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## THE EIGHT HOURS BILL.

MAYOR BASKIN has vetoed the eight-hour labor bill. This has occasioned some excitement in labor circles. It has exposed the Mayor to much criticism. It is very easy to arouse sympathy for "the poor working man," and to call everything oppression which appears to be opposed to his interests or his demands. We are not among the great admirers of Mayor Baskin, but we do not think it right to join in any unreasonable attacks upon him, nor to find fault when he performs what he believes to be his duty. We therefore ask the public, including the working people who think the Mayor has done wrong, to carefully examine the bill and the veto before they condemn the course he has taken. The bill has been published before but we reproduce it here for perusal:

"A bill for an ordinance making eight hours a legal day's work on public contract work.

"Section 1. Be it ordained by the City Council of Salt Lake City, Territory of Utah, that in all contracts made by the City of Salt Lake for the erection of buildings or repairs on public buildings, bridges, viaducts, street paving or grading, and all work on waterworks or sewerage, there shall be incorporated the express agreement between said city and contractor or contractors that the said contractor or contractors shall not require or permit any employee or laborer between the hours of 6 a. m. and 6 p. m. each day to work more than eight hours upon any such building, bridge, or viaduct, or street, or other public work, and that the said eight hours shall be a full and legal day's work; the provisions of this section shall not apply to work required under said contract to be done at the factory, foundry or shops of the contractor or contractors, but shall apply only when employees or laborers are engaged directly at work upon the premises where such public work is being constructed.

Sec. 2. Any such contract shall also provide that in the event of any contractor or contractors violating the provisions of said contract, that he or they shall forfeit \$100 to the City of Salt Lake, Territory of Utah, for each and every day that he or they shall violate the provisions of said contract.

This ordinance shall be in force from and after its approval.

The text of the veto will be found in our report of the City Council proceedings. It will be seen that the Mayor is not opposed to the eight hour system, so far as it makes eight hours "a full and legal day's work." But he does not think it proper by arbitrary legislation to interfere with the natural right of a workman to labor more than eight hours if he wishes to

do so, nor of a contractor to engage men to work extra time if he wishes or it becomes necessary. Further, the Mayor objects to limiting work to eight hours in the day and leaving it unlimited as to time in the night.

Now, what is there in all this that is unsound in law or reason, or unjust to the workman or the employer? If the city should ordain that eight hours shall be counted as a full day's work entitled to a full day's pay, making proper provision as to night work also, would not that be all-sufficient? Is it necessary to prevent any man from laboring longer than eight hours if he desires to do so and can get the work? If a contractor is under obligations to finish a job by a certain time and he finds it necessary to engage his workmen for overtime, would it be right to fine him a hundred dollars or punish him in any way for doing so? We do not believe that any such restriction and penalty would be good law, even if the ordinance had been signed by the Mayor, for, as he says, it would deprive men of "a natural right" and laws are made to protect and secure, not destroy such rights.

We are in sympathy with the eight hour labor movement. We have been for many years in favor of the theory that eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep and eight hours for improvement and recreation, make a fair division of the day of twenty-four hours. If the law was so framed that eight hours should be a legal day's work entitled to a full day's pay on all public works, we think that would be a good thing. But we do not believe in such legal restrictions as would destroy liberty or interfere with the freedom of the laborer or the employer. Nor do we consider any enactment sound in law or in principle which infringes upon any natural right.

Working people may combine and pledge themselves of their own free will not to work longer than eight hours in a day. But they have no right to say that other persons, who do not choose so to bind themselves, shall conform to this limit. Any attempt to compel others to do so is tyranny and should be resisted just as much as the oppression of employers. The tyranny of labor combinations ought to be fought by working men as well as the tyranny of capital. Men of independence should be careful not to barter their individual liberty for a deceptive mess of pottage.

The great troubles that are coming upon this nation will have their source in the lawlessness of labor combinations and their disregard of individual rights on the one hand, and the grasping heartlessness of moneyed corporations on the other. It is not always the necessities and sufferings of working people, or the injustice and oppression of their employers, that are the occasion of strikes. It is too often a disposition to take advantage of an opportunity to demand higher compensation for labor, regardless of any question of equity or justice. And that usually originates with crafty men who do no manual labor, but manipulate the organizations to which laborers surrender themselves.

There is no doubt that labor has gained advantages by union of effort.

Organization is necessary to the amelioration of working people. They have a right to combine and it is good policy to do so. While capital and labor continue to hold their relative positions of antagonism, societies for the promotion of labor interests and for resisting the encroachment of capital will be needful. But the danger in them is in that tyranny which is always worse in a mob than in a person or a government, and in that disposition to effect by force what cannot be accomplished by reason.

The liberties of mankind are of paramount importance. They must be preserved at any cost. They must not be trampled upon under any pretence. Labor associations have no more right to say that men who do not belong to them shall not work for a certain price or a given time, than capitalists have to say they shall do so. Governments have not the right to limit men's liberties in this respect. Municipalities go beyond their powers when they attempt it.

Mayor Baskin is right in his reasoning and, in our opinion, has done his duty in vetoing the bill under consideration. And no matter how much some demagogues may denounce his act, we do not believe there is a thinking workman in this city who studies the situation and the bill but will say in his heart, the veto is right, after all.

## STORAGE-BATTERY STREET CARS.

Says the New York World on this subject:

"The storage-battery system has been recognized from the first as the ideal method of utilizing electric power in crowded cities. Attempts to apply it, however, have not been successful, for mechanical or commercial reasons."

"The system has been developed at Milford, Mass., and is now in operation. The buckling of plates in the batteries, which has hitherto been the most serious mechanical difficulty, is rendered impossible. The escape of force in wasteful ways is prevented. The weight of cars, when equipped with power enough for a run of fifty miles, is less than that of trolley cars. The crippling of the machinery by suddenly excessive currents—a danger unavoidable on trolley lines—is impossible here.

"The cars at Milford climb a grade of 8½ per cent. and make sharp curves without difficulty. In going down grades the resistance necessary to check speed is applied not wastefully by brakes, but by a dynamic device which utilizes the force of the descent in the development of electricity and reinforces the battery with new power. In one experiment it has been found that 17 per cent. of the power used for the trip has been resupplied in this way."

## GILDED VICE.

EVERY possible effort is being put forth in this once sober city to clothe vice with the habiliments of respectability, that it may be more alluring. One of the devices used for this purpose is to equip drinking dens with gilded splendor, that outward show may serve to cause men with shallow brains to lose sight of the danger of indulging in intoxicants.

A new drinking establishment exhibits novel ingenuity. It occupied