ILWU backs New Democratic Party

Free trade the only issue in Canada vote

VANCOUVER, BC—Members of the ILWU Canadian Area are working hard to support candidates of the New Democratic Party in the federal parliamentary election slated for November 21. "Just about every union is supporting the NDP slate," according to ILWU first vice-president Bill Kemp.

Across the province, ILWU organizers have become a refrigerated unit on the US-Canadian "free trade" bandwagon signed by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and US President Ronald Reagan last year.

A UNION POLICY

The free trade pact, scheduled to take effect January 1, 1989, is the most sweeping change of US and Canadian trade policies since the 1930s. The treaty, they fear, will undermine Canadian labor laws which are far stronger than US law.

"The threat comes from the new competitive forces that will move through Canadian ports. The US influence will be pronounced in areas such as immigration programs."

They're taking aim at the Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and US President Bush and Quayle, who are scheduled for November 21. "Just about every union is supporting the NDP slate," according to ILWU first vice-president Bill Kemp.

The Canadian Area Political Action Committee is particularly concerned about the damage such a treaty will do to the Canadian way of life.

The NDP candidates are pledged to oppose implementation of the Reagan-Mulroney "Free Trade Treaty," fearing that it will turn Canada into an economic colony of the US. "We believe that we have a front line defense against the US with our water, our air, and our national parks."

Enjoying strong labor support in the Vancouver East area is Margaret Mitchell, who has been in Parliament since 1974. "I am a strong advocate of stronger health programs, and housing and immigration programs."

In Skeena, the ILWU is strongly supporting Jim Fulton, who has also served in Parliament since 1974. "I am a strong advocate of stronger health programs, and housing and immigration programs."

In Saanich, the ILWU is strongly supporting John Warkentin, who has also served in Parliament since 1974. "I am a strong advocate of stronger health programs, and housing and immigration programs."

Labour breaks even in US Congressional races

In the House, the Democrats made a net gain of 5 seats, with almost all incumbents from both parties supporting the Maintenance of Parliaments Act. If the results follow the polls, the likely outcome will be a minority government, which would be a good result for the ILWU.

The ILWU has had substantial financial contributions to the New Democratic Party, and a large number of members are out on the ridings. "The Canadian equivalent of districts" supporting NDP candidates.

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Published by the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union
The '88 elections: where do we go from here?

By JIM HERMAN
ILWU International President

You already know the bad news. The victory of George Bush dashes for another four years our hopes of restoring compassion and common sense in the White House.

An economic crisis, caused by a mountain of government and consumer debt, looms ahead—with the people who created it still in charge. And there will undoubtedly be a decisive Reagan-Bush majority on the Supreme Court for years to come, with a devastating impact on the labor movement, and indeed on the entire social fabric. The appointment of new federal judges will continue to be based entirely, as in the Reagan years, on their adherence to ultra-conservative politics, rather than judicial competence.

Labor, of course, can expect only continued hostility from the new administration and its agencies.

By now, it's become the conventional wisdom that Mike Dukakis lost this election as much as, or maybe a little more than, George Bush won it. The Democratic candidate failed to connect with the Democratic party's strongest supporters, especially with those whom Jesse Jackson had brought into the political arena in the primaries. He allowed Bush to put him on the defensive. He was never able to articulate a real alternative to Reaganism—he offered only more competent management. By the time he got his campaign on track, it was too little, too late.

AN OPPORTUNITY LOST

It's a real shame, because Mike Dukakis is a decent, progressive man who has been a good governor and probably would have made a good president. It's a shame because a window of opportunity has been allowed to close.

But there's also some truly good news.

First, Dukakis' strong popular vote—he lost a number of key states by razor-thin margins—gives us something to build on. There is still a constituency out there open to old-fashioned progressive ideas about what government is supposed to be about. The slightly strengthened Democratic majorities in both the Senate and the House of Representatives can provide at least some restraint from the worst excesses of Bush-Quaylism. Important victories in the state legislatures assure fair reapportionment in 1990.

Most important, the votes of working people pulled out critical victories—the first being the resurrection of Cal-OSHA in California, the second being the passage of an improved minimum wage in the State of Washington, with first-time-ever coverage for farm workers and domestics.

So where do we go from here? What can we in the ILWU do to increase our political strength, as we look toward the mid-term election of 1990?

INCREASED STRENGTH

First, there is the matter of voter registration. We've made some improvements in recent years, but I suspect the percentage of ILWU members who are registered to vote is probably no higher than the level attained by other unions—maybe 60-70%. That's too low. One of the benefits of our affiliation with the AFL-CIO is that we can make use of their computerized facilities to match our mailing lists against state lists of registered voters. We'll be certain to do that early in 1990 so that we can put together a campaign to make sure every member of the ILWU is able to exercise this most basic right and obligation of citizenship.

Second, our legislative work needs to be upgraded. It's entirely appropriate for ILWU locals which have not already done so to join the appropriate AFL-CIO state labor federation. These state AFL-CIO federations perform valuable work on a day-to-day basis, and are often a powerful presence in the state capitals. They can provide important resources and contacts. The success of the California AFL-CIO in the recent OSHA campaign demonstrates what these organizations are capable of doing.

We should also be examining ways to make it possible for our concerned members to have a greater impact on legislative affairs. The establishment of an ILWU network which could generate a couple of hundred letters or phone calls to legislators on any given issue would increase our political effectiveness tremendously. The far-right has used such techniques for years with great destructive effect—why not turn them in a more positive direction?

The ILWU Political Action Fund needs to be strengthened. I cannot exaggerate its importance. American political contests have in some measure become a contest about money. They cost an outrageous amount. But until the day that the process can be reformed, the fact is that if we want to play the game we've got to be able to ante up. I'm proud of some of the contributions we've made this year—to candidates like Leo McCarthy and Mike Lowry. I only wish we could have done more.

So whatever disappointment we may feel, however realistically we assess the dangers upon us, American workers have a right to take some satisfaction in what we have been able to accomplish politically in the last two years, and to look forward to further progress. We can be proud of what ILWU members have done. We are moving in the right direction. Together with the rest of the labor movement, we will keep on keeping on.

JIM HERMAN
President

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Kodiak dockers take case to the public

KODIAK, Alaska — Longshoremen of ILWU Local 200, Unit 222 have found themselves in the midst of a controversy currently fulfilling its promise to the small fishing community of Kodiak, Alaska.

The dispute centers on the town's current contract with Sea-Land, which has an exclusive lease on all the docks on the Kodiak waterfront. Sea-Land also has a collective bargaining agreement with the members of Unit 222. The threat of nothing moves in or out of the port without Sea-Land's consent has loomed over the town. However, wants to change that.

Rather than have Sea-Land hold all the rights, some Kodiak civic leaders have proposed to add new facilities which would allow the town to expand its port operations. However, if Sea-Land loses work, the ILWU longshoremen could lose their jobs. Expansion of the port does not guarantee expansion of the ILWU's jurisdiction to work the new docks and that has always served this community in an effort to resolve the issues.

"But isn't it logical for us—the local workers—that our work has always worked on the docks and that has always served this community efficiently and without a single interruption?"—to expect some spin-off from an industry of this potential magnitude?" "We thank the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Corporation for having included the longshoremen on the subcommittee which has dealt with (these) issues. We are hopeful that we can continue to assist in bringing the whole matter of catcher-processors to a conclusion acceptable to all the parties involved.”

Second time around ILWU wins at Nature's Co.
BERTERLEY, Ca.—Throwing a beer and a pizza party early this month, workers at the distribution center for the Nature's Co. plant in the first bath and a half of ILWU warehouse Local 6. Winning a representative election by a vote of 25-5, the fact that they lost an election 3 years ago made the victory all the more sweet.

"This time, they were united from the beginning," said Local 6 Vice President Bob Lloyd. "He helped organize the group with ILWU International Rep Abba Ramos. That's the difference. Although many workers there wanted the benefits and protections only a union can provide, the employer waged an effective campaign, convincing them an "individual relationship" with the company wasn't in their best interest. The union lost by a wide margin.

Two years later the workers realized they made a terrible mistake. The "inde-

Kodiak dockers take case to the public

September 20 for someone else. They knew about the threat of permanent replacement, they knew what had happened at Butler Paper where Local 6 members who had also hung out for the Teamsters had lost their jobs. And still they stayed out."

The strike began after Fleming imposed a new contract containing a 1.50 wage cut and major health and welfare concessions onilwU members. After five years of effort, the strike did away with the threat of the IBT coming in.

Local 17 wins new pact at SE Rykoff

SACRAMENTO—Over 200 members of Local 17 returned to work at this giant automated warehouse facility on October 6 after respecting a Teamster picket line established by Rykoff Local 150 at Fleming Foods for 19 weeks.

"Our guys showed a lot of guts and stamina," said Local 17 president Ray Kristoff. "They stayed out from June 9 to

Local 17 sets pace with lumper pact

SACRAMENTO—ILWU Local 17 members at two area lumberyards have signed new three-year agreements which put their basic wages over $13 per hour for the first time, making them the highest-paid workers in their industry in the Sacramento Valley.

The 14 Local 17 members at the giant Weyerhaeuser yard in Sacramento won a $1,000 signing bonus, plus 25 cents in 1989 and 25 in 1990, along with maintenance of health and welfare benefits and an increase in pension benefits to $20 per month per year of service, including all past years.

The agreement was negotiated by Dave Barr and Arden Cadematori, with Local 17 President Ray Kristoff and Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyntz.

Twenty more members at Davidson plywood works in Sacramento won a 35 cent per hour pay raises each of the next three years, maintenance of health and welfare benefits and a 40% increase in pension benefits. The agreement was negotiated by Chuck Wilson, Jack Wyntz and Ray Kristoff.

IBU settles Bay Area tug, ferry contracts

SAN FRANCISCO—Bay Area members of the Independent Seamen's Union, maritime division of the ILWU, have ratified eight new contracts in the last few months.

These contracts cover deckhands and tankermen employed by Harbor Tug and Barge, ticket sellers, ticket collectors and deckhands on Harbor Tugs; and deckhands, terminal attendants and ticket sellers on the Golden Gate Ferries.

"In each case, we had to make the best of a bad situation," said IBU President Mike Cornejo, Jerry Chynowith Local 17 President Ray Kristoff and Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wyntz.

"This is a real credit to the continued strength of the union, and the hard work of

IBU settles Bay Area tug, ferry contracts

"That's a real credit to the continued strength of the union, and the hard work of the committees and the unity of the membership." Volunteer, unpaid rank and file committee members included:

Harbor Tug and Barge—Paul West, Michael Branham.
Golden Gate Ferries—Mike Cornejo, Mike Whitman, Mike Blevins, Tom Lonisi.

"It's a major victory in difficult times," said International President Jim Herman, "and a sure sign of the power that exists when the labor vote is united."
SAN FRANCISCO—Maritime workers exposed to dangerous chemical vapors from tankers and barge-deck work are exerting strong action from the San Francisco Bay Area Air Quality Management Board when it meets on December 7.

The Inlandboatmen’s Union, Marine Division, ILWU Local 26, has joined with a coalition of environmental and other North Bay community groups demanding the board to avoid health hazards caused by the failure of the oil industry to restrict dangerous oil vapors. A “green” organizations—such as Citizens for a Better Environment, the Sierra Club, and the Costa County Toxics Coalition, and the Sierra Club—have also won increasing support among the elected city and county officials who serve on the board of the Air Quality District.

“The citizens of the surrounding communities shouldn’t breathe these fumes, and neither should our members,” said ILWU national president Burill Hatch. “If gas smokers can’t have their butts for pumping 10 gallons of gas, why exempt the oil ship workers?"

PARTICIPATION NEEDED

The Board meets at 9:30 a.m. at 839 Ellis St., San Francisco. The board, which is made up of nine people, appears as though nobody on our side gives a damn, the Board will be much more susceptible to employer pressure at all times.

The board is expected to set a “green” rule, calling for reduced emissions without specifying the actual engineering methods to be employed. The proposed rule permits no more than two pounds of hydrocarbon emissions per 100 barrels of product.

“We urge the District to adopt the rule with the full support of the California Air Resources Board and with full implementation as soon as possible,” said California Attorney General John Van De Kamp. The rule will be among the first in the country, and it is expected that the regulations across the country standard will spread rapidly throughout the world.

The ILWU will strongly support such a standard, and calls for the installation of vapor recovery systems aboard all foreign and domestic vessels. “Vapor recovery is practiced overseas, it is possible here,” said Northern California ILWU Regional Manager Tony Estrada.

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States Workers’ Compensation System: A Model for Others

The cost of workers’ compensation insurance in the State of Washington and the benefits paid to workers there may be starkly contrasted with costs and benefits in California, according to new reports.

In Washington, maximum weekly benefits have risen from $256 in 1985 to $395 in 1988.

The rates California employers pay for workers’ compensation insurance have increased 48% in four years while benefits have stood still. Washington is one of four states that have raised their rates under exclusive rights to issue workers’ comp insurance.

In California, the State Compensation Insurance Fund is prohibited from underwriting private companies. Workers’ compensation rates have been set for decades on the recommendation of the Workers’ Compensation Board, which in turn is made up exclusively of insurance industry executives.

The system is challenged this year in a lawsuit in which employers, named following expansion of the bureau by the Legislature in 1987, Tom Rankin, research director of the California Labor Federation, is the labor representative.

Insurance Commissioner Tawnya Gillispie is expected to rule shortly on the $160 million California rate hike request. The Washington Department of Labor and Industries, which oversees the state compensation system, is no longer claiming to have lowered its rates.

“California’s workers’ comp rates have gone down because Washington is the only state that bases rates on hours worked, rather than ‘per $100 of payroll,’” the Department of Labor and Industries declared.

In Maryland, which uses a payroll-driven approach, premiums automatically increased as employers cut jobs, even if the insurance rates remained the same, a Washington spokesperson pointed out.

Unions’ popularity up

Approval of union contracts is down to 36% from its 1967 peak of 49%. Unions have grown, but workers are less likely to be covered.

The poll revealed a 61% rise in nationwide approval of unions, and a 14% drop in organized labor also slipped to its lowest level since 1967—to 25%.

PANAMA FRANCO—A recent decision by the California Industrial Welfare Commission is any indication, workers here have more of a chance at winning the state lottery than getting justice under the public administration, anti-labor administration of right-wing governor George Deukmejian.

Deukmejian, 43, who has cut spending for the state’s teaching ranks and theTiny, remote Pelican, in southeast Alaska, its only goal was to acquire the facility at the right price and make a profit, which it obviously thought could not be done with a union on the property.

The battle for Pelican

Arnold “Pete” Derenoff, the plant’s owner, says the sale of the town’s chief employer, Pelican Cold Storage, to Japanese-owned Western Fishing Company, is a “direct attack on the union.” It also became an attack on the town itself.

“Pete’ strategy was to starve us out, and make us scatter,” said union president Jerry Deerronoff.

As reported in a September edition of The Dispatcher, the plant was to be shut down and all employees laid off.

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Henry McKnight, longtime member, officer and friend of Warehouse Local 6, died last month as a result of heart trouble. He was 81.

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"He was my friend for over 40 years," said ILWU Regional Director LeRoy King. "We worked together at Local 6 for many years. He was a real mover and shaker."

As a retired member, McKnight was a member of the negotiating team bringing land-clearing for the Benicia Community Housing Project in Benicia and was elected the Local 6 delegate to several International Conventions. Retiring in 1983, he remained in the ILWU as an active member and friend of the Local 6 rank-and-file members and of the International.

Local 6 President Emeritus Keith Erickson and Regional Director LeRoy King represented the ILWU at the September 24 funeral service. Survivors are his wife, Elizabeth, and her daughter, Michelle.

Henry McKnight, was Local 6 Vice-President Jim Eldredge and member Joe Jacobsen, who spearheaded formation of the Local 34 Community Fund, hand simulated check for $1,000 to Pat Russell, head of the Benicia Community Affairs Council.

A SIMPLE IDEA

"It's a simple idea, to help people much more fortunate than we are in a direct and personal way, as a union," said Local 34 President Frank Bilicke. "Our members live and work in these communities, and we want to show our willingness to share.

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Local 34 gives something back

SAN FRANCISCO—ILWU clerks Local 34 has established a community fund to support local small-scale projects which deliver immediate support to people in need and are consistent with the ILWU programs and policies.

The Fund is supported by direct donations from the membership and go directly to services and goods for people, without an intervening layer of bureaucracy.

Each month, the local executive board will select a worthy group proposed by a member or by a group of members. The first donation of just over $1,000 was made last month to the Benicia Community Action Council which provides emergency food services, Meals on Wheels, and other services in this delta community where many ILWU members work unloading automobiles for Nissan Corp.

The second donation of $1,000 was made to St. Martin de Porres Food Kitchen, a center which feeds some 600 to 1,000 people a day through its breakfast and lunch program on Potrero Hill in San Francisco.

Billy Allen, 81

OAKLAND—Labor writer William "Billy" Allen, well known for his fiery, par-tisan, unorganized attacks on unions for the People's Daily World, died last month of a heart attack. He was 81.

"Billy was from the old school," said International President Jim Herman. "His heart stopped during his funeral. He never stopped caring, he never stopped being angry at injustice and exploitation.

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Dockers, Widows on Pension List

SAN FRANCISCO—Following is the November 1988 listing of dockworkers retirees under various ILWU-PMA plans:

Local 1, Portland: Keith Olson; Local 10, Southern California: Johnny Moore; Local 12, North Bend: E. Marion; Local 13, Wilmington: Fred Allen, Dave Lund, Antonio Morales; Local 14, Carlos Riveria; Local 18, Seattle: Leon Bennett; Local 23, Tustin: Martin Butler; Local 28, San Diego: Leon Zuniga.


The widows are: Lucile Alberg (John, Local 13); Erma Broman (James, Local 13); Grace Contreras (Frank, Local 63); Margaret Costillo (Frank, Local 13); Louise Dunin (Clarence, Local 63); Beverly Glennes (Carlos, Local 53); Rosina Hite (Arthur, Local 63); AnnaJones (Charles, Local 53); MacCagnan (Louie, Local 13); Erma McDow (Frank, Local 61); Jaqueline Milovich (Bernard, Local 34); Edina Miller (Floren, Local 98); Erna Olsen (Roy, Local 52); Jean Perkins (Harold, Local 12); Faye Reid (Charles, Local 94); Glenda Ruiz (Napoleon, Local 29); Anita Salda-na (Jesus, Local 13); Lily Woodford (Kenneth, Local 18).

Names in brackets are those of deceased husbands.
November 14, 1988

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THE DISPATCHER

US corporate pay out of whack

Compared to their counterparts in Europe or Asia, corporate executives in this country are grossly overpaid, according to a recent report in Fortune Magazine. The figures are staggering.

In 1987, General Electric chief executive Jack Welch received $12.5 million in salary and stock options. In contrast, Sweden's Anders Sparre, chairman of the largest appliance manufacturer in the world, got total compensation of $437,000. A 17,000-square-foot bungalow of JVC Corporation in Japan; poor devil earned less than $300,000.

Dispatriates among auto manufacturers are more pronounced. Chrysler's Lee Iacocca, exclusive of the sales of books he writes in praise of himself, earned $17.6 million in 1987 in salary and stocks, while the company netted $1.3 billion in profits.

It's not that American execs are any better off than their European counterparts; in fact, many European and Japanese firms are out-performing American companies. There are many execs who make kites quite successfully, earning billions of dollars a year.

The disparity, says Fortune, is attributed to a variety of other factors.

For one, American execs make more. The average European and Japanese firm executive is complications from a five-bedroom apartment in the better districts of Paris sells for $600,000 while lunch for two can easily run around $200.

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Members of the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, around 1938, whose efforts to create real west coast labor maritime unity are detailed in Bruce Nelson's new book, reviewed below. Anyone know any of these guys? If you see a few familiar faces, call The Dispatcher at (415)773-0533 so we can identify them.

Excellent new study of origins of ILWU

By Eugene Dennis Vrana

IUW Archivist and Librarian

Bruce Nelson's Workers On The Waterfront: Seamen, Longshoremen, and Unionism in the 1930s (University of Illinois Press, 1988) is easily the most sympa-thetic and comprehensive discussion of Pacific Coast maritime unionism during the 1930s era since Mike Quinn's The Big Stakes.

Nelson's engaging narrative increases our understanding of individual union leaders and their organizational ties and commitments. But by focusing on the role of Communists and anti-Communists he falls short of his own promise to give us the history of the 98% of the rank and file who were neither. Frequent lapses into uni-versal jargon (how about "antipolitical par-ticularism"?) are pardonable.

WEST COAST RADICALISM

But Nelson is successful in giving us a new look at the role of the Communist party on the waterfront: he argues persuasively they did not blindly follow dictates from Moscow or New York, but adapted party policy to local conditions of maritime workers, and made important contribu-tions to the 1934 strike and the development of the Workers Industrial Union of the ILWU. And he makes a good case for understanding the wave of radicalism that peaked on the Pacific Coast waterfounds in 1934 as a unique blend of the IWW's "One Big Union" and the disciplined radicalism of the Communist Party.

He paints a brief but evocative picture of the waterfront worker's brutal life before the ILWU. He tells of the "red" picture of the life of the average maritime worker. He unfortunately chose not to uti-lize the minutes of local meetings, includ-ing those of strike committees, (not to mention existing ILWU oral histories) to get at the thoughts and feelings of the rank and file.

And, although Nelson is the first to seri-ously explore the origins and character of the longshore rank and file newsletter, The Waterfront Worker, he goes overboard in using the pages of the newsletter as a source. The newsletter provides extraordi-nary insight into what its editors thought, but it may or may not reflect the sentiments of the thousands of ordinary workers who built the ILWU.

Nelson also limits himself by drawing a timeline around the subject that excludes essential events and sources. By beginning in 1919, for example, he omits the historic struggle at the 1915 ILA convention at which the San Francisco delegates chal-lenged the rest of the ILA to adopt their industrial approach to organizing (as opposed to the ILA's craft unionism) to organize waterfront workers of all races and nationalities.

MISSES '48 STRIKE

And by closing his narrative in 1940, he loses the key debates of 1948 strike, in which the generation of 1934 finally nailed down the gains of 1939 stood up for their right to elect leaders of their own choosing, and opened the door to the historic welfare and pension gains of the 50s.

But Nelson compensate for these short-comings by effecting a beautifully integrated, cohesive story. The goal is not some kind of parochial telling of "just another strike," but a history of the ILWU's development as a mass union, bringing to the forefront the role of the rank and file.

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Nelson badly misreads the record by blaming the longshoremen for triggering a split with the seamen—and by making light of Harry Bridges' role in the rise of the CIO—but nowhere else will you find as exhaus-tive a treatment of the factional disputes within and between the organizations involved in those efforts.

Ultimately, Nelson concludes, the "cru-sade" of 1934 failed to create one Big Union because it was a "hopeful exercise in the regen-eracy of craft unionism, violent anti-commu-nists of key maritime leaders, anti-wage wars by employers and police agencies, and the split between AFL and the CIO—"labors civil war"—until the merger in 1955.

To sum up, this is a fine book. Nelson and the ILWU survived this onslaught and emerged stronger. They did not blindly follow dictates from Moscow or New York, but adapted party policy to local conditions of maritime workers, and made important contributions to the 1934 strike and the development of the Workers Industrial Union of the ILWU. And he makes a good case for understanding the wave of radicalism that peaked on the Pacific Coast waterfronts in 1934 as a unique blend of the IWW's "One Big Union" and the disciplined radicalism of the Communist Party.

In response to my question, Secretary Alexey Bilboev admitted the police make the most of the difficulties caused by the law's vagueness. Labor legislation. Under the present system, a group of workers may sign a contract with the management of a firm to produce so much for a set remuneration. The workers, eager to make as much as possible, work longer hours and with greater intensity, to fulfill the contract in as short a time as possible.

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UNION FUNCTIONS

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