

# 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 seashore  
It 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 then  
Now 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 it  
Course, 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 cups  
You 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 him  
Suppose 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 wife  
Now, 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 defense  
But 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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