

READING LABOR ADVOCATE

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL THE WORKERS

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Legislative Action Freezes Bank Deposits

REFLECTIONS

By the Editor

I AM INDEBTED to a panhandler for a bit of philosophy.

He came into my office this week and mooched a dime. When he made his wants known he looked me in the eye and smiled.

"You're a happy panhandler," I said, as I did the Rockefeller act.

"I try to be," he returned, still smiling.

"How do you manage it?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "it's a matter of thinking the thing out. I don't like to panhandle, but it's the order of the day so I do it. It's my job. The reason it don't throw me is because I never permit myself to be grateful. You see, it's pity that makes a person give. Then the reaction of the panhandler is likely to be that of gratitude. That makes him feel inferior to the giver and pretty soon he is convinced that he's no good. Then it's only a matter of time until he is sitting on the curb with his head in his hands. I can smile because I have convinced myself that, as long as society won't permit me to earn my living I have a perfect right to bum it."

IT STRIKES me that the most dangerous thing a man can do is to peacefully suffer a wrong. The natural reaction should be to fight back. Just HOW he fights depends upon the degree of intelligent understanding with which he views the situation which confronts him. But fight he should if he wants to retain his self-respect and his morale.

My panhandler visitor was fighting his way. There is little danger that he will turn to either suicide or crime—as long as he retains his philosophy and is able to trade upon human sympathy.

THE MANY SUICIDES which have occurred since the Capitalist system took its nose-dive indicates the fate of individuals who have lost their fighting spirit. They die. They may die physically or they may only die morally. In the latter case there is just as much tragedy as in the former. The present social system might just as well break a man's neck as his spirit.

WHAT I'VE BEEN leading up to is a suggestion that there is hope for the jobless man who joins in the struggle for a better social order. If I were to prescribe the proper medicine for souls which have been sickened by adversity, I'd order a good dose of activity in one of the movements which have attracted militant workers.

There's little danger that a man's spirit will be broken if he takes an active part in an organization of the unemployed. He's fighting and busy. Or if he joins the Socialist Party and captures the spirit of the challenge which the party is constantly hurling at the injustices of Capitalism he'll discover that he has something for which to work and fight and live.

JUST TWO DAYS ago I met a man who ought to get into a movement which will give him an opportunity to fight. He happens to be a college man. He once was the son of a rich man and is now almost pauper-poor. He earns what he can as a door-to-door salesman. And his spirit is broken.

He knows what is wrong with him but he doesn't know what to do about it. When I asked him whether his training has not fitted him to

ACTION SEEN NECESSARY TO AVERT CRISIS CAUSED BY BIG BANKS' ACTIVITIES

Socialist Members "Go Along" With Plan But Warn Old Party Lawmakers That State Relief For Banks Would Be Example For Workers to Follow—Decay Of Security Values and Drastic Price Reductions Seen As Forcing Extraordinary Action

The wreckage of deflation, now in its fourth year, came to the surface last Monday night in the Pennsylvania Legislature when, less than three hours after convening for the week's session, a resolution was rushed through both House and Senate and signed by the Governor which partly freezes the savings of the workers of the State. Under the terms of the resolution all banks are authorized to remain open even though they might at the same time refuse to pay more than 1 per cent of their money to depositors.

Reading banks took advantage of the powers given them and, last Tuesday limited the amount of withdrawals to \$50 plus 5% of balances on record at closing time Monday. This action applied to checking as well as savings accounts, although only the Farmers National Bank placed restrictions upon checking balances. It is now understood that the banks will honor all checks to cover payrolls and necessary business expenses.

Bankers May Dictate With the consent of the Secretary of Banking any bank can remain open while stringently limiting the amount of money depositors may withdraw. This authorization of banks to freeze hundreds of millions of dollars in their possession is one of the most amazing cases of ignoring of legal procedure that is on record, the resolution giving this tremendous power to banks being accompanied merely by a promise to put through legislation backing up the sense of the legislation at some later date.

Not only did the Legislature ignore the constitutional procedure for the passing of any legislation, but if legislation is passed at a later time it will directly impair the sanctity of contract which is the very foundation-stone of the private property (Continued on Page Five)

STATE LABOR HEAD HITS WAGE CUTS FOR TEACHERS

HARRISBURG, Pa.—It is admitted that the future of civilization depends to a great extent on the character of the quality of present-day primary education but meanwhile politicians want to create sweatshop and speed-up conditions in the Pennsylvania school system.

This charge was made by John Phillips, president of the State Federation of Labor, testifying against the proposed reduction in the \$100-a-month minimum pay scale for rural teachers. A flat 10% cut in all minimum rate for teachers is proposed in revisions to the Educational code.

"Better salaries for teachers raised standards of public education in this State to the level of other modern states," Phillips said. "We now want to destroy educational standards along with economic standards. Teachers are not in a competitive industry."

"Today, no one with any economic intelligence could cut wages except to meet an immediate competitive situation."

"The school teachers have been better police for young people in this depression than the police. Nevertheless, thousands of young people are roaming hungry and desperate throughout Pennsylvania as in other states. A wise state would provide better educational facilities, to occupy the idle jobless child, but teachers' salaries and you will inevitably affect the morale of the educational system so that thousands of youngsters who now stay in school because they have no work, will drift out and swell the army of the unemployed."

FUSION MAYOR CALLS HALT TO STREET REPAIRS

George Forced to Quit Improvements Which Would Eliminate Filth in Working-class Districts

PUBLIC ENDANGERED

Socialist Councilman Declares Greater Expense Will Result From Delay In Repair Work

Householders who live in those sections of Reading which have recently been sewered will be obliged to stay in the mud several months longer as a result of Mayor Ernest Trout's order forbidding Councilman Jesse George to cover soft spots on the streets with a paving of cold mix. Ernest Trout issued his edict late last week in language which created the impression that George was showing bad economy and favoring the contractor who is charged with the duty of keeping the streets in passable condition for a period of six months.

In a statement yesterday George declared that the householders in the sewered areas will be the losers and denies that poor economy was shown. "I have stopped the work because I recognize the mayor as the superior officer of council and because the law gives him jurisdictionary powers over all departments," George said. "However, I do not agree with him that bad economy was shown."

Delay Fore Expense Declaring that he started the paving in response to numerous requests for relief which came from householders, pedestrians and motorists, George insisted that, in the long run the paving costs are likely to be higher if the work is delayed. "It is true," George stated, "that the contract requires the contractor to keep the streets in passable condition for a period of six months. However, he can use any material (Continued on Page Two)

INCOME TAX TO AID IDLE URGED

Workers of Farm and Labor Demand Levy on All Who Receive \$5,000 Per Year

HARRISBURG, PA. (FP).—A 5% income tax on all incomes over \$5,000 to provide for jobless relief and lightening burden of local home owner will have the united backing in the Penna. Legislature of the Penna. Federation of Labor, the Railroad Union Brotherhoods, the State Farmers' Grange and the Pennsylvania Security League. The new tax would have to be a flat per cent but the exemption would be secured by a rebate of enough for prompt payment to except the smaller incomes. Estimating the income of Pennsylvania receiving over \$5,000 for 1933 at half of that of 1932, the tax is estimated to bring an annual sum of \$30,000,000 which would be divided evenly between unemployment relief and aid to localities for their school system to lighten burden of farmer and worker home owner.

The united front of farm and labor organizations will also vigorously support a constitutional amendment to permit a graduated state income tax. Such an amendment passed the Pennsylvania House in the special session of 1932 but was smothered in the Senate because Socialist members of the House had amended the bill to strike out a crippling 2% maximum which the wealthy Senators wanted.

You and All Your Friends Are Cordially Invited to attend the

International Woman's Day Pageant SUNDAY, MARCH 5th

ST. CASIMIR'S HALL

Bingaman and Orange Sts.

7:30 P. M. sharp

Free Admission

MRS. CHAS. SANDS, Chairman

There will be an interesting program including Songs, Speeches and Historic Sketches. Many in costume.

Sponsored by the Women's Committee of Berks

See Page 2 for Further Details

What Reading Folks Are Talking About

"SAVE READING FROM RIDICULE"

That section of the public which still has some money to worry about ought to try to get themselves in the same frame of mind which caused some of them to vote against Socialism in 1931.

Then it was "Save Reading From Ridicule" and "Keep the Industries in Reading" by defeating the Socialists. The Socialists were defeated, but during the past week we have seen more ridiculous carryings-on than ever before in the history of our city.

One bank, the Farmers National, refuses to pay out any money which had been deposited prior to Tuesday. The others are honoring checks but limiting the amounts which may be drawn by the thrifty owners of savings accounts.

The ridiculous part of it is that thousands of people are worrying about the safety of their savings in a land which abounds with every resource which society needs to produce abundantly.

Why don't we use those resources and make the things we need. Because they are not ours. Why don't we make them ours? Because we have saved not only Reading but the entire nation from ridicule by voting against Socialism.

The people of this wealthy land have voted to permit the wealth of the nation to remain in a few hands. They have voted to be idle and hungry when the few owners don't find it profitable to permit the masses to work. They have voted for Capitalism—and they are getting what they voted for.

MORE LAY-OFFS

Yes, the industries are still here, but the jobs have disappeared. During the past week there have been more lay-offs at the Reading Railroad shops. Also a number of store clerks have been sent out into the cruel world to grieve for their all-too-slim pay envelopes.

Jobs are scarce and times are hard. But times needn't be hard. They're only hard because people have consented to let everything up to a few people and refused to use their government for their own benefit.

The American people could end hard times forever by taking over the industries and operating them for the use of the people instead of for the profit of a few owners. But that would be Socialism and too many people would rather starve than vote the political power of the nation into the hands of the Socialist Party. Well, the threat of starvation is growing.

WHEN THIEVES FALL OUT

"When thieves fall out honest men get their due." That old maxim came to us this (Continued on Page Four)

SOCIALIST Radio Program EVERY SUNDAY at 12:15 P. M. over 361.4M WEEU 830K
Mar. 5—Lilith M. Wilson.
Mar. 12—Mark Starr.
TELL YOUR FRIENDS

Mass Meeting

Wendell Phillips

Memorial

City Hall Auditorium

Sunday, March 5

2 P. M.

SPEAKERS:

J. HENRY STUMP

Former Mayor

EMIL RIEVE

President Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers and Chairman of National Labor Committee for Thomas and Maurer

GEORGE M. RHODES

President Federated Trades Council

Everybody Welcome

No Admission or Collection