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PROTECTING DEPOSITORS.

We print in this issue a communication from a bank depositor on the question of better protection for people who trust their money to the keeping of banks. The subject is certainly one that demands the attention of every man and woman who is interested in the welfare of the people. There is no legitimate reason why anybody should trust his money to a bank without security any more than to an individual. Banks are only individuals under a corporate name. The incompetency or dishonesty of the individuals composing the corporation is the incompetency or dishonesty of the bank. The provisions suggested by our correspondent are certainly pertinent and they seem feasible and practicable. The amount of money that has been and is continually being lost by bank failures presents a state of affairs that demands some sort of protection for the depositor. That the general government can and ought to furnish this protection there is no doubt. It is only a question of how it should be done. It would not only be a benefit to the depositors, but to the banks themselves, for it would give a confidence to the people in the security of the bank that they do not now possess and would as a matter of course increase the deposits. There would not be so much money kept in stockpiles and private vaults if the people were protected in their bank deposits. This is a vital question and appeals to the depositors, to the banks and to the general government. The insecurity of the national banking system is doing more to produce timidity and suspicion and to keep money locked up in private vaults than any other one thing in the country.

It is time the government gave this matter its serious attention, and the administration that provides for the protection of the masses by securing their bank deposits will endear itself to the hearts of the people in a way that will not be forgotten.

DIRTY BUSINESS.

A plot has been unearthed in the East by which the capitalistic classes are using money for the purpose of purchasing the small traitor element that can now and then be found in the ranks of organized labor. The money is devoted to corrupting weak and dishonest unionists and procuring information regarding the positions and actions of the leaders in the various unions. That people so base as to lend themselves to this vile, degrading, disreputable employment can be found brings the blush to every true-hearted unionist. But then traitors that will follow the jingle of silver and gold have been ever since Judas Iscariot betrayed our Savior for thirty pieces of silver. If these modern Judases could be induced by the pangs of conscience or anything else to destroy themselves as did their infamous original, they might prove to the world that they are no more than he was. But they haven't manhood enough to even commit suicide.

We are told by good authority that the paper mills of Oregon City have a number of this class in their employ. Men, so-called, who get good pay for keeping their ears open and reporting any employee whom they chance to overhear expressing any dissatisfaction with his condition, or even mentioning the word union. The offender is at once notified that his services are no longer required, and he is unceremoniously turned out to better himself if he can. If one or two of these "pluggers," as they are called, could be detected in their nefarious work and made to dance a traitor's hornpipe or nothing, it might prove a wholesome lesson for

some of the others of the same ilk. The remedy would be a desperate one, but desperate diseases sometimes require desperate remedies.

ONE REASON WHY.

"There is one reason, if no other," said a union man the other day, "why the business men should favor union in preference to cheap, non-union men, and that is, if the corporations are allowed to 'log' all the profits that are created by labor the wage earner will have no money to spend with the merchants. Every business man knows, if he will stop to think, that the retail houses depend on the middle and working class for ninety per cent of their trade. If they had to depend entirely upon the trade of the rich for their support, the retail merchant would stand a small chance of succeeding in business."

If the working element is prosperous, the merchant thrives from his trade. When the laborer's wages are cut down it takes just that much cash from the till of the business man, and just that much comfort from the cottage fireside. That is one reason why the business men should support and encourage organized labor. The union men are not so blind that they do not know their friends. They know the sentiment and attitude of every business man of any prominence.

PAYS GOOD DIVIDENDS.

Every man who works for wages must understand that isolated he is but a small factor in any contest that may arise between his employer and himself, but when surrounded by hundreds who are pledged and willing to support him, he immediately feels that he is armed for any conflict that may arise.

There is no organization that pays as good dividends on money invested as labor organizations. They cost but a pittance, and in return they shorten the hours of toil, hold and advance the wages of the worker, and, besides all this, give him a sense of security, independence and manhood in the presence of the boss that is entirely absent when he stands alone.

All this and more the union does. It educates, develops and broadens the man. In the union room he meets in friendly debate his fellow workers, hears the questions of the day discussed, and by it acquires knowledge that is useful in all life to him. His association in the union runs off his coarse corners, banishes his prejudices and broadens his judgment and, by its rigid teachings, makes him a better citizen in every respect.

WORKS BOTH WAYS.

Mr. Schwab, of the steel trust, is opposed to labor trusts. Mr. Schwab is inconsistent, to say the least. It makes a lot of difference whose ox is gored. If Mr. Schwab and his partners have the right to consolidate, will he kindly tell us why the men whose labor is their capital have not the same right; of course, he can't give any reason, unless it is the woman's reason—"because." Mr. Schwab, of course can tell why he does not want the men to organize. It is because with the men who do the work for the steel trust, if unorganized, will be completely in the power of the trust, and if organized they will have something to say about their hours of labor and the compensation they will receive. We are sorry for Mr. Schwab and his pals; but his gigantic steel trust will have to face a gigantic labor trust, composed of the men in his employ. Mr. Schwab can console himself with the pleasant reflection that inasmuch as he has all the steel plants of the country under his control, all the men who are skilled workmen in steel will belong to the labor side of the same great combine. So that if any misunderstanding occurs, there won't be one little plant involved while ninety-nine of the hundred are at work, but the entire shooting match will be brought to a standstill. So you see, Mr. Schwab, the rule works both ways.

THE MISSISSIPPI PLAN.

Quite a novel and at the same time effective method of securing justice was adopted by the 2,000 textile workers of Wesson, Miss., which town boasts of having the largest cotton mill in the South. A manager by the name of Oliver started out to make a record by discharging the old employees—they were thrown out on the scrap-heap like so much old iron. A sort of revolutionary spirit infused the other employees, and one fine evening recently about three hundred of them formed a procession, marched to Manager Oliver's residence, and politely informed that gentleman that if he did not vamoose instant his carcass would decorate a telegraph pole. The modern cannibal did not stop to argue. He ordered a carriage, gave orders to pack his belongings, and decamped. When the mill proprietors heard the news they reinstated the old employees. The marchers were law-breakers—breakers of capitalistic laws. Who will condemn them?

BASE INGRATITUDE.

The Machine Wood Worker tells a great truth when it says that the reasons why trades unionism is not a greater success than it is on this side of the Atlantic is largely attributable to the ingratitude shown toward those who do most for it.

There is not a worker in the movement who can not point to men who have labored zealously, doing valiant service for labor's rights, but who in time became apathetic and whose efforts were lost through lack of proper appreciation, or worse, through jealousy or antagonism on the part of those who did little themselves, and hated to see those who did something receive the proper credit.

There are those who have given the best parts of their lives to the advancement of trades unionism, and what have they to show for it today? The time has come for a change. We must drop our silly jealousies, cultivate a spirit of tolerance, each one doing what good he can. When we learn to do this the charge of ingratitude will no longer be applicable to us.

Go with the crowd on the R. R. Excursion to Salem, Sunday, May 26. Fair for Round Trip, only \$1.00.

AN ARCTIC PARADISE.

A correspondent writes from Iceland, that, while that small country has over 70,000 inhabitants, it boasts of but two policemen, and they never have anything to do except when sailors and other foreigners come ashore. They have an empty jail, but no poorhouse or orphan asylum, and there was only one murder in 37 years, which was committed by an insane man, and there have been but two divorces. The country has no illiterates, is well provided with schools and a college. There are no beggars, no slums and vices are almost unknown. The people own their homes and are not greedily exploited in modern style.

By the time this paper gets to press there will probably be from 100,000 to 150,000 machinists and their sympathizers on strike in this country. The contention of the machinists is for a nine-hour day, and they ought to have it. There is a tension and a strain on the nerves of men who work at this trade that in a comparatively short time undermines the constitution and brings on nervous prostration. Nine hours is as long as a man can work at the trade of a machinist without injury to himself, and no man ought to be required to work till he imperils his health. We trust the machinists will gain the victory, for right is on their side, and the right eventually wins.

San Francisco seems to be in the throes of a labor war. With the cooks and the waiters and the carriage and wagon makers and several others, the Golden Gate city must be having a lively time. We hope our friends of organized labor will win a sweeping victory, and the prospects are that they will.

AGITATE THE LABEL.

Too much attention, says the Cigar-makers' Journal, cannot now be given to the label and label agitation. Every local union should make a special effort to advance the label at this time. If the trust attempts to fight as it will find that our label will be its greatest stumbling block. It will find that the label is a bulwark of strength in the International Union with which, despite its power and funds, it cannot successfully cope. Active label committees should be appointed and urged to make a vigorous campaign in the interest of the label, and every member should do his utmost to back up the work of the label committees. In fact, all should resolve to be label agitators in their individual capacity. Neither the trust nor the non-union individual manufacturers can overcome or cope with the label. Our ground in this regard can be made doubly sure if a vigorous label agitation is at once started in all local unions. Boom the little blue label, the weapon with which we will beat back the whole non-union crowd and with which we will win the battle.

All union men should attend the R. R. Excursion given by the Federated Trades Assembly to Salem, Sunday, May 26. Round Trip, \$1.00.

Fifty members of the four companies of the Twelfth regiment, located at Williamsport, Pa., have asked for their discharge, on the ground that the labor union to which they belong requires that they quit the guard. The local militia officers declare no discharges will be given on that ground. In the mining regions whole militia regiments are composed of union workmen.

Even the cowboy must go. In Lower California electric searchlights are replacing the night riders. The tender of each searchlight is provided with a long-range rifle and a telephone.

A NATION OF CHEATS.

The Name American is Becoming a Synonym for Commercial and Business Dishonesty.

It is a curious anomaly that the greatest food-producing country in the world should be the greatest consumer of impure foodstuffs. We boast of our ability to feed the world, if it were necessary. There is no reason why we should not have the best upon our own tables. As a matter of fact, however, we are impregnated with the wooden nutmeg principle, says the Bricklayer and Mason. We have become so accustomed to cheating each other, and to being cheated, that this is accepted as a necessary condition of every-day business life. We no longer expect anything to be as it is represented to be; when it so happens, we are astonished or still incredulous. We have come to regard the general "skinning" of the people as smart, as a natural, if not exactly laudable, business proposition. We have earned the reputation abroad of being a nation of "sharps." There as well as here at home, we have sacrificed quality of food products to cheapness, made purity and superiority of material subordinate to cost.

Generally speaking, it is impossible to go into any establishment in New York or any other American city, where food products are sold, and obtain any prepared article of common consumption which answers to its label. It is only relatively good, relatively doctored, relatively adulterated, and relatively pure or impure. The labels of the best houses are either entirely false, or at the best misleading and extravagant; and they are no more to be relied upon as an index to quality than the circus poster is to be relied upon as a description of the real show. Is it a case of pure bluff, if the word "pure" can be used in such a connection. This is true of almost every class of prepared food.

Some of these adulterations are harmful, some are not. Analysis has shown repeatedly that many of the adulterations used in the manufacture of our foodstuffs are highly poisonous, and the remainder are in some wise harmful to the general health. "Loaded" flour, and the bread from our bakeries, deny to many of us the very staff of life. In other countries, where there are safe-guards about such things, bread is what bread should be.

The processes of adulterating and doctoring are carried as far as the producers think the public can be deceived, or, being deceived, will continue to purchase. They count upon that peculiar tolerance characteristic of the American people, which leads them to put up with anything, even the most scandalous imposition, without complaint. The fact that these producers swarm and thrive, even at the cut-throat game of competition, and have thousands to spend in advertising their bogus wares, shows that they do not count upon this apathy in vain.

We have certain so-called pure food laws, but, beyond the wholesale restraints upon the milkman, they are practically a dead letter. There are two reasons for this: First, their enforcement depends upon private complaint; second, the punishments would fall upon the wrong persons. As we are not a nation of "kickers," it is difficult to obtain private complaints against anybody for less than bodily injury or highway robbery. The retailer is not the man who should be made to suffer. He buys a lot of canned goods and condiments, etc., in bulk, and sells these without assuming any personal responsibility for their purity or wholesomeness, or even knowing anything about them. It is the firm which puts the goods upon the market which should be brought to book; but this cannot be accomplished by local laws, for the producer is likely to carry on his business outside the limits of the state wherein the complaint is made. It is impossible to reach him through the present laws. The buying public might refuse to buy his goods; but this would be simply to fly from one adulteration to another. Local boards of health not only require complaints, but evidence must be submitted that the adulterations complained of are detrimental to health. Then, the local retailer alone is made to suffer by the publicity of seizure. Besides, so gigantic is this species of fraud grown among us, that the entire police force of Greater New York would be inadequate to seize all of the spurious wines and liquors, and all of the "sardines" bearing the label of France, to say nothing of condemning the other frauds.

If it is true that a man is what he eats, then what sort of creature will be the future American?

At a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Waycross, Ga., a movement was begun recently to build a \$200,000 cotton factory at that place. More than \$22,000 was subscribed within an hour. George W. Deen and other capitalists are at the head of the enterprise. Cotton mill men in South Carolina have agreed to take \$100,000 of the capital stock, if Waycross will raise the other \$100,000.

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

The Telegrapher says: At the municipal elections held in London, England, in March, a sweeping victory was scored to the credit of the party whose chief plank was the municipal ownership of public utilities.

The eventual result will be that the people will own their own waterworks, their own gas and electric plants, the street cars and other means of transportation.

As the British government already owns the telegraph system of the country, as well as the telephones, it is apparent that all the public utilities will soon be under the people's control.

The March election was fought out principally on the question in regard to the ownership of the water supply. London's water supply is now owned by several different companies, the most important and influential one being that of the New River Company, which received its original charter during the time of King Charles II. The profits of this concern have been something enormous, the shares showing the highest premium of which any knowledge exists. The company had the audacity to recently present Parliament with a bill that went far to show that it was but an organized appetite, and its finish was soon in sight. The taxpayers of the city rose in a body and swept down into oblivion the conservative party which was backing the "grafters."

The progressive party, which espoused the municipal ownership idea, has secured the entire membership of the council, as a result of the New River Company's attempted encroachments. It looks now as if they would have to sell their property out to the city at a fair appraisal or lose out entirely, because the city will inaugurate a plant of its own, and it is to be presumed that the city in its present temper will not care which horn of the dilemma the companies take.

The city already holds possession of a number of the street car lines and will proceed at once in the construction of a number of new lines in order that the congestion of traffic may be relieved. The council has also taken up the business of providing model tenement houses for the benefit of the poor, and the building trades will be on the boom for years to come in consequence.

It is enough to give a man pause when contemplating these wonderful notions getting into the heads of the conservative citizens of London. It is, however, the second city of the kingdom, Glasgow, that is entitled to the palm, for that city has been in the public utility business for years and has made it an unqualified success.

FEDERATED TRADES EXCURSION.

The Federated Trades Assembly excursion to Salem a week from next Sunday will be one of the most enjoyable occasions of the kind that has ever gotten up in Portland. Arrangements are being made to have a large number of interesting features in the way of games, etc., the complete programme of which, together with the prizes and names of donors, will appear in next week's Labor Press. Nothing will be left undone that will tend to make those who go on the excursion enjoy the day. Tickets are going like hot cakes.

The Legislature of Nevada recently passed a law which compels all insurance companies to pay the full face value of policies in case of fire and as a result many companies have withdrawn from the state. Every state should have a similar law even if it drove three-fourths of the insurance companies out of the United States. The profits of these companies are enormous, and they should be compelled to pay the full face value of their policies.

Don't forget the Federated Trades Assembly R. R. Excursion to Salem, Sunday, May 26. Round Trip, \$1.00.

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