

following remarks of Mr. Byrd, in opposition to the adoption of the committee amendment, were ordered printed in the Journal:

MR. BYRD. Mr. Speaker, I regret that I am placed in a position in which I must oppose a committee amendment, but in this case, I shall do so strenuously.

It is not my purpose or my desire to castigate or to ridicule the members of the Judiciary Committee in the action they have taken in proposing this amendment to the workmen's compensation bill for I think they have acted with due sincerity and out of the honesty of their convictions. I have the highest regard for each and every member of that committee, and I have a deep admiration and a lofty respect for one so eminently capable as is the chairman of that committee.

However as the co-sponsor of this bill it becomes my duty to defend it against any and all amendments which may cripple its intent and purpose. It is my duty as one who sincerely believes in the humanitarian principles involved in this bill to rise to my feet and defend it against this amendment.

Not only is it my duty in this sense, but it is my obligation to the great potential number of widows and orphans in this land to stand up and cry out in protest when those widows and defenseless children cannot be here to speak for themselves. In the Book of Isaiah we are told to "relieve the oppressed, and plead for the widow." In Exodus it is written "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child; for I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

The Workmens' Compensation Law first became effective October 1, 1913. It was established as a mode for the prompt redress of grievances and for the securing of restitution, commensurate with the loss in services of those workmen injured while in the duty of their employer. It has protected both the employer and the employee and it has served its purpose well.

At the time of its inception in 1913 the widows were given a monthly payment of \$20.00. In 1923 the payments were increased to \$30.00. During the twenty-four years intervening since 1923 to the present day that figure has remained the same. During a quarter of a century there has been no increase in the payment to widows to offset the stupendous advance in the cost of living.

Under the provisions of this bill, widows would be given a \$10.00 increase per month, making the total \$40.00 instead of \$30.00 as at present. But the amendment proposed by the com-

mittee would strike out the ten dollar increase and the widow would go on getting the same \$30.00 as in the past.

At the present time the dependent children are receiving \$10.00 monthly until they reach the age of sixteen years. Under this bill there would be an extension of two years in their payments and they would be paid until eighteen years of age. There will be no increase in the amount paid these children but they will merely benefit from the payments two years longer. But you see, even this bill provides no relief or represents no improvement for any child under sixteen years. The only way that we can help the dependent children under this bill is to allow an increase to the widows. By granting a \$10.00 increase to the widows it is easy to see that the dependent children would therefore get a little relief also. This money will be used in some way to buy food for those children who are starving. It is going to add clothing to their bare backs, put shoes on their bare feet and fulfill many of their other needs.

Now my friends, I would have you think seriously on this question. I am sure there is no member here who would be a party to taking food from the open mouths of starving children. I am confident that no member here would be a party to taking the clothing from the bare backs of these little ones, nor would you take the shoes from the bare feet of children who are making footprints in the snow.

There are some who object to this bill on the ground that it will cost, but we cannot be justified in our denying comfort and food to defenseless children by saying that it will cost a little more. We just cannot get around it with such a flimsy and trivial excuse.

The issue here is the human element versus the dollar. To me, the dollar is secondary; human misery and suffering, and the welfare of helpless, dependent children come first.

Now, during the twenty-four years since the last increase in payments to widows, it is no secret that industry has made great gains and increasing profits. This is all well and good, and I am happy to see a healthy and growing industry, but in my sincere and humble opinion when a man makes the supreme sacrifice, pays the supreme price, and makes the supreme investment in laying down his life in order that industry's successes might be made possible, then I believe industry owes his wife and dependent children a fair living in return for the priceless treasure they have lost forever.

Some well-meaning souls in this fair land look always and only at the eternal dollar. Their eyes see nothing but the shining glint of gold and their ears hear naught but the tinkle of fine silver, but, my friends, I see and hear neither of these, but

above the din I hear only the voice in the wilderness of poverty crying out for bread.

Gentlemen, I will have you look upon the moral side of this question. During the past days of this session I have sat here, listened patiently, and with admiration to the splendid oratory of the members here, and not once have I risen to take your time on this floor, but this evening I speak to you sincerely and out of the depths of my heart.

I have heard other members speak about the moral issues as they have been brought before us here. I defy anyone in this House this evening to look back on the roll calls, and upon any question in which morals have been involved, show that I have failed to stand for the right. I defy the distinguished gentleman, my good friend from Mercer, to challenge this statement. My guiding thought throughout my deliberations here has been in the infallible belief that nothing is right politically if it is wrong morally.

A man's stature is not measured by his wealth or his social standing, but by the depth of his character and the kindness shown to others out of his heart. He is measured by the stand he takes on the great moral questions of the day, and to be always found on the right side is within itself a noble achievement.

I am a Christian. I not only talk Christianity but I live it every hour in the day. Before lying down at night I get on my knees as an humble child before my Maker and I talk with Him. I speak not out of chicanery, or sham, or bluff, but out of sincerity and truth. Yes, there is a moral and a humane issue involved here and you cannot get around it.

I can see the poor widow as she is left alone in this old world without a companion with whom to trod the rocky highway of life throughout the long years ahead. I can see her as she sews and mends the worn and tattered clothing of the little ones about her gathered, with tired eyes and aching arms far into the night. I can see the little golden-haired, pale-faced, underfed girl sitting by her knee and I can hear that little girl say "Mother, where has daddy gone?" and mother answers "Daddy has gone away and he will be gone a long, long time." The little one says "Mother, when daddy was here, I had candy every day and something good to eat and I had shoes to wear on my feet to keep them warm and I had beautiful little dresses like the girl next door and since daddy went away I don't have them, and Mother, I want a slice of bread tonight." I can hear the mother say "Darling, we ate the last crust of bread today. My purse is empty and our monthly payment check will not be due for yet another week, but I will go over to Mrs. Jones' tomorrow and do the washing, the ironing and the scrubbing in

return for a few dollars and while I am over there Johnny will stay home from school to watch you and then when I come home he will go over to chop kindling for the Smiths in order that we may buy something to eat."

Yes, my friends, such scenes go on about you, each and every day. I have lived among these scenes because I came up the hard way and I have seen them.

On this question I think of the Master who, as a young man, walked the green hills of Judea 2000 years ago; who always went about doing good; healing the lame and the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, feeding the multitudes and raising the dead to life. Whose heart was ever moved with pity and filled with sympathy and compassion for those in extreme distress and suffering. The Master did not think of the cost in monetary terms but always and only of the cost in human misery.

I think of what His words would be to you in this matter; and His message, I say, is within your heart tonight, if you but search the recesses thereof.

I pause to think of what Lincoln would say to you on this question. If the voice of the great Lincoln could be heard rolling down through the years it would fall upon our ears in thunderous tones.

I think of what the immortal Franklin Delano Roosevelt would say to you if his cold lips could but speak out of the depths of the dark and silent grave.

My friends search your hearts and your conscience for the right. Life is but a fleeting moment in the annals of time and eternity and as we go out we must go before the great bar of justice. We must answer for our actions here and we shall hear the great eternal judge say "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

Members of the House, I know that we cannot perfect all, or uproot the world in a day. This bill is not a cure-all but it is a step in the right direction and we can go forward. This we must do.

In my closing words I am reminded of the last lines of "Thanatopsis," written by William Cullen Bryant, and in the spirit of these I ask you to so act upon this question that if this very night the summons is yours to "join the innumerable caravan, which moves to the pale realms of shade, where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death, Thou go, not like the quarry-slave at night, scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dream."