

State Historical Society

THE WAGEWORKER



A Newspaper with a Mission and without a Muzzle that is published in the interest of Wage-workers Everywhere.

VOL. 2

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, FEBRUARY 23, 1906

NO. 46

FROM THE UNION STANDPOINT

Ministerial Union Listens to a Union Man's Presentation of the Claims of Unionism—Lincoln Preachers Show by Word and Action That They are Friendly to Trades Unionism—Only One Discordant Note Heard.

Last Monday morning the Ministerial Union met in regular session at the City Library, the attendance being larger than usual on account of the announcement that Rev. Charles Stelzle would talk on "Trades Unionism from the Standpoint of a Trades Unionist." If trades unionists who heard Mr. Stelzle Sunday afternoon were pleased with his address, they would have rejoiced even more had they heard his address before the ministerial union. It was a square, fair, earnest and forceful presentation of the claims of trades unionism, and it had a splendid effect on the minds of the ministers present. Mr. Stelzle frankly admitted that he spoke as a trades unionist.

Rev. Mr. Marshall, whose views are well known to Lincoln unionists, struck the only discordant note. He doesn't believe that a Christian workingman should belong to a labor union in which non-Christian workingmen hold membership, and he repeated his position again. But his position was an isolated one, for none of the ministers took a stand with him.

"All that is Utopian," declared Mr. Stelzle. "Let the employers, with his supposedly better information, his better advantages and his better opportunities, take the lead, and don't expect the workingman to make all the concessions and all the advances."

The Monday Evening News contained a good abstract of the address, and it is here given:

Rev. Charles Stelzle of Chicago, who addressed the men's mass meeting at the Oliver theatre yesterday, read a paper before the ministerial association this morning on "The Ethical Value of Trades Unionism," and a number of the preachers entered into a discussion on the subject. A motion presented by Rev. Samuel Z. Batten that the association express their appreciation to Rev. Stelzle for the address was carried. The paper met with the approval of the preachers present.

"Nothing is ever gained by mere denunciation of the trades union," began the speaker. "The time has come for a saner study of what Carlyle has called 'the universal vital problem of the world.' Ordinarily trades unionism is judged by a newspaper item which has its birth in an insignificant strike event, but which was nurtured by the irresponsible reporter of a sensational newspaper.

"Sometimes the story of tyranny or lawlessness practiced by some trades unions is true, but this lawlessness is not an essential part of trades unionism, any more than class rushes or hazing are essential parts of the college curriculum. I frankly confess that labor unions are not ideal.

"It is sometimes forgotten that the labor union is not the labor question. If every labor union in existence were to be wiped out, the labor question would still be present, and that, too, in a more aggravated form than it is today. It cannot be denied that in spite of its shortcomings, trades unionism has brought us nearer a solution of the industrial problem. It is easier and far more satisfactory to deal with men collectively than to attempt to deal with them as individuals. As a matter of fact, in this day of great corporate interests, individual contracting has practically gone out of practice. Furthermore, if workmen were to be denied the right to organize and to elect representatives to care for their interests, such denial could only result in a state of individualism which would end in chaos and anarchy. It is the fact that this right still belongs to them that makes our American life so free from the so-called anarchistic propaganda, and which accounts for the small response on the part of American workmen to such appeals. It seems almost superfluous to add that trades unionism does not endorse the plan for the disruption of our American form of government. Nowhere can be found more loyal citizens than in the ranks of organized labor.

"Trades unionism is not a labor trust. A trust excludes the many for the benefit of the few. Trades unionism opens wide its door to every workingman in the craft, frequently reducing or abrogating the initiation fee in order to make it easier for the candidate. A trust is a close corporation; a trades union diligently seeks new members. Its officers are not high salaried officials. They are usually under-paid, when one considers the character of the work and the other demands which are made upon them. The business agent of a labor union receives as his salary only the rate of wages which prevails in his craft.

"The principle of the so-called closed shop is accepted in every-day business life. The dealer will agree with the manufacturer to handle only a certain kind of goods. This is considered perfectly legitimate. Why does it seem unconstitutional when precisely the same bargain is entered into between the employer and his employes? Logically, then, the real open shop is the union shop, because any one may enter it.

"The trades union is unincorporated, so that an employer cannot hold it to its contract while he himself is liable to damages. This is not true. It is well known that an unincorporated concern can neither sue nor be sued, so that the employer and the trades union

are on an equality before the law in this respect.

"A successful suit for damages would practically disrupt the organization. If all the employers were absolutely honest, the incorporation of the union might be insisted upon, but for the reason given, organized labor is naturally cautious about taking a step which would bring it practically no advantages, while it would lay itself open to the assaults of its enemies.

"The right to run one's business as he pleases must have its limitations. Great changes in the conception of personal property rights have come as part of the democratic evolution. In some respects a man can run his business as he pleases, but in other respects public opinion, and frequently matter of employment, it is being recognized that there are two parties instead of one. A man may do as he pleases only so far as that liberty does not injure the well-being of his fellow man. One may not set fire to his own house, nor may he exercise that privilege which might injure somebody else."

A discussion followed, and each minister who spoke on the paper first expressed himself as being wholly in sympathy with the views of the writer.

"I am in sympathy with the writer," declared Rev. N. S. Haynes in his three minutes' discussion of the paper. "Why is a non-union man depreciated and called a scab?"

"A non-union man is allowed in some places to work with union men," declared the writer of the paper in answer to the question of Rev. Haynes. "It angers the union man to have a scab take his place at a machine for this reason. It is for the scab, as well as for the betterment of the working men, that a union is formulated. When scabs take the place of union men they cause, in many cases, the union men to lose the strike."

"It is my duty," declared Rev. J. L. Marshall, jr., in his discussion of the paper, "to look after men that are members of a union, and to see that they are Christians, and to also see that they are given work. I should do this, in the best way I can. It is the duty of all of us ministers to look after union men and help them in any way possible to lead a better life. The heads of these unions, that is many of them, are good Christian men. It is my opinion that there should be organized a Christian labor union, or that we as ministers should do as much as possible to connect the unions with the church."

"It would not be a wise step," declared Mr. Stelzle, "to make the unions Christian organizations. The labor question in the last analysis is a moral question."

Several other members of the association entered into a discussion of the paper.

Rev. Mr. Batten made a short and earnest plea for fairness and justice. "When they had the trolley strike in Brooklyn Rev. Mr. Barrons preached a sermon denouncing lawlessness and demanding that it be put down with a strong hand. I wrote and told him to preach another sermon denouncing the lawlessness of the trolley company and the dishonesty of the men controlling it. And I told him that if he did not do it he was false to humanity, false to God and false to himself."

Several ministers spoke on the paper, and all were strong in their endorsements of it. Mr. Stelzle said it was the most consistent ministerial union meeting he had ever attended, because it had confined itself absolutely to the paper.

THE WARFARE HURTS.

Woman's Home Companion Feeling the Effects of the Campaign Against It.

The Woman's Home Companion, published by Crowell & Co., Springfield, O., locked out its printers last October. Then it secured the usual blanket injunction. Naturally the printers resented this action, and they began a little fight.

Of course it is illegal to boycott, and printers wouldn't do anything illegal. Neither would they violate an injunction. But there is nothing illegal in pointing out your friends and your enemies. Crowell & Co. are enemies of organized labor. This fact was made known. The result hurts the Woman's Home Companion. Unsold copies by the car load are being returned to the publishers.

Now Crowell & Co. are sending 20 extra copies free each month to newsdealers in order to spur them up, and also increase the circulation for the "benefit" of advertisers.

The printers have got the "rat" Woman's Home Companion on the t-boggon. Don't boycott it, but just tell your union friends that it is a "rat" publication. That's ought to be sufficient.

HE DIED A MILLIONAIRE.

Stetson, the Hat Manufacturer, Who Couldn't Afford Union Wages.

John B. Stetson, the hat manufacturer, died in Florida the other day. Mr. Stetson couldn't afford to pay the scale of the union hatmakers. It would ruin him and his business. He had to keep figuring close all the time to escape bankruptcy, and if he acceded to the demands of the union hatmakers he would have to close his factory.

But John B. Stetson died a millionaire three times over. He had a palace in New York, a cottage at the sea shore, a private yacht and automobiles. The poor "scabs" who worked in his open shop didn't have any of these things. They were almighty lucky to have enough to eat and a place to sleep. But Mr. Stetson lived in luxury.

And a lot of men who claim to be unionists helped him live that way. The Wage-worker charges that railroad men, who above all men should be consistent unionists, made Stetson a millionaire. If you don't believe it look at the hat of the next railroad man who is dressed up in his good clothes. It's a cinch he is wearing a "scab" Stetson hat.

A PAIR OF ANARCHISTS.

One in Omaha and One in Russia, With Slightly Different Bombs.

A few days ago a peasant in Russia threw a bomb and blew a Russian general into eternity.

That was anarchy.

On the same day a district judge in Omaha enjoined union printers against using moral suasion in their efforts to win their strike.

The judge who issued that decree is a more dangerous anarchist than the Russian peasant who threw the bomb.

The Russian anarchist tried to override the law by the employment of force.

The Omaha judge tried to do violence to the law with a sacred weapon which the people had placed in his own hand.

The Russian anarchist was impelled to the deed by a hatred which had been inspired by the damnable treatment accorded the peasants by the Russian aristocracy.

The Omaha judge was inspired to his anarchistic act by long service as a fawning puppy at the feet of the monied aristocracy in Nebraska.

That's all—

Except that the Russian anarchist is entitled to better regard than the American judge who teaches anarchy by violating the law which he has sworn to uphold.—Columbus (Neb.) Telegram.

CLERKS GROWING UNEASY.

Ask Ministerial Union to Help Them Get Shorter Hours of Work.

At the Ministerial Union meeting last Monday Rev. Mr. Thomas called attention to the fact that the clerks in the retail stores of the city were compelled to work long hours on Saturday. As a result many of them who wanted to attend church Sunday morning were unable to do so.

"I have been thinking about this for some time," he said, "and I have been thinking about asking the ministerial union to help them get shorter hours of work."

That is really a very reasonable request. The shorter working hours would mean that the clerks would be able to attend church Sunday morning and that the ministerial union would be able to help them get shorter hours of work.

workday? If they had waited for help from that source they would still be working ten or eleven hours a day. Not that the ministers would not have helped—for they would. But the ministers are helpless when it comes to a thing like that. The whole matter rests with the clerks. They can get shorter hours if they will go about it right. The way has been blazed for them. The plan of campaign has been laid out and successfully followed by scores of organizations. Note that word "organizations."

Instead of whining around and asking the ministers to help them, let the clerks exhibit a little backbone. Let them organize a retail clerks' union and then make a concerted request for shorter hours. Their request will have the endorsement of 3,000 union men and women—and these represent the bulk of the purchasing power of the city. Let them unite and work collectively for something instead of remaining separated and begging as individuals for what is due them as a body.

Now let us see if there are any retail clerks in Lincoln who have the "sand" to take the lead in organizing a local of the Retail Clerks' Union.

THE WARFARE HURTS.

Woman's Home Companion Feeling the Effects of the Campaign Against It.

The Woman's Home Companion, published by Crowell & Co., Springfield, O., locked out its printers last October. Then it secured the usual blanket injunction. Naturally the printers resented this action, and they began a little fight.

Of course it is illegal to boycott, and printers wouldn't do anything illegal. Neither would they violate an injunction. But there is nothing illegal in pointing out your friends and your enemies. Crowell & Co. are enemies of organized labor. This fact was made known. The result hurts the Woman's Home Companion. Unsold copies by the car load are being returned to the publishers.

Now Crowell & Co. are sending 20 extra copies free each month to newsdealers in order to spur them up, and also increase the circulation for the "benefit" of advertisers.

The printers have got the "rat" Woman's Home Companion on the t-boggon. Don't boycott it, but just tell your union friends that it is a "rat" publication. That's ought to be sufficient.

HE DIED A MILLIONAIRE.

Stetson, the Hat Manufacturer, Who Couldn't Afford Union Wages.

John B. Stetson, the hat manufacturer, died in Florida the other day. Mr. Stetson couldn't afford to pay the scale of the union hatmakers. It would ruin him and his business. He had to keep figuring close all the time to escape bankruptcy, and if he acceded to the demands of the union hatmakers he would have to close his factory.

But John B. Stetson died a millionaire three times over. He had a palace in New York, a cottage at the sea shore, a private yacht and automobiles. The poor "scabs" who worked in his open shop didn't have any of these things. They were almighty lucky to have enough to eat and a place to sleep. But Mr. Stetson lived in luxury.

And a lot of men who claim to be unionists helped him live that way. The Wage-worker charges that railroad men, who above all men should be consistent unionists, made Stetson a millionaire. If you don't believe it look at the hat of the next railroad man who is dressed up in his good clothes. It's a cinch he is wearing a "scab" Stetson hat.

A "RAT"-LING GOOD JOKE.

Everybody's Magazine, a "Rat" Publication, Makes an Apology.

The March number of "Everybody's Magazine," a "rat" publication issued by the Ridgeway-Thayer Co., and backed by the Union Busters' Alliance, naively springs a good joke. It was not intentional, and that is what makes the joke so rich. In the Publishers' Department of the March issue "Everybody's" says:

"In anticipation of the strike (printers) which began on January 1, the March issue of Everybody's Magazine went to press on December 28."

It is to laugh! Went to press two months ahead of time.

And then it came out ten days late!

Union printers could have got it out on time and it would not have been necessary to go to press on December 28 in order to get out the March issue ten days late in February.

VISITING NEWSPAPER MEN.

Nebraska Press Association Will Meet in Lincoln Tuesday and Wednesday.

The thirty-fourth annual convention of the Nebraska Press association will be held in Lincoln on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. A majority of the members are friends of organized labor, and not a few of them are union printers. The local newspaper fraternity is preparing to give them a royal good time. On Tuesday evening the entire membership will meet at the local fraternity at a big banquet at the Oliver, when Primrose's reels will be on the boards. The night will be something worth going to. The management is going to do everything for the visiting newspaper men. It means that the general public will not miss it. See the minstrel show

and hear some new ones that will be sprung for the Faber shovers.

On Wednesday evening John T. McCutcheon, the famous cartoonist, will deliver an illustrated lecture, and again the visitors will be the guests of the local newspaper men. The general public will be admitted for the small sum of 50 cents per head.

A VERY PLAIN TRUTH.

Rev. Mr. Stelzle Tells Ministers of Unfairness of Daily Newspapers.

At the Ministerial Union meeting last Monday a member asked Rev. Mr. Stelzle if he meant to say that the daily press was inimical to the trades unions.

"As a rule, yes," was the instant reply. "Reporters are looking for good stories, and they do not always take the trouble to look below the surface. As a case in point let me point out the Chicago Chronicle. It has been filling its columns for years with tirades against the trades unions. A few months ago its owner showed up in his true light. You all know what it is. I unhesitatingly say that the daily press, as a general proposition, is unfair and unfriendly to organized labor. This is due largely to the fact that the owners of the big dailies are the men who are interested as employers in big corporations."

Union men should ponder on this fact for a little while, and then some. They can be assured of fair treatment only from the labor press and an occasional daily that is run by conscientious men who have no selfish ends to serve.

"RAT" BISCUITS AND THINGS.

National Biscuit Company Making a Splurge in Lincoln Just Now.

The National Biscuit Co., an unfair and notoriously "scab" concern, is just now making some demonstrations in Lincoln for the purpose of recovering some of its lost trade. The merchant who lends himself to the advertising of this concern is not commending himself to unionists.

The National Biscuit Co. not only employs "scab" labor, but it has injured Lincoln in a business way. It is a soulless trust. Very recently it closed its factory here, thus injuring the business interests of the city merely because it could thereby save a few dollars. If the retail grocers of Lincoln as a body haven't nerve enough to resent such a blow at the city, they deserve nothing but "dirt" from the cracker trust.

A DESERVED PROMOTION.

One of Lincoln's Staunch Woman Unionists Takes Better Position in Omaha.

Miss Ethel Thorngate, a member of Lincoln Typographical Union No. 209, has taken out a traveling card and gone to Omaha, where she has accepted a position as proofreader in the Western Newspaper Union. Miss Thorngate is a staunch unionist, and has cheerfully borne her share of the burden of financing the strike for the shorter workday. She has been proofreader at the Journal-News for some time, and her new position is a deserved promotion as to amount of work and wages.

The union printers of Lincoln rejoice that Miss Thorngate has bettered her condition, and they will wish her well in her new position. The Typographical Union of Omaha will find that she is a unionist through and through, and we commend her to the friendship of the Omaha Union and its wide-awake auxiliary.

THE PRIMROSE MINSTRELS.

Famous Aggregation of Burnt Corkers Are Due in Lincoln February 27.

The famous Primrose Minstrels will be at the Oliver next Tuesday evening, February 27, in all the glory of burnt cork, novel dress and oriental splendor. The company this year is better than ever, and that is saying much, for it always was a leader in minstrelry.

The stage settings are the handsomest ever set, the individual performers are the first pick of the profession, and everything is up-to-date and the best that the mind of man can frame up.

An added attraction will be the presence in the audience of 300 newspaper men and women, the occasion being a theatre party in honor of the Nebraska Press association which meets in Lincoln next Tuesday and Wednesday.

WHAT RYAN SAYS ABOUT IT.

Takes a Very Optimistic View of the Situation in the Mining Difficulty.

Considerable has been said and published regarding the agreement between the miners and operators, inasmuch as the joint conference adjourned without getting together. In an interview Secretary-Treasurer Ryan tells the whole story in few words. He says: "The situation is not as bad as some news reports have given to the public. There is two months yet for some kind of an amicable settlement, and it will in all likelihood be made. However, there is no cause for alarm as yet. In fact the chances are about even at the present moment for a unanimous strike or an amicable settlement."—Springfield Tradesman.

A MINISTERIAL PRESENTATION

The workingman who failed to hear Rev. Charles Stelzle at the Oliver last Sunday afternoon missed one of the ablest pleas for organized labor ever made in this section. The professing Christian who failed to hear it failed to hear a masterly presentation of the gospel of the Carpenter of Nazareth. The union man who heard it got a broader and better idea of the gospel. The Christian man who heard it got a broader and better view of unionism. Quietly, and without any attempt at oratorical flights, and without appealing to prejudice or passion, Mr. Stelzle devoted his time to proving that the gospel of Jesus Christ presented the only rational solution of the great economic problems of the age. He proved by logic and by the scriptures that in the Nazareth the working people have their ablest champion and defender. And his whole plea was for men to get together upon the common platform presented in the teachings of the Master.

The opera house was well filled, and trades unionists were out in large numbers. Several union officials and representatives were upon the stage, and to the editor of The Wage-worker was given the honor of introducing the speaker. Mr. Stelzle's compliment to the editor while undeserved was thoroughly appreciated. He began by telling of his childhood in the basement of a tenement house on the East Side in New York, where his widowed mother and four sisters and himself lived in poverty and misery, his mother supporting the family by making wrappers at \$2 per dozen for a Hebrew sweat shop manager. He told how he and his sisters often had only a piece of bread with a pinch of salt thereon for supper, while the mother went supperless and worked far into the night. He told how he was apprenticed as a machinist, and how he worked for several years at that trade. All this was told simply and directly, and then he said:

"Knowing all these conditions as I do, and knowing what trades unionism has done for the workingmen, I would be false to myself and false to my God if I were not a trades unionist."

"If I thought the church of Jesus Christ was not interested in this phase of our economic problem; if I thought the church's mission was not to aid and comfort those who are oppressed; if I thought it had no thought for the children doomed to slavery in the mills and factories, I would leave the church and devote my whole time to preaching trades unionism."

Then the speaker gave voice to his earnest belief that the church was interested, and that it was just beginning to awaken to its duty in this regard. Mr. Stelzle then proceeded to preach a sermon, earnest, thoughtful and instructive, and the great audience hung upon every word. He showed that the labor question is, in its last analysis, a moral question, and that moral questions are to be solved only by the application of the teachings of the Carpenter of Nazareth. The address was full of epigrammatic sentences that seized hold on the minds of his hearers.

"There is this difference between the religion of Jesus Christ and all other religions," he said. "The religion of Jesus Christ is the result of God reaching down after and searching for men. All other religions are the result of man seeking God." Following is a brief resume of his closing remarks:

"Christianity is not dependent upon the infallibility of the church nor of the Bible. The church and the Bible are simply a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. Their purpose is the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

"Therefore, the chief question that men are called upon to answer is not, 'What do you think of this doctrine, or that church, or that system of theology?' but, 'What think ye of Christ?' Gladstone once said that this is the greatest question of the age.

"You might be asked: 'What do you think of Plato, of Socrates, or Shakespeare?' and you could dismiss the matter with an off-hand reply. But this question asked of Christ passes into the most practical and the most personal of questions: 'What shall I do then with Jesus?' The question becomes insistent. Men cannot get away from it. It will follow them to the ends of the earth. They may become angry because of its presence, but does not that prove that it is no ordinary question? To dismiss it by saying that Jesus Christ was simply a great reformer will not satisfy. To say that he was only a good man, or that he was a great teacher, but simply one of many teachers, brings the consciousness that one is only dodging the issue.

"It is frequently stated that Christ came to establish an ideal republic, or that he sought to inaugurate a utopian democracy. Neither statement is true. His own words indicate that it was his purpose to establish an absolute monarchy, a kingdom, of which He should be the head. This kingdom is to embrace all those who will acknowledge His kingship.

"Therefore, when some 'social reformers' select from among the words of Jesus Christ a few catch-words, which have to do only with certain social affairs, rejecting everything else that meets with their disapproval, especially that which applies to their personal lives, and then claim to be the only bona fide followers of Jesus Christ, they are leaving out of their consideration altogether the most important part of Christ's plan for the complete emancipation of mankind.

"What think ye of Christ? Workingmen cannot afford to evade Him. He is too often quoted by them. He is too great a factor in their lives. More and more will this be true."