

PORTLAND LABOR PRESS

Official Publication of the Central Labor Council of Portland and Vicinity, and the Oregon State Federation of Labor.

Published every Monday by the Central Labor Council of Portland and Vicinity, under the direction of the following Board of Control:

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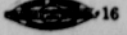
A. H. HARRIS, Editor and Manager.

Subscription, \$1.00 per year in advance

Advertising rates furnished on application.

Entered at the Post Office, at Portland, Oregon, as second-class mail matter.

Monday, August 25, 1913



A THOUGHT FOR TODAY.

How important loom the thousand and one things that fill the daily life, yet how trivial is the bulk of them? To separate the realities from the unrealities, the significant from the trifling and non-essential—that surely is the first step to self-knowledge, the one and only royal road to self-conquest.—Collier's Weekly.

ORE DOCKWORKERS' STRIKE.

The ore dockworkers' strike has been declared off. It lasted less than a week. Of the poor fellows who were duped by the loud-mouthed leaders of the I. W. W., most of them were obliged to crawl back to work on their bellies, while others whose pride was stronger than their need for bread are looking for jobs elsewhere.

It is not an easy task for an editor of a trade union paper to write about the recent ore dockworkers' strike. Our sympathy goes out to the poor workmen who, no doubt are underpaid, as most workmen are, when cost of living, hazard of occupation and seasonal employment conditions are taken into consideration. They were easy prey for such an organization as the Industrial Workers of the World, and its leaders lost no time in taking advantage of them.

Now they are back to work again, and the I. W. W. leaders declare that there are sufficient of their members on the job to "do whatever work may be assigned to them." Of course, this can be taken as a threat to resort to "sabotage," which is understood to be "striking on the job" by crippling the machinery at the ore docks. How far they will dare go in this direction only the future can tell, but it looks to us like one of their characteristic bluffs.

Ore dockworkers should take a lesson from their recent unfortunate experience. The Industrial Workers of the World have never won a strike. Their tactics have been repudiated wherever they have been tried. In every instance the participants in an I. W. W. strike have become so disgusted with what they believed was an organization of labor that they turn against all co-operative effort upon the industrial field. But they should not take this view. Labor's only hope for freedom is in organization along well-tried, constructive lines. Without organization labor would be ground to atoms.

The method of organization followed by the American Federation of Labor has so far proven to be the best for all laborers. The ore dockworkers have been taught to despise craft unionism and to seek relief through industrial organization. At the same time they are eligible for membership in an international trade union as pronouncedly industrial in its operation as any labor organization in the world. We refer to the International Longshoremen's Association, which admits all workmen who load and unload boats, all men who sail harbor tugs from the captain to the cook, and all other harbor employees. This great industrial union with its long record of achievements, the Duluth and Superior ore dockworkers rejected to accept the I. W. W., with nothing behind it but wind and failure.

All unorganized labor must learn that good things do not come to it on silver platters. It requires time, sacrifice, patience and hard work to forge ahead. It can not expect to receive at one stroke that which required years of organization for union labor to achieve. Indeed, it is the very height of folly for any group of workmen to think of venturing into a strike until they have been well disciplined in organization, having behind them a sufficient treasury to withstand a long siege, and more than all when they shall have sought and gained the public's good will. When they reach this point they will find it less necessary to strike than when they were unorganized, or but recently organized. The best antidote for strikes is a strong, healthy and carefully managed trade union.

The Steel Trust too is not free from the responsibility of the recent strike. Its attitude against the organization of its employes makes it possible for such organizations as the I. W. W. to exist. Had local Steel Trust officials tolerated constructive organization along trade-union lines at the ore docks there would be no such thing as a mid-season strike. Indeed, there would be no occasion for strikes at all, and the contracts they made an issue in the late strikes would be made in equity to be

kept by men who had something to say about making them, which they did not have in this instance.

The road to industrial peace runs to the constructive organization of the working classes and by collective bargaining. Through no other method can it be obtained or made secure.—Duluth Labor World.

CONSUMER PAYS IT ALL.

The poor consumer comes in for his full share of grief, whether the weather be hot or cold, wet or dry. In winter feed is high and livestock prices range high. In summer, water is scarce and the range stock is driven to market to prevent suffering from thirst and consequent loss to the drover. Anyway, it goes, the consumer pays it all, and is expected to smile.

The harried consumer who has had visions of beef from Argentine, Brazil, New Zealand and Australia as a means of checking the ever-ascending price of meat will be keenly disappointed by this prediction. Already some beef has been received in California from Australia, but California, except in California, is a very small portion of the United States, and a few shiploads of meat landed at her ports will have little effect upon the markets further East, where the masses of consumers live. The trouble with Argentine beef, the expected source of supply for the Atlantic Coast, is that cattle diseases rage there, and there is no satisfactory inspection of beef before shipment. It is stated that this can not be supplied to render beef shipping to this country of importance under two or three years.

A few weeks ago the Department of Agriculture sent Dr. A. D. Melvin and several assistants to Argentine to investigate the meat producing and shipping conditions. There was at once a complaint by farmers and cattle raisers in this country that the department had no right to send men to foreign countries to teach them how to compete to better advantage with our own cattle raisers. The department hastened to explain by official circular, that it had not sent men for that purpose, but to inspect methods and inform the government what they were, so that the department would be in better position to protect the people of this country from the importation of diseased meats. In other words, the mission of Dr. Melvin was declared to be restrictive of importation rather than promotive.

While this may have reassured the farmers, which is doubtful, it was far from encouraging to the consumers, who hoped an effort was being made to smooth out the rough places in the road of importation of meat. And, in fact, that is the real object of the mission, to teach the packers of Argentine what they must do if they would ship meat to this country. They will probably do it and we shall get the meat, but not in quantities for several years. In the meantime the tendency of meat prices to soar will not be checked. The present drought has temporarily lowered the prices paid farmers, which are now about \$1 per hundred less than a few weeks ago, because farmers are rushing stock to market to save feed. But the consumer is getting no benefit from this, and a little later, when the prices go higher than ever before because of shortage, he will find his meat bills more altitudinous than ever. Then the farmer who has sold his breeding stock to save feed will suffer equally with the consumer, because he will have no steers to sell at the new high prices. About all the consumer can do is to turn his eyes towards Argentine and hope.

Muzzling the Press.

From Congress down to the lower Judges of record there is a disposition among those in authority to say what newspapers shall or shall not print. Presently, we suppose, the patrolman on the beat will take the matter into his own hands.

Congress invades newspaper offices and the Supreme Court holds that instead of violating the liberty of the press it is only applying new conditions for the use of the mails. Thus encouraged, Senator Works introduces a bill forbidding publication in the District of Columbia of more than a mere statement of the fact that a crime has been committed.

In Arkansas a bill passed the Senate prescribing the make-up of newspapers and limiting their activities in news-gathering. In Indiana there is a new law making it a penal offense for a newspaper to print "any article or cartoon calculated to expose any person at any election to ridicule or contempt."

The Texas Legislature was recently asked to consider a bill punishing newspapers for printing deceptive advertisements, whether innocently or by design. A measure of the same kind passed in Maine was vetoed by the Governor.

The recent penitentiary sentence of 15 years imposed upon a Paterson, N. J., editor for "hostility to the government" must still be in the public mind, as is also the attempt of a trial Judge to imprison a Kansas City editor for contempt because he printed a truthful narrative of certain court proceedings.

Less than a month ago the Mayor of Seattle undertook to suppress a newspaper by a police order, and last week in Missouri a Judge ordered the indictment of a reporter who had sent to a newspaper some account of a grand jury's proceedings.

These episodes are now recalled because this week a Circuit Judge in West Virginia ordered the arrest of three reporters for contempt for the reason that at a public trial they disregarded his order that no newspaper should disclose anything that was going on in his court. When he graciously discharged them, the judgment was foolishly described as "a great triumph for a free press."

Is this Russia or San Domingo—New York World.

JURISDICTIONAL INFRINGEMENT.

A movement is on foot to reorganize the labor editors into a State and International Organization for the mutual benefit of their jurisdictional rights. No craft in the American Federation of Labor suffers through the infringement on their jurisdictional rights as do the labor editors and the labor press.

Scores of labor papers have been forced to the wall because of the continued infringement in the publishing field by various crafts in the American Federation of Labor. In the two or three years just past a great change has taken place. Thousands outside our movement who formerly were opposed and unfriendly can now be counted as our friends. The question arises as to the cause of the change, as the policies of the labor movement are the same. The change has been brought about through educating the public as to our policies, aims and achievements.

Through what channels do the public receive their education? It does not come through the daily press, because their columns are not friendly. The public do not attend our meetings, so it can not come through that source. The educating and enlightening of the public to our human cause and our human struggles has been brought about through the labor press, that, we do believe, cannot be denied by any fair-minded thinker.

Now, to return again to the jurisdictional rights of a craft. Why is not the labor press entitled to the same protection as any other craft? The carpenters are given the construction of all wood in buildings, the printers the setting of type, the machinist the remodeling and reshaping of iron, in fact, all crafts are given certain fields of industry and where any infringement on the jurisdictional rights of a craft occurs, the American Federation steps in and says to the craft that is infringing, "Hands off."

Why not give the labor publishers the same protection?

The prime object of an organization is to improve the working conditions, bring about a reduction in working hours and establish a minimum or a living wage, yet we can find some organizations devoting as much time and energy to the financial success of some book, or program, that they may be publishing, as they do to the wages and hours and the general conditions under which their members are employed.

Some times they offer the excuse that they need funds to maintain their organization, but that should not be sufficient to give them the right to trespass on the jurisdictional rights of other industries.

It may be true that the labor editors or the publishers of labor organs are at fault for not asserting their rights, but they no doubt feel as a union man does in an open shop—with no organization to support him he must submit to the conditions as may exist.

Let a union man in an open shop enter a protest about the conditions therein and off goes his head. He is only one and must submit to the dictation of the boss. And we believe many publishers of labor organs are held in submission by the same fear. Nevertheless, it is plain to any one and cannot be disputed. The organization which devotes its energy to improving is much further advanced than the organization which divides its energy and efforts with some proposition outside the working conditions of its members of its regular calling.—Labor Journal, Rochester, N. Y.

A shortage of cars to move the crops this year is reported. There are many reasons for improving the waterways, and this is one.

Man's noblest gift to man is sincerity.

DECAY OF TRADES.

Is the institution of trade unionism crumbling in the United States? An affirmative answer is given by Andre Tridon in his book, "The New Unionism," just issued. Mr. Tridon is the literary spokesman of the syndicalists in this country, and in his book he expounds the philosophy and active program of this movement, which he calls the "new unionism." His view of the trade union movement as represented by the American Federation of Labor is, of course, far from impartial.

Tridon's thesis is that the conservative trade union movement is fast losing grip on the labor situation in this country because the constituency to which it is addressing itself is disappearing. Trade lines are being obliterated, he says. The unskilled man is everywhere crowding in on the skilled worker. The job is divided up into minute parts, and it takes but a day for a perfectly new hand in any trade to learn to run any mechanical appliance.

The progress of the machine, Tridon says, is the death knell of trade lines in labor unions. He cites a number of industries, the glass blowing industry among them, which at one time were highly specialized. It once took years for a workman to become a master in the glass blowing trade. Today, through the invention and perfection of the Owens machine, the glass blowing trade is disappearing off the map as a skilled trade, Tridon states.

This decay of trades and the disappearance of skilled workers is real and is progressing far more rapidly than most people, and even labor leaders themselves, suspect, says Tridon. The day of the indispensable man is over in most occupations. The unskilled worker is in the ascendency. Unless organized labor modifies its tactics to suit not merely the ever decreasing class of skilled workers but the great mass of unskilled laborers, it will undoubtedly supply the syndicalist agitator with effective weapons against conservative unionism.

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