

BIG LABOR QUESTIONS

DESCRIBED BY TWO LEADERS OF OUR MOST SKILLED MECHANICS' UNIONS.

Seventy Thousand Machinists and How They Control the Trade—Their Fight Against Piecework—One Man to One Machine—Benefits For Strikers and Victims—The 13,000 Granite Cutters, Who Receive From \$3.00 to \$6.00 For an 8-Hour Day—What It Costs to Belong to a Union and How It Has Paid over 3,000 Per Cent—Interviews With President O'Connell of the International Machinists and With Secretary Duncan of the National Granite Cutters.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 20.—I give you here interviews with two men who represent the most intelligent and most skilled mechanics of the United States. Both are vice-presidents of the American Federation of Labor, and each is the leader of a national union of skilled workmen whose members are to be found in every business center. One is James O'Connell, the president of the International Association of Machinists, and the other James Duncan, the secretary of the National Union of Granite Cutters. Each of these men had reached the top of the trade he represents before he was elected as its leader. Each knows how to work with his hands, and has done so for years at the highest wages. Both are conservative, diplomatic and practical. They understand their business and can hold their own in their meetings with the great capitalists and representatives of trusts with whom they daily come in contact to settle strikes or lockouts, or to make trade agreements which shall govern hours and wages for one year or five, as the case may be.

I met President O'Connell at the headquarters of the International Association of Machinists here in Washington. They take up the greater part of the second floor of the McGill building, on G street, not far from the patent office, and their business is managed as carefully as that of a bank or a great mercantile establishment. Two typewriters were clicking away in Mr. O'Connell's office as I entered, and they kept on clicking while we talked. I first asked as to just what the International Association of Machinists was. Mr. O'Connell replied:

"The International Association of Machinists has more than 70,000 members, and it embraces about half of all the men in the trade. It has local unions scattered all over this country, Canada and Mexico, and more or less in every manufacturing city of the south and west."

"What do you mean by machinists?"

"The word machinist as applied to our trade," said President O'Connell, "represents the highest intelligence and the greatest skill among the men who deal with machinery. In our sense, the machinist is the man who makes, erects and repairs all descriptions of machines and machine tools. It is not the man who runs the machine to produce another product after they are made. Our men design and make machines with the aid of drawings. They operate machines to make machines and machine tools, and they have to be able to do all kinds of work and repairs on any kind of machine from patterns, and that within a reasonable time."

"Their work includes the making of the finest and most delicate machinery, such as the tools with which watch movements are made, and it includes the making of the heaviest and coarse-

st machinery, even to the great lathes which bore out the guns for our men-of-war. The machines for making bicycles, automobiles, typewriters, sewing machines, and, in fact, every kind of machine and machine tool, is the work of the machinist. Such work requires great intelligence and skill. The man must be an inventor as well as a mechanic. He has new problems coming up with every job, and he has to use his judgment in almost every bit of repairs which comes before him."

"How many such machinists are there in the country?" I asked.

"There are all told about 150,000 in the United States."

THEY CONTROL THE TRADE.

"Then I suppose if the union has 70,000 members it practically controls the trade?"

"Yes, it does," replied Mr. O'Connell. "Any organized body is as strong as 10 times the same number unorganized. If there are 10 union men in a shop where 100 men are employed they will do more as to regulating the hours of work and other matters than the 90 non-union individuals. We find this the case all over the country."

"What has your association done for your trade?" I asked.

"It has benefited it in many ways," replied President O'Connell. "We have reduced our hours from 10 to nine. Before 1900 the machinists of the United States worked 10 hours or more. At the beginning of that year we notified the employers that we should demand a nine-and-one-half-hour day at the end of six months and the nine-hour day beginning with Jan. 1901. We carried our point. We have gotten the nine-hour day not only for our trade, which, including those not belonging to the union, numbers 150,000 men, but also for allied trades, which number 150,000 more."

"How about wages? Do you get the same for nine hours that you did for 10?"

"Yes."

"Does the association insist upon a minimum wage?"

"Yes; but the minimum wage varies in different localities and is settled for each locality by an agreement with the employers there. In New York the lowest wage is \$3 per day. In some other places it is \$3.50 and \$4. Any employer can pay as much more as he pleases but he must pay the minimum or our men will not work for him."

NO PIECE WORK WANTED.

"Then you are not paid by the piece?"

"No; our association is against piece work. We believe it contrary to the interests of the workingman. The employer will say that such methods of payment give a greater chance for the man to make more money by the piece than by the day, but it is not true. The system keeps every man up to a high tension. It makes him strain every nerve to produce a large output, and when the output increases the employer invariably reduces the rate per piece, so that the man finds he is working harder and receiving less than under the old day rate. This is a matter of experience."

"But does your association try to restrict the output?"

"No, it does not," said Mr. O'Connell,



SECRETARY DUNCAN TALKING TO MR. CARPENTER.

"But how about your rule that one man shall operate one machine and no more? That is certainly a restriction of output."

"Not in work like that we do," replied Mr. O'Connell. "Our machines are necessarily fine and we have to insist upon that rule to protect ourselves. The employer will say he is willing to stand the loss of any work spoiled by having a man run several machines, but we find that if the work is spoiled the man is discharged sooner or later. In some of our work a man does not need to touch his machine for a long time, as, for instance, in boring out the barrels of great guns. A machine may be set and take 12 hours before the boring is completed. We insist upon having a man watch that machine, for the least break or fault may ruin the whole work, whereas if the man is there he can remedy the defect the moment it comes."

"Our machines," Mr. O'Connell went on, "are so fine that they need constant watching and the mistake of a hair's breadth may cost thousands of dollars. The bricklayer knocks off too much

from the corner of a brick with his trowel in laying a wall; he throws in an extra pint of mortar and the fault is repaired. In the machinist's work the mistake of one ten-thousandth of an inch may destroy the machine and much of our work has to be corrected to the hundred-thousandth of an inch."

"What does it cost your members to belong to the association?" I asked.

"The dues are 75 cents a month, of which 40 cents goes to the National association and 35 cents to the local union. Our system of bookkeeping is such that we keep track of every one of our members from month to month and can tell if he has paid his dues and is in good standing. In case of a strike or lockout, every such member, if unmarried, receives \$5 a week, and if married, \$7 a week as long as the strike continues. He gets the same amount if he is victimized."

"What do you mean by victimized?" I asked.

"A victimized man is one who is discharged by his employer without cause, or for

by the rules of the union. We also pay death benefits of from \$50 to \$200, according to the length of time the deceased has been in the union."

"We take in and pay out several hundred thousand dollars in money every year, but our accounts are so carefully managed as those of a bank and our losses are comparatively much less."

THE VOICE FROM THE GRANITE.

James Duncan, the secretary and treasurer of the Granite Cutters' National Union spent years in cutting out cemetery monuments, granite statues and building blocks before he was chosen as the leader of the Granite Cutters' union, and he tells me he can make more money today polishing granite than by acting as the secretary of his union. I asked him something about the granite business of the United States. Said he:

"The granite industry represents hundreds of millions of dollars. Its chief center is in New England, but it is carried on in nearly every part of the country. You will find our men at the

quarries and in the shops of almost every city. Their work, as in every cemetery and their buildings everywhere. Nearly all the government, state and municipal buildings are granite. The \$14,000,000 Pennsylvania depot which is about to be built here will be of granite and the greater part of the \$30,000,000 worth of public buildings, which they have decided to put up in Washington in the near future will be granite structures. We have many great granite quarries, and the business of taking out and preparing the stone is a special trade."

THE GRANITE CUTTERS.

"But, Mr. Duncan," said I, "do not the members of your trade cut other stones than granite?"

"No," was the reply. "The granite cutter has a trade of his own. There is as much difference between him and the soft stone cutter as there is between the shoemaker and tailor. The soft stone man shapes his work with chisels of soft steel, which he pounds with a wooden mallet. He on his own tools and carries them from job to job. The granite cutter works with the finest steel. He uses a steel hammer. He does not own his tools, and he is ready to work with tools or machines as his employer directs. All he asks is that his employer keep to his agreement with the union giving him reasonable hours and fair wages."

"How many granite cutters are there, Mr. Duncan?"

"We have about 14,000 in the United States, and 97 per cent of these belong to the Granite Cutters' union."

THREE TO SIX DOLLARS A DAY.

"And what wages do such men get, Mr. Duncan?"

"According to our national agreements with the employers, they now receive a minimum wage of from \$3 to \$5 per day, according to the locality where they work. In Butte City they get \$4.50 a day, and men are paid higher than that according to their skill. In Butte City the lowest wage is \$3 a day, and in Helena, Great Falls and Spokane \$5 a day. In some other places it is \$3.50 and \$4, but where the wages are the highest the maximum and minimum rates are about the same."

THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

"How about hours?" I asked.

"We have the eight-hour day all over the United States," was the reply.

"Do you mean to say that the men who cut granite in Butte City get \$5 for eight hours' work?"

"Yes, that is just what I mean," replied Secretary Duncan. "But wages of all sorts are high there. As for the hours, we have been fighting for the eight-hour day for a long time. We tried to get it through Congress and are trying still. In 1897 we got tired of waiting, and we then notified our employers that we should insist upon the eight-hour day beginning with the spring of 1900. Before then only one-third of our men were working eight hours. Since then we have all had that day, and that with increased profit to ourselves and our employers."

"What do you mean by increased profit, Mr. Duncan?" I asked.

"I mean that the workman is better off and that the employer gets more out of his work in the eight hours than

he formerly did in the nine hours. Wages have risen as much as 25 per cent, but nevertheless the product is cheaper than it was under the long hours and lower wages."

"That sounds like a fair story," Duncan said.

"It may sound so to you," I replied, "but it is a true story everywhere. You must remember that granite cutting is hard work, and that the time work that demands a high skill must be fresh and not tired out. In the long hours, as noon approached, the heat or try to save themselves for the rest of the day. Now they put in only four hours in the morning, and after the noon rest go in and work for the remainder of the day. The employers are now interested in seeing that the men have better tools, and that the whisper or rougher work is done by tenatized matters so that the product is as great or greater during an eight-hour day than it was in the nine-hour day of the past. One of the largest employers at Butte, Vt., where about 1,500 of our men have regular work, recently told me that not only had his output been greater under the eight-hour day, but that the character of the work was finer."

"Do you think the time will ever come when the eight-hour day will be the rule for all classes of our mechanics?" I do," replied James Duncan. "It will be more so in many of the trades, and it will be more so as time goes on."

WHAT IT COSTS TO BE A UNION MAN.

"What does it cost to belong to the granite cutters?" I asked.

"The initiation fee is from \$2 to \$5," replied Secretary Duncan. "A distinction is made in accordance with the standing of the applicant toward organized labor in the past. If a man has been fighting us and asks to join he might be punished for the past by a high initiation fee, but the ordinary fee is under \$5. Apprentices pay only \$1."

"What are your dues?"

"How do you spend the money?"

"The most of it goes to support our people in case of strikes and lockouts. We pay our men when they are out of work on such accounts, and we have also a death benefit of \$100. One of our members who died recently had joined the union only three weeks before. His old mother was immediately paid her \$125 to which his death entitled her. As to our strike and lockout funds, we paid out an enormous amount during the lockout of 1892. At that time we used up all the money we had in the treasury and then issued promissory notes to those who still held out, agreeing to pay them out of the first money that came into the treasury. These notes amounted to more than \$100,000. It took us five years to pay them, but we did it."

THE UNION AS AN INVESTMENT.

"Do you think, Mr. Duncan, that the members of your union get the worth of their money?"

"I certainly do," replied Secretary Duncan. "There is no investment in the world that has paid better than this."

(Continued on page twenty-five.)

Great Conference Attraction!

BED ROOM SUIT.

Of three pieces, finished in oak and highly polished. Strongly made. Includes a Bed, Dresser and Wash-stand. Do not overlook this bargain. We offer it during conference week for—

\$28.50

A SPECIAL PRICE of \$2.90

Is made for this beautiful enameled IRON BED. This is an astonishing value when you see the bed. Call and let us show you wherein our bed excels other makes.

\$2.90

LOUNGES and COUCHES.

Of Sanitary Steel Spring construction. Covered with velour in artistic designs and fast colors. The wood frames finished in both mahogany and oak of very fine workmanship. Upholstered with special attention given to comfort as well as appearance. Guaranteed not to sag with ordinary use. Prices range from—

\$7.50 to \$45.

DON'T FAIL TO SEE THE GRAND DISPLAY OF HOUSE FURNISHINGS AT DINWOODEY'S.

IN ORDER to meet the demands of our growing business, we have been compelled to enlarge and remodel our store, resulting in an additional floor space of 3,000 square feet, making a grand total of 70,000 square feet of floor space, covered with samples of the best House Furnishings to be found in the world's markets.

We have over two miles of Furniture if strung out in a single line. This is exclusive of our immense stock in our warehouses. A special invitation is extended to Conference Visitors to call and see us and inspect our improved business home and learn of the advancement the world is making in the manufacture of Furniture, House Draperies, Carpets, Rugs, Etc.

We have men of ripe experience constantly on the lookout for anything new in our lines. We go right into the heart of the world's markets, so that nothing worth noticing in our business escapes the keen eyes of our buyers. Result: WE ARE ALWAYS UP-TO-DATE.

We buy in such large quantities that we sell at the very lowest living prices. In order to make it interesting to our visitors we will offer some Rare Bargains.

CURTAIN DEPARTMENT OFFERINGS.

NOTTINGHAM LACES.		IRISH POINTS.	
Regular Price.	Special Price.	Regular Price.	Special Price.
\$4.50 Per Pair.	\$3.45 Per Pair.	\$4.50 Per Pair.	\$3.25 Per Pair.
\$2.75 Per Pair.	\$1.90 Per Pair.	\$2.50 Per Pair.	\$1.95 Per Pair.
\$1.65 Per Pair.	\$1.25 Per Pair.	\$2.75 Per Pair.	\$2.15 Per Pair.
\$1.00 Per Pair.	\$.70 Per Pair.		

The above Curtains are of various patterns. The weave is of strong texture. Do not fail to visit this department as soon as you arrive in the City.

Carpets, Rugs, Matting, Etc.

The carpet department is filled with exclusive designs and patterns. The prices are extremely reasonable. We have been receiving goods daily for your demand. The variety is so large that you will surely be satisfied. Ask the salesman to show you our line of—

Inlaid Linoleum.

Utah's Largest Home Furnishers

Dinwoody Furniture Co.

37 to 43 West First South Street.

Utah's Largest Home Furnishers