

Portland Labor Press

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DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.

Organized labor of Portland has been benefited by the recent visit of Messrs. Duncan, Kidd and Lennon, of the executive committee of the American Federation of Labor. These gentlemen are veterans in the service, and being familiar with the many peculiar phases that arise in the work, are able to and gave advice particularly fitted to do a great amount of good. That they are sincere in the movement and speak from honest conviction and a knowledge based upon experience and study lends sufficient weight to their words that at once convince an unbiased mind of the possibilities of the union. They urged conservative but sedulous action, firmness and responsibility; that a contract between employer and employ should by all means be kept, even at the expense and inconvenience of the union. They counseled forbearance and study. Education as a means of securing justice and equity, instead of force. "The movement," they said, "was necessary on account of its magnitude," but the virtue of its principles would gradually permeate every nook and cranny of the universe until the emancipation of the servile toiler would be fully accomplished. They hold great faith in organized labor, and believe that it is the safeguard of our democratic institutions. They went away leaving many friends in Portland, who will profit by their visit here.

On August 4 Messrs. Gompers, Morris and O'Connell, the other half of the committee, now on the Coast, will visit this city and address the citizens and wage-earners in some place to be announced in a few days. These gentlemen are also of National reputation in the labor movement, and add light to the knowledge we have already derived from our brethren who have just left us.

Mr. Gompers is an exceptionally fine speaker, and together with his 30 years' and more of constant service at the head of the movement, along with his natural ability, places him in the foremost rank of labor leaders of the times. Every one should turn out to hear him and his colleagues on that date.

LABOR DAY.

The committee on Labor day is working out its plans for the biggest and most successful parade ever seen in the Northwest. It has been determined to have an all-day Labor day, and steps will be taken to have all employers agree to give their working people a full holiday on labor's emancipation day this year. It is conservatively estimated that more than 10,000 union people will parade, and not less than six full bands of music will be required to enliven their march. The original committee of five which has been planning the celebration was by motion at last Friday's meeting of the Federated Trades Council increased to 15. The new members will be announced at the next meeting by President Gurr. This committee will then organize and be subdivided into smaller committees for the better management of the different features of the parade and celebration. By our next issue the plans will be sufficiently perfected to place probably full scope and plans of the committee before our readers. Enough is known at this time, however, to warrant us in admonishing all our unions, fix and place their lines for non-changers, and prepare to make their

greatest turn-out in labor's cause. It is quite probable that some good, stiff cash prizes may be offered for those unions who can excel in uniforms, turn-outs, floats or other interesting features. It has been suggested, too, that there may be held three separate Labor day balls on that night, instead of one large ball, as last year. The idea is to make a rivalry of the three dances and offer an elegant trophy, something of value and that would be highly prized, to the management making the greatest success of their dance. How would it do to have the Building Trades Council manage one, the Water Front Federation the other, and the organization showing the greatest net return to the central body to hold the trophy for the current year, and to be competed for the following year?

There is no doubt at all but the observance of the first Monday in September will by far eclipse anything yet given in the Northwest. Wage-earners should delegate themselves individually to every effort to do their share and more to make of the coming Labor day the banner event of all similar demonstrations on the Coast. The fact of the day being made a legal holiday, and its purpose, demonstrates the progress of labor organization. Besides its economic significance to workers, it implies a sentiment beyond that of a mere machine. Just as Mr. Gompers says: "Labor day has been instituted to afford the workers an opportunity to review their past efforts, to rekindle the enthusiasm of those grown weary and worn in labor's struggles, and to strengthen the aspirations of all who strive for a truer social future. On this great day, without prejudice of race or creed, we direct our loving thoughts to our brothers who work at the bench, the loom or the plow; we extend fraternal greetings to all who toil, whether high upon the reeling mast or deep down in darkest mine; whether on the fast-speeding train or in the dim and fetid den of the cheap clothier. Especially in hope and faith of a brighter future we direct our thoughts to our toiling brothers, wherever they may be, who are organized in trade unions and are struggling to hasten the day when the might shall be with the right, and when each willing worker shall sit in comfort and security by his hearthstone with none to make him afraid."

GETTING CLOSER TOGETHER.

Dispatches dated July 22 from Chicago state that general managers of the railroads centering in Chicago are considering the advisability of establishing a general labor board, whose individual members will be empowered to act for the railroads they represent. An attempt will also be made to induce the labor unions to organize a similar board to treat with the railway board on grievances. The object of the plan is stated to be to save expenses and time for both the railroad officials and the employees.

Thus it will be seen that the solution of the labor problem is gradually adjusting itself. There has never yet occurred a reform without a considerable loss to somebody. While strikes, as a rule, are to be deprecated, sometimes there is no other method so well fitted to accomplish just the thing needed. Chicago has suffered from quite a number of extensive and costly strikes during the past 10 years. This experience has taught the great industrial agents of that great municipality that organized labor has become a fixture and is to be treated with as a part of the system of material production. They have concluded that the success of their business enterprises depend upon the proper negotiations and adjustments between themselves and their vast army of dividend-producers. The fallacious cry that "we will run our own business to suit ourselves" is giving way to the practical and logical idea that there is no such thing as an independent individual business. That the whole business world is based upon a system of co-operation and interchange, implicating the energy of every man, woman and child who works. Upon this thesis other labor boards will be encouraged and established by corporations at the seat of their holdings until strikes will have given way to the more enlightened plan of arbitration. Organized labor has always stood and stands today unqualifiedly for arbitration. It is not because labor is more enlightened than capital, but the one is satisfied that such a form will be the most economical means of obtaining a better condition for themselves, and the other hesitates to the concession for fear that their close corporation will be perturbed and their commissions reduced. As months and years roll on, other financiers and employers of labor will see the necessity of following the example set by the Chicago railroad magnates. The very law of evolution will make it imperative, and when a few of the keener agents adopt this plan it will become fashionable for the rest to follow. Then the labor question will settle down to a basis of a few rumblings without devastating eruptions. Capital and labor will then be working upon a feasible plan for harmony, and surely there can be no mistake in this.

See that the union label is on your goods.

We would call our readers' attention to the letters from our correspondent at Salem. They are full of energy, snap, and have the right ring. It will do any union man good to follow Mr. Harris, and should make a convert of the nonunion wage-earner. In his communication this week he aptly ridicules the snob who works for wages who thinks he is beyond such a common institution as a labor organization—these would-be "business men" who are not worth more to their employers than a nominal wage, say \$5 or \$6 per week.

The committee on Labor Day has some pretty surprises up its sleeve, for the people of Portland. It is estimated that fully 10,000 trades unionists will march in the parade on the first Monday in September. Special attention will be given to floats and spectacular mechanics.

NO GENERAL STRIKE.

The Bituminous Miners Will Abide by Their Contract and Help Strikers.

As was expected of the United Mine-workers' convention, held at Indianapolis, and just adjourned, the bituminous miners were instructed to abide by their contracts, and assist the anthracite miners who are fighting for a small betterment of their poverty-stricken condition. The basis upon which the fight will be continued substantially incorporates every suggestion made by President Mitchell. Following the recommendations, a public address was issued. Both recommendation and address follow:

Recommendations.

- 1. That the national treasurer be authorized and directed immediately to appropriate \$50,000 from the funds of the national treasury and place it at the disposal of the officers of Districts Nos. 1, 7 and 9 (these are the anthracite districts).
2. That all districts, sub-districts and local unions be appealed to to donate from the surplus in their treasuries as large an amount as they can afford.
3. That an assessment of 10 per cent be levied on the gross earnings of all members of local unions in Districts Nos. 6, 8, 12, 19, 23 and 25, and an assessment of \$1 per week upon all members of local unions in Districts Nos. 2, 5, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20 and 21. The members of districts now on strike which may resume work before this assessment has been removed shall be assessed either 10 per cent of their gross earnings or \$1 per week, whichever the district may decide, from the time work is resumed.
4. The assessment shall be paid direct from the local union to the national secretary, and the local unions will be held responsible for the payment of the same.
5. An assessment of 25 per cent will be levied upon the wages, salary or percentage received from the organization by all national district and sub-district officers and organizers.
6. The assessment shall begin with July 16, 1902.
7. All contributions made from the national office to the anthracite region will be divided pro rata to each anthracite district in accordance with the number of miners and mine laborers in each of them, as shown by the most recent coal reports.

It was voted also that each local union in the regions that is at work select a committee which shall secure work for as many of the men on strike as possible in the locality where the local union is situated, and that the same reports be made of the local union for the American Federation of Labor, and also that committees be appointed by local unions to canvass the business, men and other citizens of their localities for subscriptions.

Address to the Public.

In accordance with the recommendations of the special committee, it was voted to issue an address to the public. This address, as reported by the committee, says: "When we look upon the enormous fortunes that our labor has made possible with the innumerable comforts and luxuries that it brings to the people at large and then examine the paltry pittance we receive for the labor we have to perform, the dangers we undergo, the dampness we must endure, the foul air we must breathe, we feel we are being treated unjustly in payment for so much labor and so many sacrifices.

The great combinations of capital which control the coal industry have become so powerful that no miner can hope, through his individual efforts, to secure a just share of the wealth which his labor has produced. The history of industrial development in the past has shown that when capital combines, the workers must associate, else they will fall, one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in the struggle for existence. For many years the coal miners of America have been imbued with the truth of the position. The extremely low wages paid to anthracite miners, the refusal of the coal companies to have the coal properly weighed or permit the miners to employ men at their own expense to see the coal they have mined weighed, measured or credited, the great number of hours the miner must work every day in the most unsanitary conditions,

the cruel, unjust manner in which they have been treated by petty bosses, clothed with a little brief authority, the arbitrary assumption by the employers that neither the miners nor the public have any rights that are entitled to consideration by them, has forced us to organize, not for the purpose of taking from the operators that which belongs to them, but for the purpose of securing better treatment than we have received in the past and fair compensation for our labor.

"We have sought to accomplish this end by conciliatory methods, by submitting disputed points to arbitration and by a refusal to work upon the terms offered us, commonly spoken of as a strike, when all other means of adjusting the grievances complained of have failed. As proof of our sincerity, we point to the joint convention system of adjusting the wages and conditions of employment from year to year, which we have, by our persistent efforts, introduced and firmly established in a great majority of the bituminous fields of the United States. For five years we have annually made contracts in this manner with many of the bituminous coal operators, and, notwithstanding the allegations that are persistently made that we are an irresponsible body, we feel proud of the fact that, while it may have been to our financial interests on many occasions to cast them aside and we were under no legal obligations to any one, we have never failed to carry out to the letter and spirit every contract we have made, nor shall we violate them now.

"One hundred and fifty thousand of our craftsmen in the anthracite regions of Pennsylvania have sought to procure better wages and relief from many galling conditions under which they have been compelled to labor in the past. They have tried by every honorable means known to civilized men to adjust the grievances with their employers without resorting to a strike. In this they have failed because the employers have assumed to be the only parties interested in all the questions involving the welfare of the miners, a position that has not been sustained by the conditions existing since a stoppage of work has taken place.

"Some of the coal operators have been quoted as saying that the question is not one of wages or other conditions of employment, but that they believe it to be an opportune time to destroy the union. Whether they have made this statement or not, their actions indicate that their purpose is to destroy our organization. If it is the purpose of the coal operators to destroy our union, then upon the principle that self-preservation is the first law of nature, we will be fully justified in taking drastic measures to prevent the accomplishment of their designs. We believe we have within our reach the means by which that purpose can be thwarted. No law can compel us to work if we desire to remain idle.

"We believe that our interests in the community of which we are a part and our obligations to the operators with whom we have agreements require that we shall not inaugurate a general suspension of work in the coal trade. They may destroy our union, but they cannot make us violate our contracts. The struggle in the anthracite region will be continued until our demands have been granted or a competent board of arbitration has declared that we are wrong. No class of men realize more than we do the great power of public opinion. Its influence is potent for good or evil in accordance with the manner in which it is used. No right can be secured and maintained without its support, and no wrong can long exist that meets with its concentrated opposition. Realizing this fact, we appeal to the people at large to bring all possible pressure on the officers and stockholders of the anthracite coal-carrying railroads and other anthracite coal interests to treat consistently the appeals of their employes for arbitration.

"The care of 150,000 men and their families in a protracted struggle, such as this is likely to be, will require the expenditure of a large sum of money in the purchase of food. Our own resources are limited. We have made a large assessment on those members who are at work to assist us in caring for those who are on strike. We need more money for that purpose, and we appeal to the trades union and trades unionist, and every citizen whose interest is involved and to every lover of fair play, to assist us in raising \$1,000,000 per month from outside sources as long as the strike may last. We believe that with this amount of money, together with the amount received from our own members, we can continue the struggle until justice has been secured for the anthracite miners."

SALEM FORGING AHEAD.

Editor Labor Press: Salem unions moving along serenely. A steady growth is the report, but no new unions formed recently. There are several departments of labor that should be organized here, and doubtless will be soon. Prominent among these are the woodworkers, and I wish the planning-mill unions of your city would write a few letters to foremen and operators here, urging upon them the necessity

of unionizing their forces. None of them is opposed to it, but simply don't act, probably because they think it unnecessary, or something of that sort.

We are straining ourselves to get the Gompers party to come here on their return trip.

As yet I have not heard of any preparations here for Labor day, but you can count on Salem for some kind of a demonstration. We will not be found asleep on Labor day.

Everywhere in Salem the unions are getting down to a solid working basis. They are fast printing by-laws and making their working plans pat and in perfect trim and readiness. A few minor disputes have arisen, but so well and so quickly have the unions acted that their demands were granted and the public has heard little of it.

Our central body is composed of the most energetic young men of the city, and its meetings go with a snap and push that is remarkable. In every case the delegates composing it are among the best and most responsible in their respective unions.

It is something strange, however, to hear the sickly excuses a few people have for not joining the unions. They are not necessarily opposed to them, but seem to wonder why they should join. They look at you in a sort of vacant way and say: "How is it going to benefit me to join? I don't see any particular use in joining a union. I guess it's a good thing, but I'll wait till I see how it will benefit me before I join."

What a pity the energetic ones, who would accomplish something, and who can see some distance beyond the paltry personal and selfish benefits of movements of this kind, could not be rid of such a load of good-for-nothing burdens. They can't see what such movements have done for them and for millions vastly worse off than they; nor can they see the menace they are to others who must needs drag, pull and kick them along. Salem has a few, but will try to prod them into the procession somehow.

There is another class, too. Sort of semi-intellectuals—a little too conservative and "brainy" (?) to pay much attention to such things. They are easy, however, though they don't get into the swim early and share in its pioneer work. All that is necessary is to get some pace-setter to say the movement is popular and quite the proper thing, and our "brainy dudes" will just fall right into the push and you would never be able to tell but that they were born with a union label on them. I guess it's so everywhere. Yours for the cause, R. A. HARRIS.

LABOR NOTES.

At Cheyenne, Wyo., on the 17th, Frank Benotke was arrested on the charge of criminal provocation preferred by the Union Pacific. It was alleged that he ran the line of guards about the company's shops. The case was dismissed. The attorneys for the defense sprang a sensation by proving that in bringing an armed body of guards into Wyoming to protect its property the Union Pacific is violating the statutes. The strikers may bring suit against the guards on this charge.

The Amalgamated Society of Painters, which ordered a general strike in New York over a month ago for an advance in wages of 50 cents a day, has reported that a general strike in sympathy with the painters has been ordered by the Board of Building Trades. About 200 men in half a dozen trades have quit work on the new Union Club building on Fifth avenue. A sympathetic strike is to be ordered on the Mansion building, erected for Andrew Carnegie at Ninety-second street and Fifth avenue.

A strike was inaugurated July 21 throughout the country by the United Goldbeaters' National Union of America. The tie-up is said to be complete everywhere. There are about 400 goldbeaters in the United States, and all are members of the union. They demand the discharge of the women employed as moldfillers who, Mr. Gray, the president of Philadelphia union, says, do the work at the rate of 18 cents, for which the goldbeaters formerly received 90 cents. The beaters, he claims, can only earn \$12 to \$15 a week.

News reached the headquarters of the Western Federation of Miners that the Crow's Nest Coal Company, operating the coal mines at Fernie, B. C., has refused to permit the survivors of the recent disaster at that place to rescue the bodies of eight miners that are still buried in the mine. The federation officials are indignant over the action of the company, and President Charles H. Moyer will go to Fernie at once and take charge of the strike, which is the reason for the company's refusal to allow the miners to enter the works. The strike at Mitchell, B. C., in which 300 men were involved, has been settled, the companies there agreeing to recognize the union.

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