

The Labor Press should appeal to advertisers as a medium for getting business because it bears a distinction not had by other papers, in that it is the journal of a class in an organized capacity—the wage-earners—without whose expenditures there would be a marked decrease in all business. Merchants, when fixing appropriations for advertising, should remember the Labor Press.

Oregon Labor Press

Formerly The Portland Labor Press.

Owned and Controlled by Organized Labor.

Nothing contributes more to the upbuilding of a prosperous community than the patronage of Home Industries and Home Merchants. Money sent to out-of-town mail-order houses never comes back. The Labor Press urges its readers to patronize home merchants, and especially our advertisers.

Volume XVI. Number 11

Portland, Oregon, Saturday, July 1, 1916

Whole Number 856

Open Letter To Chamber Of Commerce Members

The Central Labor Council, mindful of the large numbers of liberal and broad-minded men and women holding membership in the Portland Chamber of Commerce, has for obvious reasons decided to lay its case and the cause it represents before them individually, rather than through the usual official channels.

This Council wishes to register with you in your capacity as a member of the Chamber a most emphatic protest against the action of the board of directors in declaring by resolution for the so-called "open-shop."

Not that all proponents of the "open-shop" are labor-haters, but that all labor-haters are proponents of the "open-shop" is our reason for withdrawing our membership.

You will find in every city a Chamber of Commerce, a Central Labor Council and of late years, an Employers' Association, the latter organized and maintained for the sole purpose of promoting what its members please to term the "open-shop" policy.

The first-mentioned organizations have attained the dignity of institutions and all broadminded men and women having any correct knowledge of their admit this.

The antithesis of the "open-shop" policy is the "union shop" policy, or what the enemies of union labor originally termed the "closed shop," and this term is now generally applied by writers and others in describing the union shop.

Every Central Labor Council in the United States is committed to the policy of the union shop. Why? Because experience has proved it furthers organization of the workers and as a result more nearly equitable wages and bettered conditions of employment are obtained.

Chamber's Functions Analyzed.
A Chamber of Commerce, as we understand it, is supposed to function as to promote the best interests of a community as such, and its functions best when those interests are promoted without injustice to any particular set or class of individuals in the community.

This Portland Chamber of Commerce has reorganized, promised to do it and still retains as a slogan:

"All for one and one for all." With this slogan as a watchword, the various interests of Portland were invited and urged to come into the new Chamber at \$50 per year dues, and the officials of one concern, the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company, became so enamored that they took out some 79 memberships at a trifling cost of \$3500 or so, per year.

This generous application for memberships passed without any public comment, but when the Central Labor Council, the Waterfront Federation, the Building Trades Council, the Stationery Engineers Union and the Oregon Labor Press each took out a membership, the public press commented on the fact favorably and prominent members and officials of the Chamber were quoted as being well pleased with our action.

Never, on any occasion, did any representative of union labor seek to use the Chamber for the promotion of the interests of union labor as such. But scarcely had the Chamber been formally organized, than did the paid representative of the Employers' Association wait upon the officials of the Chamber and solicit its support in a movement to have the City Commissioners refer to the people for a vote on an ordinance prohibiting this council or its unions from picketing or putting on the streets a boycott banner, and as a result a committee of the chamber waited on our Mayor and urged that he change his vote on this matter.

Arbitration Board Discussed.
When this came to the attention of this Council a committee was provided to wait upon the Mayor. Mayor Albee suggested that representatives of the Chamber and this Council meet in his office with him. This was agreed to.

At this conference it was suggested by representatives of this Council to the committee from the Chamber, that if it wished to do something of real and lasting benefit that the Chamber join with us in a movement to form a joint board that would hear both sides of any industrial controversy and attempt to adjust same. As a result, such a board was formed with jurisdiction over any industrial dispute "between employer and employee."

Please bear in mind the representatives of the Chamber were intent on

doing something that would cause the disappearance of the boycott banner, and bear in mind further, that all boycott banners are occasioned by either a strike or lockout or where the union believes workers are being underpaid or overworked.

Time passed and the meatcutters went on strike for a ten-hour day. The union requested the advice of the Central Labor Council. The Council advised that it place its grievance before the Joint Conciliation Board. The meatcutters did so. The employers were so notified by the officials of the Board. Coincidentally with this the representative of the Employers' Association of Oregon wrote each member of the Board (from the Chamber of Commerce) a letter saying the Board had no jurisdiction over the case as the men on strike were no longer employees. The Board took up this interpretation and finally decided to lay the matter on the table until they could submit an amendment to the rules governing the Board to the Chamber and to the Council.

The amendment extended the jurisdiction of the Board to cover strikes, lockouts and boycotts, and the full Board, without a dissenting member, recommended the adoption of the amendment. The Council adopted the amendment and the board of directors of the Chamber rejected it. As a result, the Board was powerless to act as a conciliator.

Chamber Action Blamed.
The entire coast is now affected by a longshoremen's strike, and a strike of river steambot men is on in Portland. Had not your board of directors laid down the order of the Employers' Association of Oregon, long ere this the Joint Conciliation Board of the Chamber of Commerce and the Central Labor Council would have given to the public the facts in each strike.

The longshoremen of this port are on strike to force a parity of rates between this port and those of San Francisco and Seattle, our competitors. Your Chamber of Commerce has been demanding this. What is its answer to the strikers? The "open shop."

The river steambot men are on strike for a 12-hour day, and what is the answer to the Chamber of Commerce? The "open shop."

The following explains our aversion to these answers: The theory of the "open shop" (according to 120 witnesses representing employers) is that the

workers are employed without reference to their membership or non-membership in trade unions. While as a matter of fact it was found upon investigation that these employers did not willingly or knowingly employ union men. (See page 85, Report of U. S. Industrial Relations Committee Report.) Page 438 in separate report made by the representatives of employers on the Commission says: "We frankly say if we were wage-earners we would be unionists, and as unionists we should feel the keen responsibility of giving the same attention to our trade union duties as to our civic duties."

Is it possible that the Employers' Association of Oregon is in such disrepute that it is forced to hide behind you as a member of the Chamber of Commerce when advocating its policies? Last year \$300,000 and more was spent by the Chamber of Commerce. Three hundred thousand dollars ought to build quite an organization. If it is to be used for the benefit of Portland and Oregon, the investment is a good one. If merely to function as an auxiliary to the Employers' Association, it is not.

This Council would be pleased to hear from you on this matter, either orally or by letter.

By order of Central Labor Council of Portland and vicinity.

EUGENE E. SMITH, Pres.
E. J. STACK, Sec.

♦♦♦♦♦ PATENTERS OF LOCAL ♦♦♦♦♦

♦♦♦♦♦ No. 226 ♦♦♦♦♦

♦ Owing to the next regular ♦

♦ meeting, Tuesday, July 4th, be- ♦

♦ ing a holiday, there will be no ♦

♦ meeting on that date, making ♦

♦ Tuesday, July 11th, the next ♦

♦ meeting. On that date the ♦

♦ newly elected officers will be ♦

♦ installed.

♦ W. A. WEAVER, Rec. Sec. ♦

♦ June 27th, 1916. ♦

♦♦♦♦♦

OUR NATAL DAY

(By Lenna Pittman Stahl.)

'Ere another issue of the Labor Press shall have been printed we shall have celebrated the anniversary of the signing of that instrument upon the principles of which our government was established—the Declaration of Independence.

One hundred and forty years ago a new nation was born and out of the flaming fire of revolution there emerged a republic dedicated to liberty, prosperity and peace, a republic offering a haven to the oppressed people of every other nation.

Born amidst military scenes, the stirring sound of the fife and the drum, the gathering of men to do battle for their very existence, men who preferred death to further oppression.

And from the efforts of these patriots has grown a mighty republic. Consecrated to liberty and human progress by the life blood of those patriots who made our country a reality; there has been handed down from generation to generation a love for justice, humanity, liberty and peace which no power on earth can overcome.

From the cradle of liberty, rocked by the hands of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, has grown children imbued with love for fellow beings, with sympathy for the oppressed that welcomes to our fold men of every country who seek an asylum from the woes of the old world.

We have been, above all, a peace-loving nation. The sagacious diplomacy of our chosen leaders have, time and again, averted war with

other governments, and our bravery or valor has not suffered by these peaceful settlements of disputes. As a result of this policy America stands an example to the warring nations of Europe, serene and confident, a temple of liberty and peace, dedicated to the ideals of progress and humanity rather than to the gospel of selfishness and slaughter.

From every home, from every workshop, from every mill and factory, from the fields and forests and from the lips of every mother in our broad land goes up a voice of praise, a prayer of thankfulness for the spirit that revolts at thought of war and carnage, but strives with every possible effort to maintain for our people peace, happiness and prosperity.

We have grown mighty in wealth, wisdom and power under the policy of maintaining our National honor by peace if possible, by war if necessary. In the hearts of the fathers and sons of this great nation there breathes a spirit that will prompt them to "fight for our flag, and die for our flag when Reason primes the sword, when Honor draws the blessing on the standards they uphold."

As to the future, may Wisdom point the way. May the God of Nations hover over us, directing our every movement. May peace so pre-dominate that the world may beat its swords into plow shares, its spears into pruning hooks and may the temple of peace and liberty, the foremost of all nations, be surmounted by the unshuffled, respected and loved Stars and Stripes.

LAND AND LOAN LAW PETITIONS ARE FILED

You'll have a chance to vote for the People's Land and Loan Law. It will be on the ballot next November.

Secretary Stack, of the State Federation of Labor, took the huge bundle of signed petitions to Salem yesterday and deposited them with the Secretary of State and the final chapter of the campaign to place the law on the ballot was completed.

The law requires 21,136 names and the petitions filed contain over 25,000 names, so there is no question about the measure getting on the ballot.

Now then there is an opportunity for every man and woman in Oregon who believes in the principles involved in the bill to get busy and help to make votes for it.

You won't have to worry about the Chamber of Commerce passing "open shop" resolutions if you will enact it into law.

It has been submitted for criticism to some of the foremost students of economics in the country and it has been declared that its adoption would be the greatest step that has ever been taken toward the abolition of involuntary unemployment.

It proposes to take the speculative value out of the land and make it possible for the man without a job, or the man with a job and who is dissatisfied with his boss or working conditions, to own his job by obtaining at the actual value a sufficient amount of land to enable him to make a living for himself and family.

It further provides, that under certain conditions and restrictions a man may borrow from the state certain specified sums of money to enable him to improve the land upon which he locates. This feature is a real rural credits plan and should have the support of those who have been howling for rural credits.

An active campaign for the adoption of the measure will be waged from now until the polls close on election day. Arrangements have been made to send speakers over the state to arouse the voters and to induce them to study the bill carefully before casting their vote. Those charged with the responsibility of enacting the measure into law feel that it will only be necessary to get the people to understand the bill and what it seeks to accomplish in order to roll up a big majority for it next November.

The following story entitled, "How to Boost Wages," by George A. Briggs in "The Indiana Forum," hits the nail squarely on the head:

"I don't know whether many people have the same feeling about it, but I do know that every time I read serious articles about Efficiency, Thrift, Sobriety and so forth, they give me the fidgets. I am not opposed to these things of course, but what a will-o'-the-wisp it is to expect any of them to better the condition of labor."

"If all men doubled their efficiency, then the work of the world could be done by half the number of workers. And they would do it for less pay per day than they now get. That conclusion to me seems inevitable."

"If through thrift and economy people lived on half as much as they do now, then wages would be correspondingly reduced. What else could happen in a world where, due to artificial conditions, there are always more men than there are jobs. The law of competition is written as deeply in the economical constitution of things as is the law of gravitation in physics."

there are more men than jobs the tendency of wages is down to the lowest amount on which the workers can live. On the other hand, if there were more jobs than men, then the tendency of competition would be to raise wages to the level of what the worker produces.

"I have no fault to find with competition. It is simply a natural law. In itself it is neither good nor bad. Its goodness or badness depends on the way society adjusts itself to it. If there are more jobs than men, then competition is good. If there are more men than jobs it is bad. The real question then is not what we shall do about competition, but how we may create a condition where the existing ratio between men and jobs will be reversed."

"This can be done in many ways, but only one of them seems practicable. One impractical way would be to encourage drunkenness. If enough workers were incapacitated by drink the sober ones would get better wages. This would not be because they were sober, but be-

cause the others were drunk. When the drunks signed the pledge and went back to work, then the number of sober men competing for jobs would be so increased that wages would fall.

"This suggestion is absurd of course, but it is none the less logical. There is a way however by which the ration between men and jobs may be permanently changed; by which the wages of all men may be increased. And under such circumstances every one could be free from the fear that his increase was at another's expense.

"This way had a try out in this country. It is responsible for the fact that wages as a rule have been higher here than elsewhere. Let me tell you about it.

"When our country became a nation it consisted of thirteen colonies scattered along the Atlantic seaboard. Back of these colonies stretching out for three thousand miles to the Pacific, was a vast "back yard" of fertile and unused land. If Bill Jones or Tom Smith, working in a factory in Boston or Baltimore or elsewhere, became dissatisfied with his job it was a simple thing for him to leave and take up a quarter section or whatever he could work of this unused "back yard."

"By doing this he took himself out of competition with the workers of Boston and Baltimore. He became the employer of his own labor. It was a cinch that he would not go back to his old job for less than he

could, make working for himself. But he did not get all the benefit.

Not by any means. When enough Bill Joneses and Tom Smiths had followed his example, there was a scarcity of labor in Boston and Baltimore. Every worker there was benefited. Wages went up. The workers that remained automatically received this benefit without effort on their part.

"The departure of enough Bill Joneses and Tom Smiths did the trick for all. It created a condition in the cities wherein there were more jobs than men. It automatically established a minimum wage. That minimum—for all workers—was the amount any average man could make for himself on the hitherto unused land in our national back yard.

"Alexander Hamilton saw all this and tried to head it off. He tried to have a law passed whereby the national domain would not be sold except in such large tracts that no one but the rich could buy. Fortunately he didn't succeed. And because he didn't succeed, the wages of American labor were fixed—so long as free land was available—at what average ability could produce employing itself in agriculture.

"That free land is now all, or practically all gone. There is no further outlet for surplus labor. If it were not for labor unions and other similar influences, wages would soon fall to the European level. They would thus fall be-

cause in this country there are now more men than jobs.

"Very well, you may say, but what are we going to do about it? I can give you my notion of what we ought to do. I said a moment ago that practically all of this free land is gone. I didn't mean that. It hasn't gone away. It is still here. But it isn't free.

"The most valuable part of it—that which lies in the cities—is largely owned by the Astors, the McCormicks, and others of their ilk. Look about in your own town or city. You will soon discover that a relatively small number own all the land. Then in country districts there are the Scullys in Illinois and Nebraska that own vast tracts. There are the Miller and Lux in California who own whole counties. There are the Farwells in Texas who received three million acres for building a state capitol.

"Now most of this land is held out of use for speculative purposes. More than half of the land in every town and city is so held. It is the same way in the country. Although the land is not used, you can not get it. At least you can not get it on terms you can accept. The landlords, otherwise called groundhogs, are too wise to permit anything of the kind.

"They want to live without work. They want to get big rentals for the land they permit to be used, and then to live on the income. When they have occasion to employ labor,

they want it to be cheap. It is a beautiful scheme. And it works. When you look at your pay envelope, you know it works.

"Now, let's beat them at their own game. Let's get busy in politics and work for a reformation in our tax laws. We have a rule by which to proceed. A tax discourages the thing taxed. Let us then tax everything we don't want, and untax everything we do want. That's simple, isn't it? Now first of all, we don't want land held out of use for speculative purposes. That hurts all of us. The workers have to pay the drones for every speculative advance in land values. So let's tax land speculation. But how? Simply by placing a big tax on the value of land—not the acreage, but the value, mind you—regardless of whether or not the land is used.

"Then the man who uses his land will not be hurt. But the man who holds his land out of use, or who only partially uses it will be soaked. And he's the man we're after.

"The beautiful thing about it is that when land values are taxed the landlord can not add the tax to his rent. The law of competition prevents that. Roughly speaking, the rent of any site is its desirability measured by the competition of those who want it.

"Now if by taxation we soaked land speculators so hard that they could no longer hold their land out of use, they would have to bring it into use or let some one have it who would. That would increase the number of available sites. And any such increase in sites without a corresponding increase in the number of people who want them, inevitably reduces rents. And reduced rents mean cheaper land.

"So, all we have to do is to make the tax on land values high enough, and all sites would then be available. Since the state of Texas has enough land to support the present population of the world, think what it would mean if land speculation were abolished in this way.

"Good land would then be almost if not quite as cheap as Bill Jones or Tom Smith found it just after the war of the American Revolution. Anyone who wanted land for use could get it practically without money and without price. All he would have to pay would be the taxes.

"Now of course all men are not farmers. All men would not want to go onto farms. They wouldn't have to do so to get the benefit of this fundamental reform. If a very small percentage of men did so then by taking themselves out of the labor market, they would so change the ratio between men and jobs that the wages of all men everywhere would be raised automatically by the competition of jobs for men.

"The man who operates a lathe at the gear works would benefit no less than the man who actually left the city and went onto a farm of his own.

"Just as gravity pulls a rock down the mountain side, while at the same time it pushes a balloon into the skies, so also competition will depress or elevate wages according to the ratio between men and jobs. And by a stiff tax on land values this ratio may be reversed so as to increase the wages of all men everywhere.

"I'm for it. Are you?"

HELP HIM TO GET OUT

