

THE WAGEWORKER



State Historical Society.

VOL. 5

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, MARCH 16, 1909

NO. 48

Among the Live Workers Here, There and Elsewhere

Something more than two years ago the managers of the then Citizens' Railway Co. advertised in The Wage-worker that among other reasons why the union men and women of the city should patronize the "white line" was that the company was not averse to its motormen and conductors organizing. In various ways the management of the Citizens' company let it be known that it would welcome an opportunity to do business with organized employees. But the motormen and conductors could not be prevailed upon to organize. They were getting more than the Traction company men, and this tickled them almost to death. What was the use of organizing when they were already getting the money? Why pay dues when they got all the benefits without? Nothing to organize, anyhow!

Now there is a light breaking on the minds of the aforesaid motormen and conductors.

A week or so ago consolidation of the Citizens Railway Co. and the Lincoln Traction Co. was organized. As soon as the merger was completed the wage scale was given attention.

Did the new corporation decide to grade up the pay of the Traction men to the Citizens' standard, or did it decide to grade down the pay of the Citizens' men to the Traction company standard?

You are allowed one guess. Correct! You guessed it the first time. The standard was fixed at the lower level maintained by the Traction company, and now the Citizens' motormen and conductors who couldn't see the benefits of organization and a contract wage schedule are going to find their wage envelopes short from \$2.50 to \$3 a month.

It might have cost them as much as 75 cents a month for dues—perhaps only 50 cents. And does anyone suppose for a minute that if the Citizens' company men had a contract wage scale that the new company would have dared to abrogate that contract?

If the Citizens' company men had listened to the advice of old-time union men who know the game from Alpha to Omaha, they would not now be bemoaning a lowered wage scale. It is awfully hard for union men to work up any sympathy for the motormen and conductors who are going to suffer a reduction of pay. They are getting just what they framed up for themselves. But there will be plenty of sympathy for the wives and babies who are going to miss that little old two or three dollars a month.

We mention the motormen and conductors in the department of "Live Ones," not because they are really in that class, but merely to call their case to the attention of the real live ones who now have ample opportunity to say, "I told you so."

The Traction Co. schedule averages about 1 cent an hour lower than the old Citizens' schedule. This means a loss of about 12 cents a day to the Citizens' Co. men. Of course that isn't much per day, but it amounts to about \$43.80 a year. It would cost the men about \$9 a year dues to belong to the union, which would leave a net profit to unionism of \$34.80 a year, speaking in terms of dollars and cents. But in addition there would be the sick benefit, the out-of-work benefits, the burial benefit, and all the other benefits of unionism.

Perhaps the motormen and conductors of Lincoln will sit up and take notice now.

The men and boys who were guilty of that "race riot" in South Omaha a couple of weeks ago should be punished to the limit. They should be punished for two reasons. One reason is that they foolishly went after the effect instead of aiming at the cause. Another reason is that instead of venting their wrath on the innocent victims living in the hovels in South Omaha, they should have marched in a body to the Hanscom Park and West Farnam districts of Omaha and made their protest to the parties responsible for conditions in South Omaha.

A lot of maudlin sympathy, by the way, is being wasted on the "poor, persecuted Greeks" of South Omaha. It is all coming from the quarters that

had no word of sympathy for the Americans who were forced by inhuman conditions to strike for better pay and decent surroundings, and then had their places filled by the imported hordes from decadent Greece. By the way, don't imagine that the "common workingmen" of South Omaha were wholly responsible for that so-called riot. Business men who find themselves facing ruin because of the Grecian conditions of Packingtown did not bust any suspenders trying to squelch the riot.

Does it pay to organize? Ask the musicians. The other night the editor of this glorious rag of freedom attended a meeting having for its purpose the organization of a little social dancing club. The instigator of the enterprise said:

"It will cost each of us just \$4.05 for the term. That will pay hall rent and musicians. A year or two ago we could have secured the music we need—a piano and violin—for \$6. Now we will have to pay \$7.50 because that is the union scale."

"Well, isn't it worth it?" queried the labor editor.

"Certainly it is," was the reply, "and I am glad that they are enforcing a fair scale of prices."

The union musicians of Lincoln pay \$3 a year dues. In just four nights the increased wage scale makes good the amount they pay to the support of their union.

Isn't that a good investment?

A bill that is of interest to the allied printing trades has been introduced in the legislature. It creates a "commissioner of printing" similar to the positions of oil inspector and labor commissioner. In other words, it makes the governor the commissioner of printing and empowers him to appoint a deputy who shall be a "competent printer" within the full meaning of that term. This department is to have complete control of the printing, and also of the purchase of supplies for all offices, including the legislature.

Another printing bill contemplates retiring the state treasurer from the printing board and substituting the governor, who shall have the appointment of the board's secretary. It is the general opinion of all who have investigated the matter that the bill first referred to is by far the better one.

The deputy commissioner of labor asked the legislature for \$500 with which to finance the holding of a state labor meeting. The request was denied. The sum of \$20,000, however, is set aside to finance the farmers' institutes—and the chicken show gets the usual \$1,000.

When the Central Labor Union meets next Tuesday evening the newly elected president, Mr. Hanna of the Electrical Workers, will probably announce his committee for the ensuing term. President Hanna may be depended upon to appoint "live ones," and then lay awake nights to frame up schemes to keep them busy.

The Machinists have decided to wake up and get into the game in real earnest, and henceforth delegates from that organization may be expected to attend the meetings.

Wish we had the name of the wise labor gazabo of New York who sprung this good one on Judge Wright.

"Why, if Judge Wright had lived nineteen hundred years ago he would have restrained the Apostle Paul from preaching to the Ephesians on the ground that Paul was interfering with the business of the silversmiths who make images of Diana."

That's about the best shot at the arrogant Wright that we have seen. If you are interested in the story, just read the nineteenth chapter of Acts. Demetrius the silversmith was the great grand-daddy of the whole tribe of VanCleave, Parrys and Posts.

The official organ of the Bricklayers and Masons has changed its form, coming now with smaller pages and more of them, making it more convenient in size and adding to its appearance. The Bricklayer and Mason is one of the best craft journals in the country.

THE PRESIDENT OF THESE UNITED STATES

PORTO RICO, GUAM, HAWAII AND THE PHILIPPINES



William Howard Taft, president of these United States. We did our level best to defeat him, but it was no use. Now that he is president here's hoping he'll make the best one we ever had. May he prove a glad disappointment to thousands of us who were afraid that he would hand as many presidential lemons to organized labor as he handed judicial lemons when he was on the bench. Of one thing we are sure, while William Howard Taft is president we are going to have less of the eccentric and the spectacular, and more of the sensible and the thoughtful. We'll have less of froth and more of fact, less of grandstanding and gumshoeing and more of poise and peace and—we hope—prosperity.

If William Howard Taft's administration is as successful and prosperous as we hope it will be, he will be remembered with gratitude and forgiven a whole lot of the wrongs he has done us.

On the whole we are rather inclined to like William Howard Taft. True we don't agree on lots of things, but we are agreed that this is the biggest, the best and the brightest country on the face of the earth. We agree that what we need and want is less bluster and more business; less rant and more reason; less contention and more commerce.

William Howard Taft takes into the presidency a big brain in a sound body. He is the president of the humblest toiler as well as of the haughtiest capitalist. He deserves the support and sympathy of every loyal citizen, regardless of party, in his every effort to advance the material, the social and the moral welfare of the republic. If he will talk less about the "square deal" and get busy with the cards, he'll start something, anyhow. We've grown a little weary of so much talk about the "square deal." It was pretty good "patter" to deceive us while we were getting it in the neck. Now we want a hand in the game, and we would rather like a chance to cut the cards before the deal begins.

We would much rather have seen another William in the chair, but we lost out. So we'll accept the William that's there, like a loyal citizen should and give him the hip-hurrah with a hearty good will.

We have been told that William Howard Taft is, after all, a good friend of the trades unions. Perhaps. We were born in Callaway county, Missouri, the birthplace of the original "show-me" man. And when we are shown we're going to take a day off and hate ourselves for having ever doubted it. If ever a man had an opportunity to show his friendship for organized labor, William Howard Taft is the man. If he's got it in stock he can't get it out on the counter any too soon. If William's administration turns out to be a prosperity-breeder, we'll undertake to get our share of it, and we'll be man enough to give him all the credit that is due him. And if the reverse is true we're going to put the thumb of our right hand to our proboscis, and while wriggling that thumb's companion digits we're going to howl "we told you so" in a tone of voice that will shake Abraham Lincoln's tin statue off the dome of the Lancaster county court house. And we'd a lot rather grab off a chunk or two of Taft prosperity than to be able to say "we told you so" any old day in the year.

But, after all, William Howard Taft is still a man, even though president of the United States. If he does not make some mistakes he'll be the wonder of all succeeding ages. But here's hoping his mistakes will be little ones, and we honestly believe they'll be mistakes of the head not of the heart. Somehow or other we've kind-of-mellowed towards William during the last few weeks. We've still got a lot of sore spots, but we're not using as much salve and arnica as we did a month or so ago. We don't believe, and never did, that

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Printers and Employers Have Mutually Agreed

Lincoln Typographical Union No. 209 has just closed a contract with the largest employing printers of the city—a contract that is as pleasing as it is satisfactory to both sides.

For several weeks the scale committee of the union has been meeting with a committee composed of eight of the largest employing printers in the city, and these meetings have been marked by harmony and good will. The result is a complete understanding that will preserve harmony for the next five years. More than that, it brings Lincoln up to the class where she properly belongs in the matter of printing wages and conditions.

Briefly the new contract calls for the following:

A scale of \$17 a week for the job men, eight hours a day. Time and one-third for overtime for the next two years from date of contract, and time and one-half for overtime after the end of the two years for the next three years.

An advance of 25 cents a day in the daily newspaper scale for the next two years from date of contract, and 25 cents a day more for the next three years.

But an increase in the wage scale is by no means the most pleasing feature of the new contract, which contract, by the way, runs for a period of five years from February 27, 1909. The International Typographical Union and the Newspaper Publishers' Association have an arbitration agreement whereby strikes are avoided and through which every difficulty that has arisen during the last five years has been amicably adjusted without the loss of an hour's time or a dollar of wages. Unfortunately the employing job printers have no such association as the publishers, therefore the International Typographical Union has no arbitration agreement covering the job men.

But in the new contract that has been signed by the employing printers of Lincoln and the Lincoln Typographical Union, a start has been made towards remedying this situation. For at least five years to come in Lincoln any disagreement between the employing job printers and their employees will be arbitrated—not by outsiders, but by the parties interested. It is a belief current among the employing printers of Lincoln that the "Lincoln agreement" will sooner or later be as widely known as the present agreement with the Newspaper Publishers' Association.

In addition to the facts set out above the new contract clears up a number of points that heretofore have been in a state of uncertainty. One of these is the matter of apprentices. Under the new agreement the employers will co-operate with the union in securing as apprentices boys who show some signs of adaptability to the trade, and when indentured these boys are to be trained up to become skilled craftsmen. In this work the employers will help, because it means better workmen in the future.

The interests of the fair employing printers of the city are safeguarded in several ways. During every session of the two committees the best of feeling prevailed, and while there was, naturally, many differences of opinion, not once was there the least sign of trouble. As a matter of fact, the good feeling was more than once a matter of comment.

Several humorous things happened during the conferences. Occasionally the employing job printers would retire for a little conference over some disputed point, and the newspaper employers would put in the time telling good stories having to do with their experiences. When the newspaper employers would retire to confer, the employing job printers would make things lively with tales of their experiences. All this served to keep everybody in a good humor all the time, and when men retain their good humor it is never difficult to agree.

The printing concerns that have signed the new contract to date are as follows:

State Journal Company.
Star Publishing Company.
Press Publishing Company.
North & Company.
Woodruff-Collins Company.

George Bros.
New Century.
Western Newspaper Union.
Other employing printers have signified a willingness to sign the agreement, and it will be presented to them as rapidly as possible.

The Wage-worker congratulates the employing printers of Lincoln and Lincoln Typographical Union upon the success attending the conferences.

The union's scale committee is entitled to the highest praise for its good work.

THE GREAT DIFFERENCE.

Citizens' Company Employees Can See What They Have Missed.

Without whatever to "rub it in," The Wage-worker would like to call the attention of the motormen and conductors of the late Citizens' company to the story of the printers, published elsewhere in this issue. The printers are organized and well disciplined through long years of experience. They have just signed a contract whereby the job men get an increase of \$1.60 a week in their scale, and the machine men an increase of \$1.50 a week for two years, and then an additional increase of \$1.50 a week for the next three years.

The conductors and motormen of the Citizens' line were practically invited by the management to organize, but they wouldn't do it. They were already getting more than the Traction Co. men, so why pay dues?

It's different now. The Citizens' scale was lowered to the Traction scale when the merger was completed, and while the union printers were getting an increase of 28 cents a day, and working only eight hours at that, the non-union motormen and conductors of the Citizens' Co. lines were getting a decrease of 12 cents a day, and working twelve hours.

If this don't put the motormen and conductors to thinking, then nothing will.

CAPITAL AUXILIARY.

News Notes About the Helpmates of the Printer Men.

Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Jones have moved to the Pentzer home, 1847 North Twenty-seventh street, and Mrs. Jones will entertain the Auxiliary on March 10.

Mrs. Charles B. Righter is still confined to her home by sickness.

Mrs. George Freeman is suffering from a badly sprained ankle, the result of falling down the cellar steps.

Mrs. Will Bustard has been quite sick for the past week.

The Hebbard home is no longer under quarantine and Mr. Hebbard can now eat a meal at his own table. The house has been under quarantine for nearly two months.

Mr. and Mrs. George Locker have moved out near Normal and will engage in the poultry business on a large scale. The Auxiliary is planning to hold a meeting out there as soon as the "broilers" are ripe.

The committee appointed to prepare for a social for the benefit of the monument fund is hard at work, but as yet has made none of the details of the proposed affair public.

TO ENTERTAIN TYPOS.

It is estimated that it will require about \$6,000 to entertain the international convention of the Typographical Union, which will be held in St. Joseph, Mo., next August. To raise this money the local union has decided to depart from the established custom of soliciting funds from business men and proposes to accomplish the purpose by means of an industrial fair and entertainment at the auditorium, to be held upon a large scale and which will enlist the entire public.

MINERS IN POLITICS.

After a heated debate the United Miners of Illinois have decided to delve into politics and a special committee was appointed to report to the convention as to what should be the future political policy of the organization. This was done after President Walker had paid his respects to "Uncle Joe" Cannon, referring to him as the "greatest stumbling block in the world in the path of organized labor."