

NEW LABOR BILL A TAFT POLICY

Liability and Compensation
Measures Progressive.

JUSTICE IS ITS OBJECT.

President Approves Proposed Legislation Making Federal Labor Laws Fit Modern Conditions—Legal Machinery Simplified.

As the result of the personal interest of President Taft in all matters affecting the workmen of the country, congress has before it today a comprehensive bill on employers' liability and workmen's compensation which is recognized as one of the most progressive of the many achievements of the Taft administration. The bill was reported by a commission appointed by President Taft pursuant to a joint resolution of congress passed on June 25, 1910, and it was recently sent to congress by the president, accompanied with a message recommending its passage. As drafted the measure provides an exclusive remedy and compensation for accidental injuries resulting in disabilities or death to employees of common carriers engaged in interstate or foreign commerce or in the District of Columbia.

This comprehensive legislation is the direct outcome of the general unsatisfactoriness of labor legislation passed by congress in recent years and is illustrative of the Taft method of reaching an admitted evil by a painstaking investigation followed by carefully considered laws. As is well known, the first employers' liability law passed in the last administration was declared unconstitutional by the courts. A new law to take its place was passed under the last administration, but it was generally understood at the time that the comprehensive measure now before congress was to follow, both as to liability and compensation, as soon as the necessary investigation into the subject could be made. The result is that the workmen of the United States, so far as they can be reached by federal law, will soon be working under one of the most enlightened labor laws on record.

Provision is made by the bill as drafted tentatively, that every common carrier engaged in interstate or foreign commerce shall pay compensation to the employees specified in the bill to any of its employees who sustain personal injury by accident arising out of and in the course of his employment and resulting in his disability or to his dependents in case of death.

It is provided in the bill that the injured employee shall have medical attendance and surgical aid when necessary, the last mentioned being limited to \$200. The monthly wages of an employee are deemed to be twenty-six times the established day's pay, and \$50 is the minimum monthly wage payment. It is also provided that all compensation shall be paid monthly unless computed to a lump sum.

Death benefits are provided for at a specific percentage of the man's wages to be paid to the widow with an increase in the amount when there are dependent children, and in case of no dependents the payment of the burial expenses is required. The matter of personal injury compensation is also covered in a fair and equitable provision.

Another feature of the proposed act is a clear definition of the term "dependent" as well as of what constitutes an "injury" and an "employee." Legal complications are provided for, reports of accidents, payments and operations under the law to the interstate commerce commission are required, and it is declared that the proposed act shall take effect on July 1, 1912, and cited as "the federal compensation act of 1912."

In its investigations of this subject the commission determined at the outset that in substance the doctrines of the common law originating under comparatively simple conditions were unjust as applied to the complex relations of master and servant. The use of complicated machinery, steam and electricity has had the effect of increasing the deplorable antagonism between employer and employee and often giving a few injured employees large and frequently extravagant damages, while the great majority have been left to bear the entire burden without any recompense whatever.

At the time of the adoption of the common law rules of liability industrial conditions were radically different from those of today. The number of employees was smaller because there were few big industrial plants. The business carried on was small in extent, the appliances used in the work consisted largely of hand tools, while the power was simple in character, with little danger to the employee. Under such conditions the rules of common law originated.

DELEGATES PLEDGED TO TAFT.

On Friday, April 12, 1912, the delegates to the Republican national convention pledged to President Taft were as follows:

Alabama	22
Alaska	2
Colorado	2
District of Columbia	2
Florida	12
Georgia	26
Illinois	2
Indiana	20
Iowa	6
Kentucky	23
Louisiana	6
Michigan	18
Mississippi	20
Missouri	14
New Mexico	7
New York	83
Oklahoma	4
Philippines	2
South Carolina	16
Tennessee	16
Vermont	6
Virginia	24
Total	341

Pledged to Roosevelt, 113.
Pledged to La Follette, 53.
Pledged to Cummins, 4.
Necessary for choice, 533.

evidently drawn by men imbued with the importance of preserving the employers from burdensome or unjust liabilities. It was treated as a personal matter of each employee, and the employees were put on a level of dealing which, however it may have been in the past, certainly creates injustice to the employee under the present conditions.

The attention of congress to the great injustice of the present system was called by President Taft. He mentioned the fact that often the recovery of large sums in damage verdicts did not result in actual benefit to the injured person on account of the heavy expenses in litigation. The president expressed the belief that these burdens would disappear with the enactment of the proposed law, since the counsel fees are limited to a reasonable amount.

As further stated by the president, "the great object of the proposed law is to secure justice to the worker party under existing modern conditions." He also declared that he would use his influence to aid in the enactment of the proposed law before the adjournment of the present session of congress.

ROOSEVELT PRAISED TAFT.

Former President Lauded Successor Before New York Republicans.

One of the most comprehensive endorsements of the Taft administration has ever received was contained in the speech of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt as temporary chairman of the New York Republican state convention at Saratoga, N. Y., Sept. 27, 1910. The first two paragraphs of the speech were as follows:

"We come here feeling that we have the right to appeal to the people from the standpoint of national and state achievement. During the last eighteen months a long list of laws and administrative measures have been enacted by congress and approved by President Taft.

"The amendments to the interstate commerce law, beginning of a national legislative program for the exercise of the taxing power in connection with big corporations doing an interstate business, the appointment of a commission to frame measures that do away with the evils of overcapitalization and of improper and excessive issues of stocks and bonds, the law providing for publicity of campaign expenses, the establishment of the maximum and minimum tariff provisions and the executive authority of the President and other treaties in accordance therewith, the inauguration of the policy of providing for a disinterested revision of tariff schedules through a high class commission of experts which will treat each schedule purely on its own merits with a view to protecting the consumer from excessive prices and to securing the American producer and especially the American wage worker what will represent the difference of cost in production here as compared with the cost of production in countries where labor is less liberally rewarded, the extension of the laws regulating safety appliances for the protection of labor and the creation of a bureau of mines. These and similar laws, backed up by executive action, reflect high credit upon all who succeeded in putting them in their present shape upon the statute books. They represent an earnest of the achievement which is yet to come, and the beneficence and far-reaching importance of this work done for the whole people measure the credit which is rightly due to the congress and to our able, upright and distinguished president, William Howard Taft."

Taft Sure of Nomination.

Up to and including April 12 494 delegates had been elected to the Republican national convention, which meets in Chicago in June. Of these President Taft has 341 instructed for or pledged to his re-nomination. There remained to be elected on that date 153 delegates. Of these President Taft needs only 128 and Mr. Roosevelt needs 25. In other words, if President Taft gets out of every three delegates remaining to be elected he will have within four of enough to nominate, while Mr. Roosevelt must have three out of every four of the delegates remaining in order to secure the nomination. That President Taft will have more than 700 delegates at Chicago is a certainty.

FISCAL REFORMS PRODUCE RESULTS

Treasury Department Example of Economical Administration.

EVEN DEMOCRATS APPROVE.

Under Taft Reorganization Accomplished, Frauds Stopped and Law Violators Punished—Divorced from Wall Street.

The treasury department has recently received the commendation of the Democratic appropriation committee of the house of representatives for the results achieved in bringing about economy and efficiency in that department. The general basis of this unusual praise is the fact that it is costing \$2,500,000 a year less to run this big business machine of the government than it did three years ago when President Taft began his administration and initiated his campaign for governmental economy by placing an experienced business man, Secretary MacVegh, at the head of the treasury department.

The Economy Effected.

The amount now saved each year is a 10 per cent reduction in the previous cost. It is as but half the story of the actual economy effected, for there has been a 10 per cent increase in the business of the department during this time, making a total gain in the interest of the taxpayer of 20 per cent.

The earnestness that now exists to make political capital out of criticism makes the fact eminently striking that through this period of investigation and inquiry the treasury department has been found a fruitless field of operation. It has not even been mentioned in connection with the alleged "money trust," for the reason that the treasury department is now for the first time wholly independent of the big banks of the country in its operations. That the department should always be above the slightest ground for moral criticism is of course one of the fundamentals of its administration.

Frauds Are Punished.

The vigor with which the administration has gone after those who have attempted frauds on the customs revenue is illustrated by the fact that more than \$5,000,000 has been collected in fines against dishonest importers and attempted smugglers. Jail sentences in numerous instances have been added to the fines. The result has been the creation of a wholesome respect for the law on the part of importers and Americans who travel in foreign lands. The entire machinery for the collection of customs has been overhauled, with the result that valuations are made more accurately, and many channels for frauds have been stopped. One of the special aids in this connection has been the special agents' service, which the secretary has taken personally in hand.

The other collection agency, the internal revenue service, has been brought to a high degree of efficiency. Its collections last year were the highest in its history—\$222,000,000—which was collected at the expense of 1,084,000 cents for each dollar, a substantial decrease in cost. Internal revenue collectors are now giving the major portion of their time to their official duties, an innovation brought about for the first time through the insistence of the president that efficiency of administration was more to be desired than the developing of political machines.

Where Savings Resulted.

Savings in the method of printing the paper money of the country have been made to the extent of \$900,000 annually, while similar work in the mints has resulted in cutting down the expenses annually to the extent of \$450,000. By using the mails instead of the express a saving of \$90,000 a year is effected in sending warrant notes to the treasury for redemption. Nearly \$50,000 a year is being saved through improved methods in handling the paper on which money and postage and internal revenue stamps is printed. A similar amount is being saved through closer scrutiny and economy in printing the stationery for the department. The revenue cutter service adds to the list a saving of \$100,000 a year with increased activities, so also does the public health service. There are many more details of savings, all telling the same story.

Genuine Reforms Made.

And this story is the strongest kind of a denial of the charge that President Taft has used the government employee to further his own political advantage. There have been 1,801 unnecessary places abolished under the treasury department in the last three years. Five hundred and forty-two of these have been in the department service in Washington. None of those in Washington whose places were abolished have been separated from the service by that fact. Secretary MacVegh has rightly adhered to the policy of saving the vacancies which occurred in the department by resignation and death, and these places have been filled by those who would otherwise have been dropped.

The facts above set forth are convincing proof that under the administration of President Taft genuine reforms in administration have been accomplished in bringing the government machine to the most practical and economical basis in the history of the world.

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