

HON. COLE L. BLEASE AND REV. TOM P. JIMISON LABOR DAY SPEAKERS AT LAKEWOOD PARK



LABOR DAY, 1923

Labor Day, 1923!

Monday, September 3, the toilers of the land will have a holiday—their very own holiday.

America will pause in its onward rush, to give honor to the men, women and children of Labor.

Millions of people will gather in assemblies to hear speakers tell of the past, dwell upon the present, and utter Labor's hopes for the future.

The messages of Labor's past achievements will be most interesting. The history of the efforts of the workers to advance reads more like fiction than fact. Those who toil for others were once slaves, then serfs, and now, in most industries at least, they are respected citizens, home-owners, tax-payers, church-supporting, and leaders in all educational advancement.

As Labor has progressed, just so far has democracy and freedom advanced. No more and no less. Pure democracy and real freedom of people were purchased through the sacrifices of Labor, and its uncompromising, persistent battles.

When landed aristocracy ruled America the problem concerned the land-workers, the chattel slaves and the "hired hands" and tenant farmers.

When industry and financial combinations took control of affairs, and ended the rule of landed aristocracy, the problem became an industrial problem.

Efforts of industrial workers were much more effective than had been the efforts of the workers of the field, because in the industry the workers were grouped and it was an easy matter for these various groups to meet in common cause, and discuss their common problems, always seeking a way out to the big high road of advancement.

Labor's past is filled with interesting history. Mistakes have been made, costly mistakes, but never repeated. Obstacles have been thrown in the way of the workers at every step Labor has taken. Powerful combinations of wealth and the best brains that wealth could purchase and employ have made every endeavor to keep back the forward march of the workers. Publications and pulpits have been used in an effort to stop the onward march of the toiling masses, but they marched right on, receiving at the very worst only temporary setbacks. Leaders of labor have been imprisoned; others have been brutally murdered; the courts have been called into service, and through the injunction route and the debasement of high courts, strenuous efforts have been made to outlaw organization, and completely

kill labor's power. Propagandists have been employed in dozens and in dozens, to circulate falsehoods about the Organized Labor Movement that would set the public mind against the workers, and after the clouds had cleared away, Labor has emerged each and every time, stronger than ever, more determined than ever.

So on this Labor Day the workers are gathered, their minds deeply concerned with the present and inquiring searchingly into the future. No opposition is minimized, the strength of no enemy discounted. Labor knows now, even better than ever before, that there are men and combinations of men who would like to see America return to serfdom, if not actual chattel slavery. No boxing bout, no wrestling match, ever held the breathless interest of spectators more intensely than the present struggle between autocratic wealth and Organized Labor holds the intelligent interest of the workers.

There are two foes to fight now, instead of one. There are two deadly enemies, one on each side of Organized Labor, and the complication of this struggle add dangers to the contest.

On the one side is organized wealth.

On the other, organized European radicalism and fanatical Russian bolshevism.

Both are Labor's foes.
Both are democracy's foes.
Both are striking at freedom.

In between, standing alone and unaided, the American Organized Labor Movement is fighting America's battles and preserving freedom and democracy for the generations to come.

There is, on the side, the man who thinks his possession of wealth gives him absolute proprietorship in the men who work for wages. He denies to those men who labor any right whatever to a voice in their own working and living conditions. He is opposed to collective bargaining. He owns the plant, therefore he owns the men and women in that plant. His word is law and gospel; his custom supercedes and rises above the law of the land. He thinks business is run for profit alone, and the human agency in such business is run for profit alone, and the wheel, to be replaced whenever the man or woman is worn out, and no thought of the worker's welfare enters his mind. This kind of employer is firmly of the opinion that laws exist for his benefit, and he resents the very idea that those who work for him are citizens of the state. He feels that he is doing the workers a favor by keeping his industry going, and it never occurs to him that he is being enriched on the labor and at the expense of those in his employ.

This man is making hot-beds of bolshevism and anarchy. His plant is an incubator for fire-brands and dynamiters. His industry is but a breeding place and a hatching place for

men and minds that learn to hate all government and all law.

On the other side, the American Labor movement is fighting back those forces that are foreign to American, Americanism and American ideals. From Moscow to Southern Europe orders are received in America by the lieutenants and henchmen of those forces to destroy the American Labor Movement. Under various names and guises these agencies are at work in America, and wherever Labor Day is being observed this year, members and officials of the American Labor Movement are giving serious thought to the best manner of fighting these insidious influences.

These foreign influences are against all government, all law and all orderly process. They are openly committed to the plan of completely destroying the capitalistic system of government. The first thing, therefore, they must do is to destroy the legitimate American Labor Movement. The American Federation of Labor is the one bulwark of defense against the ravages of those foreign influences. The American Federation of Labor Day is today the strongest champion, the greatest defender of America and her ideals and her institutions.

And it is with a full realization of the responsible position which the Labor Movement occupies that the workers look out upon the future. America must be kept safe from those who would destroy it, and the American people must be kept free from those here who would enslave the workers. It is a great task. It is a wonderful field for service. It is a battle that puts to test the souls of men and women.

The American Labor Movement, then, has as its two big enemies those who worship the God of Gold and those who worship no God at all.

The one believes in ejecting workers from their homes, while the other believes in ejecting owners from their place of business.

The one is just as bad as the other, and both must be eliminated from American life, if America is to continue a nation of freedom and democracy.

Then on this Labor Day let Labor plead with all right thinking men and women everywhere to join in this great and important contest that has for its two-fold the real freedom of the men, women and children of America, and the preservation of America and her ideals.

Absolute justice to the workers of America is the one safe way to make America safe for all Americans.

Good roads, fine buildings and big factories will not make a country, or a state, big and powerful.

Men, women and children are what constitute a state or a nation, and make that nation's or that state's bigness.

Let the hands of Justice be spread over all our various interests and groups, and safety and security shall be ours.

GOMPERS' LABOR DAY MESSAGE

Labor has reason to celebrate Labor Day this year as a day marking great achievement.

Our movement is today in a commanding position. It has come through a great ordeal. It is triumphant.

Our position today is a tribute to the solidarity of our movement, to the soundness of its policies and the determination of its membership.

Workers in America know that they can trust their movement to serve them adequately. They know that their movement is "on the right track." They know that in their unions they can win over all obstacles.

So our movement has not even been weakened by the struggles through which it has passed. The great labor-hating crusade of the so-called "open shoppers," the wage cutters and the immigration fanatics has fallen by the wayside, ineffective as it was unaided. Neither legislation nor economic pressure has weakened our ranks.

Our movement lives because it is right. It triumphs because it is right. It serves because it is the creation of our own time, the product of our American environment and our American genius.

We have critics within and without, some seeking power, some seeking advantage, some seeking mere destruction. Our movement, sound, healthy, right in principle, is impervious. It lives and grows.

Celebrate this Labor Day with pride and dignity. Consider the lessons of the past and resolve magnificently for the future! Full justice will yet be ours.