

State Historical Society

THE WAGEWORKER



VOL. 4

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, MARCH 7, 1908

NO. 49

Rev. Mr. Batten Takes an Exception

Lincoln, Neb., March 4.—To the Editor of The Wageworker: With great surprise and regret I learned, from reading The Wageworker last week, that you have taken an adverse position with reference to no-license in Lincoln. I cannot avoid the feeling that in this position you have made a great mistake as time will show. And I cannot help the feeling that the reasons you give for your position are wide of the mark and miss the real point at issue.

For one thing, with reference to my own figures, I utterly fail to see how you can infer from anything I have ever said, that "we are going to demand a legislative enactment compelling men to put it up to divert (the money spent for liquors in Lincoln) into a fund for furnishing dress suits and décollete gowns for the naked savages of the Fiji islands." I fail to see the relation of this to the question at issue; and I ask you to point out one word in anything I have ever said that gives you the least ground for this sentence.

In another editorial you seek to belittle this whole movement for temperance reform by legislative action, by carrying the principle to an absurd length. Why stop with such things as liquors, you ask? Why not go on and seek to prohibit by law every other thing that may have some possible injurious effect upon mankind? The Safety of the People is the Supreme Law; it is the business of the state to determine what are the things that are manifestly injurious to man; and it is then the duty of the state to enact laws against those things. Scur bread, I can easily believe, has been the cause of much discomfort and dyspepsia; I am ready to confess that if I had to eat some people's bread that I should want to drink whisky or possibly something worse. Now if it should appear that bad bread is a cause of social demoralization, that it weakens men and unfits them for the discharge of their duties, then the state ought to intervene and declare that bad bread should not be sold. The fact is the law does intervene and does seek to prohibit the sale of adulterated flour and sour bread. I am sure that you are a firm believer in the pure food laws.

Again, you say that every preacher who is beseeching the aid of man-made law is confessing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has failed. Now that is one of the most surprising statements I have seen in print for a long time, and I can hardly believe that it reflects your maturest judgment. You seem to suppose that the Gospel of Christ is a kind of weak milk and water doctrine, a goodly-goodly sentiment, a vague and indefinite influence that remains up in the air and never gets down to real life. Now I am sure you agree with me in this, that such a doctrine as this is unworthy of man and impotent in the world. And from what I have read in The Wageworker you have nothing but scorn for the preachers who deal in that sort of stuff. You want a Gospel that gets right down to earth, that means something and somebody, that grips the conscience and is a terror to evil doers.

Then there is another thing that must be remembered: If Christianity is to be a real thing in the world, it must soon or late express and incarnate itself in human institutions, in social customs and in civic laws. Christianity is hatred of the things that are evil; it is a declaration of warfare against the things that hurt man and hinder society. Then Christianity must maintain a warfare, in every legitimate and natural way, against every custom and institution that is destroying man and is demoralizing the state. Instead of saying that this demand for stringent laws against the saloon is a confession that the Gospel of Christ has failed, it is the declaration that this Gospel is really becoming effective. It is creating a social conscience which is feeling the woes of society and is moving men to maintain a warfare against them. This modern opposition to the liquor business is the evidence that at last we have a Christianity that is active and militant enough to be worth an honest man's consideration. Jesus of Nazareth, as you very well know,

was no harmless dreamer and visionary recluse; the fact is he was a terror to evil doers and was killed on that very account. The Bible teaches most plainly that rulers are the "servants of God unto men for good;" and we are distinctly told that the magistrate is "an avenger for wrath on him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:1-10.)

The doctrine of Christ is here to make a social conscience in men. As fast and as far as this conscience is made it will feel the woes and evils of the world. But conscience that is worth any respect and has any power must manifest itself in all the spheres and relations of life. One of the most important spheres of life is what we may call society. Civil law in its highest sense, according to the best thinkers of the world, is the formulated and positive conscience of a community. If Christianity is ever to be anything more than an empty dream, it must soon or late express itself in social customs and civil institutions. If it appears that the liquor traffic is injurious to man and demoralizing in society—and that it is in you will readily admit—then the Christian conscience has but one duty: it must maintain a warfare against that traffic and must take up that stumbling block out of the way of the people.

I must not claim any more space in The Wageworker; but all of your other comments about regulating men's beliefs and forcing the gospel on every creature, are both wide of the mark and are obfuscating the issue. Believe me, yours most sincerely,
SAMUEL Z. BATTEN.

THE BARBERS.

Barber College Manager in Detroit Charged With Fraud.

The "barber college" industry shows indications of nearing its end. This "college" graft has been worked on unsuspecting young men for several years. The "college" advertises to turn a student out an experienced journeyman barber in six weeks, and insures him a job. The country boy, scenting easy work and good pay, puts up \$25 or \$35 and is allowed to work on bums and tramps for a few weeks. Then he is turned loose and told to hustle. He finds himself worthless as a workman, out his tuition fee and without hope of the promised job. Now the postal authorities threaten to get after the "colleges." Harry W. Andrews, proprietor of the Detroit Barber College at No. 277 Jefferson avenue, Detroit, Mich., was arraigned before United States Commissioner Harsha recently, charged with using the United States mail to defraud. He was held in \$1,000 bail for hearing. The complaint is taken out by Postal Inspector Larmon and two boys, Christian Denstead and Oliver Herr, from Acme, Mich., but other students will be called. Andrews, seeing that other cities had their "tonorial colleges," branched out in Detroit several years ago. He guaranteed to turn out experts in six weeks and secure positions for the graduates. The fee was \$25 and this also provided the necessary tools.

If the postal authorities are not too busy they might also go after some of the "plumbing colleges," bricklayers' colleges," etc.

THE MUSICIANS.

Watching the Bill to Prohibit Competition From Government Musicians.

After a struggle of several years, the Musicians' Union of the country appear to have reached the point of success in the matter of having musicians in the employ of the government prohibited by law from competing with civilian musicians.

The Congressional committee on Labor, to which the matter was referred, says in the latter part of the report:

"Simple justice demands that a citizen musician, as a citizen, is entitled to the same consideration as men of any other trade or vocation. The government does not allow soldiers to compete with citizens as bakers, bricklayers, masons, blacksmiths, doctors or lawyers, and it does not dream of ordering out the artisans of any particular craft in case of labor troubles to take the place of ordinary workmen, and the same measure of protection against government competition should be extended to civilian musicians."

The bill is now pending, and is said to have good chances for favorable action.

The Lincoln local has selected W. T. Pinney, president, to represent it on the Labor Temple directorate.

After a couple of sessions with an amateur band the management of the automobile show last week sent for the business agent of the Musicians' Union and made a contract. "The remainder of the week was pleasant for exhibitors and spectators."

A BEAUTIFUL STRUCTURE.

Picture of Proposed Labor Temple Now on Exhibition Daily.

The picture of the proposed Labor Temple is completed and is now on display in the windows of the Armstrong Clothing company. It will remain there for a few days, and will then be exhibited elsewhere. Ever

SUBSTITUTES FOR THE SALOON.

"It is very doubtful whether a complete substitute for the saloon will ever be found. There are so many elements, both human and physical, which must be considered, that no one organization or institution thus far established completely meets the needs which seem to be so strongly imperative. Merely to adopt the negative policy of closing the saloons and prohibiting the sale of intoxicants will never meet the case. This method fails to recognize that many human cravings which the saloon gratifies are perfectly legitimate, and men will gratify them."—From "Christianity's Storm Center," by Rev. Charles Stelzle, page 127.

since it was placed on exhibition it has been surrounded by admirers, and great interest in the project has been aroused.

The Labor Temple directors met in regular session Monday evening and completed the plans for the subscription campaign. Everything is now in readiness, and the work will begin next Tuesday morning and will be pushed with vigor. A neat prospectus has been printed and will be distributed Monday, and on Tuesday the solicitors will follow up. The prospectus shows a view of the proposed building, gives pertinent facts concerning the project, and contains the articles of incorporation. This prospectus will be placed in the hands of every business and professional man, and distributed to every union.

The city has been districted and hustling solicitors will be put into each district. No one will be asked to donate a cent to this enterprise. It is purely a business proposition—an investment that is as safe as real estate can be. Organized labor and its friends will be asked to invest in the stock of the company, and every stockholder is entitled to a voice in the company's affairs. The Wageworker especially invites the business men to read the prospectus and the articles of incorporation.

At the meeting Monday evening, W. T. Pinney appeared with credentials from the Musicians' Union and was warmly greeted. There are several unions that have as yet shown no interest in the project, being will-

ing, apparently, to let others do all the hard work and then, when things are easy, come in and enjoy the benefits. The following unions now hold stock in the Lincoln Labor Temple Building Association:

Electrical Workers.
Plumbers.
Bartenders.
Typographical.
Leatherworkers on Horse Goods.
Painters and Decorators.
Carpenters.

More than 1,200 shares have been subscribed and paid for, and enough more subscribed for to make the amount more than \$2,000. All this has been accomplished without solicitation.

The outlook is rosy with promise. It looks like a certainty that the cornerstone of the Labor Temple will be laid on Labor Day. It will be a certainty if union men will do a little unselfish hustling and dig up one or two day's wages as stock subscription. Five dollars from each active union man in Lincoln and Havelock will make the erection of a Labor Temple what the sporting editor calls "an immortal cinch."

Now get ready and do your part—and then some.

THE PRESSMEN.

Brief Bits About the Boys of Squeeze and Color.

Walter Brown, foreman of the press room at the Free Press, is building a new double house on his lot on F street between Thirteenth and Fourteenth. The contract specifies the employment of organized labor. The contract amounts to about \$6,000.

Wednesday evening the pressmen had a social time after attending to routine business. Good union-made cigars were smoked, good talks were made, and a few exhibitions of boxing were given. The boys had a fine time.

Alex Weckesser is getting along as well as could be expected of a fellow who has a broken ankle. The injury is very painful and will keep him laid up for several weeks.

ONE OPINION OF ROOSEVELT.

Philadelphia, March 1.—William D. Haywood, secretary of the Western Federation of Miners, who was recently acquitted on the charge of being implicated in the murder of Governor Stuenberg, was the principal speaker here today at a socialistic labor meeting held under the auspices of the Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone conference. In paying his respects to President Roosevelt, he said:

"To say the least, he is peculiar. When we were shackled in prison he stabbed us in the back with his letters. I say that this was not the act of a brave man."

A Memory of the Engineers' Strike

"Cyclone" Thompson, one of the oldest and best known engineers on the Union Pacific, was killed at Elm Creek the last Tuesday in February. In trying to start an extra heavy freight train, one of the cylinder heads blew out. He had got down and disconnected that side of the engine, and in trying to get the other side off center, it had gathered steam, throwing the reverse lever back with such force as to crush his right side in a frightful manner. He was assisted from his engine and taken to the depot, where medical assistance was given. He expressed himself as confident his injuries would prove fatal, as he realized his intestines were ruptured or he was bleeding internally. When the accident happened they were carrying two hundred and fifty pounds of steam, and the lever came back with fearful force, catching him diagonally across the lower part of the bowels, on the right side. He suffered great pain, but was able, with assistance, to walk to his train, which he took to Omaha, due at 1:40 a. m. Thompson died before the train reached Omaha.

J. J. Kurtz, a Burlington engineer living at 814 North Thirteenth street, Lincoln, died at his home about midnight of February 23 from drinking cresolene. Mr. Kurtz came in from Ravenna that night and not feeling well when he returned home he went into his bedroom to take a dose of medicine. Mrs. Kurtz had been burning cresolene to fumigate the house, and by mistake her husband got hold of the bottle containing the highly poisonous mixture. Medical aid was summoned but nothing would avail to save his life. There can be no doubt that death was due to a mistake. Mr. Kurtz's home life was happy, and he had no cares nor worries save those incident to a man who is the head of a family. He left a wife and two children. Mr. Kurtz was born in 1872 and was for many years in the employ of the Burlington. He was a favorite among his fellow employes and his untimely death is deeply mourned.

Henry McCarn is expecting a visit from his brother "Lum" McCarn, who lives at Joplin, Mo. "Lum" McCarn was formerly a Nebraska newspaper man. He went to Joplin about the time the zinc industry of that section began booming and invested what little money he had in the Joplin Globe. He put about thirty years' work into it in seven or eight years and made the Globe one of the best daily newspapers in the southwest, bar none. Then his health failed and he sold out. He has a lot of friends in newspaper circles in Nebraska, and they'll show him a good time if he gives them a chance.

A little item in the "Thirty Years Ago Today" column of the State Journal Monday morning recalled to mind that twenty years ago this month the Burlington engineers were on strike, and there were warm times in this Burlington territory. The Journal's item calls a little memory of that famous struggle. Twenty years ago the editor of The Wageworker was foreman of a weekly paper published in a Nebraska town on the Burlington lines. Shortly after the road had started trains to moving with threshing machine engineers and firemen of gasoline engines, a freight train pulled into the writer's town and "died" on the "scabby's" hands because he couldn't work the injector. He was used to the old-fashioned pump of a stationary engine. The station agent wanted to help out so he tried both the town elevators in an effort to find an engineer who could start an injector. But both elevators had pumps. Finally some one told the agent that the office where the writer worked had an engine with an injector, so up he came. The writer, who knew just enough about an engine to start and stop it, did happen to know how the injector worked. But the "boss" was gone, so the writer professed ignorance. But there was a "tourist printer" in the shop who had drilled in the day before. He heard the conversation and interrupted with the remark:

"Why, I can start the injector. I

used to knock around engines a whole lot."

The writer tried to head the "tourist off" but he donned his coat and disappeared with the remark that it was "easy money." An hour later he came back and began taking off his coat preparatory to resuming work at the case. Then the writer made a few red-hot remarks about any man claiming to be a union man who would help a blankety-blank and double-dashed "scab" out of a hole, and wound up by ordering the "tourist" out of the shop.

"Aw, keep your shirt on, young fellow," growled the "tourist," as he mounted a stool. "That dashed old injector ain't started yet—and I guess it never will. Something was wrong with a few nuts on the engine, and by mistake I pulled the wrench the wrong way. The injector ain't the only thing about that 'scab's' engine that ain't working now."

The engine was hauled back to the division point by another engine.

By the way, there's a heap o' difference between the engines the brotherhood men stepped down from twenty years ago, and the ones they are running today. Those engines of twenty years ago look like family teapots alongside the huge machines of today.

Again referring to the Journal's item—do you remember those big bill board sheets depicting a couple of engines in collision, and the words, "Prepare to meet thy God" over them? Those were strenuous times, for fair.

THE BRICKLAYERS.

Work of Organization Flourishing Throughout the South.

The Bricklayers are getting busy in the south in the matter of organization. Twenty-eight new locals have been established in North Carolina during the last four months. In addition five suspended locals have been reinstated. New locals are being organized in other states.

Locally, the Bricklayers are looking for a busy season. There are some big jobs in sight, among them a new \$45,000 structure for the congregation of the First Christian church, the completion of the First Church of Christ, Scientists, and several new buildings in the wholesale district. The outlook is exceedingly good, and the feeling of depression evident during the financial flurry has given way to great and hopeful expectations.

The proposition to erect a new high school building meets with favor among the Bricklayers—of course. That would mean a big contract.

"Waiting at the church" is a familiar song. But one young member of the Lincoln local sings it a little different. A strict watch on South Twelfth street about 5:01 p. m. would explain all.

A LABOR PARTY.

New York Unionists Declare That the Need is Imperative.

That the trades unionists of New York City will force the consideration of forming an independent labor party at once is predicted by leaders of the movement to bring workingmen into political organization.

Encouraged by the knowledge that many of the most influential union officials in the city favor the plan advocated in the resolution presented to the Central Federation union appealing to the American Federation of Labor to call a meeting to organize a labor party, several of them are exerting every energy to secure its adoption. The vote will be taken March 1, and backers of the resolution predict they will win.—Detroit Union Advocate.

THE BOOKBINDERS.

The Lincoln local, No. 120, Brotherhood of Bookbinders, has but seven male members. They are enjoying the eighth-hour day. That it is a little bunch of live ones is evidenced by the fact that in regular and special assessments it has put up \$143.80 during the last six months. That's going some.

Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen

CAPITOL LODGE NO. 170

FORM	At _____
31	X _____ Opr _____

Train ahead left at March 16, '08 M

Yourself and ladies will run extra, regardless of all other engagements, to the New Fraternity Hall, Monday evening, March 16, 1908, where you will meet the members of Capitol Lodge, No. 170.

From 8 p. m. until 2 a. m., you will occupy the main line and assist in station switching. After 2 a. m. you will run double-head to your ladies' residence, running extra to your home with the best wishes of
CAPITOL LODGE NO. 170.