

## Portland Labor Press

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### THE A. F. OF L. CONVENTION.

It will be exceedingly unfortunate if the time during the session of the convention of the American Federation of Labor, which is in session at Louisville, Ky., is expended in quibbling over differences between unions of trades that are similar in character. For instance, the difference between the stationary engineers and firemen, the carpenters, woodworkers and box-makers, the painters, decorators and paper hangers, the plumbers and gas-fitters and steam and hot-water fitters, the printers and machinists, the garment workers and tailors, the brewers, and the miners and hoisting engineers. All these differences are comparatively minor matters, and should be settled without unnecessary loss of time. There are vital questions that ought to come up before the convention that affect the entire working population of the country. These differences between brothers should be smoothed over in a spirit of fraternity, and then all act together in the furtherance of the greater work that lies before the convention, the chief of which is the consideration of the re-enactment of the Chinese exclusion act. Don't waste your ammunition, brethren, shooting at woodchucks when there is big game to be captured.

Of course, one of the important things to be done will be the election of a president. There has been some talk of John Mitchell, of the miners' union, but in all probability Samuel Gompers will be re-elected, as he has come as near giving perfect satisfaction as any man could.

### A WHOLESOME REGULATION.

The working people of Vancouver, B. C., are making an effort to have a law passed imposing a heavy tax on male domestic servants. This measure is proposed in the interest of working girls who are being crowded out by Japs and Chinese. It would seem that a law of this kind would be a wholesome regulation, and would go a great way toward eliminating this very undesirable element from the question of domestic service. It is bad enough for these vermin to rob our laboring men of employment by working for a mere pittance, but the subject assumes a more serious aspect when they seek to deprive our women and girls of the means of earning a living. If some of the societies that are striving to better the condition,

morally, socially and industrially, of poor girls and women would exert their energy, much of which is wasted, in trying to prevent the evils that they are trying to cure, they would accomplish more.

The imposition of a tax in Portland similar to that proposed in Vancouver would have a salutary effect in helping to drive the Chinese out of the homes of our city. If the women's clubs would make an effort to have a tax of this kind imposed on these Mongolian interlopers, they might do a great deal of good for the deserving ones of their own sex and effectually prevent much of the evil that they are trying to cure.

### TRYING TO CORNER THE MEAT MARKET.

It is announced that the price of meat is going up, the Chicago packers' trust having given the word. But that doesn't make any difference. Many working people don't like meat, anyhow; it tends to brutalize, the vegetarians say. So if the Armour and Swifts want us to pay their campaign contributions, we'll fool them. We hear that Rockefeller is also organizing a \$25,000,000 cattle trust.—Cleveland Citizen.

The news of new trusts being formed is getting to be so common that the formation of a new trust is no news. This man Rockefeller seems to be insatiable in his insane desire to gain worldly pelf. He is laying his hand on everything that comes within his reach. Why don't some phrenologist examine his head? He might find a new bump—a bump along the same line as acquisitiveness only in a more aggravated form—and thereby render a service to humanity in using this unparalleled specimen of the human species for scientific purposes. He is now trying to corner the meat market. It is a good gambling proposition to guess what will be the next necessity of life that he will try to control in his own selfish interest and against the interest of the people.

There is some consolation in the thought that it won't be long till a voice that he must heed will say to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

### A GUARANTY OF BETTER THINGS.

Probably in no other industry with the possible exception of the cigar manufacturer, has the union label's benefit been so substantially demonstrated as in the garment makers' trade. It has proven itself to be a great help toward abolishing the infamous sweating system that has so extensively prevailed in this trade. Its continued use will doubtless result in better sanitary conditions for those that toil, and a general amelioration of the lot of those who work at this trade. It will prove a great preventive of disease through garments made in the filthy dens or sweatshops, by enforcing cleanliness among the workers. It will be a guaranty, just as the blue label of the cigarmakers is, that the article has been made amid healthful surroundings and that the consumer runs no risk of contracting disease by using it.

The same rule applies to all union labels, but it is particularly applicable to that of the garment makers. It is to be hoped that the adoption of the label will become universal, and that there will be no demand for any product that does not bear it.

Every friend of organized labor, in fact, everybody that wants to see an improvement in the condition of the working people and at the same time a guaranty that healthful conditions surrounded the manufacture of any article, should always see that their purchases bear this trademark of better things than sweatshops, Chinese-made cigars, etc. Don't forget to demand the union label!

Don't forget the union label, the union card and union hours.

### EIGHT-HOUR LAW SUSTAINED.

The recent decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of Holden & Hardy, sheriff, upholding the eight-hour law, is another step forward in the way of bettering the condition of the working people. The court declares that the fact that both parties are competent to contract does not necessarily deprive the state of the power to interfere, where the contracting parties do not stand upon an equality or where the public health demands that one party to the contract shall be protected against himself. The opinion also states that employes are often induced by fear of discharge to conform to regulations, which their judgment, fairly exercised, would pronounce detrimental to their health or strength, and that the legislature may properly interpose its authority.

In short, it is the duty of the law to protect the weaker against the stronger, and, if necessary, against himself, for in his fear of losing his position and the means of support he may agree to do those things which if he were free to choose he would not do. In cases like this, the legislature may step in and do for the weaker party that which he cannot or dare not do for himself. The decision is a good one, and will go a long way toward dispelling the illusions that hang around the legal aphorism that the state has no right to pass laws impairing the validity of contracts.

A machine has been invented which, it is declared, will take the places of boys now employed in shuttling molds in bottle factories. The Sans Pareil factory in Hartford City, Ind., will be the first plant in the United States to put the machine in operation.

We devote considerable space this week to President Gompers' excellent report. In it he treats of all the subjects of vital importance to the workingman, and shows what is being done for him by labor organizations.

### IN SYMPATHY WITH LABOR.

Portland, Or., Dec. 8, 1900.

Editor Portland Labor Press—Dear Sir: Through your kindness I have been receiving copies of the Press for several months and I desire to express my appreciation of the favor. With the object of the paper I am in full accord, and in agreement with much that it said as to methods for bettering the condition of laboring men. So far as I have been able to judge, we all agree that the founder of the Christian religion was one whose teachings solve the great problems of humanity. He was a carpenter, and the son of a carpenter. He chose most of his disciples from the working classes. In two sentences which he declared, he covered the whole ground of man's duty to his fellow-man. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." These two simple and all-comprehensive rules would, if obeyed, bring in the day of peace.

The difficulty is that the world is not living up to these precepts. Not even the church is doing it. Laboring men are finding fault with the church, not with the founder of the church. That there is cause for this sentiment, no thinking man will deny, but it is not always remembered that there are many men in the churches who are honestly striving to find and follow the exact teachings of the Christ. They desire to reproduce in organized form the very principles taught by him whose name they bear. To do this they ask the co-operation of all men who recognize the supreme authority of the great teacher. The church ought to be the best friend of the workingman. It wants to be nothing less than that. If it has seemed to stand aloof from him, the cause is found in lack of effective methods and not in earnest intentions. The doors of the church are open wide to every workingman of the

city. The services of pastors are at the call of the people who need them, the activities of the church are administered without regard to financial or social rank. The manhood of all is recognized by inviting all to have part in the whole work of the church. What more can we do?

Sometimes I think the workingmen are standing aloof from their best friend when they so severely let the church alone. It is possible that the fault is all with the church; if so, we want to find it out. Show us our fault and we are ready, with your help, to correct it.

On Sunday evening, December 16, the labor question will be discussed at the First Baptist church, corner Twelfth and Taylor streets (the White Temple), and a most cordial invitation is extended to every laboring man and his family to be present. The music and every part of the service will be made as pleasant as possible. Sincerely yours,

ALEXANDER BLACKBURN.

### PROFESSIONAL TRADES UNIONS.

There is no class of persons that has so little sympathy for trades unions of workingmen as the professional class, yet there is no class of persons that maintain such perfect trades union principles for themselves as this same professional class.

Members of the legal profession have established an ideal trades union. This trades union has absolute control of the profession in every court of law and in nearly every civilized country. No man can plead a case as an attorney without having made application and having been received in the lawyers' trades union, known as the bar. The power of this lawyers' trades union is so great that judges bow in submission to its rules and regulations.

The Medical Association—the doctors' trade union—prohibits any person, unless he be recognized by such trade union, prescribing medicine for the relief of the afflicted. They have also established professional ethics that are binding on their craft, as are the ethics of labor unions. The medical profession denounces as "quack" doctors who ignore the rules of the medical trade union, just as labor unions denounce as "scab" workingmen who ignore the ethics of labor unions, and a "working card"—a diploma—must be in the possession of the medical practitioner before he is allowed to earn a dollar at his trade.

The professional trades unions have been more successful in the protection of their craft than have the labor unions. While labor has been denounced by many good people for attempting to secure legislation beneficial to labor, these professional gentlemen have quietly secured laws that effectually prevent "scabbing" by non-union professional men.

The lawyers, the doctors, the dentists, the druggists, have all secured laws which prevent incompetent persons working at their respective trades. Yet, when a labor union attempts to secure these same results, these same professional gentlemen join in the cry of "Down with the tyrannical labor unions."—American Musician.

### GET OUT AND HUSTLE.

The union is what the laboring men make it. If they join it just for the increase in wages and less hours and then stay at home and let some one else do the work, it will not stand. Get out and hustle; talk to your friends on the subject; get them interested; never let an opportunity to talk union pass, and talk to some purpose. There is a principle at stake; fairness to the employer and employee should be considered. Never adopt a scale that the employer cannot concede to if he is so minded—live and let live should be our motto; but after such a scale is adopted stick to it—never say die. By standing by each other, union success is assured.—Leather Workers' Journal.