

IN THE FIELD OF LABOR.

Senator Tanner's bill specifying that the label of the allied printing trades shall appear on all state printing had a narrow escape from untimely death Wednesday. In committee of the whole, where members are not required to go on record, the bill was marked for slaughter, the committee recommending it for indefinite postponement. Immediately after the committee arose and reported Senator Tanner offered as a substitute motion that the bill be engrossed for third reading and demanded a roll call. This put members on record and the bill was saved for the time being. The vote on the motion to engross the bill for third reading stood 17 for to 13 against. Every vote in the negative save one was cast by a republican. Every vote save one cast to engross the bill was cast by a democrat. Banning, democrat, voted against the bill, and Bartling, republican, voted for it. Selleck and Brown of Lanoaster voted against the bill. Banning said such a law would put the printing of the state in the hands of a few firms, thus exhibiting his ignorance of conditions. The present condition puts it into the hands of a few firms that render poor service and execute cheap work because they hire cheap labor. Hoagland said he was a friend of union labor but not of the closed shop—the sort of friendship that jabs the knife under the fifth rib while giving the kiss of friendship. When Hoagland stated that the bill would merely place all the printing in the hands of Lincoln and Omaha firms he uttered a statement that had no foundation. It would not take a dollar's worth of work from any print shop that now has state contracts if those shops would comply with union conditions—which conditions are to pay a decent scale of wages and work a reasonable number of hours.

The enactment of this bill would

put a stop to a huge graft that is often worked. Two years ago a notoriously unfair print shop at York secured the contract for printing a biennial report, taking it at a price per page fully one-half less than the next lowest bidder. The book was two months late in delivery, and when it came it showed 137 blank pages out of a total of less than 500, and enough other space wasted by "padding" to account for fully 165 pages. The state paid the contract price per page for the 165 padded pages. This is common under present conditions. The basement at the state house is full of old bulletins and reports printed in non-union shops by cheap and inefficient help, the department officials refusing to send such botch work out with their signatures thereon. The label of the allied printing trades will be a guarantee that the state is getting just what it pays for. It will be a guarantee that the mechanics employed on the work were paid decent wages that permits them to live like American citizens, and that they were not compelled to work long hours. Senator Tanner's bill is a bill to raise not only the standard of printing done for the state, but to raise the standard of living of hundreds of mechanics and their families. There can be no logical opposition to the bill.

There is another printing bill introduced that ought to be enacted into law. It provides for a real state board of printing. The present state board of printing is a joke. This is not meant as a slap at the men who constitute the board, nor to its efficient secretary-expert. The fault is with the law. Under the present law no one is responsible for poor work, for insufficient delivery, for failure to make prompt delivery or for other failure. Under it officials are able to pay debts—political debts

—at the expense of the state. An official wanting a supply of printing makes out his requisition and files it with the board. The board lets the contract. The work is done but is not delivered to the board but to the official asking for it. That official puts his "O. K." on the voucher and the printing board allows it, always. But no one checks up the delivery, and that's where the gouge comes in. A state official can ask for say 10,000 bulletins or letterheads. Then he may call up the editor of the paper that boosted hardest for him and say: "I've asked for 10,000 of such-and-such a report. Now you bid on the 10,000 with the understanding that you'll have to print only 5,000." As a result the favored bidder has it all his own way, for while he is aware that he will have to print only 5,000, the other printers figure on having to deliver 10,000. When the job is done it is delivered to the official, the voucher is made out, properly certified to, and it is then paid.

The bill referred to aims to cure all this, and will if enacted into law. It provides that all work must be delivered to the secretary of the printing board and certified to by him before the bill is paid. This fixes absolute responsibility. This expert must be a printer of experience covering a specified number of years, and a salary is provided that will enable him to give his whole time to the job. Nebraska pays out in the neighborhood of \$60,000 a year for printing, 25 per cent of which is wasted. In other words, if the printing board was what it should be the state would get far better service for two-thirds of what it is now paying for wretched service.

Missouri, long the most notorious of convict labor states, has at last seen the light. The bill abolishing convict labor for private contractors has passed both branches of the legislature and is now before Governor Hanley. The law provides that no further contracts be made for prison labor, and that 300 contracted convicts be withdrawn every year until there is no longer a convict working under contract. Provision is to be made for enlarging the state birding twine plant, and for the manufacture by convicts of articles used by the state, such as furniture, bedding, garments, brick, cut stone, etc. But the product of this labor is not to be sold on the open market to compete with the products of free labor.

The railroad brotherhoods are feeling good over the success that is attending their efforts to secure remedial legislation. The representatives on the ground, Routt and Omstead, seem to have acquired the art of doing entirely without sleep, and as a result of their efforts not only have several good bills been passed, but others are well on the way.

Trades unionists, and especially members of the allied printing trades, owe Senator Tanner of South Omaha their hearty thanks for the bully fight he made to save the union label bill from being stabbed in the back and from ambush. Tanner put up just the kind of a fight he is always likely to put up when he gets good and warm—and he can get quite trop-

ic when organized labor is attacked. "Doc" carried a card in the typographical union for a long time, and he employs only union men in his big printing plant in South Omaha. He never bids on state printing, either.

Ten thousand building tradesmen in Chicago are out on strike. Rumors of an intended strike became rife and an attempt was made to head it off by applying to Judge Gridley for an injunction forbidding the issuance of the strike order. But the leaders got wind of the injunction business and called the strike while the judge was reading the petition.

The safety appliance laws of 1893, 1897 and 1903 were bunched in the United States supreme court last Wednesday, and the question of their scope and constitutionality will be determined. Cases were up from Tennessee, Alabama, Nebraska and Colorado, and the court determined to take them all at once.

The Temple amendment in Iowa has been held constitutional. This act prohibited a public service corporation from compelling an employe to sign away his rights to sue for damages on account of injury, either as a condition of employment or because of membership in any relief association. A bill for a similar law is before the Nebraska legislature.

The Chicago printers settled their strike in short order. Within a few minutes after President Lynch had notified them that their strike was illegal they went back to work. The trouble will be arbitrated at once.

Chicago Typographical union at its last meeting voted \$1,000 to aid the Chicago Daily Socialist.

The strike of the photo-engravers in the Los Angeles Times plant crippled Otis badly and he is having great difficulty in securing competent men despite his extraordinary inducements of high wages. There is a mistaken impression abroad that the photo-engravers permitted their men to enter the Times office and accept jobs before the strike. Such was not the case. The men who walked out were formerly non-unionists and were organized secretly. And when the time came to make a stand for the right they acted like true men. That's why Otis raves.—Cleveland Citizen.

STUDYING CHILD LABOR.

The National Child Labor commission is in session at Birmingham, Ala. It will endeavor to draft a uniform child labor law, and will listen to reports from men and women who have made a study of the child labor evil.

CAN ORGANIZED LABOR STAND FOR THIS.

John Mitchell has been forced out of the National Civic Federation. The edict came from the convention of the United Mine Workers of America recently held in Columbus. It was voted that either Mitchell give up his membership in the National Civic Federation or in the Mine Workers' organization. Here's democracy for you and personal liberty which gives the ordinary friend of organized labor a cold chill. It will give the ne-

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