

HOW LONG SHOULD A MAN'S VACATION BE?

President Taft Says Every One Should Have Three Months--What Big Employers of Labor and Men of Affairs Think on the Subject.



Wm. H. Truesdale, President of the Lackawanna Railroad.



Wm. E. Corey, President of the U. S. Steel Corporation.

"The man," continued Mr. Hedley, "who works at a bench for example, drops his tools and all the cares of his work the moment the whistle sounds. The man above him cannot do this. Responsibility is always on his mind--he can't well get away from it. There is an unconscious strain and this soon tells upon him. Such a man undoubtedly needs a vacation and a good one. The same rule applies to workers in the other lines of work than railroading."

Oliver Harriman, Banker.

"I believe," said Oliver Harriman, the banker, "that Mr. Taft's idea is right. A man, when he can do so, should take at least two or three months away from his business and get out of the rut. He will, in my opinion, do far better work and accomplish more if he does this. Clerks and others doing mechanical work should have at least two weeks, but in both the cases where a man or woman works with the brain

"I believe, too," he continued, "that all institutions that employ clerical help should exact in every instance that their clerks should take a vacation of two weeks, and during their absence should rigidly examine into the previous work done, so that upon their return they would be able to start with a clean slate, as it were. We make this a rule in our own office."

Judge Alton B. Parker.

Former Judge Alton B. Parker, at one time candidate for the Presidency on the Democratic ticket, said:

"Do I believe in vacations? I most certainly do. The trouble with me is that I've had mine--been to Europe, too, and for three months, which is Mr. Taft's minimum vacation period, isn't it? I am of the opinion that a man should take three months, providing that he can do it consistently, and that while he is gone his affairs won't go awry."

Frank Hedley.

of the year in rest is by any means a fair distribution of time.

"The employes in this department get two weeks, and I am of the opinion that it is sufficient. So far as the laboring man is concerned, he apparently does not need so much rest--vacation, you may term it--as those men and women who use their brain and are under more or less strain during the greater part of the year."

Colgate Hoyt, Banker.

"Every man needs a vacation," said Colgate Hoyt, the banker, "and is better for it, but the young man needs less than the old. But I cannot see how any man, young or old, should spend a quarter of the year loafing. The amount of pressure a man is under has a whole lot to do with the length of his rest, and if he can get away from the stress of business for say a month it seems to me to be quite long enough. Every clerical employe

HOW long should vacations be?

According to President Taft, in his heart-to-heart talk before Bar Harbor talk last week, an annual recreation period--that is, a vacation--of ten days or two weeks is insufficient.

"The American people," said he, "have found out that there is such a thing as exhausting the capital of one's health and constitution, and that two or three months' vacation after the hard and nervous strain to which one is subjected during the Autumn and Spring are necessary in order to enable one to continue his work the next year with that energy and effectiveness which it ought to have."

Mr. Justice Strong of the Supreme bench, who lived to be 88 or 90, told me," continued Mr. Taft, "that it was a part of his life to take sixty days each year away from the people, exercising and living in the open air, and to that he attributed his long life."

"And so," he added, "the American people have come to the conclusion that the women and children especially ought to have a change of air where they can expand their lungs and get exercise in the open. The men can go when they can."

Which is the better proportion? A Times reporter endeavored to ascertain the views of some of the prominent men of New York, especially employers of large numbers of workers, on the vacation proposition, and found a surprisingly large number who themselves practiced Mr. Taft's two and three months' idea, and were out of town enjoying themselves. Some, however, were found busily working, and these expressed interesting views on the vacation problem, as the following interviews show:

William Ellis Corey, President of the United States Steel Corporation.

William E. Corey was very deliberate in his reply as to vacations. He thought it over several minutes before he answered the query of the reporter.

"I believe," he said, "that every man should take a vacation at least once every year, but as to the length of it I am not quite sure. However, I am of the opinion that two or three months, as suggested by the President, is entirely too long under ordinary circumstances, although the time would depend greatly on what sort of pressure a man has been working under during the year. It would be perfectly natural to assume that a man in great activity would require a longer period of rest than one not under such a great strain."

"On the whole I am convinced that a man needs just enough vacation to put him in good physical and mental health, and of course this varies according to the make-up, physical and mental, of the individual under consideration. Just how long it should be I don't know."

John Dustin Archbold, Vice President Standard Oil Company.

"Vacation periods," said John D. Archbold, "are absolutely necessary and are indeed advisable for all classes of workers--mental, perhaps, more than physical."

"But as to the length of time it seems that circumstances must govern this. For people who conserve their powers carefully in their current work, reasonably short periods ought to suffice and this would involve less disturbance to their duties."

Former Postmaster General John Wanamaker.

Mr. Wanamaker is probably one of the busiest men of the country in his particular industry. When the reporter stated the object of his call, Mr. Wanamaker's eyes twinkled and he said that he was inclined to think that possibly Mr. Taft was not wholly serious when he made his statement.

"Possibly," he added, and the twinkle became more pronounced. "Mr. Taft was merely expressing his views as to what he would like for himself. Did you think of that?"

"But to speak seriously," he continued, "it is impossible to try and figure out how much vacation a man



Henry Clews, Banker.

should take. It would be much like trying to treat all diseases by one general rule, and one cannot fail to appreciate that this wouldn't work out well at all. I believe in vacations, but it is ridiculous to think that a man requires two or three months--I mean the average business man under average conditions."

"On the other hand, a man, in justice to himself, should take as much as he feels he needs--he must make a study of himself--an honest study! Some men don't need a vacation at all because their work is really a recreation to them--quite as much as a vacation would be."

As to employes in stores, Mr. Wanamaker stated that they certainly should have vacations, and in his opinion the time should vary.

"No," he said in conclusion, "I cannot see the President's two or three months' idea at all, except to repeat that it should not be taken too seriously."

William Haynes Truesdale, President of the Lackawanna Railroad.

"I hadn't seen Mr. Taft's statement as to the length of vacations," said President William H. Truesdale of the Lackawanna, "but if he did say that I am inclined to think he did not mean it literally."

"There is no doubt that vacations of some length are a very good thing, and assuredly the man or woman who is under a mental strain during the greater part of the year should take one. How long it should be is more than a difficult thing to decide--no one can decide it but the individual himself. What applies to one individual wouldn't fit another. Two men may be under the same high pressure, but one may recuperate more quickly than the other, and as a result he does not need so long a time away from his duties. It has its economic viewpoint, too, for it is difficult to figure what might result if every one were to take two or three months off."

"No, I cannot appreciate how the average business man under average conditions needs two months, yet it would be difficult to try and strike a happy medium."

Frank Hedley, Vice President Interborough Rapid Transit Railroad.

"The value of a vacation depends entirely upon how far you go down the line," said Frank Hedley. "I am a great believer in vacations and very liberal ones for men who work under a mental strain. It seems to me that a man can actually do more work in eleven months than in twelve."

"But it is different with the man whose work is merely physical effort. Take, for example, the man who works in the earth or performs some such simple normal labor. In his case the Saturday half holiday and Sunday brings much greater relief than they do to the man who works with his brain. The laborer has a much better chance, it seems to me, to live longer and enjoy good health than the man who is subjected to great mental strain."



John D. Archbold, Vice-Pres. of the Standard Oil Co.



Oliver Harriman, Banker.

and those who have more stereotyped labor, there are certain conditions which make any standard vacation time difficult to arrive at."

Henry Clews, Banker.

Henry Clews got right down to percentage at once, and stated that he thought "35 per cent. of time spent in vacation, according to Mr. Taft's statement, was entirely too much, and that it would ruin some people."

"Why," he continued, "the average clerk would be spoiled if the rule for vacation was to extend beyond two weeks, although I do think they should have a two weeks' rest. The man in business on his own account--where he has the responsibilities of that business--keeping in touch continually with the fluctuations of trade, is entitled to a month, and furthermore, he should exact it from himself and his partners. If it is necessary, even go beyond this time; but I would hardly say three months is a proper rest period under average circumstances. Too long a time spent away from active work would injure some people--impair both their physical and mental machinery."

"At the same time I feel that a three months' rest was needed by the President of the United States and other high officers in the Government, and it appears to me that their duties would permit them taking that length of time without any detriment to their official work."

According to Mr. Clews' age has a great deal to do with the vacation proposition. He contends that the older a man gets the more rest he should force himself to take, in order to have longer life and greater vigor by which to accomplish better work."

"It doesn't do a man a bit of good to go fishing on his vacation when he doesn't care for fishing, or hunting when he doesn't like hunting," he continued. "His vacation in the strict sense of the word means relieving his mind and body from that to which he is accustomed."

"Some men think that in going to the ball game they get recreation, but from the time they start until they get back they are thinking of their business and planning what they will do when they get back to the office. The result is that the outing of the afternoon hasn't done them much good."

"To sum it all up, I think it is a very good idea for those who use their brain to any great extent to take three months, with the proviso I have said before. As for those in clerical pursuits of a more or less mechanical nature, they should all have at least two weeks. This, too, should vary in the case of some individuals."

Dr. A. Blauvelt, Department of Health.

"Yes, I saw that the President thinks the vacation period should be two or three months long," said Dr. A. Blauvelt of the Department of Health, but he doesn't explain how he arrived at that decision. There isn't a bit of doubt that many would like that sort of a vacation--so far as length is concerned, but I am inclined to think that Mr. Taft was putting it a little broadly when he made that two or three months period."

"Everybody knows," he continued, "that man and animal alike need a resting period called a vacation, but how long it is to be is no easy matter to determine, if it can be determined. I cannot see that spending a quarter

should have two weeks, and as far as the laboring man is concerned he apparently gets his in "what is called 'forced vacations'--yet he is entitled by no means to the same amount of rest as one who uses the brain in an active way."

Simeon Ford, Humorist.

Simeon Ford is known as the funny man of the hotel business.

"I think," said Mr. Ford, in his sepulchral voice, without the shadow of a smile on his face, but a discounting gleam of amusement in his eyes, "that it is very nice of the President to consider that I should have two or three months, but I can't take it. I'm very sorry. At the same time I feel he should have one of that duration--perhaps longer--for it certainly must have been a big strain on him to open so many baseball games and to supervise so many personally conducted trips all over the country. Yes, he ought to have it--in fact, do you know I think that all legislators should take a good long vacation every year--say from three to eleven months."

"Personally," he continued, "I never had the time to take three months for a real vacation--I go to Europe every year. But giving this subject serious consideration, I am under the impression that the average business man does not need three months off--I know I cannot get away from my business for any such length of time. Probably the professional man needs a long rest more than any one else, and so far as clerks are concerned, it seems to me their rest should be spread out thin during the year--a few days here and there."

"Anyway," added Mr. Ford, "I guess the greatest enjoyment one gets out of



John Wanamaker, Former Postmaster General.

a vacation--the very keenest fun and the personification of extreme pleasure is the thinking about it, the going and the coming back to the comforts that you'd left for a time. This may sound a bit unusual; but I don't mean it to be funny. This reputation for being a 'funny man' has embittered my life, and let me tell you--I'm trying to live it down!"

Joseph Davis, Controller of the American Locomotive Works.

"It all depends," said Joseph Davis, "what type of man is to be considered. If you mean officials of large corporations in which modern business activity calls for greater responsibilities, where the man works under a higher degree of pressure, and as a result uses up more energy, he needs at least a month's rest. This to me would appear quite sufficient under ordinary circumstances, although it is difficult to measure the exact mental and physical strain under which an individual works. As to the clerical force of a concern," he said, "two weeks appears to be quite sufficient, for the simple reason that in the majority of cases their work is of a mechanical nature."

The laboring man seems to be in a class by himself, so far as vacations are concerned, according to Mr. Davis. Many corporations now hire this force under an hourly wage agreement, and it is rare that the man has a full year's work. The result is that the time "off," owing to changing conditions, takes the place of a vacation, but of course it is at their own expense. He stated that it would be extremely difficult to arrange any vacation proposition, with this class of labor, owing to just this hourly wage basis, and furthermore, because about 40 per cent. of many forces shift in the course of a year."

Gustav Straubenmuller, Acting Superintendent of New York's Public Schools.

"There isn't any doubt," said Mr. Straubenmuller, "that school children must have vacations, for their application is just as trying to them as is the application of those in business or professional life. The tendency has been of late years to give the youngsters a longer period of rest."

"In 1860," he continued, "the children had just forty-six days' vacation, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays, while at the present time they have ninety days, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays, an increase of nearly 100 per cent., and this vacation time was prolonged at the advice of a board of physicians, headed, according to the best of my recollection, by Dr. Abram Jacob. The reason for so doing was that they considered the classrooms too warm for the children to work in, and it was thought better that they should be out in the open air and not confined."

Mr. Straubenmuller stated that in his opinion the ninety days was quite sufficient, and that it was more than some countries provided.

"The question might be asked," he

continued, "why we have the so-called 'vacation schools,' if we consider that the children should have a rest and that it should be ninety days, but there is a good reason. In our schools of Manhattan we have about 700,000 children. If only about 2 per cent. of the inhabitants of New York ever take a vacation, as has been stated, this percentage applies, probably, to the children, too. As a result they have to remain, many of them, in the congested districts, housed in close tenements, living two or three in a room. They are more or less in the way there, have little to amuse them, and are forced to go out on the hot streets to seek what little recreation they can. They find no particular comfort in the streets, so many of them prefer to go to school. That's why we open our schools to them from 9 to 12 in the mornings, and in a way it is a vacation for them."

"Of course, I believe that the youngsters should have a real out-and-out vacation if it is possible--preferably in the country, where they can obtain good food and fresh air, but it is impossible for us to do this for them."

"So far as the 17,000 teachers are concerned, the ninety days' vacation is quite enough. Their work in many cases is extremely trying, but the three months is enough."

Supreme Court Justice Henry Blischoff, Jr.

It is unusual to hear of a man--an active man--who has not taken a vacation in twenty-one years, but Supreme Court Justice Henry Blischoff hasn't. Down in the Court House they tell you he is a "horse for work." The reporter found just fifteen lawyers waiting in and about his chambers to see him, but the Justice stopped in his work long enough to say a few words about vacations.

"I've been on the bench twenty-one years," said he, "and I've never taken a vacation simply for the reason that I didn't feel that I needed one. I don't look any the worse for it, do I?"

"But don't misunderstand me--I believe in vacations--believe in them thoroughly, but for my own part I prefer to be leisurely busy all the time and spend my evenings in a social way."

Justice Blischoff seemed to think that professional men worked a bit harder and under higher pressure than business men.

"As to the length of time of vacations it is difficult indeed to fix a time that could apply to all classes, but I am inclined to think that one month for the business man is quite sufficient and that the professional man should have at least two months. Clerical employes should be compensated by a two week's rest in each year."

"Then, too, I believe that the laboring man ought to get a vacation, but unfortunately he cannot unless he takes it--and then it is without pay, which means a lot to him, you know."

Oren Root, General Manager of the Metropolitan Railway.

"I believe it all depends on the temperament of the individual," said Oren Root, who is probably one of the youngest street railway managers in the country, "but I do not consider that under average circumstances a man needs a vacation until he gets to that position where he is shouldering great responsibilities, and then--to get the best results from body and brain--he should take at least two weeks. A less time than this would not appear to be particularly beneficial. If a man works ten years without taking any sort of a vacation, I think he is entitled to three months, but not otherwise. The President's length of time seems to me to be all out of proportion."

"Take our motorman, for example," he said. "They work but six days and are paid for seven. That seventh day is their vacation, and they can generally get it any time during the week. One might think that they are under a great nervous strain and would require more rest, but I cannot see that this is the case."

"I cannot see the philosophy in Mr. Taft's statement. I worked ten years at one stretch without a vacation. This year? No, I'm not going to take one--not for two weeks or two months."