

THE INTERESTS OF LABOR *

I AM particularly pleased that in this election there is on the ticket with me a candidate who is essentially a representative of the wage-workers. I do not wish to be misunderstood. The first and most important consideration in pushing forward a candidate should be, is or is he not a good citizen? But we must recognize the fact that, aside from their general interest as citizens, special groups of citizens have special interests, and just at present, where, as in this case, we have a representative of the labor interests who is on other grounds peculiarly fitted for the position to which he is nominated, it is an additional advantage to have him elected because of his connection with the great groups of citizens who collectively can be called wage-workers.

More and more of late years we have grown to understand and sympathize with the objects of the men who have taken the lead in working for what are called the interests of labor. And more and more these men have become more reasonable in their demands and less suspicious of those who wish, as they too should wish, carefully to investigate every remedy proposed for any wrong before committing themselves in its favor. It is a good thing to have in the State administration a spokesman of the wage-earners so competent as my colleague, Mr. McDonough.

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While we must always insist that the working man, whether he work with head or hands, must keep steadily in view the fact that he must rely mainly upon himself, upon his own thrift, energy, and honesty, rather than upon the State; yet we must also remember that very much can be done by working men acting in groups, and that the State, too, in some cases, can do a great deal. It can help make a working man of more value in the life and labor of the community, and when he does this it will work for the public welfare, as well as that of the working man himself.

It is to the interest of all of us to produce a high type of citizenship among all our people. And, therefore, the State, standing as the representative of all the people, is deeply concerned in producing a high type of citizenship and manhood. We must not lose sight of the fact that the individual himself is the most potent factor in bringing this about, nor yet of the other fact that the State, likewise, can do something toward producing this same result.

I am not going to promise you as much as other men would promise you. Those who make countless promises never keep all of them. But if I am elected governor of New York State I promise you this—and I will see to it that my promises are made as good as my words: That no man shall wrong the State; that the State shall wrong no man, whether he be rich or poor; that the laws passed to protect the interests of the working man are carried out to the letter; that creed, color, or nationality shall make no difference; that every man shall be treated according to his merits as a man; that every man shall have the fullest liberty the laws allow.

In my regiment of Rough Riders I had men from the North, South, East, and West; men of money and men

without money. I treated the Northerner as I treated the Southerner; I treated the poor Rough Rider as I treated the rich Rough Rider; and so shall it be if I am elected governor—every man shall be treated on his merits as a man.