

FIXES RESPONSIBILITY.

Increased Prices of Necessities Not Due to Labor Unions.

The United States Department of Commerce and Labor has issued a bulletin, No. 54, for September, 1904, covering the exhibit of the Bureau of Labor at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

The production is a credit to the department, says Organized Labor (official paper of the Building Trades of San Francisco), and furnishes an almost unlimited and useful source of information not only to students of economics but to manufacturers, business men and laborers alike.

It is a book that ought to be in the hands of every intelligent American citizen, because it contains matter that affects their welfare as well as the prosperity and progress of the country.

We have heard time and again that the trade unions are responsible for the increased price in the necessities of life.

In fact, that the labor unions are the sole and only cause for high rents, high taxes and everything that goes to increase the cost of living.

The statistics, tables and diagrams in the exhibit of the Bureau of Labor most emphatically prove that such contentions are untrue.

In 1895, when the trade and labor unions all were nearly out of existence, the price of the raw material was six points below the price of the finished products. It stood 84 to 90. Since then labor has been organizing; wages have increased; hours have shortened.

It is true, but according to the statistics, we find that manufactured commodities have raised during the period from 1896 to 1903 from 90 to 112, while the raw material has soared from 80 to 122, a difference of forty-two points in seven years.

What has caused this wonderful increase?

Is it labor? Hardly; because labor is not an essential factor in the raw commodities, and it is the raw commodities that have gone up to a figure almost beyond the most sanguine expectations, while the finished products have clung more closely to the basic line.

The raw material is controlled by combines, and the price is fixed by trusts.

The influence of the trade and labor union does not enter into the question when the price of the raw commodities is made. It has only to do with the finished product.

If the bulletin of the Department of Labor proves anything, it gives conclusive evidence that the raw commodities have been forced up as high as possible, not by natural means, but by artificial—by combines and a corner of the market—while the manufactured article has had to be content to hold a secondary position.

In other words, the resources have been monopolized; the necessities of life have been cornered, and vended at the price fixed by half a dozen trust regulators in some Wall street office, and then labor, in order to live, has been compelled to take a halting step in the same direction.

That this is the case is apparent from statistics and tables covering the wages and hours of the various trades and labor organizations for the last thirteen years.

The blacksmiths' wages have increased from 25 to 30 cents an hour in thirteen years, without any change in their working hours.

The bricklayers have had quite a raise from 43 to 55 in the same period of time, but without any change in working hours.

The carpenters have been accorded a raise from 27½ to 35 cents an hour, and a slight average reduction in the working hours.

The printers have received a raise from 40 to 45 cents an hour, with a small reduction of working time.

The hod carriers come in with a raise from 22½ to 27½ cents an hour, and no change in their working hours.

The iron workers are recorded a raise of from 25 to 30 cents, and no change in their working hours.

Common laborers are down for the enormous gain of 15 to 17½ cents an hour, and are still working on the average the same hours as they worked thirteen years ago.

The machinists have gained just one cent an hour in thirteen years, and are today working as many hours as they did in 1890.

The painters show an increase of 7½ cents an hour.

The plumbers have a raise of 10 cents an hour, and a considerable reduction of working time.

The stone cutters make a showing of 10 cents an hour, better than they were thirteen years ago, and so on down the line.

Contrasting these with the necessities of life, we find that the price of beef has raised from 90 to 126. The price of butter from 100 to 114;

eggs from 95 to 124; flour, remarkably enough, has gone down from 120 to 98. The price of lard has raised from 96 to 160, and bacon from 90 to 168; ham from 102 to 128.

But of all the necessities of life, there is none that has soared to a limit so far beyond the reach of the ordinary mortal as has that of light and fuel.

The diagrams of the Department of Labor show that Standard Oil has gone far beyond the boundary.

Whether this exorbitant raise is due to the labor movement or the directors who council at No. 26 Broadway, New York, we will leave to our readers.

The wages of labor necessary in the production and refinement of oil is nearly the same as it was thirteen years ago, while the price to the consumer has raised over a hundred per cent.

Then who is to blame for the increased price?

The facts and figures of the bulletin issued by the Department of Labor demonstrate that raw material has increased in price a hundred per cent, where the finished product has increased but 10.

It is food for thought, not only to the laboring people, the merchants and the professional man, but it ought also to furnish a few prolific grains of common sense for the Herbert Georges, the Parryites, and their deluded adherents.

The Department of Labor, in its fifty-fourth bulletin, has proven what we have always contended.

That labor is the only safe and reliable measure of values.

When we find raw material and finished commodities fluctuating in a few years from 80 to 160 per cent, we find in the same period that labor hews closely to the basic line.

In other words, labor guided by the trade union movement has avoided all insane extremities, while the interests controlled by public speculators has fluctuated in the same period of time back and forth over the normal conditions, and thus seriously affected the progress and prosperity of the nation.

Nobody can accuse the Department of Labor of being biased in favor of trade unionism.

It has only taken the facts and figures as they existed. They are there, and they are profitable food, and food that should be taken and thoroughly digested by all who sincerely wish their own and their fellow man's welfare.

California Unionists in Session.

The fifth annual convention of the California State Federation of Labor convened at Sacramento last Monday, January 2. Much interest is being manifested in the work of the convention, especially by the unions that want to gain better conditions through the aid of new laws that the federation will urge the legislature to enact. Among the important measures which the convention will be asked to present to the lawmakers are a Sunday closing law, aimed to aid the journeymen barbers in getting a full day of rest on that day.

An eight-hour bill based on the Kansas act which was sustained by the supreme court of that commonwealth will also be acted upon by the convention and will undoubtedly be presented to the legislature for enactment. The Women's Label League will offer a measure to limit the hours of labor of all female workers, with the exception of house servants and nurses, to nine.

Bills in the interest of a ten-hour day for drug clerks and amending the employers' liability law will also be brought to the attention of the delegates. The last convention of the federation, held at Los Angeles in January of last year, instructed its executive council to draft measures on the lines of some of the bills mentioned, and strong efforts will be made to secure the passage of some of the desired legislation.

It is expected that the convention will last a week.

Won Right to Strike.

Probably few shoemakers are aware that the first legal victory secured by organized labor in the jurisprudence of Massachusetts, and the most noted victory of its kind at the time, was gained by the Journeymen Boot Makers' Union, of Boston, in 1842, says Shoe Workers' Journal. The case originated in the attempts of the union to have none but union men employed in the shops. Several manufacturers alleged that their business had been injured and secured indictments against several members of the union.

The case was tried in the municipal court before Judge Thatcher in October, 1840. After a deliberation of 20 minutes the jury returned a verdict convicting each member of the union named as defendants guilty of conspiracy. "The case was carried to the Supreme Court, and in March,

1842, the verdict of the lower court was set aside. The decision of the Supreme Court declared that no unlawful act had been committed and that the union had a right to do as a body that which was lawful for its members to do.

Protect Laborers From Loan Sharks.

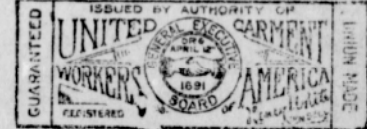
The welfare committee of the National Civic Federation held a special meeting a few days ago in New York to consider means of protecting corporation employees from loan sharks. H. F. H. Vreeland, president of the Metropolitan Street Railway system; Cyrus H. McCormick, of Chicago; B. J. Greenhut, Nathan Strauss, Charles H. Hulbert, of Chicago; R. E. Danforth, of Rochester, and Horace Perley, of Boston, were among those present.

Comptroller Riebenack, of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, read a paper on the pension system among that railroad's employees. Greatest interest, however, was shown in a paper by Mr. Perley on "Loans to Employees" prescribing a plan by which the workers themselves contributed to a fund for emergency loans. This fund, he said, belonged to the workers, and declared a dividend at the end of each year. The plan was working successfully in several localities, he said.

Mr. Vreeland said that the Metropolitan Street Railway Company had been considering the question of loan funds for its employees to save them from becoming the victims of loan sharks. Definite plans are expected to grow out of the meeting and will be formulated at a later session.

Iron and steel mills, representing millions of dollars, conducted by the North Brothers' Company and the Lukens Iron & Steel Company, at Coatsville, Pa., are about to take on a boom. Some of the mills have been idle for over a year. The furnaces were lit on December 7. The men will go on double turn. The tube works mill will be increased to double its capacity.

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Trade Union Directory

SUNDAY. Photo Engravers, Local 31—Meets every first Sunday in month at 11 A. M. at 230½ Yamhill street. Typographical Union, 58—Meets every first Sunday in the month in the Auditorium building. Railway Freight Handlers, 334—Meets every second and fourth Sunday 230½ Yamhill street.

MONDAY. Building Laborers' International Protective Union of America, Local No. 1—Meets every Monday evening at 8 P. M. at 264½ Alder street. Broom Makers—Meets every first and third Monday evening at Plasterers' Hall, 127 First street. Cooks' and Waiters, Local 189—Meets every Monday evening at 287 Salmon. Journeymen Tailors, Local 74—Meets every second and fourth Monday evening Union Hall, corner Second and Stark streets, third floor. Sailors' Union of Pacific—Meets every Monday night at 23 North Front street. Photo-Engravers—Meets first Monday in each month in the engraving department, Oregonian Bldg., ninth floor. Plumbers—Meets every Monday evening at 228½ Yamhill street. Stereotypers and Electrotypers, 48—Meets first Monday in each month at Painters' small hall, 234½ Morrison street. Street Railway Employees' Association, 18—Meets every first and third Monday in each month in Union Hall, Second and Stark streets, third floor. Journeymen Barbers, Local 75—Meets every Monday evening at 230½ Yamhill street.

TUESDAY. Bartenders' International League of America, Local 339—Meets every Tuesday, alternate afternoon and evening, at Bartenders' Hall, 264½ Alder street. Bindery Women's Union, No. 113—Meets first Tuesday evening of each month at No. 162 Second street. Brotherhood of Bookbinders, No. 90—Meets third Tuesday in month at 162 Second street, Room 200. Cabinet-Makers' Union, Amalgamated Woodworkers, No. 252—Meets every fourth Tuesday evening at Plasterers' Hall, 127½ First street. Secretary, Harry Burroughs, 692 Front street. Cigar Makers, 202—Meets every first and third Tuesday evening of each month Arion Hall, 228½ Yamhill. Journeymen Horseshoers, 41—Meets the first and third Tuesday evening of each month at the Plasterers' Hall, 127 First street. Musicians' Mutual Protective Association—Meets first Tuesday afternoon of each month room 227 Chamber of Commerce. Pressmen's Union—Meets every first Tuesday evening of each month in the Mulkey Bldg., Second and Morrison Sts. Clerks' Union—Meets first and third Tuesday evenings at 162 Second St. Riggers, Liners, Ship Painters and Cleaners—Meets second Tuesday of each month in Alisky building, room 300. Travelers' Goods and Leather Novelty Workers, Local 24—Meets the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month at the Painters' Hall, 324½ Morrison street.

WEDNESDAY. Allied Printing Trades Council—Meets second Wednesday evening in each month at 162½ Second street. Bricklayers' Union—Meets every Wednesday evening in Arion Hall, 228½ Yamhill street. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 128—Meets every Wednesday evening in Painters' Hall, 234½ Morrison street. Leatherworkers—Meets every Wednesday evening, 162 Second street, third floor. Plasterers' Union, 821—Meets every Wednesday evening Plasterers' Hall, 127 First street. Ice Drivers' and Helpers' Union, No. 316—Meets first and third Wednesday evenings at Bartenders' Hall, 264½ Alder street. Grainhandlers, No. 263—Meets every Wednesday evening at Davis Hall, Russell street and Albina avenue.

THURSDAY. Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers, Local 15—Meets every second and fourth Thursday evenings in the month Engineers' Hall, 47½ First. Boiler Makers' Union—Meets every second and fourth Thursday evening at Arion Hall, 228½ Yamhill street. Longshoremen's Association, 265—Meets first and third Thursday evening in Union Hall, Second and Stark streets, third floor. Coopers' Union—Meets first and third Thursday evenings at Bartenders' Hall, 264½ Alder street. Steam Engineers, Local 87—Meets every Thursday evening in Engineers' Hall, 47½ First street. Garment Workers—Meets first and third Thursday evening at No. 162 Second street. Brotherhood Painters, Decorators and Paper Hangers of America, Local 10—Meets every Thursday evening in Painters' Hall, 234½ Morrison.

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FRIDAY. Machinists, Willamette Lodge No. 63—Meets every Friday evening at 162 Second street. Federated Trades Council—Meets every Friday evening at 162 Second street. United Garment Workers of America, Local 228—Meets every first and third Friday evening of each month in the Marquam building at 2 P. M. Laundry Workers, Local 90—Meets every Friday evening in Plasterers' Hall, 127½ First street. Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Local 50—Meets every Friday evening at Union Hall, Second and Stark streets, third floor. Carpet Workers and Drapers, Local 110—Meets every Friday evening at 230½ Yamhill St.

SATURDAY. Bakery and Confectionery Workers—Local 114—Meets every first and third Saturdays, 6 o'clock p. m., at 228½ Yamhill street. Beer Drivers' and Bottlers, Local 201—Meets every first and third Saturday evening at Bartenders' Hall, 264½ Alder street. Brewers' Union—Meets every first and last Saturday evening in the month at 228½ Yamhill street, Arion Hall. Longshoremen's Association, 264—Meets every first and third Saturday evening in Union Hall, Second and Stark streets, third floor. Stationary Firemen—Meets every first and third Saturday evenings in Musicians' Hall, 227 Chamber of Commerce. Bridge and Structural Iron Workers—Meets every Saturday evening at 230½ Yamhill street. Shipwrights, Joiners and Caulkers, No. 12—Meets first and third Tuesday evenings in Engineers' Hall, 47½ First street. Team Drivers' Union, No. 162—Meets every Tuesday evening at Carpenters' Hall, 66 N. Sixth street.

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