Talking Union

John McCutcheon

Now, if you want higher wages let me tell you what to do
You got to talk to the workers in the shop with you
You got to build you a union, got to make it strong
But if you all stick together, boys, it won't be long
You get shorter hours, better working conditions
Vacations with pay. Take your kids to the seashoreIt ain't quite this simple, so I better explain
Just why you got to ride on the union train
'Cause if you wait for the boss to raise your pay
We'll all be a-waitin' 'til Judgment Day
We'll all be buried, gone to heaven
St. Peter'll be the straw boss thenNow you know you're underpaid but the boss says you ain't
He speeds up the work 'til you're 'bout to faint
You may be down and out, but you ain't beaten
You can pass out a leaflet and call a meetin'
Talk it over, speak your mind
Decide to do somethin' about itCourse, the boss may persuade some poor damn fool
To go to your meetin' and act like a stool
But you can always tell a stool, though, that's a fact
He's got a yaller streak a-runnin' down his back
He doesn't have to stool, he'll always get along
On what he takes out of blind men's cupsYou got a union now, and you're sittin' pretty
Put some of the boys on the steering committee
The boss won't listen when one guy squawks
But he's got to listen when the union talks
He'd better, be mighty lonely
Everybody decide to walk out on himSuppose they're working you so hard it's just outrageous
And they're paying you all starvation wages
You go to the boss and the boss would yell
"Before I raise your pay I'd see you all in hell."
Well, he's puffing a big cigar, feeling mighty slick
'Cause he thinks he's got your union licked
Well, he looks out the window and what does he see
But a thousand pickets, and they all agree
He's a bastard, unfair, slavedriver
Bet he beats his wifeNow, boys, you've come to the hardest time
The boss will try to bust your picket line
He'll call out the police, the National Guard
They'll tell you it's a crime to have a union card
They'll raid your meetin', they'll hit you on the head

They'll call every one of you a goddam red
Unpatriotic, Japanese spies, sabotaging national defenseBut out at Ford, here's what they found
And out at Vultee, here's what they found
And out at Allis-Chalmers, here's what they found
And down at Bethlehem, here's what they found
That if you don't let red-baiting break you up
And if you don't let stoolpigeons break you up
And if you don't let vigilantes break you up
And if you don't let race hatred break you up
You'll win. What I mean, take it easy, but take it

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