

# THE WAGWORKER



VOL. 6

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, OCTOBER 9, 1909

8 PAGES

NO. 27

## A Nebraskan's Tribute To Grand Young Nebraska

At the annual banquet of the St. Joseph, Mo., Ad Club, Will M. Maupin, deputy labor commissioner, representing Governor Shallenberger, responded to the toast, "Nebraska," as follows:

Mr. Toastmaster, Members of the St. Joseph Ad Club, and all its guests here assembled: Midway between Plymouth Rock, upon which the Pilgrim Fathers landed, and the Golden Gate, through whose portals Balboa gazed out upon the broad bosom of the Pacific, lies an empire greater than the mind of mortal man can conceive. Once heralded as "The Great American Desert," it was shunned by all save the wandering nomads of the plains, and the Argonauts who crawled slowly and in fear across its bosom towards the setting sun in chase of phantom gold, little reckoned that beneath the surface of this desert lay potentialities that the future would bring to light and make the output of Golconda and Ophir seem like the childish dreams of pennies. Thousands dragged their weary way across this seeming desert to delve in the bowls of the mountains for the yellow metal, little dreaming that at the very grass roots over which they trod lay greater stores of gold than mankind has yet drawn from the fastnesses of the piled up monuments of God's architecture.

As the Israelites of old traveled down into Egypt to secure the food which they much needed, so now do all the peoples of the earth turn towards this modern granary of the world for its stores of food—the bread and butter and eggs and meat that grace the tables of princes and potentates, and make glad the hearts of artists and artisans. The attic geographers of a now forgotten age drew upon their vivid imaginations, and with fingers that knew naught but to follow the dictates of ignorant minds, wrote horrible stories of the Great American Desert, and school children of a recent generation shuddered to think of the horrors that lurked within its desolate confines. Today, wherever the story of human progress is told, wherever the song of human triumph is sung, one word is as familiar as the name of humanity's liberators, and that word is the name of the giant young state I have the honor and the pleasure to represent here upon this auspicious occasion—Nebraska!

The best brain and blood and brawn of this republic, of the nations of the earth, have been drawn upon to make possible the mighty achievements that are now proudly recorded upon the pages of Nebraska's history. From the worked-out hills of New England came the sturdy Puritans; from the war-racked glades of the southland came the stately cavalier; from the middle west came the scions of the hardy pioneer—and surging out over the billowing plains they wrested the dessert from the grip of desolation and have made it to bloom and blossom as the rose. And among those who have wrought so well within Nebraska are many men and women from Grand Old Missouri. The last session of the Nebraska legislature, the first democratic legislature the state has had in a generation, and a legislature which all honest democrats say was the best, and some partisan republicans say was the worst, the state ever had, were several Missourians. The democratic floor leader in the senate was born in Buchanan county and read his Coke and Blackstone in a St. Joseph law office. The lower house contained more than one native-born Missourian, and these Missourians, transplanted from the soil of their native state to the fresher and more vigorous soil of Nebraska, reflected credit upon the state of their nativity while adding fresh laurels to those already won by the giant young state from whence I hail. Incidentally I might remark, and not without pride, that I, too, am a native-born Missourian. I say 'not without pride,' for when I selected the state in which I should be born I selected Missouri, knowing full well that at that time no better state existed, and little dreaming that the state which I now as proudly call home would in the future step gallantly forward to the head of the onward marching column of the states of this glorious republic. Had I known then what I know now I might have selected Nebraska. Just to show how rapidly intelligence is

growing these days I point to the fact that my seven children have all elected to be born in Nebraska. But so much did I think of Grand Old Missouri in the days gone by that I selected it as the state in which my father and mother should be born, and in order to make assurance doubly sure I selected it as the state in which my father's parents should be born. The Kingdom of Calloway doubtless falls to realize fully the honor I have conferred upon it by selecting it as the birthplace of three generations bearing the name of Maupin.

The ties that bind the middle west together grow stronger with the passing years. Not always has it been so. Today we of Nebraska stand upon the sundown side of the Missouri river and welcome the sons and daughters of Missouri to our hearts and our homes. Within the memory of men sitting around this banquet board Nebraskans stood upon the river bank and welcomed with sawed-off shotguns and Sharp's rifles to shallow graves in the fertile soil of Nebraska the invading hosts of Missourians who sought so strenuously to effect with physical means mental political cures. Only a generation ago Nebraska and Kansas mothers frightened their children into obedience by stories of invading Missourians, even as the mothers of earlier centuries frightened their children by threats of the ogre and the bogey man. God be praised, that day is past and we have lived to see the full glory of the day when men of the middle west, instead of battling in a death grip, are engaged in a friendly contest for supremacy in the great work of building for the welfare of our common heritage.

Standing upon the floor of the Nebraska senate a few years ago a state senator gave utterance to a mighty truth, although couched in the language of that prince of lingual contortionists, Sir Boyle Roche. Said he, 'Every man should be proud of the land of his nativity whether he was born there or not.' And so I love Nebraska, the state of my adoption, the choice of my maturer years. We cannot boast of great coal mines and steel mills, like Pennsylvania; neither

do we have to bear the odium of purse-proud millionaires whose naughtiness and dementia Americana make copy for the Associated Press. We cannot boast of giant cotton factories like Massachusetts, but in the evenings we can sit around while the growing corn is singing its song of prosperity in a rustling chorus and count the interest money that Massachusetts is pouring into the permanent school fund of our state for the benefit of the children of Nebraska, for the Old Bay State owes our school children a round million of borrowed money. We cannot boast of Carnegies and Morgans and Rockefellers, with their feudal estates and giant trusts, but in their places we point with pride to 325,000 happy school children who daily wend their way to 11,000 school houses within our borders, each child with a warm breakfast inside and comfortable clothing outside. We cannot boast of any Four Hundred; neither are we compelled to watch a bread line made up of hopeless and jobless men forced to eat the bitter bread of charity. We cannot boast of giant trusts feeding and fattening upon the necessities of the people, but we can and do boast of a state without a dollar of bonded debt, with \$9,000,000 in cash in its permanent school fund and \$27,000,000 worth of school lands yearly furnishing the fuel for the educational machine that has made Nebraska the least illiterate state in the Union. We boast no mines of precious metals, but we boast of hens whose industry yearly provides us with an egg crop that sells for more in the open market than the total output of Colorado's mines of gold and silver. Nebraskans do not dig with pick and shovel the yellow gold from Nebraska soil, but every year Nebraska dairy cows mint Nebraska grains and grasses into \$35,000,000 worth of golden butter. Loaded into standard freight cars one year's crop of Nebraska corn would make a freight train long enough to reach from Omaha to San Francisco. One year's crop of Nebraska wheat would fill freight cars enough to make a train reaching from Sidney, Nebraska, 412 miles west of the Missouri river, to Chicago, Illinois, 500 miles east of the Missouri river. One year's output of the industrious Nebraska hen would lay a solid girdle of eggs once and a half times around the globe. The New Englander who orders his dinner in Rhode Island, eats it in Connecticut and tips the

waiter in New York, little dreams of the vastness of our Nebraska domain. The overland traveler who leaves the Union Pacific depot at Omaha as the sun is just peeping above the hills on the Iowa side of the Missouri river, eats his lunch in Grand Island, Nebraska, his dinner at North Platte, Nebraska, and is in bed and sound asleep as his train arrives at Sidney, Nebraska, and then he has a good two hours' ride ahead of him before his limited train rushes across the line which separates Nebraska from Wyoming. A big state? God bless your souls, good friends, we have one county in Nebraska from which might be carved a Delaware, a Rhode Island and thirty-six Districts of Columbia, and then have a few good farms to spare. In that single county all the peoples of the world, civilized and uncivilized, might be placed, and each one given enough room in which to swing in a comfortable rocking chair. "Our dairy products in a single year are worth more than the total output of the gold and silver mines of the United States, including Alaska. The boasted roast beef of Old England is fed and fattened upon the succulent grains and grasses that grow upon Nebraska's fertile soil. Our corn crop is worth more than the total tobacco crop of the nation. Our yearly live stock production is worth more than the yearly output of the nation's copper mines. Our annual hay crop would build a single track railroad from Nebraska's capital city to Manhattan Island. Our annual potato crop would pay the interest on the national debt for thirty days. Our annual production of poultry is more than 10 per cent of the nation's receipts from internal revenue taxes. We raise more corn and wheat per capita than any other state in the union. We have more and better school houses per thousand of population than any other state in the union. We have the fourth largest state university, and we are so proud of what we have made it that we refused to make it the appendage of a millionaire who sought to advertise his philanthropy by making it the recipient of his bounty. Come with me to a modest little cottage in Lincoln and I will give you ocular proof of our proud claim that in Nebraska that we have the sweetest women, the noblest wives and the handsomest and sweetest children in all the wide, wide world.

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## Deputy Commissioner's Report on Omaha Strike

On Saturday, October 2, Deputy Labor Commissioner Maupin submitted to Governor Shallenberger his report of an investigation into the street car strike in Omaha. Mr. Maupin spent three days in Omaha trying to bring about an amicable adjustment of the struggle in that city. His report of his efforts and of the conditions as he found them is submitted by Mr. Maupin to The Wagworker readers without comment at this time. It is as follows:

To His Excellency, the Governor, State of Nebraska, Lincoln.—Hon. Ashton C. Shallenberger: In the matter of the present strike of the motormen and conductors of Omaha against the Omaha & Council Bluffs Street Railway Co., I have the honor to submit the following report:

The present difficulty had its inception some four or five years ago when the motormen and conductors in the employ of the above named company perfected an organization to promote their interests. After careful investigation, it appears that there is also in Omaha an organization of business men whose purpose is to enforce the "open shop" policy and to refuse to recognize unions of employees. Since the organization of the street railway employees there has been considerable friction, the men asking that their grievances be presented to the company through a committee selected from among their number, and this request being refused when presented. The influence of the organization of business men is very powerful in the business world. The employees of the street railway company declare that the members of their union have been discriminated against. As evidence of this they claim that of approximately 650 motormen and conductors employed last year, not less than 450 were discharged or forced to resign because of this alleged discrimination.

About six weeks ago the employees appointed a committee to wait upon President Wattles of the company with a statement of what they wanted. This demand I attach to this report and mark it "Exhibit A."

President Wattles refused to agree to any of these requests. A number of conferences were held between the

committee representing the employees and President Wattles. To the demands of the men he offered to increase wages as soon as the financial conditions of the company permitted, and to increase them one cent an hour inside of one year. President Wattles refused to recognize a grievance committee representing the union or to consent to arbitration of grievances. He stated that there was no need of a committee and no necessity to make provisions for arbitration.

As before stated, several conferences were held between the employees and President Wattles, but without avail, and then the union sent for two of its international officers. These officers arrived and assumed the duty of trying to reach an agreement. President Wattles agreed to meet Chairman Pratt before a meeting of the business men's association. Mr. Pratt told what the men wanted, and Mr. Wattles told what he was willing to write and send to each individual employee. Mr. Pratt took President Wattles' statement back to the employees and submitted it without comment. The employees thereupon decided to strike, and the strike began on Saturday morning, September 25.

President Wattles insisted that the company was plunged into this strike without notice, and taken unawares. The striking employees claim that before the strike was twelve hours old professional strike-breakers, many of them armed, were being imported into the state and used to man the cars.

The Monday following the strike I went to Omaha with a view to acquainting myself with the facts. Before making any effort to seek an adjustment of the difficulty, I thought it best to await the result of efforts then being put forth by Omaha parties. A councilmanic hearing was held at which President Wattles and the committee from the striking employees aired their grievances. Nothing resulted. A little later the mayors of Omaha, South Omaha, Florence, Benson and Council Bluffs undertook to reach a settlement. They met from day to day, and finally, on Sunday afternoon, September 26, they evolved a plan of settlement which was endorsed by President Wattles. This plan I hereby submit as "Exhibit B." This, however, was not officially presented to the striking employees but was put into sealed envelopes and given to the daily newspapers with the understanding that the envelopes were not to be opened until 10 o'clock that night, and no extras issued. Up to Tuesday, September 28, the striking employees had no official knowledge of this, and then I was empowered by President Wattles to present it to them, which I did. The men refused to accept any plan of settlement that would deprive them of the right to join any lawful organization or society that might appeal to them.

On Monday, September 27, I proceeded again to Omaha for the purpose of using my best efforts to adjust the differences between the striking employees and the company. I first sought to ascertain what the men wanted, and after having informed myself as to that, I proceeded to confer with President Wattles. President Wattles met me fairly and frankly and we went over the situation thoroughly. Upon the main contentions of the men he would not concede anything. He refused to deal with a committee of the employees, after the question of the union had been eliminated from the discussion. He refused to submit any point of difference whatever to arbitration. Finally, he declared against employment in the future of any man who would not agree to remain outside of any union of street railway men. He did agree to take back 90 per cent of the striking employees, but under no consideration would he agree to taking them all back. He also declared to me that it was his intention and the intention of the executive committee of the company to "punish somebody" for calling this strike. The employees would not listen to a proposition of settlement based upon the possible punishment of the men who had transacted their business for them. It was upon this that the final split came. President Wattles insisted that only 90 per cent of the strikers would be re-employed. I suggested to the men that they agree that in case all were taken

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## THE RAPIDLY INCREASING COST OF LIVING

A few weeks ago the Central Labor Union of Lincoln appointed a committee to inquire into the cost of living, this being a part of the educational campaign marked out by that body. The work of conducting the inquiry was given to Rev. Mr. Zenor, pastor of the East Lincoln Christian church and fraternal delegate to the central body from the Ministerial Union. Rev. Mr. Zenor devoted considerable time to the inquiry, visiting and talking with craftsmen and laborers in various parts of the city, and the following report is the result of his investigations. He says:

"If you turn to the daily press, or to those who depend upon it for information, you will read or hear words to the effect that 'these are the best times we ever saw—good prices for everything and good wages for everybody.'

"The writer can remember a few years ago, when we were told that we had the worst times that the American people ever saw; and I am still inclined to believe most of it—because there are so many people out of work, or did not find work at any price, and we were told that they could not find it. We were then told that the cause of that hard pressure was due to over-production, to not having sufficient money with which to transact the business of the country, to 'political inefficiency,' to 'the extravagance of the labor classes,' to 'too high living, domestic incompetency' and, in fact, almost any man you would chance to meet knew just what was the matter, and also had just the remedy that would bring about the desired results, and that speedily.

"It was in this year that it was said, 'we have not less than a million of idle men and they are on the road; and we by our indiscriminate charity have made a million tramps.' Who does not recall General Coxe's or General Kelley's army, or the terse expression, 'keep off the grass,' but now worn out and trite, although seen every day upon some sward. Who cannot recall the hot times in which men standing on the street engaged in discussion of the 'hard times,' the hue and cry of politics, the 'full dinner pail,' or the one more terse, 'Washington was the father of our country, Lincoln freed the slave and Grover Cleveland gave the laboring man a rest.'

"Those were hard times indeed; for the man who was able to find work accounted himself fortunate; but the wages—oh, what were they? I myself was then working on a salary of just one-half of what I am now receiving. But was that one-half quite as efficient with which to purchase the necessities of life as the double amount now is? True, wages have advanced a great deal since then, but have they kept pace with the advance of the cost of living, with rents and taxes and other items?

"At the time used as a short introduction to this paper I was living in the commonwealth of Nebraska, and a few of the then living prices will certainly not be out of order. I copy the prices from my day-book kept at that time. I paid for the best flour 90

cents per 100 pounds. The other day I paid \$1.80 for a sack of 48 pounds, or practically four times as much as in the hard times. I then paid 10 cents for just as good butter as I can now get for 30 cents per pound. I pay here from 8 to 22 cents for meat no better than I got for from 3 to 10 cents per pound, and the same comparisons hold good through the entire grocery line. The same is also true of vegetables of all kinds, of clothing, of furniture and household goods. In fact, of everything except coal and wood.

"But let us stop this generalizing, and get down to real specific statements of the cost of living today in the city of Lincoln. Let us take the average family of six persons. By actual investigation I find the cost of living right here in the city to be as follows. In the following table I have reduced items to cost per day:

House rent	.....	50	Reading matter	.....	05
Flour	.....	10	Potatoes	.....	10
Meat	.....	32	Fruit	.....	10
Canned goods	.....	15	Books	.....	10
Lard	.....	05	Street car fare	.....	15
Soap	.....	03	Medical aids	.....	10
Clothes	.....	10	Benovolences	.....	05
Cullinary	.....	05	Shoes	.....	10
Ice	.....	05	Household incidentals	.....	10
Gas	.....	10			
Coal	.....	10	Total	.....	2.50

"You will observe that I have put in absolutely no luxuries; not that we are not entitled to it, but that we just cannot afford it. You will observe that the butter allowance is only one and one-third ounces per day per person, and that the meat is estimated upon the basis of two pounds per day for six persons, or five and two-fifths ounces per person per day. And it will be further observed, out of this abundance, I have estimated one \$18 suit of clothes, and for everyday clothes, hats, caps, underwear, etc., we have left the magnificent sum of \$18.60 for each person. Allowing two pairs of shoes to the person at an average price of \$3 per pair. But let us stop and study the wages paid by the poor corporations, as stated to me by the men themselves who are doing the work. The Missouri Pacific is paying its section men here in the city \$1.35 per day. Magnificent sum! All the other railroads are paying the same class of labor \$1.50 per day, while the Lincoln Traction Co. is paying the same class of laborers \$1.75. After all the information I am able to gather, with brickmasons at \$4 and carpenters ranging from \$2 to \$3.20 per day, and then at the expense of the loss of all the time when the material is short, and wet days or days unfit to work on the outdoor work, to say nothing of the persons who have to work short hours, lose all the odd time, and an hundred others looking for places where one can better his condition, all the while on expense, I am astonished that anyone should have the audacity to speak of 'the good times' of any one but the speculator, banker or loan agent, or the grafter."