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LABOR'S CALL TO ARMS

Washington, July 22.—The executive council of the American Federation of Labor today made good its declaration of several months ago to enter the field of politics in the interest of the trades union movement and to urge all friends of organized labor to elect to political office men known to be favorable to labor's cause. At the headquarters of the federation the council today issued its "campaign program," addressed to all organized labor and friends in the United States.

It sets out that the trades union movement has kept and proposes to keep pace with the rapid change in industrial affairs, and that the working people cannot hope to maintain their rights or a progressive position in the varying phases of modern society unless they organize and exercise all those functions, which, as workmen and citizens, it is their privilege and their duty to exercise.

It is declared that labor makes no demand on government and society which is not equally accorded to all the people of this country, and that it can and will be satisfied with nothing less.

The proposed campaign is based upon the allegation that little attention has been paid to the enactment of laws prepared by organized labor and presented to congress, for the relief of these wrongs and the attainment of these rights to which labor and the common people are justly entitled and which are essentially necessary for their welfare.

The council issues a word of caution that the "movement must not degenerate into a scramble for office, but it should be a determined effort, free absolutely from all partisanship of every name and character to secure the legislation we deem necessary and essential to the welfare and happiness of all our people."

It is expressly stated that where a congressman or state legislator has proved himself a true friend to the rights of labor he should be supported and no candidate nominated against him.

The following is a text of the program:

Campaign Program Outlined.

"To All Organized Labor and Friends in the United States—Dear Sirs and Brothers: Events in the industrial affairs of our people have rapidly changed and are rapidly changing. The trade union movement, as expressed by the American Federation

of Labor, has kept and proposes to keep pace therewith.

"The wheels of industry cannot be halted or turned back, nor should they be, even if that were possible. Welcoming industrial progress, labor must be ever alert to meet new conditions, recognizing that eternal vigilance is the price of industrial as well as political liberty.

"The working people cannot hope to maintain their rights or a progressive position in the varying phases of modern society unless they organize and exercise all those functions which, as workmen and citizens, it is their privilege and their duty to exercise.

"Labor makes no demand upon government or society which is not equally accorded to all the people of our country. It can and will be satisfied with nothing else.

Congress No Friend of Labor.

"Several presidents of the United States have in their messages to congress, urged the passage of equitable legislation in behalf of the working people, but congress has been entirely preoccupied looking after the interests of vast corporations and predatory wealth.

"Congressmen and senators in their frenzied rush after the almighty dollar have been indifferent or hostile to the rights of man. They have had no time and as little inclination to support the reasonable labor measures, the enactment of which we have urged, and which contained beneficent features for all our people without an obnoxious provision to anyone.

"Patience ceased to be a virtue, and on March 21, 1906, the representatives of labor presented a bill of grievances to the president and those responsible for legislation or failure of legislation in congress, reciting the failure or refusal of the party in power to adopt or enforce legislation in the interests of the toiling millions of our country. After setting forth labor's grievances and requests and urging early action, we closed that now famous document with this statement:

"But if perchance you may not heed us, we shall appeal to the conscience and support of our fellow citizens."

Relief Asked for Refused.

"The relief asked for has not been granted. Congress has turned a deaf ear to the voices of the masses of our people; and, true to our declaration, we now appeal to the working people, aye, to all the American people, unitedly, to demonstrate their determination that this republic of ours shall continue to be of, for and by the people, rather than of, for and by the almighty dollar.

"The toiling masses of our country are as much, if not more, interested in good government than our fellow citizens in other walks of life. In line with the contention herein stated, the American Federation of Labor made its declaration of political policy, as already quoted above. And in line therewith we hope, and have the right to expect, to arouse the citizenship of our common country, interested in good government, to the apathy or hostility of the party in power to the real interests of the people, so that men more honest, faithful and progressive may be elected as the people's representatives.

"If it has come to a condition in this, the greatest and wealthiest nation on earth, that the almighty dollar is to be worshiped to an extent of forgetting

principle, conscience, uprightness and justice, the time has arrived for labor and its friends to raise their voices in condemnation of such degeneracy, and to invite all reform forces to join with it in relegating indifference to the people's interests, corruption and graft to political oblivion; to raise the standard of legislation by the election of sincere, progressive and honest men who, while worshipping money less, will honor conscience, justice and humanity more.

"We recommend that central bodies and local unions proceed without delay by the election of delegates to meet in conference, or convention, to formulate plans to further the interests of this movement, and in accordance with the plan herein outlined at the proper time and in the proper manner nominate candidates who will unquestionably stand for the enactment into law of labor and progressive measures.

"Wherever both parties ignore labor's legislative demands a straight labor candidate should be nominated, so that honest men may have the opportunity in exercising their franchise to vote according to their conscience instead of being compelled to either refrain from voting or to vote for the candidate and the party they must in their innermost souls despise.

"Where a congressman or state legislator has proved himself a true friend to the rights of labor he should be supported and no candidate nominated against him.

"This movement must not degenerate into a scramble for office. It should be a determined effort, free, absolutely from partisanship of every name and character, to secure the legislation we deem necessary and essential to the welfare and happiness of all our people. As the present objects of this movement are purely in the line of legislation, all efforts should be concentrated upon the election of members of congress and the various state legislatures.

"To make this—our movement—the most effective the utmost care should be taken to nominate only such union men whose known intelligence, honesty and faithfulness are conspicuous. They should be nominated as straight labor representatives and stand and be supported as such by union men and their friends and sympathizers, irrespective of previous political affiliation.

"Wherever it is apparent that an entirely independent labor candidate cannot be elected, efforts should be made to secure such support by endorsement of candidates by the minority party in the districts and by such other progressive elements as will insure the election of labor representatives.

"All observers agree that the campaign of our fellow workmen of Great Britain has had a wholesome effect upon the government, as well as the interests of its wage-earners, and the people generally of that country. In the last British election fifty-four trade unionists were elected to parliament. If the British workmen with their limited franchise accomplished so much by their united action, what may we in the United States not do with universal suffrage.

"Those earnestly engaged in our movement must, we repeat, be guided by the fact that the principles for which we stand must be primary consideration, and office secondary. We ask our fellow workers and friends to respond to this call, and to make of it

a popular uprising of honest men, and to see to it that the best, most conscientious men of labor or their supporters are chosen as their representatives.

Advantages Won by Sacrifices.

"Whatever vantage ground or improved conditions have come to the workers of our country were not brought to them on silver platters; they are the result of their better organization and their higher intelligence; of the sacrifices they have made and the industrial battle scars of many contests. The progress of the toilers has not been due to kindness or consideration at the hands of the powers that be, but achieved in spite of the combined bitter hostility of mendacious greed, corporate corruption, legislative antagonism and judicial usurpation.

"Labor men of America, assert your rights, and in addition to strengthening your faith and loyalty to your organization on the economic field, exercise your full rights of citizenship in the use of your ballot. Elect honest men to congress and to other halls of legislation, and by so doing you will more completely and fully carry out your obligations as union men, and more than ever merit the respect of your fellow citizens.

"Labor demands a distinctive and larger share in the governmental affairs of our country; it demands justice; it will be satisfied with nothing less. Fraternally yours,

"Q" ENGINEERS HOT.

Object to Rigid Enforcement of the "Eyesight Rule."

Chicago, Sept. 11.—A serious labor situation affecting the entire Burlington railroad system suddenly developed last night following the adoption of a new and radical rule by the company.

The regulation in question pertains to the engineers and establishes a standard for eyesight said to be more rigid than any thus far enforced by the railroads of the country. Men obliged to wear glasses, by the provisions of the new rule, are reduced in rank and assigned to unimportant and unremunerative "runs." The reduction applies to all engineers regardless of length of service for the company.

The effect of the order was so sweeping that Grand Chief Warren S. Stone of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen at midnight telegraphed James J. Hill at St. Paul requesting an immediate conference.

Simultaneously a vote was taken in every lodge of engineers throughout the Burlington system on the acceptance or rejection of the new rule. It is said the returns already in the hands of the grand officers of the brotherhood show an overwhelming majority

THE PLUMBERS.

Brief Bits About the Men of Melting Pot and Wrenches.

Bert Chipman was secretary of the general Labor Day committee and it is unanimously agreed that a better selection could not have been made.

Ed. English says the dog that paraded with the plumbers on Labor Day has more genuine unionism in him than some men. The dog never fails to stand by his friends.

Local plumbers are not saying much about it, but they have been quietly making some gains of late, and they feel encouraged.

The plumbers have not been represented at the Central Labor Union meetings for a long time. Get busy, boys.

THE STEREOTYPERS.

Seem to Need a Little Injection of Ginger Right Now.

The local stereotypers seem to be in need of a double dose of extract of ginger. They haven't been making

noise enough in union circles of late to scare a cottontail rabbit.

Work is good. In fact, some of the boys say it is too good. They have to work too hard for the money.

Ned Daugherty, who is a good workman and a good fellow when he don't mix too long with John Barleycorn, has been sent to the asylum under the dipsomaniac law. A host of friends want to see Ned come out clothed in his right mind and master of his appetite.

The boys at the Western Newspaper Union claim to have the best workroom in the state. They certainly do turn out a lot of work.

JUST A STRAW.

Speaking of the failure to organize the street railway men of Lincoln induces us to point to a straw. The average minimum wage for motormen and conductors in cities having a strong union is higher than the maximum wage in Lincoln. The first year men in a majority of the organized cities draw 5 cents an hour more than the five year men in Lincoln.

CIGARMAKERS.

Cigars bearing counterfeit union labels have been discovered in Indianapolis. They were manufactured in Pennsylvania and the Cigar Makers' Union will prosecute the counterfeiters.

The Cigar Makers' Union was the first labor organization to advocate an eight-hour day. This union succeeded in establishing it on May 1, 1886, and it has been in force constantly ever since. And the cigar-making industry is richer than ever.

Gas at Two Cents a Thousand.

Bonds were voted by Tyro for putting in municipal gas mains. Tyro has a contract for gas at two cents a thousand, which is believed to be the cheapest rate on record.

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Labor's Political Rights

The contention of those who are opposed to the entrance of organized labor into politics, that such action is un-American and against public policy, is not founded on good logic or on a proper conception of the duties and prerogatives of citizenship.

The time has passed when fair-minded people think of denying to labor the right to organize for the purpose of bettering the conditions of those who toil, and one of the most effective ways of bringing about an improvement in those conditions is through proper legislation. The leaders of the various unions realize this fact and their legislative committees are ever busy attempting to secure the enactment of favorable measures by city councils, state legislatures and the national congress. The record shows that they have in the past been in a large measure successful and many of the most just and equitable laws now on the statute books owe their presence there to the agitation of the laboring men and the massing of their votes behind candidates known to favor their ideas.

Members of organized labor indisputably have a right to hold opinions as to what legislation would be prejudicial or beneficial to their interests. This being the case, they have the further right to vote for and advocate the election of men who favor the measures which they desire enacted and to vote and work against the men who are known to be opposed to those measures. Talk of blacklisting and conspiracy is idle twaddle. Men who

believe in an eight hour law have as much right to vote against and urge their fellows to vote against a candidate who does not favor such a measure as has a man who does not believe in the principle of protection to urge the defeat of a protectionist candidate for congress.

It is not a question of whether the men who are being antagonized by organized labor were right or wrong in their positions. No one will deny them the right to their opinions, nor is it necessary to question their honesty or their firm desire to do what they earnestly believe to be right. But if what they conceive to be right and just is directly opposite to what one or more of their constituents believe to be the proper thing, those constituents would be lacking in their duty as citizens if they failed to vote against them.

Speaker Cannon, in an address delivered a few days ago, found fault with the union because, as he asserted, they were attempting to punish men for voting as their conscience dictated. If this were the case it would of course, be absolutely wrong, but it is said to be an erroneous conception of the situation. Those who are antagonizing certain congressional candidates state that they are doing so because the conscience of those candidates dictate a course of action which the union men believe to be contrary to their interests. That they have a perfect legal and ethical right to do so is beyond question.—Lincoln Evening News.

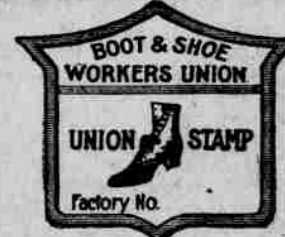
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