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Brotherhoods Plan a Co-operative Store

There was a huge mass meeting of the members of the various railroad brotherhoods of Lincoln at Bohannon's hall last Sunday afternoon. The purpose was to discuss matters affecting the welfare of the railroad employees, and these matters were fully and freely discussed.

The agitation in favor of a reduction of freight rates received considerable consideration, it being felt that any further reduction in this line would result in a reduction of wages. Indeed, the reduction of freight rates has already had that effect in other localities, although to date it has not affected the men in this section. It was decided to appoint a committee to wait on the state railroad commission and secure a date whereon the railroad employees could submit their arguments against further rate reduction. Some idea of how this matter interests Lincoln may be gained by grasping the idea that there are fully 8,000 people in Lincoln and vicinity dependent wholly upon the railroads for a livelihood. This is fully twelve per cent of the total population—twelve out of every one hundred. It is safe to say that the railroads pay to Lancaster county employees upwards of \$1,500,000 a year in wages. The prevailing rate of wages is none too high as it is and a reduction would work a hardship. Knowing that the first step in comingling in railroad management is the wages of the employees, the brotherhoods naturally feel that their interests demand a cessation of the demand for further reduction of rates.

So far, no definite date has been set for the proposed hearing, but when it takes place the brotherhoods will have representatives present who are amply able to present the employees' side of the case fully and fairly.

The matter of rates and wages was not, however, the only thing discussed. The matter of founding a co-operative store was talked over and steps taken to investigate the matter fully were taken, committees being appointed for that purpose.

Concerning the plan to establish co-operative stores this statement has been made by those interested in the work of organization:

"The railway committee of union railway employees which has been meeting at the Lincoln hotel for some time, used considerable time in discussing the advisability of formulating a plan for the incorporation of a joint co-operative wholesale and retail store of gigantic proportions. A board of trustees was elected to carry out the plans as authorized by the executive committee. The outlying districts seem enthusiastic and are continually sending in inquiries as to progress.

"It is proposed to establish branch stores at Wymore, Havelock, McCook, Alliance and Omaha, with a main store at Lincoln as a center. It is figured that about twenty per cent can be made, and this profit the organization thinks can be well used for the furtherance of union work. The plans, while not complete, were discussed at length and a board of trustees was elected to carry out the plans outlined by the executive committee. The ground plan somewhat resembles that of the plan used in the establishment of the co-operation book store at the state university, only of infinitely greater proportions. It is planned that in time the store can own its own buildings and place halls at the disposal of the various organizations for the permanent homes and club rooms, besides furnishing necessities for considerable less to the members. The executive committee in session represents the order of railway conductors, brotherhood of railway trainmen, brotherhood of locomotive firemen and engineers, international brotherhood of blacksmiths and helpers, international association of machinists, international brotherhood of boiler-makers and blacksmiths and helpers."

In this connection The Wagworker begs leave to suggest to the promoters of the co-operative plan that they carefully study the opening chapters of Charles Edward Russell's book, "The Uprising of the Many." The story of the "Toad Lane Weavers," and their little shop reads like a romance. These weavers were the pioneers in the co-operative movement, and Mr. Russell

tells the story in entertaining language.

The first four chapters of the book will furnish the promoters of the co-operative plan in Lincoln with a wealth of valuable information. These chapters are as follows:

One—The story of the Toad Lane Weavers and their little shop.

Two—The growth of a social revolution and the obstacles it met.

Three—The man with the big head and the big heart and what he accomplished.

Four—Co-operative experiments in America.

The Wagworker would be glad to lend its copy of Mr. Russell's splendid book to the committee that is engaged in investigating the matter and formulating plans.

THE BARBERS.

Pioneer Shop Surrenders Shop Card to Union's Secretary.

Last Monday the Pioneer barber shop, corner of Eleventh and O streets, in the basement under the Rock Island office, surrendered its shop card and is now manned by I.C.N. unionists. Charles Bowen, the proprietor, claims that under the 15-cent rule of the union he was losing money, and he surrendered the card in order that he might return to the 1-cent rate. It is reported that one member of the union remained at work when the card was taken out.

Sam Chaplin was under the weather several days last week, and even now his voice sounds like a fat man stumbling over a row of glass fruit jars.

President McBride is now presiding over a chair in the F. & M. shop, Fifteenth and O streets.

The barbers' union raises both the social and moral standing of its members, shortens hours of labor, increases wages and abolishes Sunday slavery. If you are not a member get

it and help us help you, as we have been doing for years.

Indianapolis Union. Barbers' union will hold a special meeting Sunday, March 22, at 8 a. m. at Paper Hangers' hall, which will be largely attended owing to the recent decision of the supreme court declaring the Sunday closing law for barber shops unconstitutional. New list of union barber shops are in the hands of the secretary for distribution and the same can be obtained upon application. These lists will be printed on the fifteenth of each month. Those shops surrendering their cards will be dropped from the list and new ones will be added. An open meeting will likely be held in the near future and all barbers, whether union or not, will be invited to attend. It is the general opinion of the barbers that the only way to get short hours and Sunday closing is through organization and not through the enforcement of laws and the prospects for local 247 are bright.

THE MUSICIANS.

Wondering If There Will Be Sunday Park Concerts This Season.

The membership of the Musicians' Union is wondering if there will be Sunday band concerts in the new city park this summer. The fact that the park commission is wholly without funds for this purpose—or for any other, so far as that goes—renders it useless to talk to the commission about it. It seems now that it is up to the street car companies to show their enterprise and provide the band and reap the reward in the shape of numerous fares to and from the park. Perhaps it would be a good idea for the union to furnish a band for an opening Sunday and thus demonstrate to the street car companies that it would pay to continue the concerts through the summer.

The Elite theater management is beginning to realize the mistake made in refusing to deal with the Musicians' Union on a fair basis. The union is not going to engage in anything so illegal as a boycott, but it is calling the attention of union men to the fact

that there is no law compelling them to patronize an amusement resort that fails to treat the union musicians fairly.

Chicago musicians are the latest to feel the effects of government by injunction, for the branch appellate court of that city has upheld the decision of Judge Windes in fining local No. 10 \$300, and President Wenker and Secretary Dillon \$50 for violating one of his orders, which debarred anyone from calling attention to a theater that employed the dual organization known as the American Musicians' Union of North America.

HARD TIMES PARTY.

Capital Auxiliary Will Duly Observe the Existing Conditions.

Capital Auxiliary No. 11 to Typographical Union No. 209, recognizing the eternal fitness of things, will give a "hard times party" at Bohannon's hall on Friday evening, April 3. Severe penalties will be exacted from all who show up with anything bearing the air of prosperity. The Auxiliary will provide a program of amusements and will also serve some good things to eat.

The admission will be twenty-five cents per couple, and five times that amount of fun is promised every purchaser. Prizes will be given for the most appropriate costumes. This active organization is entitled to the co-operation of the union printers, and every printer who is not compelled to work on the evening of the party should make it a point to be on hand.

UNION SUES FOR MILLION.

St. Louis, March 18.—Alleging violation of contract with the Beer Drivers and Stabblers' Union on the part of eleven St. Louis and two East St. Louis breweries, suit was filed in the circuit court this afternoon by William Rapp, John Nienaber and Louis Ebel, trustees of the union, for \$1,100,000 damages.

The Vincennes (Ind.) Window Glass company reopened March 5, employing hundred men. Natural gas recently piped from the Illinois field at 10 cents per 1,000 feet will be used.

Labor Demands

Justice at Once

Washington, D. C., March 21.—

"While the supreme court or other institutions may be able to temporarily retard and seriously embarrass the growth and action of our movement, we boldly assert that no power on earth can destroy, successfully outlaw or disrupt the trade union movement."

These words were the key to an address issued tonight to organized labor and farmers' association by the labor workers who have been in session in this city for the past four days. The meeting had been called by President Gompers of the American Federation of Labor. The address states that a large part of the discussion of the conference was devoted to the consideration of the supreme court's action in applying the Sherman anti-trust law to labor.

"The proceedings," the address says, "were marked by the utmost harmony. There was, indeed, the intensity of feeling which so grave a situation must evoke. There was also unbounded enthusiasm, a grim earnestness of purpose and a firm determination that work initiated by this conference should not cease until the wrongs from which the workers suffer shall be righted and their liberty, which has been imperiled, shall be restored and forever safeguarded."

Demand Prompt Action.

The further statement is made that it was the unanimous feeling of the conference that some steps should be taken to impress upon congress the necessity for prompt action toward amending the Sherman anti-trust law so that it shall be inapplicable to "organizations or associations not for profit and without capital stock, nor to members of such organizations or associations, or to any arrangements, agreements or combinations among persons engaged in agriculture or horticulture made with a view of en-

hancing the price of their own agricultural or horticultural products."

The conference pledged itself to use its influence toward securing the enactment of a bill to regulate and limit the issuance of an injunction and also of an employers' liability bill. The address, continuing, says that it is the belief that congress appreciates the gravity of the situation, and it is declared that "labor is in no mood to be trifled with."

Every legitimate pressure, it is stated, must be brought to bear upon congress "in the effort to secure the passage for our amendment to the Sherman law."

It is declared that a resolution or resolutions should be adopted urging congress to amend the Sherman law and warning congress that it will be held responsible for failure to enact such legislation, and it is stated "upon the record of this congress will be based the workers' decision as to candidates' future desirability as members of congress."

Should Question Candidates.

In stating it to be the duty of laboring men to question candidates for congress as to their attitude toward labor legislation, the address calls upon the labor workers "to stand faithfully by our friends and organize to defeat our enemies, whether they be candidates for president, for congress or other offices, whether legislative, executive or judicial."

Continuing the address says:

"We call upon all labor to use every possible legitimate effort to secure for the workers their inalienable liberties and their proper recognition as a vital portion of the fabric of our civilization. Hold mass meetings," says the address, "in every city and town of the United States in the evening of the third Sunday or Monday in April, 19 or 20, and at those meetings voice fully and unmistakably labor's protest against the supreme court decision which has stripped labor of the rights and liberties which we had supposed were guaranteed by the constitution. Each candidate, continues the address, should be questioned and pledged as to his attitude upon all subjects of importance to the toilers, whether in factory, farm, field, ship or mine."

A foot-note to the address states that "this address is signed by the same names as were appended to labor's protest to congress."

WORKING UP DOUGLAS BOOM.

Former Governor Suggested as Bryan's Running Mate.

Washington, March 21.—As it is generally admitted that Mr. Bryan will be the democratic candidate, more and more there is talk heard among leading democrats at the capital of ex-Governor William L. Douglas of Massachusetts being his running mate. If Mr. Douglas should be nominated it is the opinion of some democrats that it would make Massachusetts the fighting ground. In this connection there is an interesting story current to the effect that should the democrats nominate Mr. Douglas the labor vote will be cast for that party. In addition to his reputation as a friend of labor, Mr. Douglas possesses other qualities calculated to make him a suitable candidate for the vice-presidency. He is looked upon as a typical American, and what is fully as much to the point, he has the "barrel of money" which it is customary to associate with the second place on a presidential ticket.

The life story of Mr. Douglas is a story possible nowhere but in America. Yesterday he was poverty-stricken; today he is a multi-millionaire. Yesterday he worked from daylight until dark for five dollars a month at the shoemakers' bench, toiled in a cotton mill for thirty-three cents a day, tramped sturdily behind a four-ox team and prairie schooner across the plains of the great west, killed as a common laborer about a lime kiln; today he manages a business employing 3,000 men and women, with several large factories and upwards of one hundred retail stores, is a bank president and as director in other large enterprises.

A WORKING MAN TO WORKING MEN

Following is a synopsis of an address delivered by George J. Thompson, label secretary of the Cigarmakers' Union of Chicago, before the Central Labor Union of Lincoln on Tuesday evening, March 24:

"It was my good fortune recently to be in Washington upon a committee whose object it was to devise ways and means to promote the sale of union-labeled goods, and since that time have been engaged in that work.

"There has, however, come up the recent supreme court decisions effecting labor, which has somewhat detracted from the label movement, and more recently the prohibition question has come forward in such a manner as to call for the serious consideration of all workingmen on account of the manner in which it has destroyed industries and thrown out of work thousands of our fellow trades unionists in all those parts of the country where it has been successful, and the fact that several of our unions have been forced out of existence has caused me to study the prohibition movement as it effects the working people only. We find that to deprive a million workmen of their personal liberty and an opportunity to earn a livelihood at their chosen trades, with all the attendant suffering, will be the result of the prohibition movement if the prohibitionists have their way.

"To destroy an industry providing employment for upwards of a million workmen is the object of their campaign, and in their policy of destruction they have nothing to offer as a solace to this million and the families dependent upon them.

"FARMERS AFFECTED.—They propose to destroy a market for the farmers' grain that takes a territory equal to two states to grow, and all this land and the millions it cost may be laid waste and the people employed thereon may wander to the four corners of the earth for all the prohibitionist cares. The prospect of making deserts of farms and paupers of workingmen and their families does not deter them in their work.

"WORKINGMEN SUFFER.—The thousands of brewery workmen who have learned the trade will find themselves without an occupation and will be thrown out on the world upon an already panic-stricken labor market and will be forced to secure work at anything they can at wages anybody wants to pay. Their union will be destroyed and all protection taken away from them and the prohibitionists will wish them goodspeed.

"GOVERNMENT HIT.—A source of revenue of over \$130,000,000 to the national government and other hundreds of millions to the local governments will be destroyed which the prohibitionists makes no provision to secure. His mission is ended when he has completed the destruction. These millions will have to be made up by the innocent public, which has not woken up to what the destructive police of the prohibitionists means.

"The consummation of the prohibition movement will paralyze the woodworking and carpentry industry for years, and these workers will be left without jobs. Glassblowing will be an ancient industry and the Plate Glass Workers' ranks will be cut almost

in two. Union cigarmakers will find a market for 70 per cent of their output destroyed and they will have to look to some other occupation to earn a livelihood for themselves and their children. No prohibitionist will give them work; he is merely advancing their moral welfare. Their material welfare does not concern him.

"PROHIBITION PANIC.—The thousands of boxmakers and coopers who make the millions of boxes and barrels will be left destitute with no relief in sight, and the thousands of teamsters engaged in hauling these products will find their occupation gone, for the blight of prohibition is permanent on the workingman.

"So widespread and far-reaching in its baneful effects upon industry is prohibition that one illustration will suffice to convince. The millions of tons of coal that are consumed in the industry they seek to destroy gives employment to 10,000 miners, all of whom would be thrown out of work if prohibition succeeds.

"Brickmakers, masons and builders, machinists, steamfitters, plumbers, wagonmakers, waiters, bartenders, advertisers, printers, electricians, persons engaged in transportation, cash register makers, and thousands of other workers will suffer sufficient to cause them to conclude that the prohibition panic is the most permanent and far-reaching of all panics so far experienced. The unions will feel it more than any other class.

"MERCHANTS AND REAL ESTATE SUFFER.—Anything that destroys industry takes out of circulation the thousands of dollars paid out in wages, which reduces the merchant's profits, many of whom mistakenly support prohibition.

"Real estate owners will be losers of rents and vacant buildings and will be compelled to make up the deficit and loss of revenue caused by the elimination of saloon licenses. No matter what the prohibitionist's object may be, the result of his success will be to throw out of work a million men, causing a widespread panic that will result in wage reductions, starvation, misery, crime and demoralization among the wage earners of America.

"Success of prohibition in Lincoln will throw out of work 75 per cent of the cigarmakers, all of the bartenders and waiters and hundreds of others who are dependent upon these industries directly and indirectly, which in addition to those already out of work will cause widespread suffering and misery. These men would be unable to pay rent to the owners of buildings, many would have to leave home in a fruitless effort to secure employment elsewhere, and several hundred stores and houses would be left vacant, for the prohibitionists substitute absolutely nothing for the things they have destroyed, they offer neither bread, work, hope or opportunity to the unfortunate workingmen whom they deprive of employment by their agitation.

"In their campaign to save the drunkard they lose sight of the welfare of our honest, hardworking, sober and industrious workingmen, and appeal to you, the workingmen of Lincoln, to vote to save yourselves and your families in the trades unions from misery and want rather than to make them suffer for the gluttony and folly of others."