

Labor 100 Years Ago - June 17, 1916

A look back at the front page stories of the Oregon Labor Press, June 17, 1916. A digital version of the front page can be seen at www.nwlabourpress.org/100yearsago

*CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FAVORS THE OPEN SHOP

Yes sir. Portland is to be an open shop town hereafter. The Executive Board of the Chamber of Commerce says so. As the Evening Telegram puts it, "a majority of the Executive Board has unanimously decided in favor of the open shop."

Suffering cats. Whoever said the town was anything else than an open shop town except, perhaps, in rare instances. So far as the action of the Chamber of Commerce is concerned it will not hurt organized labor in this city in particular, and neither will it do the Chamber of Commerce any good.

Everybody knows that the Chamber of Commerce is about on its last legs anyhow and it is presumed that it was thought necessary to do something desperate in the hope that the action might attract some support.

Tommy McCusker was on the job and saw an opportunity to pull a stunt for his bunch of union haters and at the same time bolster up his chances of holding onto his job.

All right, now we are going to have an open shop town. Then what? Do you propose to reduce wages, or make the men work longer hours for the same pay? Just what do you think will be accomplished by declaring for the open shop?

You certainly don't think for a moment that the you will stop organization do you?

You might move Council Crest over on the Washington side of the Columbia and make it easy for the real estate speculators to plot the Tualatin Valley. You might move Mount Hood down close to the Columbia River Highway. You might induce John Yeon that there are just as good pavements in the world as Warrenite, but you CAN'T STOP ORGANIZATION. Don't forget that.

And there are only a very few that want to stop it or would stop it if they could. Most people have come to realize the absolute necessity of organization both of capital and labor, and it will take more than the "unanimous action of a majority" of the Executive Board of the Chamber of Commerce to convince them otherwise.

There's nothing to get alarmed about in the action of the Chamber of Commerce. It would be just about as exciting if the Central Labor Council would adopt a long resolution declaring for the closed shop.

There are a few members of the Chamber who have long wanted to have a fight with organized labor and no doubt their wish will be gratified.

Following is a copy of the resolution (resolves) "unanimously adopted by a majority of the Board":

Resolved by the Board of Directors of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, assembled in special meeting Thursday noon, June 15, That we will insist upon at least as low a wage in the handling of business on the waterfront of this port as is paid on the waterfront of any competitive port with



which we are struggling for business, regardless of any settlement that is reached in the conference now pending in San Francisco, or such as may be later inaugurated for an adjustment of the strike conditions; and be it further

Resolved by the Board, That the action taken by the longshoremen in attempting to tie up this port in the efforts to raise the standard of wages in other ports of the Pacific has interfered with the commerce of this port and is an act of ingratitude and lack of appreciation of the fact that the longshoremen have been paid in this community for many years a higher wage than the average wage rate of the Pacific Coast; and be it further

Resolved by the Board, That we oppose in most vigorous manner any effort at the present time to stir up industrial strife within this community which must have the effect of increasing the difficulties confronted by the port in re-establishing its business to normal conditions; and be it further

Resolved by the Board, That we will oppose the carrying out of the apparent plan to establish the principles of closed

shop to such extent as prevents the laborers at one stage of commercial movement from handling commerce that has been handled at another stage of the movement by what is termed by organized labor as "unfair" or "non-union" help, and that the principle of a closed shop as applied to the business of this port, which would have the effect of limiting the work of industries and any commercial organizations to only a limited number of men, who under the guise of organized labor, seek to restrict selfishly the work to its own members, and to the detriment of others who desire to engage in the work, is opposed to the best interests of the community and is an infringement upon the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States and the State of Oregon, and should be overcome by the business people and all other elements of the community who believe in the principle of personal liberty and individual rights, and in the largest possible opportunity for all people to labor, regardless of their affiliations.

Oregon Letter Carriers collect 970,000 pounds of food

Letter carriers had a lot to carry on Saturday, May 14. Not only did they deliver the mail, they also collected food donations for the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The nationwide event is a collaboration of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the National Rural Carriers' Association, United Food and Commercial Workers, United Way, and food banks.

This year the food drive collected 970,000 pounds of nonperishable food in Oregon and Clark

County, Washington. In the Portland metro area, 407,000 pounds of food was gathered. Both numbers are lower than in previous years. Oregon and Southwest Washington will typically bring in 1.2 to 1.4 million pounds of food — and over 500,000 pounds in the Portland metro area.

Melissa Yale of the Oregon Food Bank said rainy weather was the likely cause for the lower amount. "A lot of people didn't want to leave bags of food in the rain," she said.

Nationally, tallies weren't finalized at press time, but coordinators were optimistic that the food drive will exceed 71 million pounds.

Since the food drive began in 1992, more than 1.4 billion pounds of food have been collected and distributed by NALC and community supporters.

Food Bank officials say a food drive this big helps fill the summer gap for children, many of whom have access to free and reduced price meals during the school year.

Labor Agency seeks housing hardship donations

Labor's Community Service Agency, Inc. (LCSA) is making an urgent appeal for donations to its Helping Hands temporary hardship assistance program.

"We're seeing the Oregon housing crisis force more and more working families into eviction and homelessness even while folks are employed," said LCSA Director Vickie Burns.

Affordable local housing is scarce. Burns said most rental agreements allow for no-cause evictions. They also contain pro-

hibitive move-in costs and unsustainable rental increase schedules. As a result, the small, per-family financial assistance offered through LCSA's Helping Hands program falls short of keeping families in their homes, and fails to make a dent in hefty move-in fees.

Anyone can send donations to Labor's Community Service Agency, Inc. at 9955 SE Washington, Suite 111, Portland, Oregon, 97216. For more information, call 503-231-4962.