## 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—Bene. fits 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-Into Belong to a Union and the International Machinists terviews With President O'Connell of the International Machinists and With Secretary Duncan of the National Granife Cutters.

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

gent 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 James O'Connell, the president of the International Association of Machin-ists, 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 conserva-tive, 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 pat-ent office; and their business is managed as carefully as that of a a bank a great mercantile establishment. I'wo typewriters were clicking away in Mr. O'Counell's office as I entered, and they kept on clicking while we talked. I first asked as to just what the Inter-national 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 tra/le. It has local unions scattered all over this coun-try. Canada and Mexico, the largest being in the chief manufacturing centers. In Chicago there are about 18 different unions, each of which sends its delegates to a district union which acts for that city. We have a large number of local unions in New York. Boston and Pittsburg, and more of less in every manufacturing city of

"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 and machine tools, and they have repairs on any kind of machine from patterns, and that within a reasonable

the finest and most delicate machinery, such as the tools with which watch the making of the heaviest and coars-

ASHINGTON, D. C., March as 30.—I give you here interviews with two men who represent the most intellivery 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 70,009 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

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

"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

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 make more working 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 inthat the man finds he is working hard-er and receiving less than under the old day rate. This is a matter of ex-

strict 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 That is certainly a restriction

"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 less 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

"Our machines," Mr. O'Connell went '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 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 correct even to the hundred-thousandth of an

"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 as-sociation and 35 cents to the lacal un-ion. 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 weelt, and if married, \$7 a week as long as the strike continues. He gets the same amount if

"What do you mean by victimized?

g by the rules of

"A victimized man is one who is discharged by his imployer without

from the corner of a brick with his the union. We also pay death benefits trowel in laying a wall; he throws in of from \$50 to \$200, according to the length of time the deceased has been in "We take in and pay out several hundred thousand dollars in money every year, but our accounts are as carefully managed as those of a bank

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 statutes and building blocks before he was chosen as the leader of the Granite Cut-ters' union, and he tells me he can make more money today polishing granite than by acting as the secretary of his I asked him something about the granite business of the United

"The granite industry represents huncenter is in New England, but it is carried on in nearly every part of the

quaries 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 structure. out and preparing the stone is a special

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 owns 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 him 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,

"According to our national agreements with the employes, they now receive a minimum wage of from \$3 to \$5 per day, according to the locality where they work. The minimum wage in New England is \$3, and men are paid higher than that according to their skill. In Butte City the lowest wage is \$5 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 high 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 \$6 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. 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-hoor day beginning with the spring of 1900. Before then only onethird of our men were working eight that day, and that with increased profit

profit, Mr. Duncan?" I asked.

he formerly did in the nine hours.

Wages have risen as much as 23 percent, but nevertheless the product is cheaper than it was under the loss hours and lower wages."

"That sounds like a fairy story, Mr. Duncan," said I "It may sound so to you,"

"It may sound so to you," was the reply, "but it is a true story neverthe. less. You must remember that grains cutting is hard work, and at the same time work that demands a high skil and great accuracy. To do it well on the fresh and not tired out. It time work that demands a high skill and great accuracy. To do it well one the long hours, as noon approached, the long hours, as noon approached, the men were played out, and they had to loaf or try to save themselves for the rest of the day. Now they put in only the noon rest go in and work for the noon rest go in and work for the remainder of the day. The employer are now interested in seeing that the men have better tools, and that the cheaper or rougher work is done by tematized matters so that the product is as great or greater during an eighthour day than it was is as great or greater during an eight-hour day than it was in the nine-hour day of the past. day of the past. One of the largest employers at Barre, Vt., where about 1.500 of our men have regular work, recently told me that not only had its output been greater under the eighthour day, but that the character of the work was fine.

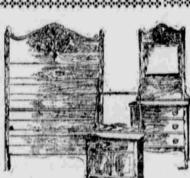
"Do you think the time will ever con-when the eight-hour day will be the rule for all classes of our mechanics" "I do," replied James Duncan, "Ita so now in many of the trades, and a will be more so as time goes on." WHAT IT COSTS TO BE A UNION

"What does it cost to belong to the granite cutters?" I asked. "The initiation fee is from \$2 to \$2." replied Secretary Duncan. "A difference 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 in "What are your dues?" "What are your dues?"
"They are now 70 cents a month."
"How do you spend the money?"
"The most of it goes to support or
people in case of strikes and lockoun.
We pay our men when they are or
of work on such accounts, and we have
also a death beneat of \$125. One of our
members who died recently had joined
the union only three weeks before. He the union only three weeks before. He old mother was immediately paid the \$125 to which his deale entitled her, As to our strike and lockout funds, we the lockeut of 1892. At that time we used up all the money we had in the treasury and then issued promisor notes to those who still held out agree-ing to pay them out of the first money that came into the treasury. The notes amounted to more than 135,000. we did it.

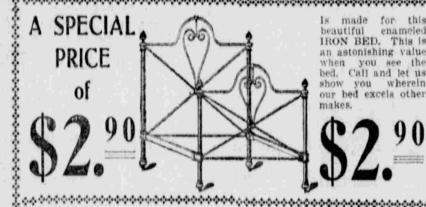
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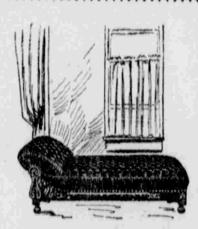
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\$1.65 Per Pair. \$1.25 Per Pair. \$2.75 Per Pair. \$2.15 Per Pair. \$1.00 Per Pair. \$ .70 Per Pair.

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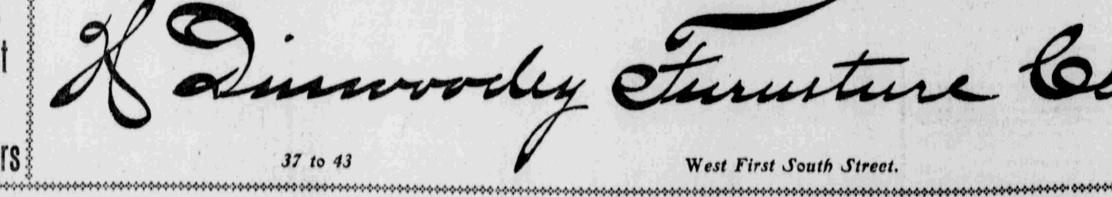
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