

STREATOR'S SON

"RESOLVED THAT THE STREATOR TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL REQUEST THE LOCAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY TO DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO PLACE THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THIS TRADES COUNCIL, R.G. SODERSTROM, AS A CANDIDATE IN THE SPRING PRIMARIES. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT WE HEARTILY ENDORSE SAID UNION MAN AND PLEDGE OUR SUPPORT AND DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO ELECT R.G. SODERSTROM IN THE COMING FALL ELECTION."

-STREATOR DAILY FREE PRESS 1914



BORN IN 1888 TO SWEDISH IMMIGRANTS, REUBEN G. SODERSTROM BEGAN WORK AT AGE NINE IN A BLACKSMITH SHOP AND AT AGE TWELVE MOVED TO STREATOR, ILLINOIS TO SUPPORT HIS IMPOVERISHED FAMILY BY WORKING AS A TROLLEY LINE WATER BOY, GLASS FACTORY WORKER AND LINOTYPE PRINTER. HE WITNESSED CHILDREN ABUSED BY LABOR, WORKERS EXHAUSTED FROM INHUMANE WORK HOURS, IMPOVERISHED RETIREES WITHOUT PENSIONS, DISABLED WORKERS WITH NO MEDICAL BENEFITS, WORKPLACE DEATHS, SHATTERED FAMILIES AND INJUNCTIONS PREVENTING WORKERS TO PEACEFULLY ASSEMBLE TO IMPROVE THEIR PLIGHT.

AT AGE 26, SODERSTROM SET OUT TO CHANGE THESE CONDITIONS. THE PEOPLE OF STREATOR ELECTED HIM TO THE ILLINOIS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, WHERE HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GUIDING INTO LAW MUCH OF THE STATE'S PROGRESSIVE AND HUMANITARIAN LABOR LEGISLATION THAT COURAGEOUSLY ADDRESSED THESE VERY ISSUES. SODERSTROM WAS THEN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO FOR 40 CONSECUTIVE YEARS, FROM 1930 UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1970.

SODERSTROM WORKED IN STREATOR'S FACTORIES, EDUCATED HIMSELF AT THE STREATOR PUBLIC LIBRARY, PROUDLY REPRESENTED THE PEOPLE OF LASALLE COUNTY AND GAVE ROUSING SPEECHES TO CHEERING CROWDS MANY TIMES IN THIS CITY PARK. HE WAS LAID TO REST IN STREATOR'S RIVERVIEW CEMETERY.

LABOR'S EMANCIPATION

"UNSANITARY CONDITIONS WERE THE RULE AND THE SWEAT SHOP EXISTED IN NEARLY EVERY INDUSTRIAL CENTER OF THIS COUNTRY, WHERE THOUSANDS OF UNDER-NOURISHED, HALF-CLOTHED, STUNTED CHILDREN WERE COMPELLED TO WORK LONG HOURS UNDER ALMOST UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS, FOR A FEW CENTS A DAY. IF A WAGE EARNER BECAME INJURED, IT WAS JUST TOO BAD. NO CONSIDERATION WAS GIVEN THE WORKERS EXCEPT IN PLACES WHERE STRONG UNIONS EXISTED. THE WAGE EARNER BELONGED TO AN EXPLOITED CLASS, AND THE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAD THE COURAGE TO PROTEST AGAINST UNFAIR CONDITIONS FOUND HIMSELF WITHOUT A JOB. TO ASK FOR AN INCREASE IN WAGES WAS TO COURT IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL.

IN THAT PERIOD LITTLE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN FREED FROM SWEAT SHOPS AND FACTORIES, THE HOURS OF LABOR DECREASED, THE WAGES HAVE BEEN INCREASED, COMPENSATION LAWS HAVE BEEN ENACTED AND WORKSHOPS AND FACTORIES HAVE BEEN MADE SANITARY AND SAFE. THE TRADE UNIONS FOSTER EDUCATION AND UPROOT IGNORANCE, ORGANIZED LABOR INCREASES INDEPENDENCE AND DECREASES DEPENDENCE. TRADE UNIONS ESTABLISH FRATERNITY AND DESTROY SELFISHNESS; THEY ENLARGE SOCIETY AND ELIMINATE CLASSES; THEY CREATE RIGHT AND ABOLISH WRONG; THEY CHEER THE HOME AND FIRESIDE AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE." - 1935

LABOR'S WAR EFFORT

"NOWHERE IN AMERICA IS THE LABOR MOVEMENT OF ANY STATE MORE PATRIOTIC AND LOYAL THAN IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT OF ILLINOIS. NOW THAT THE NATION IS AT WAR LABOR HAS PROVEN ITS PATRIOTISM BY VOLUNTARILY GIVING UP ITS RIGHT TO STRIKE FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR. ORGANIZED LABOR WILL MEET THE ISSUE IN SUCH A FASHION, AND WITH DETERMINATION, TO PRESERVE TO ITSELF AND TO THOSE WHO ARE TO FOLLOW US, THAT PRICELESS GIFT OF LIBERTY AND PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH, THE RIGHT OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION, IN SHORT, AND IN THE WORDS OF THE IMMORTAL LINCOLN, 'THAT THIS GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, AND FOR THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT PERISH.'" -1942

"NO SECTION OF SOCIETY IN AMERICA HAS MADE A LARGER CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT THAN THE WAGE-EARNERS OF ILLINOIS. THIS IS TRUE WITH RESPECT TO MEN, MONEY AND IMPLEMENTS OF WAR. IT WAS THE DANVILLE CONVENTION (1941) OF THE ILLINOIS STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR THAT ADOPTED THE RESOLUTION WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ADOPTED BY THE SEATTLE CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR...WHICH ESTABLISHED THE WAGE ALLOTMENT PLAN UNDER WHICH WAGE EARNERS OF THE UNITED STATES WERE CALLED UPON TO CONTRIBUTE 10 PERCENT OF THEIR INCOME FOR WAR BONDS. NO OTHER SECTION OF SOCIETY IS CONTRIBUTING 10 PERCENT OF ITS INCOME BECAUSE OF CONVENTION ACTION. PROFESSIONAL MEN ARE NOT DOING IT; BUSINESS MEN ARE NOT DOING IT...ONLY LABOR IS FOLLOWING THIS WAGE ALLOTMENT PLAN AND THROUGH THE PLAN THE WAGE-EARNERS OF AMERICA HAVE CONTRIBUTED BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO THE WAR EFFORT. IN EVERY COMMUNITY THE WAR ALLOTMENT CONTRIBUTION IS ALWAYS THE LARGEST, WHICH MEANS LABOR IS FINANCING THE WAR." -1943

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

LABOR'S PEACE EFFORT

"NO TRUE AMERICAN, NO TRUE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR WILL SUPPORT EITHER COMMUNISM OR FASCISM. WHEN FASCISM OR COMMUNISM MENACES THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IT BECOMES THE DUTY OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR TO RALLY TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR GOVERNMENT. THESE SUBVERSIVE FORCES ARE TODAY CAUSING INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATIONS PRECIPITATING WAR BETWEEN THE NATIONS ACROSS THE SEA. GERMANY HAS FASCISM AND GERMANY IS AT WAR. SOVIET RUSSIA HAS COMMUNISM, AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNISM ENTERED INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH HITLER AND GERMANY, WHICH BECAME A FACTOR IN STARTING THIS NEW WORLD WAR. ORGANIZED LABOR IN AMERICA WANTS PEACE. WE DON'T WANT FASCISM; WE DON'T WANT COMMUNISM; WE DON'T WANT WAR." -1939

"WHAT THEY OUGHT TO DO IS ABOLISH WAR. WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO IS NOT ONLY OUTLAW THE ATOMIC BOMB, BUT TRY TO OUTLAW THE WHOLE DIRTY BUSINESS OF WAR. ENTHUSIASM AND SUPPORT COULD BE ENGENDERED FOR A LASTING PEACE ON EARTH IF ALL OF US WHO BELIEVE IN IT WOULD WORK AT IT IN A PRACTICAL AND INTELLIGENT WAY. LABOR KNOWS WAR CREATES MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT SOLVES. LABOR IS BETTER OFF WITHOUT WARS AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT OF ILLINOIS INTENDS TO DO EVERYTHING HUMANLY POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN A PERMANENT PEACE ON EARTH." -1946

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

CARPENTER OF NAZARETH

"THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH WAS A MAN BORN IN A SMALL VILLAGE, THE SON OF A PEASANT WOMAN. HE GREW UP IN ANOTHER VILLAGE AND WORKED IN A CARPENTER SHOP UNTIL HE WAS THIRTY YEARS OF AGE. THEN FOR THREE YEARS HE WAS AN ITINERANT MINISTER. HE NEVER WROTE A BOOK; HE NEVER HELD AN OFFICE; HE NEVER HAD A FAMILY; HE NEVER HAD A SON; HE NEVER PUT HIS FOOT INSIDE OF A LARGE CITY; HE NEVER TRAVELED MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED MILES AWAY FROM THE PLACE WHERE HE WAS BORN; HE NEVER DID ANY OF THE THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH GREATNESS. HE HAD NO CREDENTIALS EXCEPT HIMSELF. WHILE STILL A YOUNG MAN, THE TIDE OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT WAS TURNED AGAINST HIM. HIS FRIENDS RAN AWAY. ONE OF THEM DENIED HIM. HE WAS TURNED OVER TO HIS ENEMIES. HE WENT THROUGH THE MOCKERY OF A TRIAL. HE WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS BETWEEN TWO THIEVES. WHILE HE WAS DYING HIS EXECUTIONERS GAMBLED FOR THE ONLY PIECE OF PROPERTY HE HAD LEFT, WHICH WAS HIS COAT. AFTER HE WAS DEAD HE WAS LAID IN A BORROWED GRAVE THROUGH THE PITY OF A FRIEND. NINETEEN WIDE CENTURIES HAVE COME AND GONE SINCE THESE INCIDENTS OCCURRED, AND TODAY HE IS THE CENTER PIECE IN THE COLUMN OF PROGRESS. I THINK I AM WELL WITHIN THE MARK WHEN I SAY THAT ALL THE ARMIES THAT EVER MARCHED, ALL THE NAVIES THAT EVER WERE BUILT, ALL THE PARLIAMENTS THAT EVER SAT, ALL THE KINGS THAT EVER REIGNED HAVE NOT INFLUENCED THE LIFE OF MANKIND AS THIS ONE MAN, THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH." -1945

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

UNIVERSAL EQUALITY

"THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR CAME INTO BEING WITH A DEDICATION TO FIGHT FOR EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL WORKERS, REGARDLESS OF RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONAL ORIGIN. THE FOUNDER OF OUR MOVEMENT WAS AN IMMIGRANT JEW, SAMUEL GOMPERS, AND THE NAME WE LIVE UNDER WAS SUGGESTED BY A NEGRO DELEGATE FROM PITTSBURGH. THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAS MADE IMPORTANT GAINS FOR ALL WORKERS. AS TRADE UNIONISTS, WE FEEL THAT A MAN'S RACE, COLOR AND RELIGION ARE HIS OWN AFFAIRS. WE ARE INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN IMPROVING HIS ECONOMIC STATUS." -1953

"WE MAY BE HEBREWS, SCANDINAVIANS, OR PEOPLE FROM THE BRITISH ISLES; WE MAY BE NEGROES, POLES, ITALIANS AND GERMANS—BUT WE BELONG TO THE SAME HUMAN RACE. WE LOVE OUR FAMILIES AND OUR HOMES AND WE HAVE THE WELFARE OF OUR NATION AT HEART; AND THE WAY TO MAKE OUR DEMOCRACY WORK, AND THE WAY TO MAKE AMERICA STRONG, IS TO WORK TOGETHER AND HELP EACH OTHER TO ELIMINATE FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH ALL INTOLERANCE, OR BIGOTRY, OR PREJUDICE AND ALL DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT." -1953

LABOR'S TRIUMPHS

"THE NEXT TIME SOMEONE ASKS YOU WHAT YOUR LABOR UNIONS HAVE EVER DONE, I WANT TO SINCERELY REQUEST YOU NOT TO PITY THAT PERSON'S LACK OF INFORMATION, BUT TO TAKE HIM IN HAND AND OPEN UP HIS MIND TO THE GREATEST POWER FOR GOOD THAT THE WORLD'S WORKERS HAVE EVER KNOWN. YOU CAN COMPARE THE WORKDAY OF FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO WITH TODAY. YOU CAN SHOW YOUR FRIEND HOW THE WORKERS' AGITATION GAVE US OUR FREE SCHOOL SYSTEM, WITH ITS FREE SCHOOL BOOKS. HOW WE HAVE RAISED WAGES AND ESTABLISHED A VAST CHAIN OF BENEFITS; HOW WE FORCED THE EMPLOYER TO SAFEGUARD LIFE AND LIMB, HOW SHOP CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN BETTERED BY MEN STANDING TOGETHER AND PROTECTING FROM BLACKLISTING THE FELLOWS WHO GO TO THE FRONT. SHOW HIM HOW THE UNIONS SPEND THEIR DOLLARS FOR LABOR LAWS THAT BENEFIT THE ORGANIZED AND UNORGANIZED ALIKE. SHOW HIM HOW THE UNIONS WERE THE FIRST TO START A FIGHT AND DIRECT LEGISLATION AGAINST CHILD LABOR AND SCORES OF OTHER REFORMS.

AND MORE THAN ALL OF THIS COMBINED, YOU CAN SHOW HIM THE EFFECTS OF UNIONISM ON THE CHARACTER OF THE MEN, HOW IT DEVELOPS INDEPENDENCE AND MANHOOD, HOW IT EQUIPS MEN TO ASSERT THEMSELVES INSTEAD OF STANDING COWED AND SERVILE WITH CAP IN HAND BEFORE THEIR EMPLOYER. TELL HIM ALL OF THESE GAINS HAVE BEEN MADE WITHIN THE PAST SIXTY YEARS. BEFORE THAT TIME MEN WERE DENIED THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE. LAWS DECLARED THAT THREE WORKERS CONSTITUTED A CONSPIRACY, BUT IN SPITE OF ALL THESE OBSTACLES MEN UNITED, THEY FORMED DEBATING SOCIETIES, ESTABLISHED SMALLER LABOR PAPERS, SLOWLY AND ONE AT A TIME THEY TOPPLED THE OLD IDEAS MAINTAINED BY LAWMAKERS, PROFESSORS, ECONOMISTS AND STUDENTS. UPWARD WAS THE TREND OUT OF SLAVERY AND BONDAGE UNTIL TODAY WE STAND ALMOST SIXTEEN MILLION STRONG WITH A REPRESENTATIVE IN THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET AND GOVERNORS AND STATESMEN GLAD TO SAY THEY ONCE BELONGED TO A TRADE UNION." -1954

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

THE MARTYRS OF LABOR

"IF TODAY WE ARE STILL ABLE TO FIGHT FOR A GRANDER CIVILIZATION, IF TODAY WE ARE STILL ABLE TO FIGHT FOR A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING, DON'T THANK THOSE WHO ARE DIRECTING THIS SHIP OF STATE, BUT COME WITH ME TO THE LONELY GRAVES OF THE PIONEERS OF UNIONISM. NO MARBLE SHAFT REARS PROUDLY OVER THEIR HUMBLE RESTING PLACE. NO MONUMENT OF STONE OR BRONZE TELLS OF THEIR MIGHTY DEEDS BUT 'NEATH THE GREEN SOD SLEEPS HEARTS THAT ONCE FLAMED FOR THE CAUSE OF TOIL. THESE MARTYRS OF LABOR HAVE BROUGHT US NEARER TO THE IDEAL OF BROTHERHOOD OF WHICH BUDDHA DREAMED ON THE GANGES THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO. IN THEM THE THOUGHTS OF PLATO AND THE TEACHINGS OF THE LOWLY NAZARENE ASSUMED REALITY. LIKE MOSES OF YORE THAT LED THE CHILDREN OF TOIL FROM BONDAGE OUT INTO THE DESERT OF STRIFE NEARER AND NEARER TO THE PROMISED LAND, AND LIKE THAT HEBREW PROPHET, THEY LAID THEIR BODIES DOWN IN ETERNAL REST IN SIGHT OF CANAAN. THEIR REWARD WAS HUNGER, COLD, THE PRISON STRIPES AND THE GALLOWS. SOME DAY A GRATEFUL POSTERITY WILL CHANT CHORALS IN THEIR MEMORY. SOME DAY HAPPY CHILDREN WILL PLANT FLOWERS ON THEIR SUNKEN GRAVES." -1960

LABOR'S HUNGER

"THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS THE STRUGGLE OF THE MASSES OF OUR PEOPLE FOR A BETTER DAY. IT MIGHT BE SUMMED UP IN ONE WORD, HUNGER. HUNGER IS THE VERY BEGINNING FOR THE COMMONEST FOOD, HUNGER FOR CLOTHES AND FOR SHELTER, HUNGER FOR HOME, HUNGER FOR LOVE, HUNGER FOR JUSTICE, HUNGER FOR FREEDOM, HUNGER FOR THE ENJOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHEST AND BEST SURROUNDINGS FOR LIFE AND LABOR." -1950

"LET'S NOT HAVE ANOTHER GENERATION WITH SCHOOLING WITH THE TRUTH LEFT OUT. LABOR UNIONS AND FRIENDS OF LABOR MUST WORK DILIGENTLY TO FILL THE GREAT EMPTY PAGES IN THE SCHOOL BOOKS OF THE NATION. THERE IS MUCH IN THE SCHOOL BOOKS ABOUT FREEDOM, BUT TOO OFTEN IT IS THE FREEDOM OF THE INDUSTRIAL OWNERS, OF MANAGEMENT, AND NOT THE WORKERS OR EMPLOYEES. OUR SKYSCRAPERS, STEEL MILLS, RAILROADS, OUR COAL MINES AND CORNFIELDS ARE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF HUMAN LABOR, NOT ENTIRELY THAT OF AN INVESTMENT TRUST OR A BUSINESS MAN IN THE FRONT OFFICE. THOSE WHO GIVE OF THEIR PHYSICAL ENERGIES ARE THE MOST EXHAUSTED ONES, THE LESS REWARDED ONES. LET US NEVER FORGET IT!" -1960

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

CIVIL RIGHTS

"AS THE NATION'S OUTSTANDING CHAMPION OF MINORITIES, ORGANIZED LABOR OF THE UNITED STATES HAILS WITH A DEEP FEELING OF GRATIFICATION THE SUPREME COURT'S RULING THAT SEGREGATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL. ALTHOUGH LINCOLN FREED THE NEGROES FROM PHYSICAL BONDAGE WITH THE FIRST PROCLAMATION THEY HAVE REMAINED SLAVES OF HARSH, DEEP-SEATED PREJUDICES, LAWS AND PRACTICES THAT HAVE ENSLAVED THEIR MINDS AND SPIRITS AND DEPRIVED THEM OF THEIR HERITAGE AS AMERICAN CITIZENS." -1954

"LABOR'S VICTORIES WERE NOT WON BY WAITING PLACIDLY FOR THE WILLINGNESS AND GENEROSITY OF THE TYCOONS OF CAPITAL AND INDUSTRY, BUT BY STAUNCH, STEADFAST AND ORGANIZED UNITY, BY PROTESTS, STRIKES AND BOYCOTTS. TYCOONS FINALLY BECAME ENLIGHTENED AS TO THE BENEFITS AND ADVANTAGES OF HUMANE WORKING CONDITIONS, ADEQUATE WAGES, ELEVATED LIVING STANDARDS AND LABOR SHARING IN THE FRUITS OF THE PRODUCTIVITY OF INDUSTRY.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IS USING THE TACTICS DEVELOPED BY ORGANIZED LABOR. THE PROTESTS, MARCHES, ASSEMBLIES AND BOYCOTTS ARE ENTIRELY PROPER AND FITTING, SO LONG AS THEY ARE PEACEFUL, WITHOUT INTIMIDATION, COERCION OR VIOLENCE. THEY FOCUS AND ATTRACT ATTENTION, INTEREST AND THE EFFORT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, MARSHALLING THE MORAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT OF AN AROUSED NATIONAL CONSCIENCE. THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IS ON THE MARCH AND I THINK IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND THE RIGHT WAY. IN MY JUDGMENT THEY ARE GOING TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLES CONFRONTING THEM JUST AS LABOR HAS DONE." -1965

REUBEN G. SODERSTROM

PROSPERITY

"LABOR WANTS THE HIGHEST AND BEST SURROUNDINGS FOR LIFE AND LABOR. WE WOULD LIKE TO ENJOY THE EARTH AND THE FULLNESS THEREOF. WE WANT MORE CONSTANT WORK AND LESS GREED. WE WANT MORE LEISURE AND LESS CRIME. WE WANT MORE JUSTICE AND LESS VENGEANCE. WE WANT MORE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT BRING OUT THE BETTER NATURE OF MAN AND WHICH WILL MAKE MANHOOD MORE NOBLE, WOMANHOOD MORE BEAUTIFUL AND CHILDHOOD MORE HAPPY AND BRIGHT. THESE ARE THE THINGS LABOR WANTS AND THESE ARE THE THINGS LABOR CAN OBTAIN BY WORKING TOGETHER AND HELPING EACH OTHER. ALL THESE THINGS CAN BE SECURED FOR THE MEMBERSHIP AND FOR WORKING PEOPLE GENERALLY THROUGH ORGANIZED EFFORT." -1961

"THE UNIONS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY OF OUR COUNTRY. WITHOUT UNIONS OUR WAGE LEVEL WOULD BE LESS. OUR BUYING POWER WOULD DEFINITELY BE REDUCED. FEWER CARS, FEWER HOME UTENSILS, FEWER CLOTHES AND MANUFACTURED GOODS WOULD BE SOLD; THE FARMER WOULD HAVE A SMALLER MARKET AND THE BUSINESSMAN WOULD HAVE LESS TRADE. VACATIONS WITH PAY, FOR EXAMPLE, NEGOTIATED BY LABOR UNIONS, HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR MILLIONS OF WAGE EARNERS TO SEE AMERICA AND ENJOY THEIR GOD-GIVEN HERITAGE. UNION-NEGOTIATED WELFARE AND INSURANCE PLANS HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE BREADWINNER OF THE FAMILY TO PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION FOR HIMSELF AND HIS DEPENDENTS REGARDLESS OF HIS INCOME, AND UNION-NEGOTIATED PENSIONS HAVE BEEN A MOVE TOWARD REMOVING THE APPREHENSIONS AND FEARS OF OLD AGE." -1963

LABOR'S LEGACY

"STREATOR HAS A CITIZEN WHO HAS SERVED THE ILLINOIS STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR FOR 25 YEARS, A PERIOD OF EMERGENCY THROUGH DEPRESSION AND WAR, OF INFLATION AND MONUMENTAL PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT. IN THAT DIFFICULT ERA, R.G. SODERSTROM HAS GUIDED THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN ILLINOIS WITH EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS, IN A MANNER THAT HAS ELEVATED THAT MOVEMENT TO ITS PROPER PLACE IN THE STATE'S AND NATION'S ECONOMY. HE HAS SERVED LABOR WELL AND BY THAT TOKEN HAS SERVED WELL THE STATE OF ILLINOIS AND ALL ITS PEOPLE." -STREATOR DAILY TIMES PRESS, 1955

"EVERY GOOD IDEA THAT HAS BEEN ENACTED INTO BENEFICIAL LEGISLATION WAS FIRST DISCUSSED IN SOME UNION HALL BY COURAGEOUS RANK AND FILE MEMBERS. ORGANIZED LABOR CAN JUSTIFIABLY TAKE CREDIT FOR ALL SOCIAL LEGISLATION, FOR SOCIAL SECURITY RETIREMENT BENEFITS, MEDICARE, UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION FOR THOSE INJURED OR KILLED IN INDUSTRY, FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND FOR MANY OTHER PROGRAMS WHICH HAVE MADE THIS THE GREATEST NATION ON EARTH. TODAY'S THREE THOUSAND UNION MEMBERS OF STREATOR ARE AMONG THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS FINE PROGRESS AND GOOD GOVERNMENT. THEY ARE STILL DOING THEIR PART IN TRYING TO BUILD A BETTER DAY AND A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE IN THIS BLESSED LAND." -1968