

# WAGELWORKER

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## TO LABOR UNIONS.

Will you assist us by appointing some one in your union to furnish us with news? The Wageworker wants to publish the news of your local, and in order to do so must have your assistance. It is our aim to give our readers all the labor news that is to be had and we wish to do it properly, so that you will be satisfied. By helping us in this way, you not only make this paper more valuable and complete, but your knowledge of what is going on in the labor movement is better and the good feeling among the various crafts is more strongly cemented. When this fellowship idea is instilled thoroughly among us there is less likelihood of a break in the ranks and it is certainly needed at the present time.

## GROWING VS. SWELLING.

There is an old saying to the effect that some men grow under responsibility, while others merely swell. The more we think of the recent action of City Clerk Ozman the more we are inclined to believe that he is not growing. It is a good thing for the "dry" supporters of Lincoln that the city clerk was practically alone in his contention that the referendum petition was not good. It is also a good thing for the "wet" advocates that a brash youth unexpectedly elevated to a responsible position swelled up with the idea that he was about the biggest mite in the cheese.

The Wageworker is satisfied, now that the referendum is all right. The Wageworker has never been an advocate of the saloon system, but if it had to take its choice between a hundred saloons in Lincoln and the possibility of any young political upstart knocking the referendum into a cocked hat, the Wageworker would choose the hundred saloons. The principle of the referendum is too dear, and it has been secured through too many sacrifices of time and money and effort, to have it knocked out now. With the referendum inviolate we can effect any reform we choose—that is to say, the people can—and are we not the people?

We can readily understand how City Clerk Ozman came to make such a foolish break. It is merely one of the indiscretions of youth. Youth is inclined to impulsiveness. We know, for once upon a time we, ourselves, were young. The city clerk, swelling with importance, thought to himself: "Now is the time for me to make myself everlastingly solid with the 'drys'—the same being in the majority—and thus insure not only personal glory to myself but also re-election and mayhap political preferment in the future."

As we remarked before, youth is inclined to jump at conclusions just that way. But while City Clerk Ozman was studiously imbibing at our state university the knowledge of how to scute the inscrutable and pass the impossible, a lot of horny-handed toilers were fighting for the initiative and referendum, and they didn't propose having anybody depriving them of what they had fought for and won. Thus it came about that the genial but mistaken city clerk got his bumps—and got 'em good and proper.

The referendum is safe in Lincoln—yet. It is not likely that it will soon again be attacked. Now let the battle rage!

## CREATOR AND CREATED.

Now what do you think of that? The supreme court of the District of Columbia, which soaked Mitchell, Gompers and Morrison for contempt, actually seeking to enjoin committees from the national house and senate from investigating grafts and crooked combines. Talk about this being a repre-

sentative government, gentlemen? It's a joke! This is a government of judges. Once upon a time this country rejoiced because it believed in the pleasant little fiction that we had three co-ordinate branches of government, the legislative, the judicial and the executive. Co-ordinate means to put in the same class, rank or order. In other words, the country long believed that these three branches were equals. But that was a long time ago. We know a lot better now. And we are learning a lot more every day.

A legislature may enact a law, and a governor may approve. Then comes along some squirt of a country lawyer, elevated to the bench by corporation favor, and with a sweep of his stub pen knocks the legislature and the governor galley west. Congress may enact a law, and the president may proceed to execute that law as he is sworn to do. But along comes a court that usually divides "five to four," with the five always on the side of the trusts and corporations, and immediately an injunction is issued and the law is given its quietus until such time as the five honorable justices may agree upon some way of saying that in their opinion the law is no good.

And when some of us object to that sort of thing we are warned not to attack the courts. And if we persist in objecting we are denounced as "agitators" or "anarchists," and if we insist upon exercising the rights guaranteed by the old instrument that created the courts, we are told that the creator is infinitesimally smaller than the created, and we are thrust into jail for the awful crime of contempt. And to be in contempt of court is an awful crime. It is worse than murder. A man charged with murder has a chance to prove his innocence before a jury of his peers. A man charged with contempt has no such chance. The judge is at once lawmaker, law interpreter and law enforcer—and there you are.

"Three co-ordinate branches of government!" God bless you, men and brethren, you are liable to be thrust into jail for contempt of court if you even intimate that you believe in such an outworn and outrageous doctrine. We have three branches of government now—the state courts, the federal district judges and the supreme court of the United States. Legislatures and congresses are mere jokes. Governors and presidents are mere figureheads. A judge is the whole thing. He is bigger than all the rest put together. If perchance he is a federal judge he is a czar, a monarch whose rights none dare dispute.

Representative government forsooth! The man who talks it or believes it ought to go out and have his head bored for the simples.

We still insist that the Rogers tract, O street between Thirty-first and Thirty-third, is the finest site for a high school that could be found—plenty of ground, high, convenient to street cars, and just close enough to this editor's property to materially benefit it without inconveniencing the family. We are for the Rogers tract.

Every time we see a lot of earnest union men enjoying a little leisure time at the Labor Temple, the prouder we are of the fact that the first proposition for a Labor Temple appeared in The Wageworker, and the first meeting to consider it was held at the home of The Wageworker's editor.

As between the B. S. of Roosevelt, which stands for "big stick," and the B. S. of Taft, which stands for "butter scotch" or "backing sugar," darned if we don't prefer the Roosevelt brand.

Richard L. Metcalfe is the "compromise candidate" for United States senator. That is to say, everybody prefers "Met" to anybody else unless they are blinded by partisan prejudice.

Those who attended the democratic banquet at the Lincoln hotel last Monday night are now congratulating "Mayor Jim" upon his excellent facilities for taking the side track.

If the United States senators are able to show the courts of the District of Columbia where to get off, we'll take back everything ill we have said about the senators.

If union men would pay half as much attention to fundamentals as they do to fool fads like the "meat boycott," it would be better for them.

A Chicago physician declares that rats cause leprosy. We don't know as to that, but we do know that "rats" breed "scabbies."

The best way to bust the butter trust is to remove the fool tax on oleomargarine.

Up to date a number of eminent republican statesmen in the First Con-

gressional District have shown an inclination to contest with John A. McGuire for congressional honors. But up to date we haven't heard of anybody but lawyers. Wouldn't it be a relief to have a chance to vote for a union man?

Meat packers say the price of beef and pork is high because the supply is short. All right, let the president and congress knock the tar out of the tariff on cattle and hogs and sheep, and watch the prices tumble.

"Gripe Guts" Post offers to bet \$5,000 there are no peanut shells in HIS breakfast food. Charley is merely betting that he doesn't eat his own dope at the morning meal.

On the dead square, we didn't get a single valentine, comic or otherwise.

## LIFE IN A TENEMENT.

Some of the Problems Confronting Workers in Crowded Cities.

There are twenty-two families in our tenement—four on each of the five floors and two in the basement. Perhaps the story of the family that used their bathtub for a coal bin (covering it at night with boards and a mattress for a roomer, has reached even you. I don't know where it originated, but I have an impression that it is a newspaper yarn. A real bath tub would be such a luxury and the rental of an apartment containing one would be so great that no one but a fool would think of doing such a thing. It is a matter of making money out of it, it would be more business-like to hire out the room to one's neighbors, who crave the luxury of a genuine bath. But seriously, most of my friends and neighbors want to be clean. It is pathetic, sometimes, to see how hard they try to keep out the dirt. There is so much of it where there are so many people, that it is difficult to conquer it, but many of them succeed—at least so far as human limitations will permit. There are some who become discouraged and let things slide, but most workmen's wives are everlasting busy with their housework, and they deserve great credit for it.

There might be some justification for storing coal even in a bath tub, because there is no place to keep it in quantities, excepting down in the cellar, where each family is given a little closet-like affair in which to keep their miscellaneous belongings. But there isn't much fun in lugging a scuttle of coal to the third or fourth floor so practically everybody buys coal by the pail and has the coalman bring it up, although it costs about three times as much as buying it by the ton. The same is true of flour and about everything else that we need in the way of food. That's what makes the cost of living higher than most folks imagine—more, even, than it costs the rich, for the same things. And we pay cash for everything too. Strange as it may seem, we pay higher rent, proportionately, than is being paid by many an up-town family, for the same over-crowding in our neighborhood. I've never had a chance to count my neighbors, but I would estimate that there are at least one hundred and fifty people in our tenement. Some of the tenements have more than that. In one of the five acre blocks in another part of town there are nearly seven thousand persons living. Another block on the east side contains 1,672 persons per acre. In a little "tract" of fifty acres, there are more people than live in the entire state of Nevada. My home is in the midst of the most densely populated part of the world. Talk about China and London—they aren't in it compared with us.—Rev. Charles Stelzel in "Letters From a Workingman."

## THE NOBLES LEAVE US.

Mr. and Mrs. Horace V. Noble, who have been identified with the Lyric for several years, were given a handsome send-off when they left for Denver last Saturday. A more popular couple never bid good-bye to the theatergoers of Lincoln, and nothing was left undone to convince them of that fact. The sadness of the parting was lessened, however, by the knowledge that Mr. and Mrs. Noble have materially benefited themselves by the change. May good luck and good fortune attend them, is the wish of The Wageworker.

## ORDER OF OWLS.

Nest of New Organization Being Built in City of Lincoln.

J. H. Bayard, national organizer of the Order of Owls, is in Lincoln, busy with the work of organizing a nest in this city. It takes fifty members to secure a charter, but Mr. Bayard has already been assured of double that number. The Order of Owls is a secret society of good fellows who believe in love, laughter and the kingdom of heaven on earth. They help the sick, bury the dead, brighten dark corners, light up gloomy places. Some

are not saints. None are in the potter's field, county shrouds or poor houses. None are hungry. They do good, speak kindly, shake hands warmly, and respect the honor of their women.

The order is fraternal and pays a burial benefit and sick benefits. It also has an insurance feature which is not obligatory. A little study of the plans of this organization will demonstrate that it is formed along right lines, and that its membership will secure mutual advantages at a nominal cost. We suggest that the workmen of the city investigate its merits. Organizer Bayard is a union man, belonging to the Switchmen. It should also be borne in mind that all of the printing of the Order of Owls bears the label of the allied printing trades.

J. W. Colley, organizer of the Switchmen's Union, is in Lincoln for a few days. He is helping Mr. Bayard, but incidentally is injecting a little new vigor into the local switchmen.

## MOVING TOWARD SHORT DAY.

Machinists Expect to Reach It In 18 Months By Gradual Steps.

According to a plan now developing, the International Association of Machinists expects to obtain the eight-hour day within the next eighteen months. The scale now calls for nine hours. The plan outlined consists in taking twenty minutes off each workday for the first six months, repeating the process for the second and third six-month periods, the result being a reduction of the full hour at the end of eighteen months. Such a plan is now in operation on the Pacific coast. It is believed that the scheme will act as a preventive of strikes in that employments will have an opportunity to adjust by degrees their business to meet the conditions brought about by the shortened working days.

## DO YOU WANT IT?

What the Open Shop Means to the Wage Earners Today.

The "open shop" means porthouse steak for the employer and liver for the workman.

The "open shop" means individual bargaining so much desired by the opponents of organized labor.

The "open shop" stands for the unfettered employment of women and children.

The "open shop" means that the employer shall be the sole judge of what your labor is worth.

The "open shop" gives the employer the privilege of being a member of an organization intended to prevent the payment of better wages, but denies the laborer the right to be a member of a labor organization.

The "open shop" bars the possibility of a solid front on the part of the workers.

The "open shop" declares that some can better conditions while others can enjoy the benefits without cost.

The "open shop" denies the men the right to sell their labor under any conditions they elect.

The "open shop" declares there is no "living line"—no minimum—for the price of labor.

The "open shop" declares it is legal for an individual to do an act that is illegal for a collection of individuals to attempt.

The "open shop" would place the solution of factory sanitation and unguarded machinery in the hands of the employer.

The "open shop" means that the employer will be the master and you will be the slave.—Exchange.

## GOMPERS AT BETHLEHEM

Takes Personal Charge of the Strike in Big Steel Plant.

Bethlehem, Pa., Feb. 14.—It was stated here today that Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor will come here this week to take charge of the strike in the Bethlehem steel plant, giving weight to the report that the strike here is the beginning of the fight to force the unionization of the steel industry.

Five hundred strikers have left here to take positions elsewhere and it is said by the strike leaders they are doing so in order that they may turn a portion of their earnings into the strike fund. The federation is preparing to assist the strikers financially.

An official statement was issued today by the union officials, claiming that 3,500 men are out. This is denied by the company officials, who say the number will not exceed 900. At a mass meeting of the strikers it was announced that the 400 men still working have promised to join the strikers.

## LAW IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

Jefferson City, Mo., Feb. 12.—The supreme court today decided the law prohibiting bakeries from working more than six days a week is unconstitutional.

Stove mounters in Evansville, Ind., report trade good.

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