

OPTIMISTIC VIEW

Commissioner Wright Not Apprehensive of the Industrial Future.

Occasionally, perhaps frequently, one hears Cassandra-like utterances relative to the future industrial conditions of the country. This results from a superficial understanding of real conditions and from the constant reports through the press of strikes more or less disastrous, not only to the strikers, but to their employers and to the public. The real fact is that for every occurrence known as a strike or lockout there are hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of cases of quiet, peaceful, reasonable adjustment of difficulties, the conditions surrounding which might have led to a strike with as much reason as produced the strikes that are announced.

In other words, there is a greater harmony of interests between employers and employees than at any time in this country since the period of frequent strikes began—say, 1880. There is a saner consideration in all these matters. The public judges the whole question by the turmoils that are described, when a real knowledge of actual conditions teaches the reverse.

Nearly all the prominent leaders of labor organizations are in favor of these quiet and private adjustments of affairs, of all reasonable methods of conciliation, and of some form of arbitration when all other methods fail. They deprecate a strike in the abstract, and only approve of it as a method of last resort.

Example of Brotherhoods.

Of course, this is not always so. The newer unions are more apt to inaugurate a strike at the beginning of a controversy than are those unions which have had experience. All of the railway brotherhoods—and they are the most conservative labor organizations in the country—not only oppose strikes, but do all they can to prevent them, and they stand so well with the railroad managements of the country that oftentimes matters are left entirely to the officers of the brotherhoods for adjustment.

This is the result of experience, for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers during their first years of existence restored to some of the most brutal methods known in labor matters to enforce their demands; but they learned their lesson, and learned it so well that the late chief of the brotherhood stood as a type of the wise and conservative labor leader. Mr. John Mitchell is a thorough and ardent supporter of all conciliatory methods and of arbitration if a controversy reaches the acute stage. So is Mr. Samuel Gompers, the head of the American Federation of Labor. So are all intelligent labor men in favor of the private adjustment, through the trade agreement, of all labor disputes.

The trade agreement, which all reasonable labor men advocate today, and which employers are in a very general way not only considering, but adopting, will in time do away with serious strikes and lockouts. The trade agreement is a solemn contract between employers and employees fixing all the conditions of labor in a specific, detailed way, providing that all grievances arising on either side shall be submitted to a joint committee composed of employers and employees for final adjustment, and that pending the adjustment of the difficulties there shall be no suspension of work on the part of the employees nor a lockout on the part of the employers.

In England, where this system has prevailed for twenty-five or thirty years, it has met with the most emphatic success, most of the industries adopting the method having been free from strikes during the continuance of their agreements. In this country also like results are being obtained. Many trades are making these agreements, extending not only to a single establishment, but to associations of establishments, and to associations of organizations.

Even when such agreements are broken, as in a very few instances they have been broken by either one side or the other, they have exerted a very strong moral influence. They lead to manliness on both sides. They avoid the suspicious attitude, a potent influence toward difficulty in labor matters, and they win the confidence of each party in the other. But, above all, they bring to the front the very best minds in the labor movement, for when an agreement exists all parties have a moral relationship and seek to abide by their word.

These are signs in the labor movement that should give the greatest encouragement, and they offset over and over again the disturbances of which we hear. They are changing the whole

moral tone of the industrial situation. They are producing a state of sobriety which can not be obtained by any other means.

What Intemperance Means.

The question of intemperance is one which is largely in the hands of employers of labor. When the employer understands and announces that he can hire a man with a clear head for the same compensation for which he can get one with a muddled brain, the temperance movement is subjected to a force not known by any other method. It may well be called the dynamics of the temperance movement, and began on the railroads a generation ago, first in orders that men who drank while on duty should not be employed. It was soon seen that this meant nothing whatever, and so the next movement was to prohibit the employment of men who were habitual drinkers, even in slight degree.

This movement has spread over the country. The public is interested as much as the railroads themselves. The safety of travel and the avoidance of disaster concern the whole people, and thus the economic value of the prohibition has been felt in every direction. It now extends to private and corporate concerns which desire to run their establishments with as little friction and as little loss as possible. The common and the statutory laws which make employers liable in some degree and under certain circumstances for the carelessness of their employees are a most powerful incentive to the employment of men with clear heads. Thus economically again the movement acquires strength.

The signs of the times relative to wages are those which can be drawn from economic conditions as a rule. Wages are higher at the present time than at any previous period in the history of the country. This applies not only to this but to other lands. Of course, high wages in some degree mean high prices, but in all probability wages have kept ahead of prices, so that the real purchasing power, which constitutes real wages themselves, is also higher than at any other period in the history of the country.

Pensions for Workmen.

Another sign relative to labor, and which means a better understanding and a more interested body of employers and employees, is the tendency to establish pension funds. Broad-minded and great-hearted employers are seeing that the man who invests his labor with them should have some protection against what we know as economic insecurity.

The industrious workman who puts his conscience as well as his skill of brain and hand into his labor is really working in the interest of the public, and when he becomes disabled through accident, whether by his own carelessness or by that of his fellow employee, or through defects the responsibility for which belong to the employer, he has sacrificed something in the interest of the public. So pension funds to recoup him for his losses or for his inability further to earn a support for himself and family are being established. These are very old across the Atlantic, and there are some instances of years of experience in this country, but it is only within the last few years that general interest has been enlisted. Now some of the largest concerns in the country—railroads, corporations engaged in manufacturing and others—are providing by a systematic, well-worked-out scheme for the protection of their employees. This will obtain additional advancement in the whole moral tone of industry, and will enable both employer and employee to see more clearly the joint interest involved.

Prospects Very Hopeful.

Whether all these things will be brought about during the coming year or not is, of course, problematical, and it would be unreasonable to expect that they will be, but the prospects for 1904, uncomplicated by any industrial depression, are very hopeful, indeed. Should an industrial depression come upon the country there would be a reduction in the number and severity of strikes. Strikes do not prevail to such a great extent when industry is laboring under a depression as when it is prosperous. The high prices which prevail under prosperity are the first to feel the effect of a depression, but wages are the last to fall. The reverse is true when the country is growing out of an industrial depression—prices begin to rise and wages rise more slowly.

It is also true, however, that, while prices may fall below their range as it existed during a period of industrial depression or after a period of prosperity, wages rarely if ever fall to the plane from which they started when prosperity began. The tendency of wages is always upward, taking the decades together; the tendency of prices is always downward under the same conditions.

So, whether an industrial depression reaches us, during the next year or two or not, it is fair to assume that the low wages of 30 or 40 years ago will not be reached, no matter what

the severity of the depression may be. Wages will not fall below what they were five or six years ago, when the present period of prosperity began, but they will fall, because under a period of depression wages as high as they are now become uneconomic—that is to say, they enhance the cost of production to such a degree that goods cannot be sold.

Security for High Wages.

The workman sometimes misunderstands this particular feature of economic conditions. All men will be glad to see wages increase, but if increased to a certain point production ceases and wages fall to the minimum. The only security for high wages is increased production, resulting in increased consumption. It may be hoped therefore that whatever depression comes upon us, it will be less severe than those of the past, and that wages and prices will remain more stable and be subjected to less severe and sharp fluctuations.

Taking it on the whole, therefore, and looking at those things which have been referred to so briefly, and at very many other matters which it would take great space to elaborate, it is perfectly clear that the real facts underlying the industrial condition of the country today are emphatic signs of a better and more peaceful condition—more prosperous and more satisfactory in every respect. There is no labor revolution or labor war ahead of us. Men are growing more intelligent, understand more clearly the real moral situation and are thus enabled to avoid disastrous undertakings in which they could have been easily induced to engage 10 or 15 years ago—Carroll D. Wright, United States Labor Commissioner.

FAVOR DIRECT LEGISLATION.

Initiative and Referendum Amendment Adopted at Convention.

At the convention of the Washington Federation of Labor, held in Spokane January 11-13, a resolution was passed pledging organized labor of that state to a movement that would secure the initiative and referendum amendment to the state constitution. The convention also decided not to admit the American Labor Union local organizations as members of the A. L. U., but as bona fide union organizations, thus leaving the state federation free to reject dual organizations of any one craft at any time, or until the A. F. of L. and the A. L. U. come to some common understanding and organizations from both can be admitted without any friction.

Secretary Menzies' report showed 144 unions affiliated with the federation. The receipts for the past year were \$2855.79, the expenditures \$2622.25, leaving a balance on hand of \$712.50.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, William Blackman, Olympia; First vice president, C. R. Case, Everett; second vice president, James Cutler, Spokane; third vice president, T. V. Copeland, Tacoma; fourth vice president, J. Franklin, Seattle; Fifth vice president, John Gronow, Aberdeen; secretary-treasurer, James Menzies, Tacoma; fraternal delegates to Oregon, Frank B. Orr, Everett, and T. S. Heskett, Spokane; delegate to A. F. of L. convention, W. Frank Moyer, Whatcom, and J. F. Baughman, Spokane; delegate to Colorado, William Blackman, Olympia; state organizer, C. O. Young, Olympia.

Resolutions on the following subjects were introduced and adopted: Pledging patronage for union-made goods.

Against making all trains mail trains.

Unfairness of the Washburn-Crosby by Milling Company.

Favoring engineers' license and boiler inspection laws.

Favoring bills providing for at least semi-monthly pay day; to pay in lawful money instead of due bills; abolishing company stores.

Favoring home manufactured union-made goods as far as possible.

Favoring closer affiliation of state federations.

Favoring resolutions Nos. 91, 179 and 270, adopted by the A. F. of L.

Indorsing the Sunday closing of barber shops law.

Favoring mechanics' lien law.

Favoring a law making the charging of a fee for securing employment a misdemeanor.

Favoring the abolishing of the hospital tax.

Against ship subsidy bill.

Urging men to stay away from Cosmopolis.

Favoring a law to protect union buttons.

For sanitary improvement of hotels and restaurants.

Against patronizing the hotel Butler of Seattle by delegates to any of the political conventions.

Favoring the employment of an organizer for the lumber workers for 60 days.

Against United States army and navy bands taking private engage-

ments while under pay of the government.

Censuring Governor Peabody, of Colorado and calling upon the president for immediate intervention.

Favoring the fellow-servant bill.

Providing submitting amendments to the constitution 60 days prior to meeting of the federation.

Supporting Senator Patterson's demand in the United States senate for investigation by the judiciary committee of conditions existing in Colorado.

Providing for protection of mechanics' tools on public work.

Postmaster General Payne, in a letter to Chairman Overstreet, of the House committee on postoffices and post roads, calls attention to the order of January 31, 1902, forbidding employees of the department to solicit an increase of pay except through the heads of the department. He transmits therewith a request for increases in pay from city and rural delivery carriers, with a favorable recommendation for its consideration.

Trade Union Directory

Portland Federated Trades Assembly—Meets every Friday in A. O. U. W. Bldg., sixth floor, Third and Taylor streets.

Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees of America, Division 13—Meets first and third Monday evenings at 8:45, in Union Hall, Union block.

Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butchers' Workmen, Local 143—Meets every Friday at 8 P. M. at Trades Union hall, corner Second and Yamhill.

Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers' International Association, No. 16—Meets every second and fourth Tuesday at 22½ Yamhill street.

Amalgamated Woodworkers' Union, No. 48—Meets every second and fourth Thursday at 23½ Yamhill street.

Bartenders' League meets every Tuesday, alternating at 2 P. M. and 7:30 P. M., at 24½ Alder street.

Beer drivers' and Bottlers', Local No. 201—Meets every first and third Saturday at 2 P. M. at Bartenders' Hall, No. 264½ Alder street.

Blacksmiths' Union meets every 1st and 3d Monday evening in room 227, Chamber of Commerce Building.

Bricklayers' International Union No. 1—Meets every Wednesday at 22½ Yamhill street.

Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America, Local No. 10—Meets every Thursday, 22½ Morrison street.

Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, Sunset Lodge No. 136—Meets every first and third Sunday, at 2 P. M., in Auditorium Hall.

Broom Makers' Union meets every 1st and 3d Monday evening at 12½ First street.

Building Trades Council—Meets every Monday evening at 23½ Morrison street.

Carpenters—Meet every Friday evening in Union Hall, third floor, corner Second and Stark.

Carpet Layers and Upholsterers' Union meets every Wednesday night at the corner of Second and Yamhill.

Cigarmakers' International Union of America, Local No. 202—Meets every 1st and 3d Tuesday night at 22½ Yamhill street.

Cook and Waiters' Alliance—Meets every third Saturday, 264½ Alder street.

Coppers' International Union, Local No. 135—Meets the first and third Thursdays in every month at No. 300, Alisky Building.

Flour and Cereal Millworkers' Union—Meets every second and fourth Saturday in each month in the Caledonian Hall.

Glass Workers' Union, Local No. 15—Meets every 2d and 4th Saturday at the corner of Second and Morrison.

General Longshoremen's Union, No. 266—Meets every 1st and 3d Thursday at Union Hall, corner of Stark and Second.

General Headquarters 25 North Front.

Grainhandlers, No. 263—Meets every Monday evening in Davis' Hall, corner Russell street and Albina avenue.

I. L. A. No. 354—Meets every first and third Saturday at Union Hall, Second and Stark streets.

International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers meets every Saturday night at the corner of Second and Yamhill.

International Association of Machinists, Local No. 8—Meets every first and third Friday in Alisky building.

International Association of Ship Riggers, Liners and Painters meets every Saturday night at corner of Second and Ash.

International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, Local 56—Meets every third Tuesday evening of each month at 300 Alisky Bldg., Third and Morrison streets.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, No. 125—Meets every Wednesday evening in Painters' Hall, Second and Yamhill.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 162—Meets every Tuesday evening at Union Hall, corner Second and Stark streets.

International Union of Wood, Wire and Metal Lathers meets every Thursday evening in room 26 Labbe Building, corner Second and Washington.

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Iron Molders' Union, No. 139—Meets every first and third Thursday at 22½ Yamhill street.

Journeyman Barbers' Union, No. 75—Meets every Tuesday evening in A. O. U. W. Building, sixth floor, Third and Taylor streets.

Journeyman Horsehoers' Union No. 41—Meets every first and third Thursday in room 21, McKay building.

Journeyman Plumbers and Gasfitters' Association, Local No. 51—Meets every Monday evening at 22½ Yamhill street.

Journeyman Tailors, Local No. 74—Meets every second and fourth Monday in Union Hall, Second and Stark streets.

Laundry Workers' Union, No. 30—Meets every Monday evening at A. O. U. W. Hall.

Lumber Mill Workers, No. 348, Meets 1st and 3d Sunday afternoon at 2:30 in Foresters' Hall, northwest corner Second and Yamhill.

Marble Workers—Meet every first and third Thursday evening, 8 P. M., at 343 First street in Quincy block, First and Market.

Mount Hood Lodge of the Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Iron Ship-Builders, Local No. 72—Meets every second and fourth Sunday in Alisky Hall.

Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58—Meets every first Sunday of the month at 2 P. M. in Auditorium Hall.

Musicians' Mutual Association, Local 90—Meets every first Tuesday at 2 P. M. in room 24, Chamber of Commerce.

National Association of Letter-Carriers, Branch No. 82—Meets every second Wednesday of the month in the Post-office building.

National Union of the United Brewery Workmen of the United States, Local No. 7—Meets every second and fourth Saturday at 22½ Yamhill street.

Portland's Bindery Women's Local, No. 113, I. B. of B.—Meets every first Tuesday evening in the month in Hall No. 300, Alisky Building.

Plasterers' Union—Meets every Wednesday night at 12½ First street.

Portland Laborers' Protective Union meets every Friday night at 22½ Yamhill street.

Portland Printing Pressmen's Union meets every 4th Tuesday at 12½ Yamhill street.

Portland Bakers' and Confectioners' Union—Meets every first and third Sunday, at 4 P. M., at 22½ Yamhill street.

Portland Theatrical Stage Employees' Union—Meets every second Thursday of the month at Corday's Theatre.

Railway Freighthandlers, Local No. 334—Meet every second and fourth Sunday at 7:30 P. M. at Caledonia Hall, Second and Yamhill.

Retail Clerks' Union—Meets every Tuesday evening at Alisky Hall, Third and Morrison streets, third floor.

Riggers, Liners, Shippiers and Cleaners—Meet second Tuesday of each month in Alisky Building, Room 300.

Shipwrights, Caulkers and Shipjoiners' Association of the Port of Portland—Meets every first and third Saturday at 22½ Yamhill street.

Stablemen's Union, No. 949—Meets every Monday evening in room 300, Alisky Building.

Stationary Engineers, No. 87—Meets every Thursday evening in Engineers' Hall, No. 49½ First street.

Stationary Firemen—Meet every first and third Saturday evenings in Musicians' Hall, 227 Chamber of Commerce.

Stereotypers and Electrotypers, No. 48, meet first Monday of each month at 250 Twelfth street.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, No. 125—Meets every Wednesday evening in Painters' Hall, Second and Yamhill.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Local 162—Meets every Tuesday evening at Union Hall, corner Second and Stark streets.

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United Brotherhood of Leather Workers meets every 1st and 3d Thursday at A. O. U. W. Hall.

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Branch No. 60—Meets every Wednesday night in Eagles' Hall, corner Second and Yamhill streets.

Water Front Federation meets every 2d and 4th Monday at 12½ First street.

Woodworkers' Local Union, No. 6—Meets every Wednesday night at Trades Union Hall, Second and Yamhill.

Women's Metal Lathers, Local 54, meets every Thursday evening at Second and Yamhill streets, 3d floor, old Caledonian Hall.

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