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AUTOCRACY VS. DEMOCRACY

The Employers' Association of Oregon at last has answered the statement of the Executive Committee of the Central Labor Council, issued on March 29, in answer to the open shop policy of the association.

This answer is as weak as it is dilatory, especially in view of the repeated announcement that the Employers' Association would speedily and strongly demolish the labor side of this question.

It took nearly three weeks for the mountain to move, and lo and behold, only a mouse is the result of the great travail.

But then men cannot write strongly on questions they do not fully believe in, nor on issues they know are lost—unless some great master mind can rise superior to circumstances and obstacles. And the Oregon Employers' Association is evidently composed of very common men of the type who have worshiped at the dollar shrine so long that in the great field of human activity and progress they flounder helplessly, relying on a few stock phrases to carry them over their difficulty. Vain and foolish endeavor.

The statement of the association, published in the Oregonian of April 18th, stripped clear of words which take away what other words have asserted, simply means autocracy in industry, instead of democracy as demanded by union labor.

With the open shop practice, where successful, the unions of labor have been disrupted. Then the employer was the absolute judge as to hours and wages and general shop conditions. He was the autocrat. Where the unions hold their own through union shop methods, there the workmen have a say as to hours, wages and general working conditions. That is, the employer under union methods occupies, as far as his little domain is concerned, about the same position that a constitutional monarch, or say the president of the United States, holds. These rulers have certain powers, held in check by the powers of the people.

Now even Russia and Persia have constitutional governments. Is it therefore to be wondered at that the spokesmen and scribes of the Employers' Association flounder and flop most ignominiously, when even after a three weeks' deliberation they at last issue their pronouncement.

It can be safely said that the small crowd of stock-gambling and public-service owning corporations that control the Employers' Association now realize that the great mass of the employers of Portland have lost faith in the leadership of the association. Hence also their weak statement.

For what do they say.

In answer to the Labor Council's statement that trades unions make for industrial peace, San Francisco and Chicago are cited as trade unions strongholds and consequent strife. We admit that quite a few years ago those two cities witnessed great industrial battles. Peace came with honor to both sides. Now the strife in those cities between labor and capital is of the type carried on at present in England between the Tories and Liberals. Intelligence backed by respect for each other's rights settles differences in parliament and meeting house, instead of on the battlefield as of old.

So much for strife in Chicago and San Francisco.

No big manufacturers are being driven out of Chicago by union labor. The great expansion of that city and increased real-estate values at times make it profitable for such establishments to practically start small cities of their own. Union conditions and union mechanics follow these establishments to their new locations.

Also these locations are so chosen that full railroad competition cheapens transportation. No railroads are given exclusive rights to bottle up strategic points as is now being attempted on the East Side by Mayor Simon and the City Council, commonly believed under the influence of the men who run the Employers' Association.

The Employers' Association crowd pays the lowest wages. They fully admit this by saying "The wage problem is automatically regulated by the well-known laws of supply and demand." Now every student of economics knows that this law of supply and demand was trotted out in England in the first part of the nineteenth century by the toadies of the then employers' associations who resisted the trades unions of England in their demand for better pay and shorter hours. The English trades unionists effectively refuted this theory by striking, that is by withholding the supply. Wages then rose to a living standard. And England still remained the workshop of the world, increasing its industry and commerce. Fair wages made for better and better work-

men. Made for more and more progress through the free spending of such increased wages.

But still unfair employers on one hand and the knaves, fools and parrots who live on the bounty of such employers, trot out at every pending labor dispute the ghost of this old discredited law.

As to the statement that open shop conditions "enable the high-class mechanics to receive their just reward and rise above the dead-level of lazy, indifferent workmen," it only need be said that this is exploded buncombe. Under open shop, that is non-union conditions, the hours for the best of mechanics are long and as a rule their wages do not reach the minimum rate established by the unions. It is hardly necessary to say that unions only establish a "minimum" rate of wages, allowing the employer to pay for extra skill as much more above the minimum rate as he believes the extra skill is worth or the worker can compel by other employers bidding for such extra skill.

This falsehood about giving opportunity to extra skill under open shop conditions is as vicious and as persistent as are the foul weeds in a cultivated garden or field. The most active vigilance is required to pull them up by the roots, otherwise the harvest is a failure. But mankind has learned its lesson of preservation. Lies and noxious weeds are effectively fought against.

It is unquestionably true great many industries give the eight-hour day and their managers find it a paying proposition. The men who fight it are the relics of obsolete curmudgeons who have always stood in the path of progress.

The weakest link in the Employers' Association statement is that dealing with building operations in the leading Western cities. The figures given are certainly subject to the criticism "that figures do not lie but those using them frequently do so." But even if these figures were true, what do they prove except the backwardness of Portland's industrial conditions.

During the last six years there has been a great industrial advance throughout the United States. The leading cities of the Pacific Coast, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and San Francisco, were in the vanguard of this advance. Portland and Los Angeles lagged behind. The same spirit which now fights the unions in these cities, also obstructed timely and needed growth. During the last year and a half Portland has shaken off at last the incubus of fossilized conservatism and since then its bottled-up energies have found vent in increased building activity. But simultaneous with this expansion in business has also been the organized spirit of the workers. And the better wages they are gradually securing go into the growth of Portland.

Seattle and San Francisco especially can be compared to the far-seeing business man who adds additions to his factory and puts in improved machinery—then he receives his monetary reward. A sluggish rival at last wakes up and copies this progressive rival. And then the latter crows that he is now spending more money for buildings than do his rivals. That is all there is to the figures presented in the Employers' Association statement.

In conclusion we wish to emphasize our belief that the great majority of employers are through with the open shop humbug, that they are convinced that democracy in industry is preferable to autocracy in industry. We also believe that if industrial strife is brought on by the reactionaries, they will reap as reaped the reactionaries in Chicago and San Francisco, namely business loss and the execration of their fellowmen. We also predict that when the smoke of battle clears away, if battle there should be, progressive business and union labor will be victors and Portland take its rightful place as one of the great industrial centers of our country.

The statement of the Employers' Association appears in full on another page.

SIMPLY NOT SO

In nearly every issue of the Oregonian appears something like the following falsehood:

Direct primaries, wide-open and go-as-you-please, each election, split the majority party into warring minorities, out of which rough-and-tumble emerge candidates who cannot win the majority support of their party. As a result, and out of revenge, candidates of an opposing minority party are elected. Yet this is falsely called rule of the people.

The application of the direct primary shows nothing of the kind in Oregon, and no one knows it better than the editor of the Oregonian. The Republican party is not split into any worse fragments than it ever was. All dominant parties split up. The Republican party has more votes and more offices filled with its nominees than it had before the primaries. They are as competent, on the average, as they ever were before, and more honest. The election of candidates of a minority party by a disgruntled faction of the majority party voting for them has not occurred as frequently in Oregon with the direct primary as it did without it. Such things occur in all lands, parties and governments. All the Oregonian is scolding and lying about is this:

It was thought that the Republican members of the legislature elected in 1908 would not vote for a Democrat for United States senator even when pledged to do so if he was the choice of the people. The Fulton-Scott-Wilcox faction of the Republican party deliberately voted for Chamberlain, the Democratic candidate, with the expectation that if the nominee of the Republican party, Cake, was defeated at the popular election the legislature would sell the office to the highest bidder. Each one of these worthy factionists hoped to be the highest bidder.

By reason of several thousand Republicans voting

for a Demo. at they didn't want in order to beat a Republican they didn't want, in order to auction off the United States senatorship, Chamberlain was elected by the legislature.

Chamberlain was the choice of the people so far as any choice can be indicated by a ballot. The endeavor to do away with the direct primary by the people is because the minor county and state officers are not responsible to a machine but to the people. A United States senator does not have to seek his office before any bunch of political auctioneers, but goes to the people direct.

The loss of the United States senatorship was compensated for by Chamberlain being succeeded by a Republican governor. Such things happen and have happened in different states at different times without any direct primary law. When factions fight, minorities get their dues. The reason for these iterated falsehoods of the Oregonian is that its owner is a disappointed, chagrined, mischief-making partisan with a greater love for himself and his faction than respect for his party or honor for the people. He thinks if he lies hard enough, and long enough, and loud enough, the people are such fools as to believe him and walk into the trap he so often baited and set with care and then been caught in himself. A minor reason is to deceive people outside the state and Republicans who have not been long in the state.

BOOSTING DOWNWARD

Where men are worked long hours for small pay the output is gradually reduced. The standard of the living constantly reduces the vitality of the men. Inferior races take the place of the Saxon, the Norseman or the Latin. If through organization the men secure reduced hours and better pay it takes from a year to three years to restore the former standard. In time men will do as much work in eight hours as formerly they did in 16 hours.

Even a horse cannot stand continuous hard work for over eight hours a day, and careful experiments by practical men indicate that horses worked six hours a day pay better than when driven longer. The same experience is the result with men. Their vitality only lasts about so long. On the average about six hours a day at its best speed. This has been confirmed by thousands of scientific experiments. Men live longer, produce more, enjoy life more, are more moral and less contentious, more sober and less dissipated on eight hours of reasonable labor than on any longer term of diurnal service.

Notwithstanding these well ascertained facts, we find men with large investments and capital banding together to fight organized labor as though they were fighting some great evil. Millions are spent to keep workmen confined to labor for half an hour more each day. Millions are spent to degrade the standard of living, to deteriorate the race. Millions are spent to secure laws to punish men for asking for better hours, conditions and pay. Men congratulate each other and their civic organizations for securing decisions of the courts, and for lobbying through law-making bodies legislation, that condemns the future and present mothers of the race to stand on their feet at work when they should be resting at home.

It seems strange that men seek to work injury to their own kind, their own countrymen, their own brothers and sisters, but they do. In Oregon we are reliably informed literally hundreds of thousands will be directly spent, and millions indirectly lost, to prevent the extension of the eight-hour day.

Every trick and device, every form of anarchy which aggregated wealth and swollen special privilege can bring to bear, will be invoked to aid in the degradation of labor and the impoverishment financially, physically and morally of the entire community.

The strangest part of this impending conflict is that it can be by no means add to the temporary or permanent profit or benefit of any employing person or corporation. If it fails it will have cost the financial prosperity of many. If it wins it will cost the community infinitely more. Yet millions will be spent to render Portland less desirable, less prosperous, less healthy and less moral. The employers gain nothing in output and the employe will be obliged to spend his time and money, of which he has little, and his energies, already overstrained, to defend his inalienable rights.

A decision of a court established that the Nazarene should be crucified. The highest courts of England decided that men should be burned alive for refusing to sign certain professions of faith. For refusing to say "God save the King" the last woman burned alive in England was refused justice by the courts and the king. The decisions of the courts have times without number confirmed wrong and established injustice; and still they are establishing and deciding that men have no rights the privileged are bound to respect; and still we look for justice from the courts. The highest courts of the land are deciding just now against the inalienable rights of man, as they always have, and that is to the extent that the multitude will stand for their decisions.

Land hogs are so delaying the completion of railroads in Central Oregon that actual train running may be delayed for a year. The assessors should get after these fellows and make them pay taxes on the valuations they set on their worthless sands, rocks and patches of sagebrush. If collected for 1910 and 1911 that would be some help. It might do a little good to keep up the assessments at what those hogs swear their property is worth.

The good roads movement proposes to permit counties to issue bonds to build roads with. This is all right, but where would the anarchy and general destruction of American liberty and principles come in if some of these roads had strips of steel laid on them and were leased for the operation of trolley lines?

Cities have secured to themselves greater powers and greater freedom and therefore their boundaries are extending to the country, where owners of land want to derive the benefits flowing from public utili-

ties, exercise of the referendum and initiative by the citizen, good roads, and other good things. Los Angeles is covering its county almost entirely. Seattle is spread out like a great starfish. A movement is strong in California to enable San Francisco to be nearly fifty miles long. Portland is reaching out to gobble part of Clackamas county, and will soon be over 100 square miles in area. We need more home rule in county government, and less interference from the legislature. The Progressive Government League of Oregon proposes to secure this with an amendment that will simplify and at the same time extend the autonomy of a county.

Organized labor is at peace in Portland, with the exception of a few little scraps with a very near-sighted bunch of employers who give the workers just enough exercise to keep a healthy development in progress. But organized labor in Portland is prepared for war. It is not likely to have it, mainly for that reason. Another reason is that the politicians don't want a ruction to start during the campaign. There is enough trouble in the political camps now, and to add a general onslaught on organized labor might result in a few more splits and shiftings. With the initiative and referendum in operation the enforcement of unjust laws, the clubbing of bystanders, the forbidding of picketing, is likely to make trouble for eminent and lowly gentlemen who have had offices of value and honor. The recall can be invoked in short order, and a general labor war is extremely embarrassing under such circumstances.

Churchmen often wonder at the antagonism of labor unions to them. The reason is not far to seek. The churches are too often built with unfair labor. Their leading members too often align themselves with movements making for unfair conditions, low wages, long hours. The church people ignore the rights of men in this world to too great an extent and buy goods without regard to whether they were made by prison, child or slum labor. The church members too often aid in supporting some butcher shop or bakery that employs men eighteen hours a day. They too often aid in keeping the girls in the stores at starvation wages. Their ministers will spend hours talking over whether one of them should wear a yellow necktie, but they never consider where the money comes from of their members who rent bawdy houses. In a phrase, churchianity is not always Christianity.

The advocates of long hours and low wages for workmen are accustomed in their subsidized sheets to claim that organized labor in Portland has only three per cent of the population. Their figures are on a par with their logic. Why should the Employers' Association count the wives and families of organized workers with their opponents? In several trades the organized workers number over 90 per cent of the possible membership. In many others over 50 per cent. There are over 25 per cent of all able-bodied men in Portland identified with organized labor, and over 25 per cent more friendly to it. If the Employers' Association starts in to reduce wages, increase hours and establish unsanitary conditions in Portland, and that is what it always seeks to do, when it quits talking and gets down to hard work, it will have a revision of its cooked statistics thrust upon it.

In New York and New Jersey several multi-millionaires have established estates that rival any of the domains of the British nobility. Like their British prototypes they are sweeping away homes, villages, towns, that sheep may graze where men were reared. "Life" of New York suggests that the object of one of these lordly Americans is "To afford an object lesson of the uses of money which helped in their day to raise hob in France, and in our day have brought the budget crisis in England." A change in the tax laws of England will break up the large estates. Same in New York, same in Oregon.

One of the Sage Foundation researches discloses that no man can properly support a family with less than \$900 a year. We have some noble-hearted philanthropists in Portland banded together to see that their pampered employes do not receive over \$700 a year. They trouble for the further progress of Portland if men should unite and thereby secure \$900 a year. They call themselves the Employers' Association. The public is the real employer of these employes, however; a fact which this handfull seems to have never realized. The public is largely made up of employes.

One of the indicted millionaires of Pittsburg is the infamous F. N. Hoffstot, the man who issued his orders to fight the striking steel workers to a finish last fall, and then wets sailing on his steam yacht while men, women and children were beaten, shot and starved at his orders. This beautiful example of the employers association leaders of the United States is charged with bribery of public officials. Wonder how many of our Portland Employers Association leaders would be entitled to indictments if the searchlight from Pittsburg was turned on \$

Organized labor in Portland is rejoiced to see that Los Angeles, so long the citadel of the long hours and poor pay of the "open" shop organizations on this Coast, is reaching out to all the towns in Southern California and girding on armor for the contest for an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. Portland is traveling the same road, and beckons to her sister city to come up higher. We have some heights to climb, too; but the air is good up here, and the workers would stand upon the top.

As a usual thing the railroads want courts to act slowly and thereby wear out the litigants who sue them, or who are sued. The railroads rushing into Central Oregon, however, are going to be tied up for a year because the condemnation suits cannot be closed in a few weeks, as they could be if we had more justice and not so much involved law.