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WAGES OF LABOR.

Basis on Which All Business Is Conducted.

FOUNDATION OF ALL WEALTH

Earnings of Toil Support Entire Structure of Commerce and Industry. Low Wages Lessen Incomes of Manufacturer and Merchant.

Many manufacturers and merchants utterly fail to understand the intimate relation of wages to business, meaning both the volume of business and the grade of goods manufactured.

They look upon the millions of population as an abstract thing which should mean a large volume of business, but overlook the fact that it is not the barefooted man that creates a demand for a pair of shoes, but it is the man needing shoes who is the happy possessor of money with which to purchase them.

Our merchants and manufacturers seem to understand that a serious crop shortage in the agricultural districts forewarns them of lessened trade in those districts, but they do not seem to comprehend that a wage shortage in the industrial centers will as surely diminish the volume of trade in those centers.

Every merchant and manufacturer is dependent upon the purchases of the masses of the people and not upon the purchases of the classes whose number is very limited, and whose purchases are largely made abroad.

For illustration, if the shoe business of this country were confined to supplying the wants of coupon cutters about 95 per cent of shoe manufacturers and shoe retailers would have to go out of business.

It is said of one New York millionaire that he pays \$20 to \$25 a pair for his shoes—custom made—and that as soon as the new custom shop finish wears off so they need to be polished he throws them away and dons a new pair. This man of wealth is quite extravagant in shoes, but there are not enough like him to run a modern shoe factory three months in the year, and, moreover, he himself, with all his wealth, is dependent on the masses of the people for their maintenance of the volume of business, which supports all his various properties and yields him his vast income.

Vast fortunes are engaged in business enterprises or are invested in real estate or railroads. In either case income depends not on the commerce of the rich, but upon the purchases of the masses—in a large sense the wages of labor.

These wages support the families that support the merchants. The merchants and families support the landlords who own the high renting retail stores and tenements.

They also support the schools, street railroads and other merchants.

They also support the manufacturers and their employees in other cities and all merchants and landlords dependent on them.

And these families and their wages and their merchants and their manufacturers in transporting goods or persons from one city to another constitute the business of the railroads.

Wage earners spend nearly all they receive. If they receive more they spend more. If they receive less they are obliged to spend less.

Every time wages are raised 10 per cent there is 10 per cent added to their gross purchases.

When wages are reduced the volume

of business is reduced just that much. When a merchant favors reduction of the wages of labor in his own city he is voting to diminish his own business and is approaching that much nearer bankruptcy.

Since labor unions fight to preserve and advance wages they operate to maintain or enlarge the volume of trade, and at the same time they are protecting their members from starvation wages they are protecting the merchants from bankruptcy through starvation business.

Some misguided small bore capitalists say that we need an influx of cheap Asiatic labor.

Let us grant their contention figuratively and what would be the result?

We will assume that all our labor is performed by Chinese.

Then all our commerce would consist of supplying the Chinese with their oriental food and clothing, and even these would be supplied by Chinese merchants, as is the case now on the Pacific coast.

Our merchants would vanish, and our city real estate values would shrink 75 per cent or more.

Every railroad would go into a receivership, and all our manufacturing enterprises would perish.

Every one of the great fortunes that flaunt their wealth and insult our intelligence would crumble.

Our rich men are either very ignorant or else they think we are.

They ought to know that we know that the thing that supports the whole structure of manufacturing, merchandising, real estate values and railroads is the standard of wages, to maintain which the unions are pledged to the last man and the last dollar.

Our exploiters are not smart enough to get much fat off the commerce of a Chinaman. They want to exploit a man who earns more and so is more profitable. They know.

Individual cases of wage cutting may be profitable to employer or to merchant in an immediate sense or for a special reason, but if the condition were general and continued it would be ruinous for all.

Mine Workers' New Officers.

The report of the tellers submitted to the international convention of United Mine Workers of America recently in session at Columbus, O., show that John P. White of Oskaloosa, Ia., was elected international president by a majority of 26,743 votes. Tom L. Lewis, the present international president, received 72,190 votes. For vice president Frank Hayes of Springfield, Ill., was elected over E. S. McCullough of Bay City, Mich.

The members of the board of auditors, which is also the credentials committee, were all re-elected. The tellers were also re-elected.

John Mitchell, formerly international president, led the list of delegates to the American Federation of Labor with 113,285 votes. Other delegates to the federation elected are John P. White, Duncan McCald, H. W. Wilson, Frank Hayes, John Wallace and T. L. Lewis. The new officers will assume their duties April 1.

Charter For Western Miners.

The executive council of the A. F. of L. has granted a charter to the Western Federation of Miners on equal terms with the one now held by the United Mine Workers of America. The matter will now be submitted to the Western Federation of Miners for ratification.

It is made a provision of the issue of the charter that members of machinists' locals now existing in mining camps are not to be required to join the Western Federation of Miners in order to follow their trade in the mining camps.