The classic saga of The Wututtat Revue — filled with misfortune, strife, sex, pathos and a dwarf — is preserved for us in the ballad of Brimelow v. Casson, [1924] 1 ch. 302.1

The Wututtat Revue, a burlesque troupe, was touring the southern part of England. The manager, a rather nefarious individual named Jack Arnold, paid such meager wages to the “ladies” of the ensemble that “they were forced to eke out a living by plying another and older trade.” Indeed, as the sordid tale later developed in court, economic necessities compelled one of the young ladies to live with a dwarf (who was a member of the troupe).2

Fortunately, a labor leader named Lugg intervened on behalf of the girls — and convinced the owners of various theatres to cancel their contracts with Jack Arnold unless higher wages were paid. Arnold refused and this resulted in the troupe being stranded in the town of Maidenhead (of course).

The owners of the Wututtat Revue then brought a “bill in equity” to enjoin Lugg and the labor union from inducing the theatre owners to breach their contracts. The court dismissed the bill — wisely holding that Lugg’s conduct was justified as a means of pressure to obtain higher wages in view of the public interest in preventing immorality and prostitution.

This decision was “immortalized” in 1938 in “Languedell Lyrics” by Douglas McNeil, a Harvard Law School student:

“The ladies of the chorus of the Wututtat Revue Through economic pressure had their virtue to eschew.

“Twas economic pressure that accounts for their proclivity To supplement their earnings with professional activity.

That poor benighted maiden didn’t say it just for fun,

‘If Snow White lived with seven dwarfs, well I can live with one!’

“An economic royalist, Jack Arnold was his name, Began this competition with the houses of ill fame. Twas some ironic destiny by which the troupe was led That prompted them to end their tour at England’s Maidenhead.”

“The matter was reported to our hero, labor’s Lugg, Who vowed he’d get Jack Arnold even though it meant the jug. He gathered up the union’s most persuasive breach inducers To tell this sad and sordid tale to Arnold’s pet producers.

“I’m proud to say the latter said they didn’t give a damn About Jack Arnold’s contract, and they closed him like a clam. I’m prouder of the Chancellor, who didn’t bat an eye But calmly told Jack Arnold that his action wouldn’t lie.

“So here’s to Merrie England, let the Union Jack unfurl, The Chancellor and Heaven will protect the working girl.”

2. Apparently proving that “one and one-half can...
3. The spirit of Jack Arnold lives on. See Liberty Mutual Ins. Co. v. NLRB, 592 F.2d 595, concurring opinion by Judge Aldrich, 592 F.2d at 606 (1st. Cir. 1979).