

# NEW ZEALAND IN 1904.

SECRETARY TREGGEAR TELLS HOW HIS COLONY HANDLES LABOR AND CAPITAL.

Industrial Unions Versus Trades Unions—The Forty-eight Hour Week and its Effect on Drunkenness and Fool Ball—Shorter Hours Coming—Old Age Pension for Working Men—The Employment Bureau—Government Ownership—Coal Mines Run by the Government—The Arbitration Act for Uncle Sam—Woman as a Labor Factor and Other Matter from New Zealand's Secretary for Labor.

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WASHINGTON, D. C., May 3. —I give you today an interview which I have just received from the leading authority on capital and labor of what many consider the most advanced labor country of the world. It comes from the other side of the globe, away down below the equator, from the colony of New Zealand. It is written by the Hon. Edward Treggear, who for the past 15 years has been secretary of labor for that colony, and who has always been one of the prime movers in New Zealand's experiments on the labor problem. The interview is in response to questions which I sent Mr. Treggear several months ago, and it gives the situation as regards labor and capital in that country in 1904.

NEW ZEALAND'S SECRETARY FOR LABOR.

It is now four years since I met Secy. Treggear in his office at the labor department in Wellington, New Zealand. He is a bright-eyed, scholarly looking man of perhaps 45 years of age. He is thoroughly posted on all things connected with labor in Australia and New Zealand. During our chat he told me what the government was then doing to reconcile the troubles of labor and capital; how it had established the weekly half-holiday; had practically fixed the 48-hour week, and how it was to some extent regulating trusts and the accumulation of large fortunes. He said that the working men of the country had become the preponderating influence in political life, and their success had been won not through violence, but by reasoning out the matter on the stump and thereby getting the balance of power in parliament. Mr. Treggear then thought that New Zealand's efforts toward equalizing the rights of man would be imitated by other countries. He said the colony was steadily advancing, and that he hoped great things for the future. That was in the year 1900. Here is what he says of the situation today. The questions interspersed through the interview are mine.

INDUSTRIAL NEW ZEALAND IN 1904.

"Department of Labor, Wellington, N. Z., 15th of March, 1904.

"My Dear Mr. Carpenter,

"It is not easy to condense in a single article answers to the large social and economic questions you send me, but I will do my best. You ask whether organized labor has been for the good of this colony? I believe that the organization of labor in New Zealand has been productive of much good both to employer and employed. It has allowed industrial affairs to be looked at from a calm, collective standpoint. The employers have met the organizations of their men by forming similar unions and associations among themselves, so that in regard to the conditions of wages, hours, etc., in a trade the personality of the individual counts little and his energies have to be turned to his own more perfect work and the improvement of methods and materials rather than to the grosser sorts of trade competition.

"The 'sweater' has been eliminated, and the honest employer, who wishes to pay fair wages, is encouraged by the absence of the commercial pirate. Moreover, employers are not at the mercy of their men in critical times.

"On the part of the workers themselves, organization has helped enormously to better their condition. The trade unions have been mostly superinduced by industrial unions, registered under the arbitration act, and such unions can do nothing directly to raise the wages of their members. They have, however, great political and social influence."

THE PEOPLE RUN NEW ZEALAND.

"I have understood that the trade unions run the country."

"The unions do not 'run' the country, as their enemies assert. There are only 23,000 unionists workers in New Zealand, out of a population of 840,000 persons having adult suffrage of both sexes, so their votes could not run the country. Their influence, however, from their solidarity and intelligence is very great and no politician can disregard it, therefore they can bring pressure on legislation."

"Economically the unions advantage labor indirectly, but very weightily, through the industrial conciliation boards and arbitration courts. Unions induce a feeling of comradeship; they have helped to advance wages, shorten hours, gain paid holidays and half-holidays, and limited the number of boy workers."

"The third party, the public, generally unconsidered in such matters, no longer has to bear the danger, annoyance and loss through disturbance of trade and of society caused by employer and employee fighting out their quarrels and pretending to decide questions of right and wrong by methods of brute force—for the check book can be as brutal a weapon as the club."

WAGES STEADY AND ADVANCING.

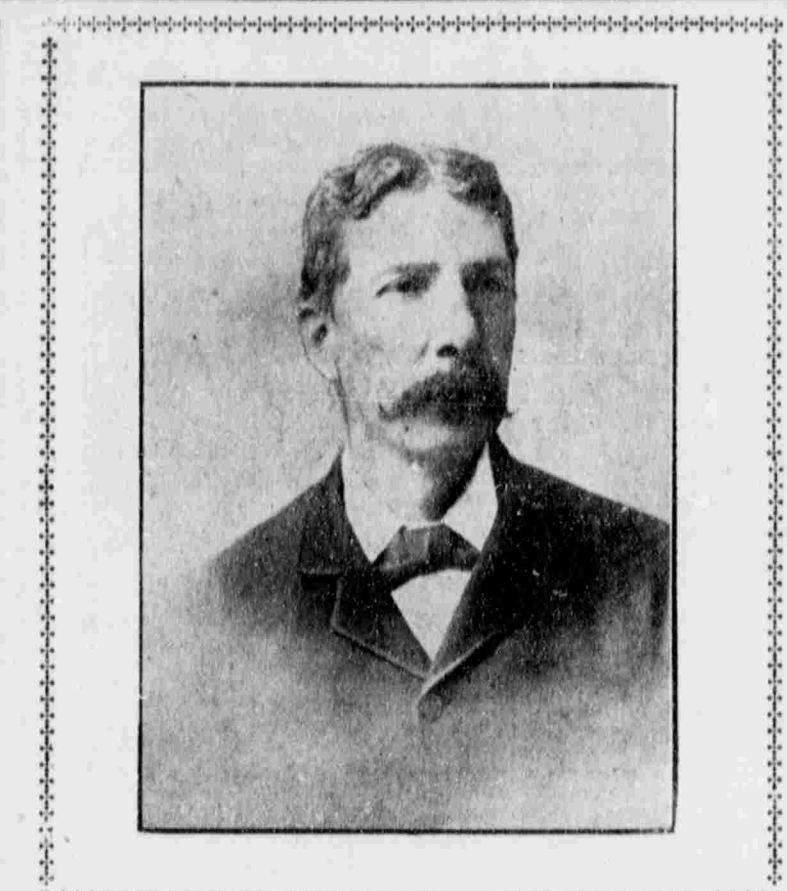
"How about wages?"

"Wages in the colony rise and fall but little, they have been steadily advancing of late years. They differ according to climatic conditions in different parts of the colony, but they average as follows: Ordinary laborers, \$2 a day; farm laborers, \$3 to \$5.50 a week and board; carpenters, \$2.50 a day; plumbers, \$2.50; brick-layers, \$3 to \$4; painters, \$2.25; bootmakers, \$10.50 a week (but most on piecework); order takers, \$2.50 a day; plasterers, \$3; station hands (cowboys), \$5 to \$6 a year and found; shepherds, \$375 to \$425 a year and found."

WOMEN AS A LABOR FACTOR.

"Give me some idea of your women unionists."

"Our women take but little share in organized labor. With the exception of the Dunedin tailoresses, who number about 500, there are no influential or active women's unions. This arises partly because the inspectors of factories and shops look with unremitting vigilance after the wages, overtime pay, holidays, etc., of the women and girls, so that there is no pressure necessitating unionism. Moreover, probably the want of cohesion in the sex when engaged in the industrial work of this country has effect here as elsewhere. There are no women members of men's unions. We have 'woman suffrage,' and our female electors exert steady political influence in certain directions—such as temperance—but their industrial position does not seem to need interference."



HON. EDWARD TREGGEAR,  
Secretary for Labor, Wellington, New Zealand.

trial position does not seem to need interference."

THE EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

"Does eight hours increase drunkenness?"

"It would certainly be a slander on our working classes if any one accused them of drunkenness. There is more drunkenness in Glasgow or in Moscow in a night than in New Zealand in a year. To say that an eight-hour day leads to drunkenness and loafing is rubbish. The overtired man who has worked too long is he who craves a stimulant."

"After eight hours of active and often strenuous labor leisure is not loafing, and the accusation sometimes comes with a very bad grace from people who are either idlers themselves or engaged in predatory industry."

"The views of the colonist are not drunkenness, but gambling and devotion to low ideals, the worship of the race horse and of the football."

"It is not probable that any shorter working day than that of eight hours will obtain for several years, but I hope that as machinery takes the place of sinew, and when the machine is owned by the man who works it, plain living and high thinking may help to a very few hours a day having to be necessarily worked by any one. Exertion on a loved and fancied line of direction is, of course, under different conditions, and time so spent will never be measured."

"Does not the eight-hour day encourage extravagance?"

"As to extravagance, the shorter working day has had if anything a beneficial effect in the direction of economy, if the savings banks statistics be accepted as a test. Personally, I have heard thrift preached to persons of low incomes. Below a certain wage line every penny saved is a sin against the worker's family, depriving them of some necessity of life. It is enough of thrift for such a one to be injured, or in a friendly society to guard against sickness or accident or death. The working father or mother who has brought up a family has, at the cost of a thousand self-denials and deprivations, performed a most valuable duty to the state, and should be provided for in his or her old age by the state whose future has been thus nourished, even if it means heavy taxation of those who have had better opportunities of acquiring money or property by shirking the responsibilities of fostering large families. In New Zealand, through our old age pensions, we partly meet our moral and national liabilities, but much more will yet have to be done by the English speaking peoples if they wish to make their nations in the future anything more than mixtures of mongrel aliens."

EMPLOYMENT BUREAUS FOR UNCLE SAM.

"Concerning your question as to the employment branch of the New Zealand

labor department, and whether such an office would succeed in America, I consider it has been a success here and see no reason why it should not be useful in the states. Since 1891 we have assisted 32,382 men, and these had 70,770 dependents, so that 103,152 persons have been benefited. This does not include the thousands who take advantage of our information offices all over the country—the figures given above are of those who received actual assistance in railway and steamer fares, etc., in order to bring the work and the worker together."

"Our clients receive no charity or monetary assistance; we only find hard work for them. The expenses of transport have to be refunded, and contrary to the belief of the pessimist, they are refunded, in the large majority of cases. No better test of the value of the work we do can be given than by the way the operatives and laboring classes stand by us; it is a dangerous experiment in New Zealand to abuse its labor department in public."

CHANCES FOR YOUNG MEN.

"What does your government offer to immigrants and what are the chances for young men to make fortunes in New Zealand?"

"The government offers no special inducements to immigrants, and it has not done so for many years. Last year we had a surplus of 12,000 arrivals over our departures, but of these 10,000 were Australians, driven out by drought in their own country. Most of the people who come here, excepting the tourists, stay with us. New Zealand is a lovely land, and it is full of attractions. It offers a good field for steady, honest living. Young men have many opportunities to secure comfortable incomes, and at the end of life financial independence. As to the probabilities of their becoming millionaires, I am glad to say they are nil."

NEW ZEALAND PROSPEROUS.

"What is the condition of New Zealand?"

"The country has been for years progressing rapidly, and in spite of croakers against 'labor as king,' we flourish more and more. The hands of factories have nearly doubled in number during eight years; they rose from 29,579 in 1895 to 59,047 in 1903. Agricultural and pastoral employments have also been in a prosperous condition, as shown by the value of our exports, chiefly wool, frozen meat, butter, etc., amounting at a leap of \$3,018,713 (about \$14,500,000) in 1903 over those of the previous year. The private wealth of the people rose in value from \$122,000,000 in 1892 to \$229,000,000 in 1901. I will not weary you with more figures."

HOW GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP WORKS.

"Does it pay to have the government run the railroads?"

"New Zealand through taking over the railroads, telegraph lines, etc., as national property has won great advantages. Such action secures the people against combinations in regard to oppressive prices for fares and freights, prevents discrimination and gives back to the people the profits made through the use of the railways and telegraphs by the people. On its being found that the New Zealand railways were making greater profits than were necessary to pay interest on the cost of construction, fares and freights were immediately lowered very considerably."

erably. Special benefits are granted to agriculturists and those 'far back' time for manuring purposes boxes fruit, etc., are carried free while the freight for fruit is almost nominal."

"Railways and telegraph working together saves much expense in officials, correspondence, etc. The disadvantage of having telegraph lines in private hands was shown in England during the last war, when the confidential telegrams to the crown ministers leaked out to financiers before the messages were delivered. Here the public are not harassed and lectured by the officials, nor are the lives of the officials and laborers recklessly sacrificed to make fat dividends."

COAL MINES RUN BY GOVERNMENT.

"The government is opening up coal mines. The mines now being privately worked will probably not be interfered with for a long time, but by having national mines the formation of trusts and monopolies can be prevented by coal sold at cost price, if it is thought fit."

"The government life insurance department, the public trust office, which administer the estates of deceased persons; the advances to settlers department, enabling struggling farmers to pay off old and costly mortgages through cheap government loans; the land for settlement department, breaking up big estates by resumption and cutting them up into small farms—all these departments are doing beneficial and profitable work."

"The agricultural department, by grading butter, cheese, and flax, by distributing superior seeds, eggs, etc., and by fighting insect pests, is of great use to the community."

NEW ZEALAND VERSUS THE UNITED STATES.

"Would your labor laws do equally well in so large a country as ours?"

"It is true that New Zealand is a tiny land compared with the United States and our legislation is often referred to as experimental. There are, however, certain natural and personal laws or imperatives in one place, however large, as in another, however small. Stones do not fall upwards in America more than in New Zealand, nor can a workman on strike keep his family on air in one locality more than in another. The New Zealander removes his industrial disputes from the vicinity of the labor boss, the armed police and the state militia to the calm rational atmosphere of a court, which examines his claim, sees if the employer is getting unfair profits out of his men, and gives the workman for a fixed time a minimum wage for his work, while he can earn as much more as his employer likes to give him. The man need not work, nor his employer pay the minimum wage for any wage, but if he works at all at that trade, he must not be 'sweated' nor may he under-cut his mates in wages."

THE ARBITRATION ACT FOR UNCLE SAM.

"Could the labor arbitration act be applied to the United States?"

"I cannot see why such industrial arbitration, proved to be of value in New Zealand, and adopted by the neighboring colonies which watched it working, should be deleterious to the United States. It is true that if it

were adopted the presidents of your labor federations and other union bosses would shrink in power considerably, and so would the trust magnates and 'bull dozers' of capital; but the gain to capital, labor and the public through having reasonable decisions by a judge of industrial matters instead of the arbitrament of the bully would be enormous."

HOW IT WORKS IN NEW ZEALAND.

"Our arbitration act here has steadily business, leveled up wages, protected the families of the workers, advanced the spending power of the masses, and thereby profits to employers, and it has put the bitterness of class feeling formerly nourished in strike and lock out, and helped to neutralize uncertainty of employment. Exports, manufactures, distribution, settlement, all have flourished through or alongside this law's excellent existence."

"If this is my opinion, I am not alone. New South Wales followed us in adopting the regulation of industry called in America compulsory arbitration. Its acting premier, speaking only last week at a public meeting, gave figures to show the growth of exports and manufactures, adding, ironically: 'I only quote the figures to show socialist legislation is driving capital out of the country.' He further stated that the growth of manufacturing interests during the next two years will be with out parallel in the history of New South Wales."

"Progressive legislation of a similar character to that of New Zealand may be harmful if introduced into America, but if it should be tried fairly I believe it would mock the doubtful pompous of its present enemies as fully as it has shamed its former opponents in this colony. And they were not easily shamed."

(Signed) "EDWARD TREGGEAR, Secretary for Labor."

"In closing this letter I would say that I doubt whether the industrial conditions of the United States and New Zealand are so near alike that the same methods could successfully be applied to both. I think Mr. Treggear for his opinions. They come not only from a great economic thinker, but from one who for fifteen years has been a practical working executive in the field of which he writes."

FANK G. CARPENTER.

Night Was Her Terror.

"I would cough nearly all night long," writes Mrs. Chas. Applegate, of Alexandria, Ind., "and could hardly get an sleep. I had consulted so many doctors, but I walked a block I would cough frightfully and spit blood, but, when all other medicines failed, three \$1.00 bottles of Dr. King's New Discovery, wholly cured me, and I gained 5 pounds." It's absolutely guaranteed to cure Coughs, Colds, La Grippe, Bronchitis and all Throat and Lung Troubles. Price 50c and \$1.00. Trial bottles free at Z. C. M. I. Drug Store.

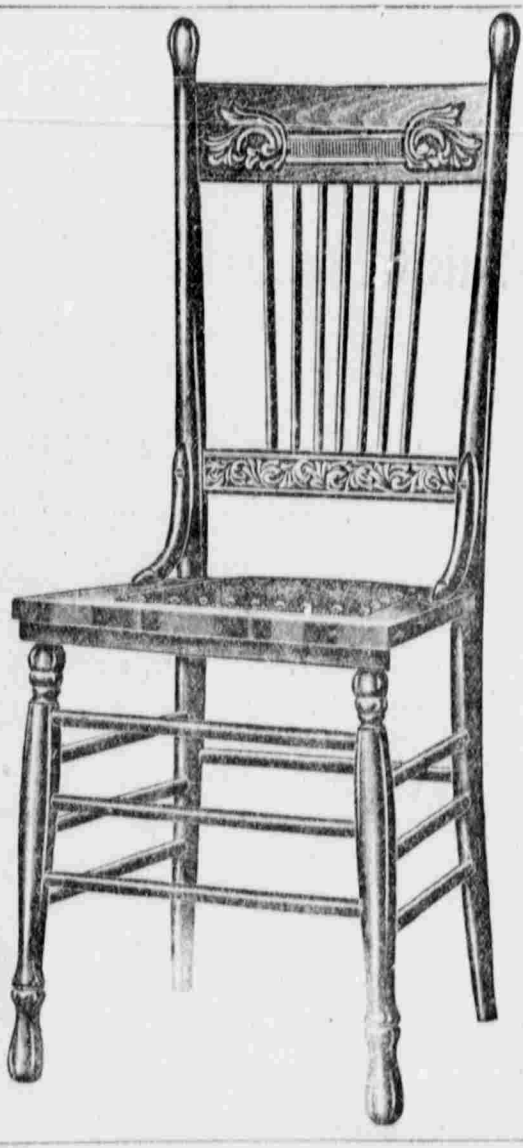
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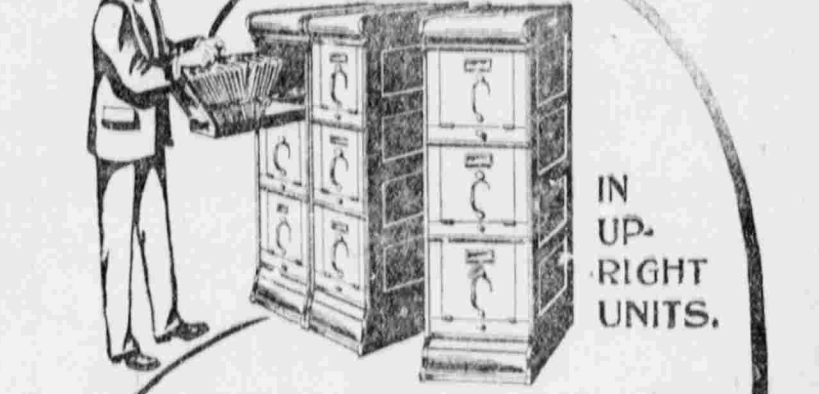


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