

# Portland Labor Press

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No. 2

## What Workingmen Have Done For Our Country

BY A WORKINGMAN.

(Continued from Last Week.)

In my article of last week, after a few introductory observations, I dwelt at some length upon the fact that Christopher Columbus, the discoverer of America, was the son of a workingman, and that the son himself, illustrious as he afterwards became, in the earlier years of his life pursued the humble calling of his father, and I there closed. Beginning now, where I then left off, I wish to start again by saying that working men, for the most part, made up the original settlers of our old thirteen colonies, which became known as states about the time of the Declaration of Independence was given to the world, July 4, 1776. That this should have been the case was quite natural, for the following reasons:

1. To working men our country, even in its then wild, undeveloped condition, offered stronger inducements for making it the home of themselves and their children than were held out by the older countries, from which they came.

2. To the class to which they belonged constituted by far the greater portion of the population of such older countries, and hence they had much the larger numbers to draw from.

3. The wealthier and better fixed classes in such older countries, as may well be supposed, were more reluctant to quit their homes of ease and comfort, to which they were accustomed, and to exchange those for the hardships, exposures and privations of a new, unsettled country, rugged over by wild and savage beasts and inhabited by still more wild and savage men. Workingmen, however, for the most part, given to the great pleasure of adventure, and the desire to show their own skill and strength, were more ready to leave their old homes and seek a new one.

4. Workingmen were more likely to be found in the most fertile and best lands of a new country, and hence they were more likely to be found in the most fertile and best lands of a new country.

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they moved Westward over hills and table lands; then climbing the rugged heights until they paused upon the summit of the Rockies, to survey, for a moment, the beauty of surrounding scenes. Then descending their Western slopes, they continued in their onward march until they stood beside the far-famed "Golden Gate," through whose deep and narrow channel the waters of San Francisco bay roll in royal grandeur to and from the bosom of the sea, till they finally stood at the mouth of our own majestic Columbia, and there gazed in rapture on its swelling floods disappearing as they did, amid the turbulent breakers of the vast deep—breakers clad, so to speak, in the silvery sheen of eternal spray.

They have penetrated our primeval forests, felled the massive trees, cleared away the undergrowths, and to the extent of millions and millions of acres made them happy homes. They have drained great areas of swamp land, reduced them to a state of cultivation, and made them bring forth an abundance of various crops. They have settled upon the rolling prairies, tilled them with the plow, and transformed them into rich fields of golden wheat and waving corn. By a resort to our modern systems of irrigation they have produced marvellous stretches of sparkling plain and sandy desert, and thereby made them flow with milk and honey and blossom as the figs.

J. T. BRIDGEMAN

(The Old Countryman.)

Portland, Sept. 5.—A conference of the workingmen of the city was held at the city hall, for the purpose of discussing the proposed new charter.

Portland, Sept. 5.—The city council has passed a resolution to the effect that the city shall not be bound to pay for the maintenance of any street car.

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Chicago, Sept. 5.—About 25,000 idle tin-plate workers of the American Tin-plate Company throughout the country will resume work next Tuesday. This is the result of the scale conference between the Amalgamated Association representatives and the manufacturers, which ended here today. The scale signed tonight is the same as last year's rate of \$4.25 box I. C. coke plate, but concessions were made on the base weight, which gives the workers an advance of 2 per cent. The tin-house scale will be adjusted next Friday.

Chicago, Sept. 3.—At the meeting of the Federation of Labor, Richard Braunschweig, for the Woodworkers' Union, reported that some mill owners, employing about 500 men, have signed the union agreement, calling for an eight-hour day. He said that there are 60 mills, employing 1,000 men, which have not signed, and that the men will be called out on strike at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning at all these mills, if the owners have not signed the agreement by that time.

Pittsburg, Aug. 1.—About 25,000 idle tin-plate workers of the American Tin-plate Company throughout the country will resume work next Tuesday. This is the result of the scale conference between the Amalgamated Association representatives and the manufacturers, which ended here today. The scale signed tonight is the same as last year's rate of \$4.25 box I. C. coke plate, but concessions were made on the base weight, which gives the workers an advance of 2 per cent. The tin-house scale will be adjusted next Friday.

New York, Sept. 1.—The members of the cigar manufacturers' combine, which locked out its union employees 26 months ago, have surrendered unconditionally and it is believed the union will win a complete victory. The strike has involved 10,000 persons in this city, and has spread to Philadelphia, Lancaster, Pa., Baltimore, Md., and other cities. The union has been successful in securing the release of its members, and the manufacturers have been forced to accept the union's terms.

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## STREET CAR EMPLOYEES

PUBLIC KNOWS VERY LITTLE OF THEIR HARDSHIPS.

Hours of Work Are Long and Wages Low—Must Submit to Many Exactions of the Street Railway Companies.

Editor Labor Press:

The strike of the St. Louis street car employes has developed some very important and unpleasant facts. It has shown to what extent the public is dependent on street car employes. They are the servants of the people and the slaves of the corporations. The men are forced to compete with the vast body of unemployed, while the corporations have no competitors, save in a very few instances. The conditions and treatment of Portland are more atrocious and grossly paid than those of any other city in the Pacific coast.

Fully 50 per cent. of the employes who work their lives for the street car and who are paid as little as 10 cents a day, are forced to live in tenement houses, and are subjected to the most brutal and inhuman treatment. They are forced to work long hours, and are paid very low wages. They are forced to submit to many exactions of the street railway companies, and are treated as slaves.

The conditions of the street car employes are so atrocious and grossly paid that they are forced to work long hours, and are paid very low wages. They are forced to submit to many exactions of the street railway companies, and are treated as slaves.

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T. ROLLER.