

Aug. 28 1947

Again this year, with parades, meetings, picnics and general celebration, American labor is marking the holiday on which all America does honor to working men and women and their trade union organizations.

In the 65 years since labor day first became an institution in New York, the ranks of organized labor have grown from a few hundred thousand to more than 15 million. What started as a holiday in one city has become a national institution.

~~And from being~~

There's another side of labor day that has become institutional. Some of us will miss it this year. With no regrets. Unfortunately, Labor Day had become an occasion on which most of our Congressmen and Senators would put on the borrowed face of a smiling FRIEND of LABOR; grab a prepared speech full of bouquets to the labor movement, all that stuff about the valiant sons of toil and labor being the salt of the earth; some high sounding patriotic praise about labor's remarkable record in the war; then they would stand on a platform full of bunting at some labor gathering and dish out ~~this stuff~~.

That used to fool a lot of people. Of course, if the speech appeared in the newspapers, some of these stalwart lawmakers used to have to call up their big-time campaign contributors and explain that they were only kidding.

Well, during this past session of Congress EVERYBODY found out they'd been kidding all along. So at Labor Day celebrations this year there'll be no such cheap hammy theatrical performances.

Because there was a piece of legislation that came up last spring which divided the sheep from the goats in vivid fashion.

It was a sorry little number, with about 134 sub paragraphs and at least a half dozen booby traps, called the Taft Hartley Bill . ~~Then~~ President Truman vetoed this bill. ^{He} ~~and~~ called it a threat to the ~~nationalizx~~ welfare of the entire nation in one of the strongest veto messages ever turned out by any President. After the veto there were 83 Congressmen and 25 Senators who stood up and voted to uphold that veto. The rest voted to overrule the president and make into law one of the crudest, most unworkable, vindictive, contradictory, confusing, coufounded legislative monstrosities that the Clerk of the Senate ever tied up with a piece ^{red} of ~~stringx~~ tape.

So this labor ~~labx~~ day, you won't find all our lawmakers out throwing bouquets at labor. At most there'll be those 83 Congressmen and 25 Senators. And out of that group of 108 who ~~mightzconciavablxz~~ dare face an audience of respectable honest working men and women, only one --- yes I said one--- was from Minnesota. Congressman Blatnik ;and he's making a speech ^{today} up in Minneapolis.

W orse than that, the Taft Hartley bill isn't the only reason that most of our lawmakers are fishing instead of making speeches this Labor Day. That was probably the rawest thing they pulled; and the crudest. The other things they did hurt labor, hurst the unions, but they don't spare the man who rents a house, the veteran who needs a house, the c onsumer who can't make ends meet, the widows of war vets and people trying to live on pensions and social security grants, the tax ayer or anybody who's well being is a part of that important abstraction we call the general welfare.

Of course, the Republican party has an explanation for all this. It comes under the heading of political strategy. Of course you can't pay bills with political strategy; there's isn't any kind of political strategy you can use on your landlord, or the grocer. But it's interesting to know what the elephant boys are thinking of.

Most Republicans don't pretend to deny that their party is owned by and large by what we call special interests-- the big industrialists; the power lobbies, the real estate lobbies, the insurance companies; the meat packers and the food trusts. Last year these people paid the ~~fix~~ freight for the GOP campaign. So now the party has to pay them back. So here's where the strategy comes in. They figure they'll pay their debt to the big boys quick; and then next year as a prelude to the 1948 elections they pass a slew of mildly progressive legislation-- all based on ideas stolen from the New Deal-- which will convince the voters to forget all about ~~1947~~ 1947.

But I'm convinced that no amount of doo-good in 1948 can wipe out ~~the~~ the infamous record of the republican party in this session of Congress. ^{by not doing anything this year} The harm they have done /can't be undone. Nobody is going to give you a refund on all the grocery money you've had to pay because OPA was killed and price controls tossed out the window. The Republicans can't give you a refund on those 15% rent increases they authorized. they can't replace the houses that might have been built if we'd started on a housing program this year; they can't undo the suffering of thousands of Europe's displaced persons will undergo because the Republican party couldn't find time to pass a bill to allow a few of them to find a home and haven in America; they can't undo the injustice that will be done to minority groups this year because we have no FEPC law; they can't undo the continual erosion at the national well being because there is no comprehensive health insurance system to give medical care to people who can't find room for it in their present budget; and they can't undo the millions of dollars in damage that will be done by floods because their pinch-penny strategy didn't make room for a TVA program in the Missouri Valley.

This is equating strategy with dishonesty and trickery.

Now, labor is genuinely sore at Congress and for good

reason. One by one, the dire predictions as to the result of the Taft Hartley Bill, made by critics from President Truman on down, are coming true.

Many tenants are indignant too. And consumers and housewives who see at the grocery stores the daily ~~signs~~ results of the failure of Congress to do anything about the constantly rising cost of living.

But did Congress spare our other important groups?

How about the farmers? Well lets have a look at the record. The job Congress did on the farmer was more subtle. You aren't going to find it in the newspaper headlines or the newsreels. We have to look at the record.

Congress set out to cut the unions down to their pre-New Deal ~~size~~ size, but they ~~put~~ quietly put the farmers on their sucker list. Now if a city slicker duped an honest farmer into making an investment that lost him 50¢ ~~out~~ out of every dollar invested, he be denounced up and down the halls of Congress and Senator Brewster might even use it for an ^{another} investigation -- complete with dancing girls and newsreel cameras.

Yet that's just what the Republican worthies of the House of Representatives-- with some renegade Democratic support-- tried to do.

The 79th Congress had appropriated 300 million dollars to be paid to farmers for soil conservation activities. 80% of the American farmers went ahead and did a job of soil conservation and scientific measures to prevent erosion. Then along came the 80th Congress. The House of Representatives voted to pay the farmers 50¢ on the dollar for the soil conservation job they'd done. But that wasn't all.. They wiped out many important research projects which had aided farmers; prevented an additional 135,000 farmers from receiving electricity this year by slashing the budget of the Rural Electrification

Authority, eliminated crop insurance, abolished the farm tenant loan and program, /reduced the school lunch program by almost half.

The House committee said in its report that it hopes to move back toward policies set in 1862 when the Department of Agriculture was set up. That's the longest rear march in search of progress that a GOP*controlled Congressional committee has admitted to yet.

In the opinion of the Committee the erosion of the precious soil of America is important. But more important, they said, is that the "rugged character of the farmer may be eroded by a dependence on federal aid." So in order to keep all the farmers RUGGED CHARACERS they decided to put them on the sucker list and pay them 50¢ for a dollars worth of important work ~~on behalf of the~~ already done.

It's no credit to the House of Representatives that the Senate had more sense and voted to restore this appropriation and make ^{instead} cuts/in the 1948 grant. It's no credit to the Minnesota delegation in Congress that they didn't have their way. Everyone except Harold Hagen and John Blatnik voted to make a sucker out of Minnesota farmers and farmers everywhere.

Today organized labor and the farmer watch with mutual concern the movement being generated by the Republican party to destroy consumer cooperatives. Minnesota's Harold Knutson, already famous for his succession of tax bills designed to relieve the rich of their fair share of the tax burdens, was original chairman of the Committee to investigate the Co-Op movement. Since then he has passed on this hot potato ~~to the willing hands of~~ to the willing hands of Republican Congressman Ploeser. They have begun another probe almost as shady and sordid as the farce staged by Senator Brewster. But it stands to deliver a real blow to an institution which has been, and can be, a bulwark of economic security to both the members of organized labor and the farmers.

The Republican party has given us a preview of the kind of ~~world~~ America they intend to ressurect. They want to take organized labor back to the days of Hoover depression; and they want to take the farmers ~~back~~ back to 1862. They want to destroy American prestige abroad by a return to isolation, high tariffs and irresponsible short sighted policies.

They want to put America's unplanned economy in the hands of its monopoly masters--- the kind of masters who find ~~ix~~ no profit in building ~~the~~ homes for Americas ~~families~~ homeless families and box cars for America's rotting wheat--- so instead we get television sets in ~~every~~ every saloon , ~~high priced~~ and high priced automobiles.

Anybod y who studies the record of the first session of the 80th Congress can't fail to see the ominous ~~signs~~ x warning it contains. Warnings for labor and warnings for the farmer.

7 We have just about a year ~~in~~ in which to do the kind of political job that will insure having an 81st Congress whose first loyalty is to the American people.

Som ebody in Washington called this session TH E BEST CONGRESS MONEY COULD BUY.



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