

THE WAGEWORKER

State Historical Society



VOL. 5

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, JUNE 13, 1908

NO. 11

Methodist Church And Labor Problems

Several months ago, just after Rev. W. M. Balch, pastor of Trinity M. E. church of this city, had been elected delegate to the Baltimore conference, Mr. Balch called upon the editor of The Wageworker and outlined a set of resolutions dealing with the labor problem which he proposed presenting to the conference. Mr. Balch is in thorough sympathy with the union movement, and he keenly realizes that the church has not given this phase of modern progress the consideration that it deserves. That he made his presence felt at the Baltimore conference is evidenced by the fact that the resolutions as outlined by him were adopted almost seriatim by the conference—and Mr. Balch was a member of the committee.

The "labor resolutions" as adopted by the Baltimore conference are in part as follows:

"We recognize the gravity of the social situation and the responsibility of the Church collectively, and of its members severally, for bringing about better conditions, through the practical application of the ethics of the New Testament. We hold it an imperative obligation that the Church and all Christians interest themselves profoundly in such questions as those of the iniquitous exploitation of child labor; the carelessness as to life and limb too often shown in factory, mine, and on railroads; the downward pressure sometimes brought upon wages by the competitive system, the chronic phase of misunderstanding and industrial warfare between employers and employed; the regrettable breach, caused by misconception on both sides of the spirit and purposes of each, which exists between large numbers of artisans and Church of Christ.

"We welcome every indication of a desire to end disputes and hostilities and to find a basis of reconciliation, fraternity, and permanent co-operation. We especially commend all those employers, whether individuals or corporations, who, in the conduct of their business, have exhibited a fraternal spirit and a disposition to deal justly and humanely with their employees—particularly as to wages, profit sharing and 'welfare work,' hours of labor, hygienic conditions of toil, protection against accidents, and willingness to submit differences to arbitration. We recognize the perplexities that arise in great industrial operations, and sympathize with those who, while carrying these burdens, are yet striving to fulfill consistently the law of Christ. We cordially declare our fraternal interest in the aspirations of the laboring classes, and our desire to assist them in the righting of every wrong and the attainment of their highest well-being. We recognize that the fundamental purposes of the labor movement are essentially ethical, and, therefore, should command the support of Christian men. We recognize further that the organization of labor is not only the right of the laborers and conducive to their welfare, but is incidentally of great benefit to society at large in the securing of better conditions of work and life in its educational influence upon the great multitudes concerned, and particularly in the Americanization of our immigrant population. While we cordially appreciate the social service rendered the community by captains of industry in maintaining large businesses, affording employment to hundreds, and by their products serving the needs of their fellowmen, yet our primary interest in the industrial problem is with that great number who, by their conditions of toil, cannot share adequately in the highest benefits of our civilization. Their efforts to improve their conditions should receive our heartiest co-operation, as must all similar effort on the part of employers or disinterested organizations.

"We are gratified by the growth of the spirit of conciliation and the practice of conference and arbitration in adjusting trade disputes, and we trust that these methods may increasingly supplant those of strikes and lock-outs, with attendant boycotts and blacklistings. We urge all our members, both employers and employed, to the fullest possible promotion of the principles of industrial peace and human brotherhood. We record our

firm conviction that the Church of Jesus Christ, in so far as it is an employer of labor, either locally or through its general organizations, ought to exemplify in practice the principles herein set forth.

"The Methodist Episcopal Church stands:

"For equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life.

"For the principle of conciliation and arbitration in industrial dissensions.

"For the protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases, injuries, and mortality.

"For the abolition of child labor.

"For such regulation of the conditions of labor for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

"For the suppression of the 'sweating system.'"

"For the gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practical point, with work for all; and for that degree of leisure for all which is the condition of the highest human life.

"For a release from employment one day in seven.

"For a living wage in every industry.

"For the highest wage that each industry can afford, and for the most equitable division of the products of industry that can ultimately be devised.

"For the recognition of the Golden Rule, and the mind of Christ as the supreme law of society and the sure remedy for all social ills."

A few years ago the Presbyterian church realized the greatness of the labor movement and was quick to seize upon a great opportunity. That denomination organized a "department of church and labor," and was wonderfully fortunate in having at command a man fitted in every way to take charge of it—Rev. Charles Stehle. One of the most learned and eloquent ministers of the denomination, Rev. Mr. Stehle was also acquainted with the labor movement by reason of active participation therein.

A machinist by trade, a member of the union of his craft, a victim in his childhood of the sweat shop system and a beneficiary in his young manhood of the help of his organization, he knew what they toilers hoped for, what they need, and what they have a right to expect. He took up the work with zeal and has pursued it with untiring industry. He has wrought a great change in the relationship between the organized church and organized labor. He is bringing them closer together every day. He is loved by thousands of workmen who trust him to the uttermost, knowing that he is of them and for them.

The great organization known as the Methodist Episcopal church—the largest protestant denomination in America—would do well to follow the example of the Presbyterian church and establish a "department of church and labor," and it could find no man better fitted than Rev. W. M. Balch of Lincoln to take charge of the department.

Now let the Methodist church call its publishing houses to account and compel them to deal fairly with organized labor. Let it bring Dr. Jennings up with a round turn, and make him feel the weight of displeasure at his unwarranted assaults upon organized labor.

"By their fruits ye shall know them."

HEROES OF INDUSTRY.

Deeds That Prove War Unnecessary as School for Valor.

John Stricker, fireman, has probably never served in any army; and The News hopes he will never be called on so to serve. But John Stricker is one of the heroes of today; a hero of ten times the caliber of many who delight to rave in the halls of congress, and utter vain things to folks who cannot reply. The story was told in yesterday's News, and needs no long repetition here. Elijah Parker, working fifty feet in the air, touched a live wire, was shocked unconscious in a moment, and lay, slowly burning to death, across the tangle of wires with which the poles on Cherry Creek boulevard are decorated. Stricker was eight feet away on another pole; but he

leaped through the air, caught with his climbing irons on the pole below Parker; and a moment later was lifting his fellow workman from danger. A slip, or the breaking of his climbing irons, would have meant instant death to Stricker. But he did not slip, and the irons did not break—probably he never thought of the matter till his friend was safe.

Deeds like these are heroic deeds. They add to the proof, already abundant, that war is an utterly unnecessary school for valor. They show that nerve and quick decision, and readi-

ness of the union, and President Bain, will deliver addresses, and a quartette will sing. The program as arranged for two weeks ago, and postponed on account of the weather, will be carried out.

Next Wednesday the tie vote for president between Ingraham and Ford will be settled by another election. The polls will be open from 12 to 7 at Carpenters' hall.

The meeting last Sunday was productive of considerable parliamentary tangle on this question of the presidency, but it was finally decided to

SEND A LINCOLN BAND TO DENVER

With a big delegation of Lincolmites in Denver during the democratic national convention, to boost for the nomination of Lincoln's distinguished citizen, it would be little less than a burning shame not to have a Lincoln band along.

Lincoln has a band that will rank with the best bands of the country. It should accompany the Lincoln boosters to Denver, and Lincoln will be guilty of a neglect of duty if it fails to provide the ways and means. From the standpoint of civic pride alone, Lincoln ought to send the Nebraska State Band to Denver. From an advertising standpoint it would be a winning proposition.

What's the matter with a few public-spirited business men taking hold of the matter and raising the necessary funds. This is not a question of politics. It is a question of loyalty to Lincoln and to Lincoln institutions.

The money should be raised in a jiffy. Lincoln is going to be a center of attraction during the coming campaign, and from the mercenary standpoint of dollars and cents, Lincoln will be a winner. For this reason, if no other—and there are better ones—Lincoln ought to "get into the game right." The first thing to do is to raise the money and send Lincoln's magnificent band to Denver as a part of the Lincoln "Boosters."

The time is short and quick action is necessary if results are obtained. What enterprising and public-spirited business men will take off their coats for a couple of hours and see to it that the work is done?

ness to stake all on the moment are qualities which peace can produce in quite as full measure as the tented field. Hurrah for John Stricker.—Denver News.

JEFFERSON DAVIS' DAUGHTER.

Mrs. Margaret Davis Hayes of Colorado Springs will doubtless be one of Colorado's delegates to the democratic national convention at Denver. Mrs. Hayes is a daughter of Jefferson Davis, and her friendship for organized labor is evidenced by the fact that she furnished the "Jefferson Davis room" at the Union Printers' Home at Colorado Springs. This room is one of the most attractive in that magnificent institution.

DOLLAR SHIRTS, UNION MADE.

If you want a union-made shirt, just send a dollar to the Model Shirt Co., Indianapolis, Ind. Give them your size and tell them about what style you prefer. You will be fitted and pleased. Every shirt guaranteed and bears the label.

TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION.

Decoration Services Next Sunday, Election Next Wednesday.

Next Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock Lincoln Typographical Union No. 209 and Capital Auxiliary No. 11 will meet at the Fraternity building, and take special cars to Wyuka cemetery to carry out the annual decoration services. Every member of the union and auxiliary is expected to be on hand. L. D. Woodruff, an honorary member

cut the Gordian knot by having a special election. This tangle has called renewed attention to the fact that the constitution and by-laws are in unsatisfactory shape, and it is probable that a committee will be appointed at the July meeting to revise the whole business.

John Marshall has located at Berthoud, Colorado, where he has purchased the Bulletin, which he will edit and publish. The Bulletin is a republican paper. It looks like a good proposition and Marshall is the man who can make it a good newspaper and a paying investment. His host of friends in Lincoln join in wishing him abundant prosperity.

THE PLUMBERS.

Work a Little Slack at Present, But Everybody is Hopeful.

Plumbers are not reaping a great harvest these days, work being unusually slack for this time of year. But the boys are keeping cheerful and expect things will brighten up pretty soon.

Charley Burns has gone to Grand Island to work for his father, who has a big contract there. This made a vacancy in the office of secretary, and George Chipman has been selected to fill it.

"We'll picnic some time in July," said a member the other day. "We are going to have a prize list that will make you sit up and take notice, too. And the fried chicken and fixin's—O, yum, yum!"

Protest Against the Convict Labor Evil

Tuesday night the Central Labor Union filed its earnest protest against a continuance of the prison labor contract and urged a policy that would result in giving the convicts occupation that would not interfere with free labor's opportunities to earn a livelihood. The following set of resolutions was adopted and sent to the state board:

"Whereas, The policy of farming out to private contractors the labor of convicts in the state prison, whereby prison-made goods are put upon the market to be sold in competition with the product of free labor, has long been an injustice to honest men engaged in an effort to make a livelihood for themselves and their families, and

"Whereas, A continuance of this policy means a continuance of the injustice, the matter of 'price per convict per day' cutting no figure in the results as they affect free labor, therefore be it

Resolved, By the Lincoln Central Labor Union, representing the organized craftsmen of Lincoln, 2,000 in number, that we protest against being forced to compete with convict labor.

Resolved, That we petition the board having this matter in charge to refuse to longer continue the policy of contract prison labor upon articles of merchandise which enter into active competition with the products of free labor, and to confine the labor of said convicts to such channels as will not force free labor to resort to devious means to obtain a bare livelihood.

Resolved, That while we realize that some occupation must be provided for the convicts, we insist that there are plenty of occupations that will answer every purpose, and at the same time relieve free labor of the burden of this unjust labor competition.

Resolved, That we endorse the proposition that the convicts be employed upon public road work, that relieving free labor of unjust competition and at the same time benefiting the general public.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be submitted to the proper state board.

The offer of the Auditorium management to give a benefit for the central body was accepted and T. W. Evans appointed to arrange for the same at a time satisfactory to the management. The label exhibition committee reported progress in settling the affairs. The donation of \$5 towards the defraying of expenses by the Machinists of the city was reported and the thanks of the central body extended to that local. The label committee reported progress and was given more time to complete its "fair list." It was reported that the theatrical stage mechanics were weary of the delay in their case and were talking of taking it before the international convention. They have been waiting for two years, and their money has been paid over fully that long. They feel that some definite action should be taken, and in justice to them they be either granted a charter or their money refunded.

Report was made of the progress towards a Labor Temple and some suggestions as to finance were offered.

Owing to the rain the attendance was smaller than usual. The representatives present reported the state of trade from "good" to "fair." A committee will wait on a couple of amusement resorts and protest against the use of tickets coming from the "rat" Rees printing house at Omaha and long neglect of this territory by the American Federation of Labor was talked over, and another effort will be made to secure the services of an organizer. For years Lincoln has been sending in its "per capita" and has never received any attention from headquarters save when some extra money was asked for. There is a disposition to retain this money in future and devote it to organization work, which is sadly needed. An organizer of the Federation appeared in Lincoln a few months ago, took a couple of trips on the street cars to talk with the motormen and conductors about organizing, and then proceeded on to some other city. That is the extent of the work of organization done in Lincoln by the Federation during the past seven

years. The unionists of Lincoln are growing just a bit tired of this sort of treatment.

The secretary was notified to collect fines from unions whose delegates neglected to attend the meetings.

THE TEMPLE COMMITTEE.

Appoints a Representative to Devote Whole Time to the Project.

From now on the Lincoln Labor Temple Building association will be pushed by a representative who will devote his full time to the work. After carefully considering the matter in all its bearings the directors decided that this should be done, and that J. W. Dickson, the chairman of the board, was the proper man for the work. It will be Mr. Dickson's work to secure subscriptions to the stock, and to arouse the interest of wage-earners and business men in the project.

A building committee consisting of Dickson, Rudy and Maupis was elected, and this committee will proceed at once to prepare plans and estimates of a temple building and present the same to the directors. This is in accord with the suggestions made by the business men recently. It was also decided that the money now on hand be, as soon as possible, invested in a site. The board will act upon this matter soon and submit the selections made to a vote of the stockholders. The board feels that the project will remain practically at a standstill until the matter of a site is settled. By paying down the money on hand it will then be up to the unionists to cope to the front and pay out, or see the money invested but because of their inaction. The building committee hopes to have its rough plans and approximate estimates ready inside of two weeks. It is probable, too, that another meeting with the business men will be arranged soon.

Mr. Kelsey reported that Manager Buckstaff of Capital Bench had offered a benefit day to the Temple project, and after thanking Mr. Buckstaff for his offer the board decided to take the matter up at an early date.

Now that the project is to be boosted by a hustler who has his whole heart in the work, it is believed that things will move lively from now on. Mr. Dickson has shown his devotion to the enterprise in many ways, and when it was decided to employ a regular representative his was the only name considered.

THE BARTENDERS.

Reduced Numbers Work Longer Hours Than Under Old Regime.

Those who imagine that the "7 to 7" rule makes work easier for the bartenders who retain employment have another guess coming. The new rule not only threw a lot of bartenders out of work, but it forced longer hours upon those who retained employment. An average of eight hours was the rule under the old order of things, while the present average is in excess of ten. About twenty-five bartenders have been forced out of employment by the new rule.

At its last meeting the Bartenders' League initiated two new members, one of them from Fremont. The Fremont man returned to his home the next day with the avowed intent of organizing a League in that progressive little city. The bartenders of Fremont, seeing how well other lines of employment were organized, resolved to get into line at once. They will receive the cordial support of the Lincoln members.

Mark Wilber calls the attention of the excise board to the fact that it has granted but twenty-four licenses, while the limit is twenty-five, and he asks that the twenty-fifth be granted to him.

FOURTEEN DOLLARS A MINUTE.

The convention of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, at its last session at Columbus, Ohio, decided to allow its delegates \$7 per day, without expenses, while in attendance. The convention cost the Brotherhood \$7,000 per day, or \$14 per minute, for every working day.