

# Portland Labor Press

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Official Paper Federated Trades Council

"Trade Unions are the bulwarks of modern democracies"—W. E. Gladstone

Official Paper State Federation of Labor

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## WOMEN IN THE HOMES

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT U. L. L. SAYS WOMEN SHOULD BOOST THE LABEL.

Woman, whether employed in the mill or the factory, or in the home looking after the needs of the family, plays an important part in the world's work and should be interested in all that concerns it. If she works at an organized trade, and does not become a part of the organization, she is not only standing directly in her own light, but is doing a great injustice to her fellow workers.

The woman in the home (possibly the home of a union man) who spends money earned under union regulations for goods that have been made under the most unfavorable conditions, may not be directly affecting herself or her husband, but she is prolonging the struggle of the workers for better conditions. Look for the union label!

Every time we make a purchase we become an employer, and work for or against our own best interests. It is inconsistent for the wives of union men to be the employers of non-organized labor. I regret to say that in this matter women have been rather indifferent, notwithstanding the fact that through organization the natural bread winner of the family has been able to command better wages, shorter hours and improved conditions. Better wages mean more home comforts. Shorter hours for the bread winner mean not only better health for all, but shorter hours for the house-keeper. It was this apparent indifference on the part of women as individuals which showed the need of the formation of the Woman's International Union Label League—an organization which is filling a long-felt want. Although the underlying principles of our organization are unselfish, we fully realize that everything we do to improve the conditions of the natural bread winners of the family is indirectly in the best interest of every member of his household.

The objects of the Woman's International Union Label League are: To promote the welfare of the wage earners; to discountenance the sweat-shop system of production by encouraging the sale of union-made goods; to gain a universal eight-hour day; to abolish child labor; to secure equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex; to aid the Sunday and early closing movement; to urge industrial and political equality for women.

The union label is by far the most effective weapon in the hands of trades unionists today. If union men and their families would buy only such goods as show the label, the result would be far more helpful to the cause than any strike could ever hope to be. According to statistics, child labor has increased 33 1-3 per cent within the past ten years. This fact alone should inspire women to a determined effort to do their part to prevent the employment of children. They can do this by persistently demanding the union label. It will not be found on any article made wholly or in part by a child.

To organized labor I believe I can safely say: There is nothing you can do that will bring about better results than to devote time and effort to the organization of locals of the Woman's International Union Label League. Women must be taught the value of the union label, and that it is women who are the purchasing power. A united effort on the part of women in the interest of the union label would prove the greatest possible help to the organization of both men and women.

I am ever ready and anxious, upon request, to send information pertaining to this organization. Address, Annie Fitzgerald, International President W. U. L. L., 286 S. Homan avenue, Chicago.

**A STARTLING OPINION HANDED DOWN FROM FEDERAL BENCH.**

**Holds Capitalists Have a Property Right in Their Employees.**

The limit of judicial usurpation and tyranny is being reached. We do not believe that the court can go any further than to reaffirm the famous (or, more properly, the infamous) Dred Scott decision and up-

hold the vicious principle that some men have a right to claim ownership in other men.

That is precisely what has occurred, and in the United States courts at that. Federal Judge J. C. Jones, in the case of the Louisville & Nashville railroad against the Alabama railroad commission, has just handed down an opinion that spells slavery in every line. The state of Alabama had attempted to compel the Louisville & Nashville railroad to obey the laws of that state and arrested some of the employees. The corporation secured an injunction restraining the state officials from interfering in its business. In reaching a decision, the court declared, among other things: "An employer has a property right in the service of his workmen in his business. The employer can maintain an action against any one who entices his servant to leave him, or prevent the servant from working for his employer. This property right is protected by the sanction of our criminal laws also."

If that is not plain and to the point then we do not grasp the meaning of words. We might add, parenthetically, that a similar decision was rendered in Michigan, several months ago, where a court ruled, in granting an injunction, that a certain firm (union) had no right to entice the employes from a competitor (non-union), even though higher wages and better working conditions were offered.

The importance of this latest decision in Alabama is found not only in the fact that the Michigan precedent becomes more firmly established but in the thinly veiled threat that criminal proceedings, as well as civil action, may be instituted against any who refuse to obey this newest interpretation of law.

We might question this chattel-slave principle that "an employer has a property right in the service of his workmen," and ask a number of pertinent questions, such as how and where the employer obtained that right, and what are the duties that have been imposed upon an employe, in return for this alleged right, but we realize the almost utter futility of debating the proposition with capitalistic courts. They hold the club and wield it whenever and wherever they choose. They can read whatever meaning they will into the laws, and legislative bodies are becoming mutual admiration societies, to enact or not to enact such laws as are deemed proper by the "fine judicial minds" of our petty Czars called courts for convenience.

It might have been expected that such a decision as the foregoing would not escape the attention of the plutocratic watchdogs. The Wall Street Journal prominently displayed the Jones opinion and declared that "the principle might have a very important bearing upon the relations of employers and trades unions." The Wall Street organ also wonders "that larger use has not been made of this property right (by the employer), in disputes with organized labor when there is clear evidence of employes being enticed away from his employment."

It may come to that soon. The employer was probably slow to act because "this property right" was not fully developed. But usage establishes customs, and a few more court decisions along the same lines as the foregoing may thoroughly clinch the "property right" idea, for that is what American capitalism is anxious to accomplish.

This nation is entering a new stage of slavery, no matter what fools or knaves may say to the contrary. Capitalism must constantly gain new power or it will languish and die. And capitalism intends to completely enslave labor. The vampire shows its victim no mercy.

Labor still has an opportunity to seize the governing power through the ballot-box and overthrow capitalism and its courts, but the time is growing short. Soon the ballot may be declared as capitalism's own.—Cleveland Citizen.

**UNKNOWN DONATES \$100,000**

A Colorado woman has just made a donation of \$100,000 to the Typographical Union to be used for the benefit of the Union Printers' Home located at Colorado Springs. The trustees have been reported to have decided to use the money for the construction and maintenance of cottages and small buildings on the grounds of the institution for the care of the families of printers in the home. The name of the donor is withheld.

## DES MOINES PLAN OF RECALL LAW

Twenty-five Per Cent of Voters May Petition for Recall of Delinquent Officials, and Force A New Election With Candidate Chosen by the People

The most important and perhaps the most startling innovation is the safeguard known as the recall, designated for the purpose of placing all officials within the absolute control of the people. Although officials composing the governing board are elected for a definite term of two years, yet, under this provision of the "Des Moines plan," their continuation in office is at all times subject to the will of a majority of the electors. The history of practically every city is disgraced with names of officers who have proven unfaithful to the trust reposed in them, and who could not be removed before the expiration of their term of office. Under this provision of the new charter, such a situation could be met by a prompt recall of the offending member. A petition signed by 25 per cent of the voters, and stating in general terms charges of incompetency or dishonesty, would be filed with the City Clerk. The offending or guilty official would then, without further delay, be required to stand for reelection with any other candidate whom the people choose to nominate, and the one receiving the highest number of votes will be the officer for the remainder of the term. This recall feature of the law will undoubtedly have a tendency to keep public officials in the straight and narrow path of their duty, ever faithful to the trust of their constituents. The highest form of democratic government is not attained by electing a multiplicity of city officials, each official to act as a check upon the other, but popular liberty is more certain of attainment where fewer officials are elected and the proper facilities are made for impressing upon these officials the popular will, and make them re-

sponsible to the whole people for the execution of that will.

The desirability of having the membership of the governing board made up of the strongest men of the city has not been overlooked by the framers of the "Des Moines plan." Not only have they made the office one of honor and opportunity, attractive to the honest and capable of every community, but they have so changed the manner of choice that the election of this type of men is less difficult, and the election of politicians without business ability less possible. The primary, as well as the election, has been made non-partisan, so that candidates can no longer depend for their election upon party affiliations, but must go before the people upon their own merits. Ward lines have been removed, and with the people voting at large the evils of ward politics are abolished, electors are freer in recording their choice of candidates, and the business man is better able to secure his election without stooping to the low practices of the politician.

The new charter certainly has an inviting appearance, especially from the view-point of theory, yet it remains for the citizens of Des Moines to demonstrate that its provisions are as practical in operation as they are beautiful in theory. Des Moines, a city of 100,000 people, offers a good field in which to try the plan; she is entering upon a most interesting and instructive experiment in government reform, and the eyes of the American municipalities are upon her, hoping that the "Des Moines plan" will prove a practical system, under which the public affairs of our cities can be wisely and economically administered.—Sidney J. Wilson, in National Magazine.

## WOMAN AND CHILDREN IN OREGON FACTORIES

By Millie E. Trumbull.

It is a difficult matter to write a holiday article on such a painful topic as the above, yet the opportunity is such a rare one, that the writer dare not pass it by.

There will be those who question the propriety of naming as "painful" the privilege of earning one's living, even though it be in a factory. But let us look at the matter and perhaps at the close of the inspection we may agree that the privilege should wear a hospital, rather than a holiday garb.

In the first place, it may be news to many that there are 1059 factories in this state. All of these

do not employ women and children as yet. But it is merely a question of time and of the invention of machinery suited to the inexperienced direction of our women and children workers. Suppose that we average 10 women and children to each factory, and dropping the 59 odd factories, we put this 10 into each of the remaining 1000, giving us 10,000 women and children working in Oregon factories. Estimating the population of Oregon at 500,000 within that time, you may compute the percentage of women and children employed in Oregon factories for yourself.

This will not include the women and children working in stores, the numbers already assuming the proportions of an army. It will mean only those who are human parts of

the machinery in the factories, and the weakest elements in the great industrial machinery of the present day.

Does this mean anything and if it does how are we to remedy the matter? Let us proceed with our inspection. Let us begin with the remark that, while theories may be valuable as well as necessary in our inspection, a small fraction of knowledge at first hand is not a bad thing. We may use this as a basis with some degree of certainty. (Parenthetically the writer may remark that high authorities have claimed for her only a "sitting at a desk" knowledge of conditions. This criticism, however, is not the testimony of grease-stained dress skirts and aching bones.) We must have theories, we must have ideals, but these must rest on a foundation of fact, or they are valueless. Theory says it is a beautiful thing to find children ambitious to earn their own livings, but theory and ideals fail to reckon with the factory-exhausted physique which the girl brings to motherhood, or the boy to manhood's tasks or the state's citizenship. Cold, hard facts are the basis of our inspection. The facts can be nothing but painful which create so many "mother in the factory" homes and "childless" playgrounds.

What does it mean that so many of our factory employes are women and children? It means first of all lowering of wages for all laborers in related trades. It means that wherever possible, a woman at less wage than a man will take his place at a machine. It means that a child at less wage than the woman's will take her place at the machine. It means that this season, in factories in Portland, girls of 14 (at lower wages) were at machines which a year ago were operated by grown women.

Lower wages always mean lower standards of living, breaking up of homes, restricted years of education for the children, a lowering in the end of the standard of citizenship, which heaven knows is low enough now. But of this feature of our painful topic, more at another time.

What else does it mean? An ever-increasing menace to organized labor. It adds to the army of unorganized or unskilled labor, and the larger this army, the greater the struggle of the organized body to maintain a fair living wage under fair conditions and fair standards for home life. We must not argue from this that women are the willing underbidders in the labor market. It is necessary on the one hand and lack of education on the other, that is, for the worker, not for the manufacturer. No one knows better than he, the lowest edge of wages to which he can crowd the worker. No one knows better than he that the ranks are easily filled when those drop by the wayside who are worn out. These "cattle"—one employer in Portland calls the children in his employ—are not worth any more than he pays them. What cares he for the conditions in the home of the child who was paid \$2.85 for four days' work, and at the end of each day rode out to St. Johns and then walked nearly a mile to her home? And in that home, which is a typical factory worker's home, what do we find? The mother doing day work, the older sister in a downtown office, the father out of work half the time because he knows nothing but factory work and has been crowded out of that. The unskilled worker, man or woman, even in these times that are clamoring for workers, is not sure of enough employment in any one place long enough to permit him to establish himself in that place. Only last week, a silk weaver, whose eyes had failed because of the character of his work, applied at the charities office for help. He is a young man, able-bodied, but on being asked what he could do, said, "I am willing to do anything, but I know how to do but one thing, silkweaving." He is a product of the factory.

And are we on the outside of the factory educated? What do we know about that mysterious region which we call "in the factories"? How many of us realize that it means 10 hours a day, steady work, broken only by the half or three-quarters of an hour lunch time? Picture to yourself, woman in the home, what would be your condition at the end of six days at a machine, which you operate with one foot, hundreds of times each day, going through the same set of motions as

## TELEGRAPH STRIKE NEWS

CONVENTION IS CALLED FOR OCTOBER 23—VIGOROUS POLICY TO BE ADOPTED.

The action of President Small, in calling for a vote as to the continuance of the strike against the telegraph trust, has shown the determination of the telegraphers to win. It will, indeed, be a grand victory for them. The moment the various unions of the country heard of their national president's action, they voted unanimously to continue the fight to the bitter end. Prospects were never better for a victory. The companies expected a stampede when the message of President Small was made public, but they were sadly mistaken. The only result upon the strikers was to make them more determined to win. The same air of optimism prevails around headquarters that was seen there upon the day the strike was called.

The Western Union's reserve fund of \$13,000,000 has been exhausted in this fight, and as a sign of their financial distress, they have cut off all bonuses, which have been paid the scabs. This occurred last Friday, and as a result in the Pacific Northwest, three scabs have quit in Portland, ten in Seattle, and four in Spokane. Reports from other points more distant have not reached Portland, but it is assured that this will prevail over the entire country.

A convention of the telegraphers is to be called October 23, to elect a successor to President Small, and when he is placed in power, some great work toward a satisfactory settlement of the strike will take place. There are several candidates for this position, and they are all strong, honest and fearless men, who will even command the respect of the trust itself.

Bulletins received from 125 different locals situated all over the country have been received at headquarters this week, and they all show that the strike was never in better condition than it is at present. Probably there has never been a national strike which has been drawn closer along union lines. Recognition of the union caused the strike, and nothing but recognition of the union will cause the return of this brave body of men and women, who are simply fighting for their rights as American citizens, and also for a compensation that will enable them to live as American people, and educate their children to become good citizens.

Union bodies all over the country are contributing to this grand cause, and in many cities each member of the union is assessed 15 cents to provide funds to prolong this fight to a successful termination. This plan seems the most successful, as it provides a regular amount each week. A victory for the telegraphers will be of everlasting benefit to all union labor, as they are fighting as heartless corporations as have ever existed in the United States and which have fought union labor ever since the telegraphers banded together for self-protection.

That the strike is still very effective with the Associated Press is manifest when that report is compared with the United Press, a strictly closed shop association.

## TROUBLE IN CANADA.

The point seems to us to have been somewhat missed in comment on the Vancouver troubles. When agitation first became violent in British Columbia several years ago, the British government entered into an agreement, planned to save Japan's pride. Last year, however, it was superseded by Canada's admission to a free immigration treaty. In any case it could not have interfered with the present immigrants, who have come from Hawaii. The vanguard arrived on the Kumerie in July. In Vancouver it is believed that several thousand are waiting transportation in Honolulu. Anti-Oriental feeling in British Columbia is so high that public opinion seems likely to force the hand of the government. Since the question involves our territory, it seems likely to cause the far-reaching effect of drawing Great Britain and the United States together in opposition to Japan. It would be easy for momentous results to spring from these riots in a small Canadian city.—Collier's Weekly.

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