

Portland Labor Press

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STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR. A State Federation of Labor has been created. It took G. Y. Harry and the supporters of the movement just 30 days to accomplish it. Many said it could not be done, but it took hard and persistent work to show them that it could. Monday morning the convention convened and remained in session for three days. Over 180 delegates answered roll call, and there were a number of unions in the state that failed to send representatives. The delegates in the convention represent approximately 12,000 union men in the state. A conservative estimate of all the men in the state affiliated with unions is 13,000. Portland alone has about 7,500 union men. The character of the convention eclipsed anything the promoters had anticipated. From the first to the last, there was not a time but the deliberations were dignified, conservative and beneficial. The officers of the convention were impartial and especially fitted for the duties imposed upon them.

Many resolutions were introduced and passed that would conserve the public weal if made laws, as well as the promotion of the principles of unionism. The transactions were open and free from cant, and there was not the slightest evidence of selfishness from individual or collective delegates. If a measure was defeated or an office lost, the same good feeling extended to the end that characterized the beginning of the convention. It was simply a body of men together who sought to devise means for the improvement of the masses morally, socially, intellectually and financially. The intellectual status of the convention was beyond the average. There were many good speakers, deep thinkers, and able organizers. The stability of the organization is based upon the fact that the workman of today realizes more than ever before that he is a responsible being and that his government depends upon him for its resources.

The executive board elected is strong in its personnel. President G. Y. Harry was the first to make the organization of a State Federation of Labor in Oregon possible. Many obstacles were encountered, but he led the process and fought them down one by one. He is a man of business ability, a gentleman in every particular, a conscientious and zealous union man, determined, honest, active and industrious. Secretary W. H. Barry is a member of Typographical Union, No. 58. He is especially fitted for the responsibilities imposed upon him. He is a union man at heart, generous, active, aggressive and accommodating, and for years has been one of the leading factors in the labor movement of Portland.

Treasurer Charles Mickley is a man that can always be found at his post of duty. He was never known to shirk a charge, deceive a friend, or take undue advantage of anybody. For many years he has been a consistent union man. Unionism is his religion. He is at present president of the Tailors' Union in this city, an organization that is indebted to him largely for its being. He is a conservative union man, a good thinker, and effective worker, and is endowed with the grand principle of honesty.

J. T. Welch, of Astoria, member of the Fishermen's Union, No. 6321, first vice-president; George Hornby, member of Portland L. L. A., No. 264, second vice-president; G. F. Johnson, of the Federal Union of Baker City, third vice-president; W. E. Miller, of the Salem Federal Union, fourth vice-president; and Fred Langever, Painters Union, No. 599, of Pendleton, fifth vice-president; all of these gentlemen are a credit in every way to the honors of their respective offices. They are earnest and indefatigable soldiers in the cause of unionism, and true types of American manhood.

The convention is over, and now the real work begins. From now on attempt will be made through the State Federation of Labor to correct certain abuses that can be remedied by law, and general organization of the wage earners throughout the state. The people of Oregon will not be disappointed in the relief that this institution assures. Our state will be more prosperous, capital safer, the worker better paid, and the homes brighter. Finally, there will be more equality amongst men and a greater stride towards a common brotherhood. And the State of Oregon will rejoice over the reforms enacted through the agency of the State Federation of Labor.

LABOR DIFFICULTIES. The Laundry Workers have conciliated their grievances and returned to work in all of the laundries upon a scale of prices that originally caused the trouble. Overtures were made to them of different kinds, and means employed to break their solid phalanx, but they stood shoulder to shoulder

and succeeded in securing everything contended for. The strike lasted but a week. A few disagreeable features occurred, but the strikers were not responsible for the infractions. The strike was generally conducted in such a manner as to leave no sore spots with the employers or employees. Everything in this line is progressing smoothly and under improved conditions.

The sawmill men are still out. A number have raised wages, but refuse to recognize the union. The fight has been centered upon the Portland Lumbering Co. The mill is running short-handed and has ceased to be even a small factor in supplying the lumber market. The mills will be taken up one at a time until a universal settlement is secured.

On the first of May the Woodworkers went out for a nine-hour day. The local is supported by its international and has the moral support of other unions in the city. The mills affected are Hand Manufacturing Co., North Pacific Planing Mill, Universal Sash & Door Factory, Nicolai, Ainslie, J. A. Martin and Northwest Door Co. The Hepp & Gay Co. and Fred Schwartz are both union all the way through and are flooded with orders.

The unfair mills have been importing men and picking up transient help, but in the majority of cases as fast as the men learn the facts of difference they leave their situations and many are joining the union. There are a few loafers in the city that have taken advantage of the situation by offering themselves for the places left by the strikers. Among these fellows is a young man about six and a half feet tall, whose principal vocation in the past has been the carrying of advertising signs upon his back, and consorting with cheap women. His physique is well known in the city on account of its length and breadth.

Hepp & Gay will enlarge their mill by adding 50 more feet. The new mill in course of construction on East Eighth and Taylor streets, the Frank Smith Co., will be completed by June 1. This mill is to be strictly union from shingle to mudsill, and will be 75x115 feet in dimensions. It will be the largest mill in the city. If the difference is not adjusted by the time the mill is ready, three eight-hour shifts of union men will be put to work, which will practically employ all union woodworkers in Portland.

Contractors are sending orders outside of the city, as they do not care to have their work tied up by the use of material from these unfair mills. The restaurant fight still continues. Keith has signed up, and so has the Quelle. The unfair restaurants now are Bruse, Eric, Juston, House, Baum & Brandes, Brunswick, Louvre, Palace, Watson, Raster's, O. K. Coffee House, Portland, Thompson, Cottage Waife, Vienna, Richards. A vigorous campaign will be instituted at once to induce these restaurants to become fair. Mr. Pike has resigned as secretary and business agent of the Alliance, and Ira Taylor, of Seattle, has been elected to fill the place.

CANDIDATE CARDS. In this issue of the Portland Labor Press will be seen a number of cards for candidates running for the various offices. In printing these cards the Press does not advocate their election. It simply means that they are friendly to organized labor. A candidate who is known to be an enemy to organized labor cannot and will not be able to buy advertising space in these columns. While the Labor Press is not taking part at this time in the pending campaign, yet it favors union men upon the tickets, for it believes that the only way to be assured of relief is to elect our own men or friends to the movement. We do not undertake to say that men outside of labor unions would not do as well, but with them there is not the incentive and perhaps they feel that they are under no obligations to support legislative measures that we need. Again, the cards printed in this paper are those of men with whom we can find no fault, and express themselves as friends of the laboring classes. It is essential that in this campaign union men should consult one another and vote for men who will fill the various offices with dignity and honesty. The political trimmer and professional trader should be relegated and reliable men elected to offices from the ranks of the people. The community is full of such men inside and outside of the ranks of organized labor. It is a fact that many men taking prominent part in the political destinies of today care little for party principle. They have been seen year after year around the various conventions scheming, trading, lying and deceiving, endeavoring to steal a morsel out of the political pot. They never produce anything, but endeavor to exist from the labors of the producer. It is such men as these that organized labor should unite against, and until it does and compels these men to go to work as an honest man should, just so long there will be unjust legislation, the weight of which will fall upon the wage earners of our state. One of the first things to be done is to stamp the political renegade just the same as you would an embezzler, social and moral miscreant. One of the first duties of organized labor is to purify politics, for it goes right to the center of our government and thence into the homes of our people.

CHILD LABOR ON STREETS. The committee appointed at the last meeting of the Federated Trades Council to confer with the contractors regarding the employment of small boys on the block paving of streets, had no duties to perform, as the boys were dismissed on Saturday, after the morning paper had been circulated upon the streets. The contractors stated that they were not aware that they were meeting the disapproval of the unions, and did not desire to antagonize organized labor. While organized labor appreciates the consideration of these gentlemen, yet they would much prefer that employers aid them in eliminating child labor everywhere and assist in giving every child in Oregon a fair education. While it is best at all times to keep the minds of the growing generation occupied with labor of various kinds, yet it seems unjust to put them at manual labor during the hours when they should be at school. Early education is what regulates after conditions, and there are thousands of men and women today who regret that their best years for school were neglected. When children creep into the bounds

of manhood and womanhood, it becomes difficult for them to take up the primary instruction that belongs to the early years. There is a natural, or perhaps an unnatural pride, that makes them timid in taking up a study alongside of one a number of years their junior. The child population of Portland is not so great nor their conditions so poor that they should be kept from school at manual labor.

SUDDEN CHANGE OF HEART.

In a letter to the Oregonian of May 2, ex-Governor Pennoyer criticizes the Millmen's Union for picking out the mills one at a time upon which to concentrate their fight. It is particularly noticeable that Mr. Pennoyer held his communication from the press until after the Jones Milling Company had capitulated and the union had centered its energies upon the Portland Lumbering Company, an institution in which Mr. Pennoyer is largely interested. The union would gladly have made the fight general if its resources were sufficient to justify them in doing so, but since Mr. Pennoyer and his business associates have attempted to keep them as poverty-stricken as possible, it was necessary for them to make the fight upon an economical and effective basis as possible. The union owes neither Mr. Pennoyer nor his associates an apology for the means employed. Mr. Pennoyer has enjoyed the confidence of the working people of Oregon many years, and they are surprised at this time that he has become so suddenly oblivious to their needs when they have been forced to touch upon his bounteous revenues to keep body and soul together.

Superintendent Tiffany, of the P. C. & O. R. Co. requested a conference with Organizers H. A. Duke, of this city, and F. Stacey Whitney, of Washington, last Wednesday, at which meeting he declared his intention to organize his system of railways, but has already advised his men to join the union. He declared that he has been misunderstood and wishes to go on record as friendly to organized labor. It is also reported that the City Suburban will advise their men to affiliate with the Street Car Men's Union. Thus it is evident that the employer and employee are gradually growing closer to each other's interests, until finally the day will come when strikes and physical contention will be no more.

It is now in order for some judge in the Eastern States who lately refused to eat meat because the meat trust placed the article so high that a common working man with a family could not afford to buy it. For the consumers to so reduce the volume of this particular industry is indeed an encroachment upon the rights of a certain class, and should be looked into at once.

Owing to the fact that the State Federation of Labor convention occurred during the busiest days of our publication, it is our only alternative to publish a generality of the convention, after which, in subsequent editions, we will publish the minutes and proceedings of the convention in full, taken directly from the secretary.

The good work of unionism grows apace. Last Monday evening H. A. Duke organized the Boxmakers, 60 in number, Wednesday evening the Blacksmiths, and tonight the Bootblacks, all under charter from the American Federation of Labor.

THE STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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convention hall during the evening, commencing at 9:30 o'clock.

THE OPEN MEETING.

Early in the evening members of various unions and their friends, including a number of ladies, assembled in the convention hall. Chairman Gurr announced that the meeting was called as a sort of a reunion of laborers and their families to hear the doctrine of labor organization discussed in various phases, and to hear Labor Commissioner Blackman, of Washington, before he went away, as Mr. Blackman had informed him that he would be compelled to return home on the following morning.

Among those upon the platform with the chairmen were William Blackman, F. Stacey Whitney, of Washington; Judge Cater, formerly of Denver, Colo.; M. J. Miller, of Oregon City; J. T. Morgan, George H. Howell. Mr. Howell was the first speaker introduced, and spoke along the lines of progress of the labor movement. He paid a glowing tribute to John Mitchell, president of the United Mineworkers of America, and Eugene V. Debs. He thought they were the type of men who should be at the head of labor organizations. That they were unselfish and sacrificed greater things for the sake of the working people. "What are we striving for?" said Mr. Howell. "Why, my friends, we want to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. We want a wage scale upon which we can rear our families and educate our children. While gigantic trusts pile up millions upon millions, it is no more than right and just that we demand a reasonable compensation. We want legislation. Every law upon the statute books of any state in favor of labor has been put there by members from the ranks of organized labor. What we want is to pay more attention to the character of the men we elect to represent us. By so doing we will secure what is ours and what is right."

Mr. Whitney was somewhat at a disadvantage on account of a severe cold, but said for the benefit of those who did not know the reasons of holding a convention at this time: "Why we organize," was the text of Mr. Whitney's address of which the following is a part: "We unite because we must. It is not a matter of sentiment or charity, but is purely a matter of cold business. We are trades unionists because there is no other agency through which we can secure our independence, privileges and our rights. Trades unions are nothing if not progressive. True, the progression of trades unions is slow. It is slow because there is a great mass to educate, but the possibilities of our unions is only regulated by the number of wage earners who remain on the outside."

Mr. Whitney then touched upon the

initiative and referendum and said that he would guarantee that the amendment would not be in the improved shape that it is now in if it was not for the trades unions, and he urged the members to take an active interest when they returned home in behalf of the measure.

Mr. Morgan waded into a small ocean of eloquence and in a happy manner ended up by throwing some very pretty bouquets to the ladies who were present.

"We live, my friends, in a very active, bustling, busy age. An age of organization. We find ourselves in two visible classes, namely, the employer and the employee—known as capitalist and labor. The former is organizing as never before. They are combining with capitalization ranging from \$100,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000. Why, we have the meat trust, the steel trust, the coal trust to keep us warm in the winter, an ice trust to keep us cool in the summer, a milk trust to nourish us when we come into the world, and a coffin trust when we go out. In the face of these conditions, need any one ask why the wage earners, need any one ask why the three modes in which organization subserves the condition of the workingman. First, because it affords them just rights; second, to resist encroachments of capital upon these rights; and third, to command higher consideration of other classes and the government itself."

Mr. Morgan then spoke very complimentary of Mr. Harry, who was, more than any other man, entitled to the praise of making possible a State Federation of Labor at this time. And he hoped that the time was not far distant when organized labor would do its full share in making the State of Oregon the brightest star in the constellation of states.

A recitation, "The Higher Power," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, was then given by M. J. Miller, of Oregon City, in a very creditable manner. Judge Cater said he was impressed with the thoughts expressed by the previous speakers. He was glad to hear them state their reasons for organizing. "I believe," said he, "that the boys who have been in the forefront of this battle for right are as brave as the boys who have stood before the belching cannon. For years they have stood the ridicule and invective of a misguided public, but tonight I believe we are standing upon the threshold of a brighter platform. No apology for labor organization is needed, and there never should have been one given. Why, they tell us of the great strides of labor. It is, indeed, a great stride to see capital increase the wages of their employees from \$1.12 to \$1.25, especially when the cost of living has advanced from 30 to 40 per cent. I even noticed in a newspaper the other day that labor had some rights. It was very reassuring to hear the press admit it. If you want a good and grand city you must have well-paid men in it. When men can go to work at 8 o'clock in the morning, take an hour for lunch, and then quit at 5 o'clock, you have got something. We hear from politicians, professional and business men that the wage earners have the power in their hands if they will only use it. I firmly believe that the day is in the near future when labor will be a prominent factor in the construction of our affairs."

Mr. Cater closed by urging the members of organized labor to stand together in political matters as well as industrial affairs.

Mr. Blackman, the principal speaker, was then introduced. "I am greatly pleased," said Mr. Blackman, "to know that your state, which has the reputation of being something of a slumbering state, has awakened to the advancement of organized labor. In 1897 we formed a state labor congress and at the first meeting there were but 12 or 15 present. However, the representatives went before the Legislature and demanded recognition. The result of the demand was the creation of the State Labor Bureau and passage of several laws for the benefit of mechanics. Feeling that they had obtained a foothold, they next demanded the enactment of other laws, among them the labor lien and blacklist measures, and at the last session the 10-hour law relative to the employment of women was passed. Out of the little gathering of 12 or 15 sprung the federation, the convention of which in January was attended by 150 delegates representing 15,000 organized laborers. The work begun will be continued, and when the Legislature meets in Olympia in January the federation expects to see a dozen of its members in each section are preparing and putting in shape the bills passed upon by the federation, and when the political conventions meet in the fall these measures will be presented to them for consideration. The bills are for the benefit of workingmen and citizens generally, and the candidate who turns them down will stay at home. That was as far as the federation went into politics. The Oregon Federation can do the same thing, and I would not be surprised to see a dozen or more labor representatives in the Legislature at Salem next year."

In speaking about imported labor, Mr. Blackman said that two years ago a man named Remington had brought a number of Japanese into the state. He had an assistant who overdraw the bank account, was arrested, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to one year in the Pierce County Jail. Thinking that the assistant could throw some light upon the influx of Japanese, Mr. Blackman visited him in jail, and the prisoner

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