

[Labor Wants a Share]

Mem. on Labor Talk

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The worker in the industrial world finds himself in a situation not unlike that of the early settler on the land in this country. The settler wanted something of his own, and he saw his holdings threatened again and again by the schemes of rival foreign powers in this country.

The struggle between the French and the English for lands - the struggle between Spain and England. The English subject settled here, but what was going to happen to his land if the French ousted the English? The settler, too, saw England giving great grants to favorites. He saw the Colonial government giving grants. Generally, to be sure, on condition that settlements were made. If he bought his land from these grantees, what would happen to him if the Crown or the Colonial government rescinded its patent?

When finally a union of the Colonies was effected and the government of the United States established, there came a second alarm among the Western settlers. Many of them had been induced by great land companies, like the famous one called Vandalia which controlled most of what is now West Virginia; West Sylvania, covering Ohio and a part of Kentucky, to go into these districts. But they saw these land companies now falling

to pieces. Their problem was to secure a settled form of government under which their ownership would be assured, no longer the pawn of Crown or proprietor or land company, and holding their right from an established state, one of the United States.

They did not want the great Western lands to be made dependent on any of the thirteen Colonies. That meant simply a repetition of the old country abuses. It was this demand of the settlers to have a government which would respect their property, which would not over-tax them and would give respectful heed to their requests and their complaints, which would give them a

representative from their own ground, that hurried on the formation of states between the Alleghenies and Massachusetts.

Now we have a parallel of this in our industrial life. Remember, the worker in this country has been brought up in this American way of looking at things. He wants just what the early settler wanted, something sure and satisfactory. He wants a voice in the thing. Hewants to feel that he is getting his share; that is, that he is not being over-taxed by some distant power whose relation to him is vague - more or less unreal, and which, becuase of this unreality, he resents as something unjust and tyrannical.

What is working in all our industrial life is the democratic notion - Americanism, if you please; and we will never have rest - I am inclined to say we never should have rest unless we get onto something like the basis of land holdings

in this country, where the worker feels that he has a share in the thing - materially and intellectually, also that he has a way open to push ahead.

The great majority of workers would find satisfaction in such a situation as this. That is, where the leaders, whether they are employers, managers or heads of labor organizations, are actuated by these motives or tendencies.

All sorts of erratic experiments are tried in the attempt to work out a satisfactory ideal. All sorts of tyrannies spring up. But we have had the same thing in working out our land policy, working out our form of political government.

The fundamental economic reason for pushing this kind of definite organization lies in the undoubted fact that it means the loosening of human powers which, under the present industrial management, are stifled. Incalculable loss has come to the country through the form of industrial organization that has grown