

Portland Labor Press

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MASS MEETING THURSDAY NIGHT

CONTRACT WORK VS. DAY WORK

A committee of the Central Labor Council is at work preparing an amendment to the city charter that will, if enacted into law, permit the city to do the work that is now let by contract by day labor.

It is expected that the contractors and those who fatten off public work will oppose the scheme. Nevertheless we believe that if the day labor plan should be followed it would result profitably to all concerned.

In this connection the following article appearing in last week's issue of the Seattle labor paper is interesting:

"In a letter to the commission of the Port of Seattle, under date of March 10, Chief Engineer J. R. West compares the results and costs of work done for the port under contract and by day labor, greatly to the advantage of the latter method. This calls to mind the report submitted by Superintendent of Streets Charles R. Case after the first year of his incumbency in which he showed that the city could run its asphalt plant and bid in competition with the contractors for street work and do more and better work for less money by the day labor plan.

"Day labor vs. contract labor is a constant source of argument on a public work and the letter of Engineer West goes far to show that the contentions of organized labor in this regard have been correct. For the information of our readers the letter is given herewith in full:

"Considerable work has recently been done by day labor and it is interesting to compare the cost of the work done in this way and the cost of the work done by contract.

"Two adjustable slips were built at the Hanford street wharf by day labor at a total cost for wages and material of \$1111.20.

"This is to be compared with the cost of two slips at Stacy and Lander street docks which were built by contract at a cost of \$1183.43. It is worthy of note that this contract price was considered at the time to be very low price and further that the two slips built by day labor at Hanford street are considerably better constructed than the Stacy and Lander street slips.

"The total cost of the offices and toilets including the plumbing at the Hanford street dock was \$1965. This figure is to be compared with the cost of the offices and toilets at the Stacy and Lander street docks which were constructed by contract

NOTICE TO FARMERS

The Labor Press is now being mailed each week to the officers of the various Farmers' Union locals in the state. There will be no charge to the recipients of the paper, the subscription being paid by the State Federation of Labor.

of \$2220. The floor area of the Hanford street offices and toilets is 2054 square feet. While the total area of the Stacy and Lander street offices and toilets is 1232 square feet and furthermore, the Hanford street offices and toilets are very much better built, and better finished than are the Stacy and Hanford street offices.

"The offices and toilets, including the plumbing at Smiths Cove, cost \$1630.88 and have a floor area of 1612 square feet. The cost of these offices compare favorably with those of Lander street.

"These figures I believe show conclusively the wisdom of doing a certain class of work by day labor rather than by contract."

ASKING FOR HIGHER WAGES.

Before the arbitration board at Chicago that will decide the wage requests of Western engineers and firemen, General Manager Trenholm of the "Omaha" railroad opposed the workers' claim that engineers and firemen shall not be required to throw switches or do flagging. The railroad official insisted that the work was "insignificant," and could be done by firemen. The workers' representatives replied that in below-zero weather, after a fireman had shoveled six or eight tons of coal, if he is obliged to leap from his cab into the freezing atmosphere and walk some distance to throw a switch or wave a flag it may endanger his health.

The general manager answered: "Oh, I don't think it would hurt the fireman."

Mr. Trenholm expressed much concern over the stockholder and insisted that "the unions were eternally asking for too much."

"If we can show you that capital has received more than 10 per cent on all it has invested in railroads, will you approve the request of the brotherhoods as to wage increases?" inquired Grand Chief Stone of the engineers.

Mr. Trenholm hesitated, and then said: "I hardly think that such a thing could be shown, and if it could be, I do not see how it would have any bearing on the present case."



C. H. KELLY
Member of the Barbers' Union of Portland, and who was recently appointed to the position of member of the State Board of Barber Examiners.

WOMEN'S WORK LAW UPHELD.

Again has the United States Supreme Court declared a State Legislature can specify trades or callings in which women can work only a certain number of hours without violating those sections of the Federal constitution which provides for "liberty of contract" and against "unreasonable discrimination."

The court reaffirmed this position in the case of a California law which limits the hours of women workers to eight per day, but which excepts canneries and farms.

In answer to the claim that the law prohibits "liberty of contract," the court held, in effect, that the liberty of contract guaranteed by the constitution is freedom from arbitrary restraint and not immunity from reasonable regulation to safeguard the public interest.

The court also held that legislatures have the right to classify trades or callings, even though, said the court, "it is possible by analysis to discover inequalities as to some persons or things embraced within any specified class."

MAKING PROGRESS.

It is reported that the joint commission of employers and employees are making progress in their effort to reach an agreement on proposed amendments to the Illinois state compensation law.

The workers' representatives on this commission are: President Walker, of the State Federation of Labor; Duncan McDonald, secretary Illinois United Mine Workers; President Fitzpatrick, of the Chicago Federation of Labor; President O'Donnell, of the Chicago Building Trades Council, and Robert Fitchie, secretary of the Teamsters' Joint Council.

PRESENT NEW AGREEMENT.

The two unions of carpenters in Allentown, Pa., have presented new agreements to contractors, same to take effect May 1. The new rate provides for a wage increase of 2 1/2 cents an hour. The present rate is 35 cents. Fifty hours shall be the work week from April 1 to December 1. Overtime at the rate of time and one-half and double time for work on Sunday, Christmas, Fourth of July and Labor Day.

EIGHT-HOUR CLAUSE STAYS IN CONTRACTS

In spite of the protests of the United States Steel Products Company which has the contract for the steel to be used in the inter-state bridge the eight-hour clause will stay in the contract.

Representatives of the company have been trying since the awarding of the contract to find a loophole in the law that would enable them to work any old kind of hours they wished, but Attorney-General Brown put a crimp in their plans when he said:

"If the material for the bridge is already manufactured and on the open market when the contract is signed, it can be used without regard to hours of labor taken in its manufacture, but if it is manufactured after the contract is signed it must be made under the eight-hour requirements, whether the work is performed in Oregon or elsewhere."

This helps some.

MINE OWNERS TO "UPLIFT."

Colorado mine owners will enter the "uplift" business for the benefit of employees, and several "club houses" will be erected, according to President Welborn of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, which imported strikebreakers and private detectives to resist efforts of the miners to compel this and other concerns to obey the state's mining laws. Mr. Welborn says the recent strike cost the operators \$1,250,000, and he closes his "uplift" announcement with this rather vague statement:

"Although our mine employees were, generally speaking, satisfied with working conditions at the time the strike was called, and had been for many years prior thereto, I know I am safe in saying that they are better satisfied and have a more friendly feeling toward the company today than they ever had before."

PLEADS FOR SHORTER HOURS.

In an address on the necessity of shorter hours, Rev. Robert E. Goodrich, of Oklahoma City, said:

"The toilers of the world must be given shorter hours for work. Much has already been gained, in some branches of industry, but shocking injustice still abounds in many directions. Fewer hours and one day's rest out of seven is the demand of the church in America for the laboring men."

PATRONIZE THOSE WHO PATRONIZE YOU.

The cold, hard, unvarnished truth about the matter is, this paper depends mainly upon advertising support for its existence. While it has a large circulation the income from that source is comparatively small.

All of our readers are interested in seeing that the paper is kept alive and knowing that merely the small amount they pay in subscriptions will not keep it up they should, each and every one of them, render the further assistance that is within their power by patronizing its advertisers.

A large majority of the unions affiliated with the Central Labor Council have given their endorsement to the political program of the Council and at the regular meeting last Friday evening it was decided to hold the mass meeting on Thursday evening, March 25, at 8 o'clock in the large hall in the Public Library.

The Council also adopted a set of rules to govern the meeting. The officers of the Central Council will be the officers of the meeting. Each nomination must receive at least ten seconds. Nominating speeches are to be limited to five minutes and seconds to two minutes. The public will be admitted to the hall but only union men and women will be allowed the floor and vote. After all candidates have been nominated each voter will vote for one candidate and one only; the five highest names will be declared the ones to be submitted to the referendum. A committee was also appointed to have charge of the door and examine cards.

Despite the attempts of the enemies of organized labor to cause dissension in the ranks by spreading false and misleading reports the union men are determined to go through with the proposition and it is expected that the capacity of the hall will be taxed.

The scheme is absolutely on the level, open and above board and there has been no framing on the part of anyone interested in the success of the meeting. There is no cut and dried proposition to nominate any one man or set of men and you are perfectly free to nominate who you please; in fact the plan of voting makes it absolutely sure that if your candidate has any considerable support he will be among the five chosen.

No charge of "assemblyism" can be made because the meeting is open to all who care to attend.

The charge that the Tillicum Club will pack the meeting in the interest of that organization is ridiculous because many who are members of the club are delegates to the Council and have favored the holding of the meeting from the beginning and it is not likely that they would do anything that would bring discredit on the Council and the club as well.

The success of the meeting depends entirely on the interest displayed by the individual members of organized labor and you should let nothing interfere with your being there next Thursday evening.

We can win if you'll stick.

500 EMPLOYEES WHO WERE GLAD WHEN BOSS TOOK UP BASEBALL.

In the April American Magazine Ida M. Tarbell writes another article in her new business series entitled, "The Golden Rule in Business." This month's article has to do with the length of the working day and many interesting points and stories are brought out showing that the old-time long working day was of no practical advantage. Miss Tarbell tells the story of a certain factory in the central part of the United States where five hundred girls are employed in making cotton articles. There was a great deal of friendliness between the employees and the owner. The owner was called "Pete" and he discussed shop matters with his employees on terms of entire equality and mutual interest. Miss Tarbell's story goes on:

"For years Pete's day was that of the operatives, from 7 A. M. to 6 P. M., ten hours and no Saturday

half-holiday. Then he became interested in baseball, and bought an automobile. But when you work from 7 A. M. to 6 P. M. there is scant time for either games or driving. Pete tried to bring himself boldly to going off Saturday afternoons, and to leaving early when the notion took him. He couldn't do it and he was easy in his mind! Moreover, if he did it, he heard of it. 'Fine to be the boss, ain't it?' some operative who had begun at the beginning and shared ups and downs with steadfast pluck and sympathy would call when she next saw him!

"Finally Pete announced there was to be a Saturday half-holiday. They were to make up for it in part. By coming at 6:30 they could get in three hours, and he thought the business could stand a cut of two hours. So they started that scale; but the girls didn't like the earlier hours. They were very often late. Pete didn't complain, he did not like 6:30 himself; and in six months' time, without any discussion of the matter, everybody was coming in at 7 A. M., and everybody had his Saturday half-holiday, which they will continue to have, as the law has recently sanctioned 5 hours in that state.

"I asked the forewoman who told me the tale, a loyal and humorous person, 'How about the output? Did it fall off?' 'That's the queer thing,' she said; 'there are girls on piece-work who make more, and the shop does more.'"

PAROLE SYSTEM A SUCCESS.

The California parole system is a "splendid success," reports state prison officials to Governor Johnson, who is told that:

"Experience has demonstrated its value in weaning men away from crime and restoring them to the ranks of self-supporting and self-respecting citizens. There are 764 prisoners on parole from both prisons. Twenty-two per cent of the men paroled in the two years are classed as failures, but only 4 per cent committed new crimes."

Fresh air treatment, ventilated cells, increased baths and increased medical attention have caused a large improvement in the health of the prisoners, it is reported.

COMMISSIONERS HAVEN'T AGREED TO SUBMIT ANTI-BANNER ORDINANCE

At regular intervals lately there has emanated from the headquarters of the Employers' Association statements to the effect that the City Commissioners have agreed to place an anti-boycott banner ordinance on the ballot at the June election.

In an endeavor to find out the exact truth in the matter we have secured statements from all of the members of the Commission excepting Commissioner Dieck whom we were unable to reach.

"I have not promised the Employers' Association, their representative or anyone else that I would vote in favor of placing the banner ordinance on the ballot," said Mayor Albee. "Furthermore I will say that owing to the fact that this subject has been before the voters on at least two occasions and decidedly beaten, I do not think it advisable to again submit it. If any group of citizens want the ordinance on the ballot again they should put it there through the initiative."

Commissioner Brewster said: "I have discussed the matter with Mr. McCusker but I did not promise him that I would favor submitting his ordinance for the reason that I do not approve of this particular ordinance. His ordinance is aimed to exclude only boycott banners, while I believe all banners should be removed from the streets."

Commissioner Bigelow said: "I have not promised Mr. McCusker or anyone else that I would or would not favor submitting the ordinance to a vote of the people at the coming city election."

Commissioner Daly: "I have not consented, and I do not believe that any other member of the Commission

has consented, to introduce an anti-banner ordinance. The matter has been under discussion several times and the consensus of opinion among the different Commissioners was to the effect that legislation along this line is now particularly up to the initiative. Similar ordinances and laws have been twice defeated, once by the referendum and again by the initiative, and it would seem poor public policy on the part of the Council to again burden the ballot with a measure of this kind."

