

Portland Labor Press

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A PLAIN PROPOSITION.

There is but one way to make converts to unionism, and that is by continuous, persistent individual effort. There is not a man in Portland who is a member of organized labor, that cannot influence some one, that cannot convince some non-union man, that it would be better for him to belong to the union. If every member of every union, would bear this in mind and work accordingly, what a revolution there would be in labor matters in Portland. The unions would have to hold special meetings to initiate the new members. In six months you would have to vaccinate somebody in order to find a scab in town. Wages would go up in every trade or calling, business would revive, and there would be such activity that astonishment would be depicted on the faces of the anti-progressive element in the city.

There is no legitimate reason why every laboring man in Oregon's metropolis is not a member of a labor union. If those who already belong would go to their friends on the outside and explain to them the benefits that will accrue to them by being members of organized labor, there is not one in ten that would not at once send in his name, for no man will voluntarily fail to do that which he knows is to his own interest, and it is to every workingman's interest to belong to a union.

GETTING THEIR EYES OPENED.

One of the fundamental doctrines of the American Federation of Labor, namely, the doctrine of municipal ownership of public utilities is rapidly spreading. It is gaining a foothold in many of the cities and is being agitated in many others. Wherever it has been tried, the experiment has proved a great success, especially in the way of saving the people's money, instead of squandering it to enrich a few greedy corporations. It is only a question of time and education when all the public necessities, such as street-car lines, electric and gas plants, water works, telephones, etc., will be owned and operated by the various municipalities. Hasten the day, when this class of monopolies shall be obliterated, and the people pay for what they get and no more.

The union label is labor's trade mark.

RETURNING TO FATHERLAND.

A Bremen correspondent is authority for the statement that many Germans are returning to the "fatherland," so many in fact that the immigration greatly exceeds the emigration. The growing merchant marine and navy and the large standing army is such that all the available men in the country are required for that purpose, compelling the farmers, miners, etc., to go to other countries for laborers. Most of the German railways have been built by Italians, and the same class of laborers is employed to carry out the immense fortifications in Alsace-Lorraine. The coal miners of Westphalian district are worked entirely by Italians and Bohemians.

The statement that Germans are returning to their native land from other countries, may be true, but we doubt whether any noticeable number are leaving America. We hope it is not true; for in their stead may come myriads of the yellow race that Kipling describes as half devil and half child. However, there is little danger, for the thrifty Germans of the United States know a good thing when they see it, and the great majority of them are too well contented here to ever think of returning to Germany to remain permanently.

REPRESENTATIVE KAHN'S BILL.

Representative Kahn, of California, will present a bill to Congress providing for the exclusion of the Chinese. It will be in most respects a re-enactment of the Geary bill, with the additional provision for an appeal to the United States district court from the decision of the Federal Commissioner, in cases where Chinese have been admitted on perjured Chinese testimony. As the law now stands, the hearing cannot be reopened nor is there any appeal, notwithstanding it may transpire that the applicant has been admitted on perjured testimony. Mr. Kahn will try to have the bill cover a period of twenty years. He is well pleased with the prospects and is confident of the passage of the bill.

Commissioner General Powderly, of the Immigration Bureau, is heartily in sympathy with the provision in the bill, for an appeal to the district court, as he says he has had a great deal of trouble through the want of some such provision. If Representative Kahn can get this bill through he will deserve the everlasting gratitude of the working people of the entire country and especially of the Pacific Coast.

REPRESENTATIVE MEN.

The man who thinks that organized labor is not in the saddle in Portland, should have been at the rally in A. O. U. W. hall last Friday evening. He would change his opinion without waiting to be told. It was a magnificent gathering of as honest, sober, healthful, industrious, intelligent men as could be found in any city of the land. The demonstration was an honor to Portland and to the people who compose the bone and sinew of the industrial enterprises that constitute the foundation of all success. There were more than a thousand men present, and a more intelligent, practical, sober set of men can not be got together within the corporate limits of Portland. They showed by their firm determined countenances that they were men who could be relied on in an emergency. They are the kind of men that gain battles for the country, and that carry "Old Glory" to victory and win the plaudits of an admiring world.

We are unable to understand how a conscientious non-union man can receive the benefits of the union, in the raise in wages, shortening hours, etc., and refuse to contribute to help the cause that helps him. We should think he would be ashamed to look his wife and children in the face.

WHAT SENATOR SWEET SAYS

The barbers of the city are considerably worked up over an article that appeared in Monday's Telegram headed "When Barbers Must Not Work." It seems that a Telegram reporter called on Senator Sweet, who is the author of the barbers' Sunday closing bill, and had a short talk with him on the subject. The second sentence in the Telegram article reads thus: "Being a lawyer and not a barber, though a patron of them, Senator Sweet is not particularly interested in the measure. He drafted the bill by request." This is the sentence that very justly excited the indignation of the barbers, as they say that Senator Sweet gave them to understand that he was in sympathy with the measure, and that he would try to have it passed.

A Portland Labor Press representative called on the Senator at his office in the Chamber of Commerce and directed his attention to the article, asking him whether it was correct or not.

"No, sir," said the Senator, "it is not correct. I said nothing that could give any such impression. The Telegram reporter asked me whether I had any bills to present to the Legislature. I told him I had and showed him this bill of the barbers. That was all there was to it. I have been misquoted and I shall call the Telegram's attention to it." That settled the matter as far as Senator Sweet is concerned.

Now, as to the statement in the article that the barbers in favor of the bill may be "classified with the dog in the manger." The Labor Press man called on Secretary Leabo, of the Barbers' Union, and was shown a list of petitions in favor of Sunday closing, from nearly every town in the state, in which the barbers were virtually unanimous in favor of the law. In fact from every town that has been heard from, there was a universal sentiment in favor of Sunday closing. So the dog in the manger, if there is any dog in the manger, must be the unnamed barber that was interviewed by the Telegram reporter.

NO WOMEN "SCABS."

If the laboring men were all as loyal to organized labor and as sensible to the benefits of unionism as the women, there would not be a non-union man in Portland. Whenever or wherever a strike for better conditions has been in progress, the wives and mothers and sisters and daughters of the workers have stood faithfully by their dear ones in their struggle for the right. Many a time have the women during a strike exhibited a fortitude in the face of privation and want, that would have reflected credit on the sterner sex. There are no women "scabs;" they are for union—to a man.

Why don't the friends of white labor urge the city council to place a heavy tax on male house servants and thus drive out the "chinks" who are lowering wages and driving white women and girls out of employment? If the working people don't help themselves and those dear to them, nobody else will.

If the organized carpenters will make a resolution and abide by it, that they won't work with non-union carpenters, it won't be long till there won't be any of the latter class around. They will either join the union or get out of town.

We say it without hesitation that one of the best extemporaneous speakers on subjects that have come within the limits of his investigation, in Portland, is Mr. J. T. Morgan, of the millmen's union.

There are a great many unorganized wood-workers in Portland. Why don't they get together?

SOME PRESS COMMENTS

Since some people will no doubt be greatly pleased to know that the plutocratic press is happy at the outcome of the A. F. of L. convention, I take pleasure also in reprinting a few comments, and thus making everything satisfactory all around.

"In the first place," says the Cleveland Leader, "the delegates to the convention put themselves on record as in opposition to the principles of socialism. The main objection to the reelection of Samuel Gompers as president came from the Socialists, and he won a decided triumph, the convention not only re-electing him, but refusing to shorten his term or change the method of electing officers, says the Cleveland Citizen. The attempt to amend the constitution in such a way as to permit the organization to go into politics—a purely socialistic proposition—was abandoned. . . . One delegate said he had not much faith in labor representatives in public offices, and that he would sooner see Mark Hanna representing their interests.

"Organized labor throughout the country is to be congratulated on the defeat of the forces which were seeking to gain control of the Federation, and the delegates to the Louisville convention are to be congratulated on the conservatism and good sense which characterized their proceedings. In many respects Samuel Gompers is one of the best leaders labor has had in recent years."

Heretofore P. M. Arthur was the only "labor leader" worth trusting in the estimation of the Cleveland Leader. I am glad the Leader is becoming more liberal in this leading business.

The Buffalo Courier thinks "the usefulness of the American Federation of Labor will not be increased by an alliance with the Social Democratic party, or any other party."

But the Courier was not much disturbed when the Federation practically formed an alliance with the capitalistic Democratic party by endorsing free silver and denouncing imperialism.

The Chicago Tribune also sanctions the stand of the Federation in turning down the Socialists, and compliments the conservatives for protesting against a speaker's reference to Congress as the "robbers' roost" and to workingmen as "wage slaves," and concludes that the present policy of the Federation "will hardly be questioned by anyone who has the practical good of organized labor at heart."

"The Journal has already commented on some phases of politics in the Federation of Labor brought on by the agitation of the Social Democratic element," says the Indianapolis Journal. "It looks now as if the conservative element would prove stronger than in previous contests on the same line. On Monday there was a spirited debate over a resolution that recited the failure of lobbyists in Congress and Legislatures to secure recognition for union labor, and declared that the men who oppose labor and make the laws are the agents of concentrated capital; that the laws are not made for the workingmen or the common people; that to right these wrongs laboring men must be possessed of the power of legislation or be legislators themselves; that the lack of power to control and enact legislation holds labor practically powerless before concentrated capital. The resolution declared that the Federation should concentrate its efforts for the overthrow of such conditions and indorse the initiative and referendum as the only means by which this could be accomplished. After a warm discussion the resolution and preamble were lost by a vote of 70 to 50. If the conservatives maintain this majority, efforts to commit the organization to socialism will fail."

Show me a restaurant or hotel man who is opposed to union labor, and I'll show you a man that always cuts a piece of pie so that it will have three acute angles.