

# PORTLAND LABOR PRESS

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### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY.

The school is fundamentally an institution erected by society to do a certain specific work—to exercise a certain specific function in maintaining the life and advancing the welfare of society. The educational system which does not recognize that this fact entails upon it an ethical responsibility is derelict and a defaulter.—John Dewey in Union Principles in Education.

### HORSES AND CLUBS AND MEN.

It is unfortunate, to say the least, when policemen mounted and with clubs drive crowds of citizens like cattle from the downtown streets. It is a bit of advertising that the Rose City does not need and a bit of stubbornness on the part of somebody that is uncalled for, at least it is so considered in the minds of many respectable citizens of Portland and of Oregon. It was thought by many people that the day of the rush with horses against citizens except during times of real riot or war, had passed with a lot of other abuses which no clean civilization can countenance.

It is strange how some men become excited and show power which was given them to be used with caution and with cool judgment. It is strange that common decency is so soon forgotten, that the rights of the non-participant are so carelessly trampled under foot, that the good name of the city for peace and for good government should be so heedlessly defamed.

If the occurrences of the last few days in Portland are those of days of peace, what would be the result in the case of real riot? If horsemen are used on the sidewalks to intimidate citizens who may be on their own missions of peace when there is no riot, what would be the methods employed in case of trouble when killing had really occurred?

It has been said that the one seriously lacking trait of the American citizen and official is steadiness, and in Portland during the last week the truth of the maxim has been brought home. The lack of steadiness has been urged as the one prime reason for military training of young men—not the killing of men, as is commonly understood to be the foundation of military training. Surely in Portland it has been shown that steadiness is a lacking quality, not alone on the part of certain political organization workers but on the part of some men in authority over the lives and property of the citizens of Portland and Oregon.

Why not get down to earth and deal with men and women as human beings, not as wild animals threatening the life of the commonwealth?

### REFUDDLING THE REAL ISSUE.

In the excitement of the last few days in Portland the public mind has been entirely diverted from the real issue before the good citizens of Oregon. Newspapers have attacked men in office and men and women on soapboxes, but not one of the organs of business, big and little, has tried to keep before the people the real problem, which must be settled before the public mind will be pacified and real peace will return.

It does not make so much difference to the people of Oregon whether the sheriff does everything he should do, or neglects some things while he overdoes other parts of his work. It does not matter much whether the mayor calls on all good people to keep off the streets or whether a foul-mouthed orator gets bumped on the head with a policeman's club. It does not matter much whether the rockpile or the North End is the abiding place for half a dozen more or less undesirable citizens. But it does concern every self-respecting citizen of Oregon when unbearable industrial conditions are allowed to exist in Portland and when encouragement is given to continue them against the peace and dignity of the city and the state.

People seem to have forgotten the strike of helpless women and girls in a cannery on the East Side. People seem to have forgotten the cries for food which went up when girls and women were ready to accept charity to prevent death from starvation. People seem to have forgotten that back of the fuss on the streets is a condition, not the problem of driving people like cattle about the streets, but the problem of giving women and girls a chance to live and to be decent in a land of opportunity.

People get excited and allow newspapers to lead them into by and forbidden paths. People forget the lesson of the fish which throws off a black liquid with which it muddles the water and thus is enabled to escape its ene-

mies or attack life about it. People in Portland forget that certain newspapers fight certain men for the purpose of submerging issues vital to the interests of the masses. People forget that attacks on Industrial Workers of the World street speakers may be subterfuges to divert the public mind from the real issue—shorter hours and higher wages for the man and the woman whose struggle for existence is almost unbearable.

Let us look the situation in Portland squarely in the face. Let us be cool and see things as they are. Men and women should get tired of picking sand out of their eyes whenever an industrial question comes up for settlement. Some people in Portland are tired of it now. May the number increase.

### JURISDICTIONAL FUZZES.

In the trouble between union workers and the Building Construction Employers' Association of Chicago, the jurisdictional strike has been given a great deal of unfavorable publicity. The association has issued and sent broadcast over the country a statement in which it is shown that contractors have been grievously wronged and that workers have suffered much unemployment as a result of these misunderstandings.

The statement follows: During the last year there have been over 300 strikes, all caused by disputes among the unions themselves, on buildings in Chicago. In nearly every case the cause of the trouble was the mere triviviality, and organized labor was used to forward a selfish interest of individuals.

Labor conditions have been growing steadily worse in Chicago until it has become impossible for employers to take any contract work in the hope of completing it without innumerable strikes.

During the past year the loss because of these strikes to owners, contractors and union workmen runs into millions of dollars.

And yet union labor has always been employed, and, until recently, there have been few serious differences between the employers and the unions. Almost invariably the trouble has been among the unions themselves. Jurisdictional strikes, caused by a question as to what union should do certain work, have cost owners and contractors millions, have thrown thousands of workmen out of employment and have been a serious blow to the welfare and growth of Chicago.

On every day during the past year there have been strikes on all large buildings; first on one and then on another, the unions violating their joint arbitration agreements with the employers. These strikes were of the kind absolutely beyond the employers' control, and while some question of jurisdiction was being wrangled over by the unions thousands of workmen lay idle and millions of dollars were lost to the workmen, owners and contractors.

One single month furnishes an example of the general conditions which have prevailed for three years. During that month there were strikes, all of them jurisdictional in nature, on the following large buildings:

Mandel Brothers, Rothschild building, Larkin building, Franklin building, Butler Brothers, Chicago Telephone Company, Children's Memorial Hospital, Nicholas Senn High School, Advertisers' building, Bauer & Black building, Lake Shore power house.

### ABLE WAGE DISCUSSION.

In the May Forum is an article by James Boyle on the legal minimum wage. It is an entertaining and instructive article, expressed in a spirit of candor and sincerity that makes it decidedly pleasant to read. Mr. Boyle disagrees with the proposition that the minimum wage is beneficial either to capital or labor. In fact, from the societary standpoint he thinks it is not to be desired.

So far as its effect upon labor goes he contends that it will be prejudicial to higher wages, since it will tend to depress all wages to the minimum point. He shows that the experience in New Zealand and Australia has not been of a character to assure its advocates of its success. It has apparently worked with some smoothness, but it has not encountered the adversity of bad times.

We would commend the article to both those who favor and oppose the minimum wage as a fine example of candid controversy with which one may disagree without bitterness.

### KILLING OFF YOUNG MEN.

A terrible arraignment of the industrial conditions of the country is found in the report of the District Attorney for New York City for the year 1912. It shows the terrible toll of young men which is taken through the system of low wages and speeding up. And, when it is understood that experts in crime say that the real criminal is rarely found in the young man, the report is all the more interesting and worthy of careful study.

The report shows that the District Attorney's office disposed of 4827 cases last year, with 3026 convictions and only 321 acquittals.

In the year 789 married men were convicted in the courts of General Sessions and the Criminal Branch of the Supreme Court, and 2068 unmarried men. The records for women defendants show 66 married women and 100 unmarried.

While the percentage of unmarried criminals is high in practically every sort of crime, the report shows that suicide is an exception.

Three times as many married men attempted suicide and were tried for it in 1912 as unmarried. A comparison for the past nine years gives 7670 convictions of married men for all sorts of crimes, and 18,406 convictions of unmarried men.

The report indicates that there is a gradual increase of crime among young men, the male criminals under the age of 30 years having increased in number from 1700 in 1904 to 2200 in 1912. During the past year many offenders were between the years of 15 and 20. Assault charges show 40 under 20 years,

and 64 from 20 to 30 years. Third degree burglary, 213 for younger period and 205 for the older; grand larceny in the second degree, 184 criminals under 20 years, and 238 from 20 to 30; petit larceny, 157 under 20, and 144 from 20 to 30 years; unlawful entry, 34 under 20 years, and 22 from next 30 years. The total shows 940 under 20 convicted last year, and 1278 from 20 to 30, where 404 offenders from 30 to 40 years were convicted.

The statistics for women prisoners show that two-thirds of the women brought to court were under 30 years. Convictions for thievery stand highest, grand larceny 18, second degree grand larceny 55, petit larceny 42. The total number of women brought before the higher criminal courts was 166.

Making averages the usual sentence imposed was five years and six months, and the total state prison terms amounted to 3991. A gradual increase since 1912 is noted. The increase was from four years and a half to the present average.

### CANNERIES AND STARVATION.

The country was tremendously shocked a few months ago when in the State of New York an investigation of conditions in canneries showed that women and children were driven to desperation in an effort to earn the necessities of life, working all hours of the day and part of the night in the task. People who are not sentimental marveled at the facts brought out, and some of the newspapers of the country were big enough to give the public a birdseye view of the canneries where millions of dollars in dividends are made while the lives of workers are crushed out.

Portland people could not suppose that conditions similar to those in benighted New York could exist in Oregon. It is easy to accuse the neighbor of being a bad citizen but it is another matter to bring the fault home, where it belongs. Judging from information which has leaked out in Portland since the strike of the girls at the Oregon Packing Company's plant, New York canneries are not the only industrial enterprises which are filling the tin cans with the life blood of the workers. In other words, if starvation haunts girls and women in Portland while they work from early morning to late at night, now is not the time to play cheap politics and fuss on the street, but it is a time for action that the lives of innocent people who want to make an honest living may be preserved, that the welfare of the whole people may be safeguarded. It certainly is not a time for schoolboy pyrotechnics, for insane quarrelling over shadows while the substance is allowed to rot and bring desolation and disaster into the life of the community.

### WHY MEN ORGANIZE.

Proficiency gives the happiness of achievement in work well done, but we do not work merely because we love it. We want some of the good things we see others enjoy. We want good things to eat, good things to wear, and other recreation besides riding to and from work six days a week. We want to look prosperous and not wait till we die before others notice that we ever lived. We want to enjoy the society of our kind and realize the joy of being a real live, active unit in the great social structure of our generation. We want pretty homes and want to provide them with all the little things that make for comfort and add so much to the sum total of human happiness. We want to start our children with natural surroundings and rear them to healthy maturity. We want them to look as neat and sweet as other children and have all the advantages of education and training which other men's children receive.

And when the heat enervates the body that has worked with mechanical precision for a year, we want to gather our loved ones and answer the call of nature which beckons us out into the open, where we can forget our cares and gather new strength from the fragrance of wild flowers and rest our weary eyes on the grassy stretch of a rolling country or perhaps lounge in the sands of the seashore and lave in the salty breakers.

We are entitled to all of these things and the world holds abundance for all. When we ask for our own as individuals we are scorned as beggars, but through our unions our claims are successfully advanced.

The worker is just as human as his employer and has all the emotions and all the capacity for enjoyment as has the man who lives off the industry of others.

But before the worker can get out of life what is in it for him, he must conserve his energy and concentrate his demands through the trade union of his craft. It is the only agency that has ever reduced his hours to the point of getting a period of recreation out of every 24 hours; it is the one means of getting prompt action on a demand for better wages, and is the only institution to give him a feeling of security in his position because it sets up a definite standard with a fair minimum wage.

The common ambition of men and the unnatural burden upon toilers bring them together under the banner of trade unionism, to march against the hordes of privilege and regain what they have taken from us.—World, Duluth, Minn.

### PRACTICAL ROAD BUILDING.

How essentially different is the policy of the state of Ohio in the matter of road building from the proposed Pacific Highway policy in Oregon! Ohio people realize that highways are usually of steel, that transportation over them is not 'he item which makes it impossible for farmers to handle their produce at a profit. Oregon enthusiasts, led by city

men who want highways built for automobiles, seem to think that what the state needs is a system of highways paralleling the railways, or going in the same general directions between great centers. One plan is practical, the other has all the elements of a great dream, even to the expense.

Ohio people want roads over which the farmer can take his produce to market. It is the road from the farmer to the village and the town that is of deepest interest to the people, not the highway between cities or great centers. Ohio people want to make cultivation of the land profitable, a sensible thing to do, and in order to do this they must first consider the problem of marketing. Over bad roads from the farm to the railroad it is nearly impossible for farmers to haul their produce without making the transportation charge prohibitive, or at least large enough to absorb about all the profit in the production of vegetables or fruit which must be handled quickly and at seasonal periods.

Oregon needs to consider market roads as well as does Ohio. The sooner Oregon gets away from many of the dreams which have annoyed the people for years, the sooner Oregon lands on a basis of doing instead of exploiting; the sooner Oregon gets to a basis of thinking that real prosperity cannot follow wild speculating and questionable money making, the sooner will real, permanent prosperity dawn and real development take root.

### STRANGE POLITICAL SITUATION.

The labor ministry of the Australian Commonwealth has resigned, having had a rather long lease of office. The recent federal elections proved less favorable to the labor party than it had expected. It lost its majority in the popular branch of parliament, although it retained a safe margin of control in the senate.

On the other hand, the same elections resulted in an indorsement of the policies of the labor party and cabinet, as the proposals submitted to the voters with reference to fiscal and social reform were carried. Again, the party that captured the popular house has a majority of one only. No government can be formed on so shaky and weak a foundation, and it is doubtful whether the "victorious" liberals will attempt to govern. The resignation of the labor ministry is inevitable, but the liberals can only form a government for the purpose of ordering another general election and giving voters a chance to render a more positive verdict.

The labor party, supported by the small farmers, has stronger hopes of success in new elections than the liberal forces, whose programme is too indefinite. But the situation is full of interest. It makes for compromise and mutual concessions, or for conservative-progressive policies.

### MUNICIPAL RECREATIONS.

The committee appointed to investigate municipal recreation in New York has brought to light several interesting facts. It has discovered that New York is spending a lot of money to provide opportunities of which only 5 per cent of the population avails itself. The expense is needlessly enhanced by reason of the failure of the city to make use of schools and armories as recreation centers. As things now are municipal recreation cannot compete with commercialized recreation.

The relative unpopularity of municipal recreation the committee explains in several ways: The system is too rigid, failing to adjust itself to the needs and demands of the several communities and discouraging individual initiative, and there is "oversupervision." As a remedy the committee suggests freer adaptation to local needs together with a measure of local control. Thus the committee appears to place most of the blame on bad administration. To the nonexpert, however, another factor in the unpopularity of municipal recreation will at once suggest itself—there is still left in the American people a large residuum of that spirit of independence for which their forefathers were celebrated. Looked at from this point of view, the stubborn insistence of the people on their right to pay their own way is far from being a discouraging phenomenon.

### EARLY CLOSING IS COMING.

The merchants throughout the country are realizing more and more that they are the teachers of the great buying public, and the crux to the whole situation lies in co-operation among the retail merchants themselves, for each store is on the defensive, and whenever a competitor prolongs his hours of employment the others follow suit. Where all adopt the same policy, no one is placed at a disadvantage and business is not disturbed. Furthermore, if the merchants would take steps along this line there would be less chance for legislation limiting working hours. Early closing is coming—nothing can stop it.

According to Colonel Mulhall, in the State of Indiana alone, there are 3,000 manufacturers affiliated with the National Manufacturers Association. Estimating that each member contributed \$250 a year, which are the annual dues, Indiana alone contributed three quarters of a million dollars annually for the purpose of exterminating labor unions.

The cure for white slavery is to make it commercially unprofitable. Make it as dangerous for a man to live off the earnings of a street woman as to dynamite a safe. Give him as long a term in the penitentiary for the former as for the latter crime, and the traffic in women will be wiped out.

The only waiters' organization in Russia is in Moscow.



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