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NOT AN EVEN BREAK.

It has been the proud boast of the members of the Associated Press throughout the country that the service confines itself to legitimate news and facts. Time and again the advocates of the association have been heard to make these remarks. But is it true? Or has the Associated Press been subsidized by capital to color reports of industrial disputes so as to prejudice public opinion against organized labor?

Time and again reports have been heralded abroad of a strike changing the unions with the most stupid and glaring irregularities, when subsequent investigation and reading of the local papers where the difficulty existed changes the complexion of the affair altogether.

It is true that some very foolish and unlawful things are done in the name of organized labor, but these irregularities are becoming less frequent as more conservative and definite policy finds its way.

If property has been destroyed in a strike and the blame cannot be fixed upon union men, the reports read that it was done by "union sympathizers," who are in fact lawless loafers and hoodlums, not the friends of any law-abiding and well regulated organization.

There has hardly been a strike in our country during the past year that the men have not been cautioned against violence and irregularities by the leaders and officers of the union involved.

In the reports of the lively men and hearse drivers' strike in Chicago it has been made to appear that funerals were stopped, non-union drivers pulled from their seats, and the sacredness of the dead blasphemed by riotous actions of the strikers. A Rochester, N. Y., paper even said that a funeral was stopped by a walking delegate because the widow was using a handkerchief that did not contain the union label, in her lachrymal grief. In all other respects, the report said, the funeral was conducted according to the regulations of the union. The proceedings were stopped, while the big, burly walking delegate purchased a fresh cigar and the mourning lady secured a labeled kerchief.

Such nonsense as this finds little credence in a rational, thinking mind, but it is absorbed and digested by those who despise trades unions, and circulated as the truth.

In the Chicago Saturday Blade of January 2 the following paragraph, in a report of the strike proceedings, appears:

"Up to last Monday (December 28) there had been but one attack on a hearse and this was when it was being driven from the cemetery. Grossly exaggerated reports of 'rioting' are continually being put out by the Associated Press representative, who cares little for the truth so long as he can 'knock' union labor. Union funerals are being held every day, with hearses, and union drivers on the box. There has been, however, a lack of carriages."

Again in the Associated Press reports from Chicago, dated December 30, which appeared in the Oregonian under a sub-head, "Thieves Promptly on Scene," in a report of the Iroquois theater disaster, is the following:

"Frederick W. Job, secretary of the Chicago Employers' Association, telephoned to W. D. Moon, a lively stable proprietor at 2021 Wabash avenue, asking that carriages be sent for the relief of the sufferers. Mr. Moon replied he would give his carriages for the work. He later told Mr. Job that he notified the union headquarters, where the drivers who are now on strike were congregated, that he had donated the carriages, and asked if they would drive to the Iroquois theater to help remove the wounded. Mr. Moon replied to Mr.

Job that they flatly refused to do so." At the same time, Albert Young, president of the union, had prepared the following decree, which was the unanimous decision of the union at a special meeting and the same was distributed broadcast throughout the city:

"Owing to the great disaster caused by the fire at the Iroquois theater, I do hereby declare a truce in the present strike of undertakers and livery-drivers for 10 days, and do further request that every man now on strike report at once to his respective place of employment and do everything in his power to assist his employer in caring for the wants of the public. Wages are to have no consideration. "ALBERT YOUNG."

Of course this appeared in a later issue, but the news was of such importance that it had to be given publicity.

These instances mentioned are but a few of those appearing almost daily. Whether the discriminate reports of the reporters against trades unions would be or are sanctioned by the association as a whole we are unable to say, but we doubt it. If it was left to the members we believe that the opinion would prevail that news should be given based upon facts.

This belief however does not alter the fact that organized labor does not find favor in the reports of the Associated Press, nor does it receive an even break. It is therefore left to a few newspapers in the country that adhere to the policy of "fair play," and the labor press, to correct the false statements, but this necessarily comes after the damage has been done. Organized labor is therefore additionally burdened by a biased press, and accredited with faults that it was never guilty of, although we are aware that at times it makes grievous mistakes, which any organization of mortal men is heir to.

SAFETY OF THEATERS.

Though the horror of the wanton destruction of nearly 600 lives at the Iroquois theater disaster of Chicago on the afternoon of December 30 has diminished to some extent in the public eye as the days roll by, it will be a long time before it is forgotten. The misery and sorrow occasioned at that time cannot be wiped out in a day, and to those who lost their loved ones, never. After an exhaustive investigation by the city officials it has been found that the theater was not constructed according to the fire regulations of the city charter, and in fact there is scarcely a theater or public hall in Chicago that is. The mayor has ordered every play house closed until they are passed upon by a board of inspectors, and it is said that many of them will have to remain closed or be torn down and rebuilt. Fire Inspector Fulkerson says that not a life would have been lost by fire if the ventilator or skylight over the stage had been open, as it should have been. Further, he says: "All the testimony given me forms a story of incompetency, blunder, carelessness and neglect upon the part of the builders and managers of the theater."

True, the theater managers have been arrested, but it is another case of locking the door after the horse is stolen. If they are convicted of manslaughter it will not bring back the lives of the victims of that awful tragedy. Still, an example must be made of such criminal negligence.

The public is invited to an amusement, and pays for it. They are guaranteed safety or they would not attend. The laws of the city have been violated and the lives of the people jeopardized. Incompetent people are employed to operate dangerous things. The result is a whirlwind of fire and death. Shall the public suffer all these things in silence? Many cities have been aroused by the Chicago disaster, and many theaters are being overhauled and closed. Portland, as usual, must have a similar experience to wake up. Manager Baker voluntarily declares that he will put in another exit and build a large tank over the stage. Mr. Baker is right. It is his duty to surround the lives of his patrons with every safeguard. But he is the only one of the theater managers who have come to the front and there is no record of an investigation being made by the city authorities of the others. The Marquam is a splendid little theater, but its balcony and gallery are veritable fire traps. If a disastrous fire should break out there people would be burned like rats. The whole inside of the theater—the three floors—should have a broad opening into the alley-way.

In fact, theaters should be so constructed that one experienced man stationed at a given point, by simply starting machinery into motion, in case of fire, could empty the house in a few moments. Steel stage curtains should be used that could be dropped at the same time, and instantly.

It is poor policy to procrastinate in so serious a matter, and Portland should be aroused to the safety of her people by this fatal lesson.



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The resignation of President Burt of the Union Pacific Railway Company has been accepted as cheerfully by the mechanics employed in the service as it appears to have been by the company. While Mr. Burt unquestionably was possessed of extraordinary ability in the railroad business, his determination to carry out his pet plan of inaugurating the piece system in the railroad shops brought on an eighteen months' strike that played terrible havoc with the earning capacity of the road as well as nearly destroying all the rolling stock. Mr. Burt's failure to defeat the strikers caused Mr. Harriman to interfere, after which the strike was settled and the men returned to work. Since the agreement was made Mr. Burt has not kept faith with the men to the letter, and grumblings have frequently been heard. While Mr. Burt declares that his resignation was voluntary, the impression exists at Omaha and elsewhere that it was hastened on account of his inability to get along with the men. The mercenary attitude he displayed towards his employees has made him very unpopular, and even though he can operate a road successfully in every other way the industrial troubles that he would incite would ultimately force any railway system into insolvency.

Chief Hunt congratulates himself upon keeping the "hobos moving," and he says this is the best way to keep down crime. This does not tally with the fact that over 90 per cent of the hold-ups reported to the police during the past year have been done by well-dressed men. By keeping the "hobos moving" it may be that some petty crimes have been prevented, but the really criminal class do not come into nor go out of Portland on a brake-beam. If Chief Hunt would clear the city of that class of men who consort and live on the earnings of professionally bad women citizens would scarcely be knocked down and robbed in the very center of the business portion of the city within a stone's throw of Chief Hunt's visiting parlors. It is the internal and unrestrained wickedness of a city that breeds violence, and if the police force would be turned loose upon the cribs and resorts of moral degeneracy of our city the safety of our citizens would come nearer being assured.

Organized labor of Salt Lake City and Utah have declared war against the Mormon Church because the officers of the church, it is said tried to supply men to fill the strikers' places in the coal fields. This has been denied by the church officials, who addressed the following note to President Gompers, of the American Federation of Labor:

"A report having been circulated that the Mormon Church has used its influence against organized labor and has endeavored to fill the places of union strikers with non-union men, we hereby emphatically deny that the church over which we preside has taken any such step or issued any instructions on this matter. The whole story originated in a false newspaper report."

President Cannon, of the church, admits however that the notice was handed him by a coal company official and read with other notices, as is the custom. No question of church influence, he says, was directly or indirectly connected with the reading of the notice.

James M. Lynch, president of the International Typographical Union, who is considered one of the conservative labor leaders of the country, believes that an industrial crisis is near at hand. He assigns as the reason the activity of employers opposed to labor unions organizing into employers' alliances headed by D. M. Parry. At the same time he thinks that the disastrous influences of the latter may be balked by the National Civic Federation. While Mr. Lynch is not apprehensive as to the stability of organized labor to stem the opposition he counsels moderation and diplomacy in dealing with employers rather than a rash selection of the path that often leads to radicalism, disruption and suffering. Finally, he says, "Let us be firm and unyielding when that policy is necessary; conciliatory and reasonable when that is possible."

The Louisville, Ky., branch of Parry's Employers' Association is agitating the passage of a law fixing the right of franchise upon a property basis of \$200 worth of real estate. The reason alleged is to minimize the negro strength at the polls "who sell their votes to the highest bidder." This professed campaign to purify the ballot might have some merit if the real purpose was not to undermine the power of trades unions, many members of which do not own a foot of real property and do not receive enough wages to acquire it, but who are withal good citizens. There appears to be a vicious purpose at the bottom of their "purity agitation."

President W. C. Schardt, of the Chicago Federation of Labor has named a committee of union representatives to report on the Iroquois theater fire. The unions seek to prove that incompetent non-union employees caused the blaze—"pickup men," paid \$1 per performance, while organized members get \$4.50. Particular stress is put by the labor leaders on the charges that the management of the Iroquois refused to employ high-salaried men to handle the stage lights. It is claimed that the man who worked the light that caused the fire was an apprentice.

According to the health officer's report Portland is the second healthiest city. There is no reason why it should not be first. We have the best water on earth, the best climate, the best natural drainage, and altogether the best opportunity. All that is needed is to raze the old moss-covered, dilapidated buildings, tear up the decayed sidewalks and replace them with concrete, keep the streets clean, pay more attention to the sewerage, and employ conscientious and industrious inspectors.

This is the time when bosses are demanding reduction of wages and laying off men, that the shrewd wage-worker will stick to his union closer than ever and go to the meetings and discuss the causes, says the Rochester (N. Y.) Labor Journal. To drop out will hasten the reduction and consequent hardship, as the capitalists are quick to take advantage of the disorganized condition of the workers.

A writer in the Washington Post thinks that the labor question might be satisfactorily settled if labor were relieved of its ugliness. "Just what we have thought all the time," says the Washington Unionist, "and we would suggest that as a labor beautifier, there's nothing like a nice fat day's wages."

WAS NOT A BAD MAN.

Samuel Daily, the collar maker, who committed suicide last week, was a member of the Leather Workers' Union and was buried by that organization December 31, the remains being interred in the Lone Fir Cemetery.

The local papers reported his death and the manner in which it occurred, and stated further that Daily was a worthless fellow. This the members declare is a mistake. Daily came from Lincoln, Neb., several months ago with his wife and was unfortunately in securing work in Portland. At different times he worked a day or so but could not procure steady employment, until his circumstances were reduced to such an extent that he could no longer support his wife. His inability to secure work and provide for her estranged them and she left him. This preyed so upon his mind that he went to drinking liquor whenever he could get it a few days prior and up to the day he took poison. The boys who knew him say that he was not a bad fellow and worked whenever he could get it, but he was simply unfortunate and became despondent, which led to drink and then his death. Besides this he was confined to the hospital for several weeks shortly after he arrived in Portland.

His remains were given the same care and burial as would have been given any other member of the Leather Workers' Union.

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