

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE

When Farmer Oatcake came to town he made a call on me,
A fact that pleased me greatly--men like him I like to see.
So I shook his hand and gave him my own good revolving chair,
And I asked him, "How is business?" and he answered, "Purty fair."
"How are you upon the question of LaFollette or Bill Taft?"
I inquired of Farmer Oatcake, and he just leaned back and laughed.
"Well," he said, "twixt Bob and Billy I don't worry nary mite,
But I'm gettin' mighty anxious 'bout my seed corn bein' right."

Then I tacked about and took him in a little different way
By inquiring how he figured on reforming "Schedule K,"
And concerning money matters like the mooted Aldrich plan,
Which I thought was quite sufficient to arouse most any man.
And "progressives" and "standpatters," and a lot of things like that;
But old Farmer Oatcake sat there merely twirling his old hat.
Then he said, "Well, honest, Billy; them's big questions I don't doubt,
But the biggest one, I reckon, is will that there seed corn sprout?"

"Are you posted on the tariff?" I inquired somewhat dismayed
At the seeming lack of interest Farmer Oatcake had displayed.
"Just a bit," he answered slowly with a twinkle in his eye.
"Or upon the money question?" "Just a bit," was his reply.
Then he leaned across and gently laid his hand upon my knee
And he said: "Them things are pressin', but they ain't a pressin' me"
Near so much as are some others; and the most important thing
That's before us farmers, Billy, is good corn for seed, b'jing!"

Then old Farmer Oatcake left me, and I pondered there alone
Till it struck me pretty forceful that some things I'd never known
Were of vastly more importance at this time than tariff dope,
Or the stuff that officeseekers hand us labeled "good soft soap";
That it isn't Taft or Harmon, Bob LaFollette or Champ Clark,
We must look to if the future doesn't get almighty dark;
But that vastly more important at this time is just to know
That the seed corn that that is planted is the kind that's going to grow.

PARTISAN BLINDNESS.

Will Maupin's Weekly, says the democrats got the worst of it last year when the whiskey question was injected into politics. Yes indeed, and we all got the worst of it, for it resulted in electing a democratic legislature.—Fairbury News.

Tut, tut! Do not be so blindly partisan. The last legislature really made a better record than the average legislature. Of course it appropriated a lot of money, but will any sensible man deny that it was necessary? Will any humane man denounce as extravagance the appropriation of money to care for the feeble-minded and the insane in a decent and humane manner? Is it extravagant to appropriate money to prevent disease, or to educate our boys and girls properly? Is it nothing that the last legislature gave us the opportunity to adopt the initiative and referendum? Of course the legislature made mistakes—and that is to be expected of 133 men brought together from all walks of life to accomplish a big task inside of ninety days. But isn't it a fact that the legislature in question gave us some almighty good laws, made better some laws that needed betterment, and repealed some laws that merely cumbered the statute books? Isn't it true that it made comparatively decent appropriations for the maintenance of state institutions and the proper support of the inmates? Does the esteemed News begrudge a dollar of the money appropriated for the better housing of the feeble-minded boys and girls in the Beatrice institution, or the men and women of clouded minds in the Hastings, Lincoln and Norfolk asylums, or the blind pupils of the Nebraska City institution, or the deaf and dumb children in the Omaha institution who are barred from the public schools by reason of their affliction?

With feeble-minded children sleeping in garrets and basements, nerved like pigs in a pen, is it extravagance to provide for their better care and treatment? The increased appropriations made by the last legislature for the support of the state's institutions should redound to the credit of its members, and men not blinded by prejudice or obsessed with the idea that dollars are more than human beings, will give the legislature credit.

The esteemed Fairbury News is living in the dark ages of Nebraska politics. It ought to tear a couple of hundred leaves from its monthly calendar.

A POOR PRESS AGENT.

King George of Great Britain ought to make haste to secure the services of a first-class press agent. Not being able to write books or edit a magazine King George is therefore unable

to do much tooting of his own horn, hence his need of a good publicity man. It is now given out that on a recent hunting expedition King George bagged thirty tigers, thirteen rhinoceri, a score of elephants and some smaller game. That is the extent of the information. Now imagine what one American hunter of note would have made of that record! With every rhinoceros we would have had a thrilling tale of "charging," with every elephant a bloodcurdling account of narrow escapes, and with every tiger a hair-raising narrative of ferocious man-eaters. Every record of a shot at a wild animal would have been a tribute to the nerve and the marksmanship of the firer, and every death would have been the end of the most ferocious member of the "free's" tribe or kind.

King George has overlooked a bet. Perhaps he feels bound by tradition and by divinity which is supposed to hedge kings, but if so he is wrong, sadly wrong. He should burst traditions, knock the idea of kingly divinity galleywest, hurl anathema at all who oppose him, organize Ananias Clubs and issue orders that all spotlights be trained upon himself.

* A GREAT BIG BOOST FOR *
* GRAND YOUNG NEBRASKA. *

* Will Maupin's Weekly, the *
* best single-handed booster Ne- *
* braska has or ever had, came *
* out in a blaze of glory last *
* week with its "Nebraska In- *
* dustries Number." Twenty- *
* four pages carried an immense *
* amount of highly interesting *
* matter regarding the resources, *
* attractions and opportunities of *
* Nebraska, and also numerous ad- *
* vertisements of manufacturing *
* concerns who make good goods *
* in Nebraska and are not afraid *
* to let people know it.—Omaha *
* Trade Exhibit. *

NOT FOR HAVELOCK.

Of course the Havelock Commercial Club, and the Havelockians in general, object to having their postoffice degenerate into a mere sub-station. And small blame to them. They have a right to feel proud of their progressive little city, and they ought to be jealous of its well earned fame. Will Maupin's Weekly would regret to see Havelock submerged in any such way. Some time, doubtless, Lincoln will grow all around Havelock and bring about annexation, but there are Havelockians who insist that when that time comes it will be Havelock that will do the annexing. That's the kind of spirit that makes a city grow.

THIS IS THE TIME FOR COMMONSENSE TO RULE

The daily newspapers of January 9 contained a dispatch from San Francisco wherein Ernest L. Reguin, president of the Federated Shop Employees of the Harriman lines, was quoted as predicting a strike of the 300,000 shop employes, including every road in Texas, the Denver & Rio Grande and the Hill lines.

We have come to look with some suspicion upon daily newspaper reports of interviews with labor leaders. The interviews are too often distorted for purposes of sensationalism. But if President Reguin is correctly quoted it is high time that he and the men whom he represents, and supposedly leads, pause to take several second thoughts. To call a strike now, under all the conditions—weather, financial, industrial and social—for anything short of absolute oppression, would be little less than criminal. Indeed, such a strike would be but a very short step removed from the criminal, for men who would deliberately plunge the country into deeper depths of oppression, would threaten wives and children with hunger and cold, and further increase the already huge army of unemployed—men who would do such a thing for any reason short of rebellion against tyranny and oppression of the medieval type, would be criminals in effect if not in purpose.

There are conditions under which it is folly to strike, but we take time to mention but two: First, when there is nothing worth while to win, and much worth while to lose. Second, when the conditions of employment are such that there are two hungry men waiting to take the place of every man who goes out on strike. Something very akin to both these situations now present themselves. The Federation of Shop Employees are, if we are rightfully informed, demanding chiefly the recognition of their Federation. The question of hours or of wages do not enter largely into the matter at this time, although it is evident that they are the real things at issue but put off to the future.

Now, just pause for a moment and think what it means to call out an army of 300,000 men now steadily employed at fairly remunerative wages, to add more than a quarter of a million men to the army of the unemployed, to interrupt business already staggering, to throw out of gear the immense transportation lines, to force thousands of women and children to face privation and want and cold, to injure a great public that is in no wise concerned about "recognition," and further plunge the country into financial depression!

Talk about striking for "recognition" when there are 2,000,000 men out of employment. Talk about striking in the dead of winter when a week would exhaust the reserve of every affiliated craft in the country! Talk about a strike when business is depressed and every local union pushed to its limit to care for its own!

What are officials of the Federation of Shop Employees thinking about, anyhow? It is all very fine for men without families to stand up and talk about fighting for recognition, or for this or for that. But what about the men who have given hostages to fortune and are striving to feed and clothe wives and children? What about the wives and children? The writer, whose union card is clear and who has been a union man for thirty years, has been through more than one strike—enough to make him fight shy of any more if one may be avoided with honor. And even honor would be stretched a long ways before he would consent to making sacrifice of the wife and the babies. This writer knows something of officialdom in union labor circles. It is one thing to sit in a comfortable office and draw good money while directing a strike, and quite another to be on the outside, wageless and penniless, dependent upon "strike benefits" that seldom last long, and watching the faces of wife and children growing more pinched each day. It is one thing to prate about "honor" while spending the per capita tax, and quite another to pay the per capita tax out of a wage envelope already too small to make proper provision for the family.

The writer knows practically nothing about managing a railroad, but it appears to him that if the railroad managers were compelled to choose a time when a strike would least hurt them, that time would be right now. And it strikes him that if the employes were to scheme for a year to pick a time when a strike would avail them the least, they would select the present.

The labor union official who advises or even countenances a strike at this time for anything short of absolute tyranny is an unsafe leader. Employes who will urge or vote for a strike under present conditions, for anything short of absolute oppression, are shortsighted. For railroad employes to strike now and further depress general business by tying up the would be absolutely foolish, for it would alienate public sympathy, without which no strike of consequence can succeed.

Let's have done for the present with all this talk and rumor of a strike. Let's get down to business and work to bring about an industrial condition when a strike might be worth undertaking because there would be some show of winning. This is no time for the agitator and the prattle of the "square man." It is time for the sedate, thoughtful and prudent union man to assert himself.

Let 300,000 shopmen strike now and tie up the railroads, forcing a fuel famine with the thermometer hovering around the zero point, and public indignation would overwhelm the strikers instead of the railroads.

Strike now, and a fortnight would exhaust every avenue of strike benefits and offer to cold and starvation the wives and the babies. Strike now, with 2,000,000 idle men in the country, and hunger would force enough "seabs" into the shops to break the strike before a month passed.

Why not act sensibly? Why play into the hands of the opposition? Why alienate public sympathy? Why sacrifice the comfort of loved ones in an effort to gain something that is neither meat nor drink, but only salve for wounded "honor?"

Three hundred thousand men on strike! How long could they stand outside without strike benefits? Say a month—then what? Say a strike benefit of \$4 a week for 200,000 single men, and \$8 a week for 100,000 married men—\$1,600,000 a week. How many weeks could organized labor stand the strain!

Think it over, men; and in God's name don't commit this awful blunder.

The writer believes in strikes, if called for just cause and after every possible effort at arbitration has proved futile. But to call a strike when everything points to hopeless failure; when the burden of suffering will fall upon the innocent and the helpless; when the thing sought for is not worth the sacrifice of a single comfort by those we love—to strike under such conditions is criminally foolish. We believe the proposed strike mentioned by President Reguin, under present conditions, would be worse than foolish.

Is the writer qualified to speak with some knowledge of such questions? Let the record show. He has been, and still is, an active member of the International Typographical Union for many years; three times a delegate to the American Federation of Labor conventions, and organized, and was twice president of, the Nebraska Federation of Labor. He has never shirked a union assessment, never drew a dollar of benefits, and never received an official salary from any labor organization. For more than seventeen years he has not earned a dollar working at his trade, but there has not been a day in all that time when his card was not clear. His interests are all with the men who toil; not with those who would exploit labor. In making this appeal he is concerned only for the best interests of the employes, knowing full well that the employers are amply able to take care of themselves.

Organized labor is not at this moment in a good position to talk about strikes. Industrial conditions, and recent developments within the ranks,

are all against success. Let us have a short spell of common-sense and discretion.

BOURBONISM RUN MAD.

Labor Commissioner Guye has favored us with a copy of bulletin No. 23 A, issued in November giving a review of the state's resources. It appears to be very comprehensive, but whether it is "worth the price" we are not sure. The best advertisement the state ever can put out is general good health and prosperous condition of all its people. This is very "fetching" to all those living in other states, who want some of both. But why advertise Nebraska? She is known the world over now and the young Nebraskans want a chance to get a "set in" at home. Crowd the state full of people and then what opportunity is there for your children? They will be forced to go west or occupy a less favorable position than you do; or do you want to see every acre of the state worked to its full capacity from this time on till it is impoverished as nearly all countries have been? Let us husband our own resources!—Crete Democrat.

It is just a bit hard to find words to express one's opinion of the above. But as a sample of bourbonism run to seed we submit that it is entitled to the premium. Wouldn't Nebraska be a "wonderful state" at this time if the early settlers had adopted that sort of policy? What good does it do Nebraska as an advertisement to possess healthful climate and fertile soil if we don't let the people of the world know it? And with 15,000,000 acres of fertile soil awaiting cultivation, and hundreds of Nebraskans going elsewhere every year, is there any likelihood that our children will have no opportunity to get a "set in"? And the idea that working the soil to its full capacity is suicidal belongs to the dark ages. The soil ought to be worked to its full capacity, and every year should find it richer. They raise three times as much wheat per acre in England as we do in Nebraska, and on soil that has been producing wheat for a thousand years. But the English farmer has sense enough to put back into the soil the fertility that he takes out of it. We have that yet to learn in Nebraska.

What this state needs is more cultivated acres—cultivated with brains—and more production per acre without exhausting soil fertility. The trouble is that we have been mining a few acres and neglecting the many acres. The wheat and corn lands of Nebraska ought to be more fertile and productivity the 15,000,000 acres of land are today. Under present conditions the soil is being exhausted. Let us have a campaign of education—a campaign that will not only teach our people how to conserve soil fertility, but teach people how to put into productivity the 15,000,000 acres of land that are now idle. More cultivated acres and more acres better cultivated! Let that be the rallying cry. No danger that there will ever be more tillers than there is room for in this state. No danger that our children will not have opportunities. The trouble is not lack of opportunities, but lack of young men and women capable of measuring up to the opportunities.

The esteemed Crete Democrat is using an 1812 calendar. It ought to jump forward just an even hundred years.

NEBRASKA'S ANNIVERSARY.

March 1 will be the forty-fifth anniversary of Nebraska's admission into the Union, and Will Maupin's Weekly proposes a novel method of celebrating the event. It is to make it "Nebraska Post Card Day," and on that day have every patriotic citizen who will send out as many postcards as possible to friends in other states, the cards containing facts and figures about Nebraska's resources and possibilities. It is also suggested that Governor Aldrich issue a proclamation making March 1 "Nebraska Post Card Day," urging all good citizens to join in an effort to make up in some measure for the failure heretofore to properly advertise this wonderful state.