

# LAW OF WEEKLY REST

Sunday Holiday and Labor Agitation in France—Compulsory on Both Employer and Employee.

ACCORDING to Consul General Frank H. Mason of Paris the industrial situation in France, which has been steadily growing more acutely sensitive during the past four or five years, has been further aggravated by the enforcement of what is known as the "law of weekly rest," which was enacted and proclaimed by the president of the republic on July 10, and after a heated and acrimonious discussion in the press and at the meetings of labor organizations of all trades and occupations was put into effect on Sept. 1. Mr. Mason continues:

The law, like most French legislative enactments, is an elaborate and carefully drawn statute and comprises 11 articles, which were designed to cover every contingency that could be foreseen as likely to arise under the new restrictions. Its fundamental principle and purpose, however, is to ordain that working people and employees of all classes and conditions shall be entitled to and utilize one day in each week for rest and recreation. The law is compulsory in both directions—in that it compels the employer to grant freedom on one day in seven to his employees, and on the other hand it requires the employee to avail himself of the privilege thus offered. There is in each week one day on which he is forbidden to work, and article 2 of the law prescribes that, unless otherwise authorized, this day of rest shall be Sunday.

But it is also recognized that certain establishments and forms of business do not admit without serious difficulties of a simultaneous absence on Sunday of the entire working force, and for these it is provided that the employees may receive their rest days, individually or collectively, on other days of the week, so that a portion of the personnel of such establishments—including hotels, restaurants, and stores at which meat, bread, and other food materials are sold—may be continuously on duty.

SPECIAL EXEMPTIONS. As an indication of the vast number of vocations which come under this category and for which special exemption and conditions have had to be provided in the enforcement of the law, the texts of articles 2 and 3 of the statute which relate to that portion of the subject is herewith translated: Whenever it shall be established that simultaneous rest on Sunday by all the personnel of an establishment would be prejudicial to the interest of the public or compromise the normal working of such establishment, leave of absence for rest may be given either constantly or at certain periods of the year, and either individually or collectively, as follows: (a) Another day besides Sunday to all in the establishment; (b) from Sunday noon to Monday noon; (c) Sunday afternoon with compensatory rest on day in succession every two weeks; (d) in succession to all of the personnel or part of it. Necessary authorizations for these variations should be demanded and obtained conforming to articles 8 and 9 of the law.

ment undertook a task of extreme and complicated difficulties. Add to this the fact that its enforcement has come at a time when the revolutionary socialistic element of the population is exceptionally restless and aggressive, and the friction and disorders of the past month are readily explained. The law has fallen with especial severity on the large class of stores which cater to the trade of the working people, to whom Sunday, with its comparative leisure, has been hitherto a favorable time for expending the week's wages for clothing, groceries, and other personal or household necessities. In closing their shops on Sunday many of these small merchants find themselves obliged to give up an important part of their trade. Many dealers in certain articles which come within the categories above quoted have sought and obtained permission to keep open during certain hours on Sunday, while others, to whom similar permission has been denied, have felt unjustly treated and have resorted to hostile demonstrations against their more fortunate neighbors.

INTERFERENCE WITH INCOME. There is also a large class of people, both employees and persons who work for their own account, to whom the giving up of one day in seven to rest means an inevitable loss of a certain part of their income. In a country where earnings are generally small, and people have been trained and inured for generations to lives of industry and rigid economy, any interference with their habits of work naturally produces more or less friction and complaint. It is yet too soon to attempt any definite estimate as to the effect of the new law upon the cost of production in the various important industries of France. That can not be determined until the disputes between labor and capital have been thoroughly settled and the relations between employers and employees adjusted to the rule of six days' work per week instead of seven.

PROTEST AGAINST WAGE LOSS. The number of strikes during the first twenty days of September has surpassed all precedent, and they have mostly had for their motive the question whether the cost of the enforced day of rest each week shall be borne by the workman or by his employer, or whether it shall be shared between them. In other words, shall the employer pay the same wage for a shortened weekly period of labor, or shall the employee submit to a proportionate reduction in his earnings? How can the new system be so adjusted as to affect equally and with justice the wages of the laborer or operative who works by the piece or day and those of the employee who is paid a fixed salary by the month or year?

Meanwhile intelligent public opinion frankly concurs in the wisdom of the principle on which the law is based, and believes that any reduction of incomes which may be at first entailed by the new system will be in the end compensated by the improved physical condition and augmented working capacity of the people.

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we were on a train returning to New York. They reached the city before the chief, and proceeded to the bishop's study. The bishop was engaged and busy. He had to wait a few minutes. Barnes turned to the young man.

"Let me have the ring," he said.

"Not on your life!"

"But you admit it's in your possession?" cried Barnes, excitedly.

"Certainly. What object could I have in denying it—now?"

"Well, you're a cool one," exclaimed the chief, eyeing him admiringly. A servant came to announce that the bishop would see them in the library. The young man and the girl remained in the dimly lighted parlor. The priest, who was seated at his desk, arose to some agitation as the two men entered.

"My dear Barnes, I hope—"

"One minute, bishop," interrupted Barnes. "We've got our man all right, but he's convincing himself. A minute more and he'll be admitted that he had your ring."

The prisoner rose up.

"I didn't admit anything of the kind," cried Barnes, wrathfully. "You told me with your own lips that you had the ring."

"The same," replied the youth, beginning to feel relieved.

"Why did you do this?"

"Well, you see, I liked Tessie and Tessie liked me, and we're both of age, and we found we had some other matrimonial plans for her."

"Matrimonial plans," interrupted the bishop. "I never gave such a thing a thought."

"Nor I did," said the young man, whose confidence was now almost at bay. "You see, we thought it would be a nice thing to go up to Tessie's old home and—"

"Never mind the rest," again interrupted the bishop. "What's this ring you were speaking about?"

Mr. Hathaway pulled a plain gold band from his pocket and held it out to the bishop. The bishop looked at the episcopal ring on his own finger. Barnes and Clancy made a move to retire. The priest followed them.

"I give me for this ludicrous blunder," he said scathingly, "and promise that you'll come around in the morning and witness the ceremony."

Barnes were not the man to whimper over an occasional defeat. He looked at his assistant and answered decisively:

"We'll promise to be there, Clancy; it's all in a day's work."

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