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Thursday

CO-OPERATIVE PLAN

SOCIALISTS AND LABORERS  
HAVE NOVEL PROPOSITION.

Socialist Candidate for Secretary of State Writes of Conference Lately Held in Portland—Propose to Build an Ideal Socialist Home at the Lewis and Clark Exposition.

The Dalles, Ore., Feb. 1.—(Editor: East Oregonian)—Dear Sir: In compliance with your request, I give the following report of our meeting at Portland:

Sunday, January 25, a conference was held at Portland by a joint assembly of socialists and union labor leaders to unite on some form of an exemplification of the principles of co-operation at the Lewis and Clark exposition.

The conference was held at 246 Washington street, beginning at 10 a. m. and continuing until 2:30 p. m. with an intermission of an hour for lunch. It was unofficial in character, those attending not having been formally accredited with power to act, but the sentiments expressed, both on the Lewis and Clark appropriation and the subject under consideration, are significant of the drift of thought in Oregon.

It was not the purpose to come to a definite understanding, but rather to have a free-for-all discussion and evolve something tangible out of the various leads put forth. Those in attendance were:

J. C. Cooper, of McMinnville, of the

Lewis and Clark board of directors, who presided.

B. F. Ramp, of Douglas County, socialist candidate for congress from the First district in June, 1902.

G. Y. Harry, president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor.

R. R. Ryan, of Salem, socialist candidate for governor last June.

E. A. Cadwell, of Portland, president of the Carpenters' union.

C. W. Barzee, of The Dalles, socialist candidate for secretary of state last June.

George M. Orton, representative in the legislature from Multnomah county.

A. W. Jones, of Portland, president of the Cigarmakers' union.

C. S. Harnish, of Albany.

Henry G. Kundret, editor of the Portland Labor Press.

Frank H. Curtis, president of the Grainhandlers' Union, of Portland.

Dr. J. S. Casto, of Clackamas county, well known in Grange circles.

It was the judgment of the meeting that the Lewis and Clark fair bill should take effect at the earliest possible moment, to insure successful work in adjoining and Middle West states which have been invited to make exhibits here in 1905. The motion in regard to this important matter was made by Hon. B. F. Ramp, of Douglas county, and the full text of it follows:

Cordially Indorse Appropriation

"The Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition being state, interstate, national and international in character, and both branches of the legislature of Oregon having, by practically a unanimous vote, enacted a law appropriating \$500,000 for said exposition, we cordially indorse said appropriation and are of the opinion that the invoking the referendum on it would be inadvisable, though we favor the principle of the referendum as applied to legislation in this state."

Mr. Ramp, who is one of the leaders of the socialist party in the state, put himself on record as being generally favorable to the referendum, but let it be clearly understood that if the referendum is ordered, he will be found fighting for the fair bill and advising his friends to do likewise.

The discussion of the question of co-operation was participated in by all, and took a wide range, without any definite decision being arrived at. One plan advanced was that a large building should be erected, with dining-hall, living apartments, laundry, library, nursery, meeting hall, etc., where it could be practically demonstrated that people could live cheaper on the co-operative plan, perhaps for \$1 a day, than by the individual method of living. There was a trend towards favoring state ownership and maintenance of the building after the fair is over.

Mr. Harnish, who pronounced himself a progressive socialist, said the men who control the trusts, have, by their methods of organizing and conducting their business, done more to demonstrate the value of co-operation than any other agency the world has ever known. They have pointed out a method of procedure to the laboring people, but the co-operation of the laboring classes, he said, would be designed to benefit the many instead of the few. Along this line, Mr. Cadwell said the members of the Carpenters' union are planning to buy timber land, with the idea of having a co-operative sawmill of their own to manufacture every class of lumber handled by them in their work.

Mr. Jones said the project for a co-operative institution in connection with the Lewis and Clark exposition is a move in the right direction. World's fairs, he declared, exhibit the products of a country, and demonstrate the capabilities of its people. World's fairs held in the past in other parts of the United States, have demonstrated what the co-operation of capital can do, but none of them had given the thought to show what labor can do by co-operation. In this respect, he said, Portland is already ahead of all of them, and the Lewis and Clark fair will show the wise men in the East something they have never thought of.

"For what we have in view from co-operation, and chiefly from its educational features," said Mr. Jones, "the Lewis and Clark fair is not a local question. It is of vital interest to the entire country."

Variant Ideas Advanced.

Equally pertinent remarks were made by Messrs. Cooper, Ryan, Harry, Barzee, Kundret, Harnish, Ramp and Casto. All laid particular stress upon the educational feature of the proposed co-operative institution, and its value as a factor in teaching the laboring classes to advance themselves. Some leaned toward the co-operative hotel as the best means to the end, while others put the educational feature above the principle of community living. Mr. Orton did not favor the co-operative hotel, and advanced the idea of co-operative homes on a tract of land or in a colony. All agreed that as a matter of right co-operation should be given a practical demonstration as a feature of the exposition.

The suggestion centered around the plan to build a co-operative hotel within the limit of \$50,000 to be taken from the state appropriation, equipped with the modern appliances, with machinery and steam laundry in the basement. A dining hall and suite of rooms were to be for the operators on the second floor, and a lecture hall, club rooms and library on the third story with garret sleeping rooms for transient accommodation, all to be operated on a co-operative plan without profits. The miniature dimensions or capability of the home as compared with the extensiveness of the exposition would seemingly make it impracticable, but tickets for meals could be engaged in advance and a rotation of participants thereby made giving each a practical test of the cost of co-operative living.

Any and all suggestions from those interested in the proposed plan will be gladly received, either by the

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chairman, J. C. Cooper, of McMinnville, or myself.

Four sub-committees were appointed to draw up suggestive plans and report at a second meeting to be held in the Chamber of Commerce in Portland, Feb. 8.

The socialists cannot afford to go on record as opposing progress and certainly the exposition will be an educational progressive epoch in our state and national life.

C. W. BARZEE.

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