

Portland Labor Press

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PRESS THE BUTTON AND WE'LL DO THE REST.

It is our earnest desire to make the Labor Press not only a great power for organized labor, but to make it as good as the best workingman's paper in the United States. This is saying a good deal, you say. So it is; but we mean every word of it, and if the workingmen of Portland will do half of their duty in supporting it, we will realize our hopes. For three or four weeks the working people of the city will be making up a list of papers to be taken during the coming year. We want to enjoin every man who is the friend of organized labor, to head the list with the Portland Labor Press. By that we will be convinced that the paper is appreciated and that our labors have not been in vain. Nothing is so great a help to organized labor as a reliable, able exponent of the principles advocated, in the shape of a labor paper. Do not confine your subscriptions to yourselves, but whenever you can, get a friend to take the paper. Not only that, but whenever it is possible, patronize the business men who advertise in the Labor Press, thereby showing their kindly feeling as well as their appreciation of its advantages as an advertising medium.

Give us your help, brethren, and we will give you a paper that you will be proud of, and that will be a great help in unionizing the city. There is no reason why Portland should not be the best organized city on the Pacific coast, and with your aid we will endeavor to gain for it that enviable position. And when we have made it the best organized city on the coast, it will naturally follow as the day the night, it will be the best business place on the coast. Now if the working people of the city want to see those two things consummated, press the button for the Labor Press and we'll do the rest.

THE OREGONIAN SAYS "IT'S A LIE."

The following resolution, adopted by the recent convention of the American Federation of Labor at Louisville, has excited the ire of the Oregonian:

"The right to quit work is an inviolable prerogative of every American workman, and a restriction of that right is an outrage on the liberties of the American people."

This resolution the Oregonian, with characteristic politeness, brands as "a lie by implication." The resolution is

a plain categorical assertion; if it is a lie at all, it is a lie direct. There is no "implication" about it. The fact of the matter is, the statement in the resolution is the truth, and no honest man with an ounce of brains will deny it. But the Oregonian saw or thought it saw a chance to jump on organized labor, and as it never lets an opportunity to do this pass, it opens the vials of its wrath on the American Federation of Labor, which organization made the mistake of not having the Oregonian draw up the resolution in question for it. It would doubtless then have been drawn to suit the great journalistic bulldozer. After indulging again in its favorite epithet, "it's a lie," the Oregonian goes on to say: "What they (the courts) do interfere with is one workingman's assumption of the right to prevent another workman from going to work." Let us see.

In a case tried in New York, involving, among other points, the right to picket establishments where a strike is in progress, Justice Ingraham, of the appellate division of the New York supreme court, in giving the supplementary opinion of the court, after speaking of the purposes of trade unions, says: "Hence it is not unlawful for a union to demand and procure exclusive employment or the discharge of obnoxious workmen by striking or threats of striking." Now if it is not unlawful to "demand and procure the discharge of obnoxious workmen," it surely can't be unlawful to prevent them from going to work.

Of course, this is only the opinion of the New York supreme court, and cuts no figure in comparison with the opinion of the Oregonian.

NOT AN UNMIXED EVIL.

A strike is not the worst thing in the world. On the other hand, it is often a great benefit in more ways than one. When the labor atmosphere, so to speak, becomes so impregnated by the impurities of oppression and injustice, a strike, like a thunderstorm, has a purifying effect, and leaves the conditions in a more healthy state. It is true, it may hurt somebody, so may lightning in a thunderstorm; but on the whole, it is beneficial.

Of course, we don't advocate strikes where they are unnecessary; neither do we believe in thunderstorms when the air is pure, and more than that, they don't often occur when that condition exists, neither are strikes likely to occur, unless the labor atmosphere has become so laden with injustice that the pent-up feelings of outraged manhood must find a vent, must find relief, and that relief is a strike. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, when a strike occurs there is a wrong to be righted that cannot through the perversity of the employer, be righted in any other way. If the employer will meet the employe half way, there will never be a strike, and no workingman ever asks for more.

CORPORATE ANARCHISM.

The New York Tribune, hitherto known as one of the defenders and supporters of organized capital, in an editorial thus attacks the great aggregators of capital that are ruling and ruining this country:

"We see today, however, the amazing and revolting spectacle of industrial corporations defying law, violating order and practicing anarchy. In playing ducks and drake with law and order, corporations are playing the game and into the hands of their worst enemy. When Chanter wrote, with mordant pen, of the men to whom every law is burdensome, every restraint insupportable and all government odious; men for whom honesty means the most trying of yokes, he had in mind not so much the sansculotte mob of the slums as the 'men of light and learning,' such as Danton, Desmoulin and Robespierre, upon whom the just judgment of time has

set the seal of execration. In like manner the worst enemy of social order today is not the beery brawler, but the law-breaking or law-evading corporation, in its insolence of wealth and influence. Corporate anarchy—that is the enemy."

These are strong words coming from such a paper as the New York Tribune. They show that the people, even the great dailies, are beginning to get their eyes open to the enormities practiced by corporate wealth.

THE ORIENTAL EXPOSITION.

We are glad to see that the great Oriental exposition in Portland is being received with so much favor by the people. All classes seem to be in favor of it. Business men and workingmen are heartily endorsing the enterprise. The Board of Trade, the Manufacturers' Association, the Historical Society, and last, but by no means least, organized labor want it. The names of the gentlemen who are taking an active part in the enterprise are almost synonymous with success. Mr. J. M. Long, city attorney, who did so much toward making the carnival a success, is chairman of the committee of 21 from the Board of Trade to confer with the Manufacturers' Association, may be mentioned as one of the strongest factors in the enterprise.

That the exposition will be a great thing for Portland needs no argument—great for the business portion of the city and great for the working people. An exposition of this kind would be of untold value in advertising Portland and Oregon. It would give employment to thousands of workingmen and bring thousands of dollars into the city. There is no reason why we should not have it, and every reason why we should. Organized labor can and doubtless will use its influence in favor of the exposition. An event of this kind will attract more attention to Portland and do more to advance its interests than anything else in the history of the city.

ADVOCATES HIGH WAGES.

Here are words of wisdom from the Louisville Courier-Journal, the most influential of the great dailies in the South:

"The competition for trade in the coming century will be sharp, and Great Britain will hardly keep the primacy as she has done during the century now about to close. Nevertheless, the day of bankruptcy is not yet visible. If she continues to employ the highest-paid laborers next to the United States, as now, she will hardly fall below the second place. All the talk of controlling the markets of the world with pauper labor is pure nonsense. Highly-paid labor is the cheapest, because it is the best, the most intelligent, the most productive. Countries that pay 10 cents a day Mexican money will never achieve industrial supremacy over those that pay \$2 to \$5 a day gold. It is not so recorded in the books of history or in the decrees of destiny."

An editorial like the above in the Courier-Journal is worth more than a whole state full of advocates of pauper labor, like the sycophantic Leland Stanford college that bares its back to the whip of corporate greed in California.

In speaking of George Harris, the burglar, the Oregonian says: "Probably if Harris was not a burglar, he would not be a total abstainer." That is, no man is a total abstainer who is not a burglar, which, in the Oregonian's favorite parlance, is a lie, and a very foolish lie at that. But the Oregonian can be counted on to oppose any kind of reform, whether it is temperance reform, gambling reform, religious reform, labor reform or anything else that tends to the betterment of mankind. The Oregonian is "agin it."

THE FOOD THE POOR EAT.

"Do you know that diseases of the heart and stomach are alarmingly on the increase?" said a well-known physician to the writer.

"What is the cause of that?" was asked.

"The profit system, the money-making craze," the practitioner replied. "No more horrible indictment can be brought against capitalism—against modern business methods—than that the people are being slowly poisoned by vile and dangerous adulterations of food and drink. The workingmen especially ought to be deeply interested in this question, because they and their families are necessarily compelled to take the cheapest and most impure foods and liquids into their systems. If they only knew how their lives and the lives of their wives and children are being shortened, not only by the intensified competition to gain wages, but by the manner in which they are robbed and ruined in body and mind when they spend those wages to fill their stomachs, they would rise up as one man and smash the capitalistic profit system at the polls and introduce the co-operative commonwealth."

"I tell you, young man, it makes my blood boil to come in daily contact with these stern facts, and then to realize that the working people care so little about their own welfare that they deliberately vote not alone to keep the shackles of wage slavery upon themselves, but to be slowly poisoned and prematurely enfeebled. It's awful! The slaves of the South would not have done that if they had had votes. And I don't know as I have overmuch sympathy for those fellows with fog-horn voices who howl themselves hoarse in campaign times for either of the old parties and all the iniquities that they stand for, but I do most emphatically protest against their condemning disfranchised and helpless women and children who look to them for support to lead lives of suffering and misery; and, worse still, commit a crime against coming generations," says the Cleveland Citizen.

"Those for whom workingmen vote are usually rich men, or at least so well situated that they can and do purchase the highest-priced and purest food products. The poor usually subsist, or try to exist, upon food stuffs that are inimical to good health. The former, being entrusted with the political power of the working class, take no steps to even check, let alone abolish, this growing evil, for the very good reason that they themselves or their friends are engaged in the nefarious traffic. Indeed, they cold-bloodedly block every attempt to interfere with the poisoning and health-ruining business. They harassed and finally drove Dr. McNeill out of the Ohio pure food commissionership; they have practically shelved the embalmed beef inquiry, and I understand that Senator Mason's committee to investigate pure food is to be muzzled. The pure food laws in every state are a farce."

Joseph H. Choate, our ambassador to the court of St. James, was once asked in a company who he would like to be if he were not himself. His kindly eyes traveled around the room as if in search of inspiration, and then rested upon Mrs. Choate. In a flash came the answer to the singular question put to him: "Mrs. Choate's second husband."

We publish in another column a list of union conventions to be held during the next two years, including a few that have already been held. Our readers would do well to cut this list out and preserve it for future reference.

Organization is the open sesame to success.