

SOME PERTINENT FACTS ABOUT THE "OPEN SHOP"

While much is being said about the union shop, it is highly improbable that there will be any attempt to force the change on a large scale. As yet the opponents of the union shop have made all the noise. But the arguments advanced are so superficial, and the alleged statements of facts so palpably unfair that many unionists do not think them worthy of reply.

The talk we hear about the "inalienable right to work" is pure buncombe, as such a right does not exist, except in the sense that a book agent has to sell his wares. It is patent to the most obtuse that there would be no involuntary idleness—no long, weary tramps from shop to shop in quest of a job—if workingmen had "a right to work." What the luckless unemployed do enjoy is the right to seek employment, which is a far cry from the much talked of "right to work."

Another form of stating the anti-union cause is to say the closed shop infringes on an employer's right to hire whomsoever he may please. This is one of those half-truths which are more misleading than a falsehood cut from the whole cloth. No one, and last of all the sensible trades unionist, seriously denies the exercise of this right to an employer; but this concession in no way impairs the right of ten or a hundred employes to refuse to work with an obnoxious craftsman. That is what union men do in some instances; they do not in reality ask that such a man be discharged, but simply refuse to work with him. Associations of lawyers and physicians do the same thing, saying the objectionable one has been guilty of "unprofessional conduct" or "violation of the ethical code," while the unsophisticated workmen, with commendable frankness, but deplorable lack of finesse, blurt out that the object of their hostility "is a scab." The underlying cause and the purpose in view are the same in both instances, but few, if any, seem to find fault with the professional

associations. The homely admonition that "it is not so much what you do as the manner in which you do it," seems to apply here.

Many good reasons are advanced in defense of the union policy, but it is not the purpose to discuss or even outline them here. There is abundant evidence that these arguments presented fairly, appeal with force to the general public.

A well-known educationalist, who has made a special study of labor unions, says he finds it easier to convince people of the mercantile and professional classes with whom he comes in contact of the fairness of the card shop policy than of any other phase of militant unionism. The writer also knows of a club of 20 or 30 men, not one of whom has a remote connection with the wage earning class, who, after investigation, think the strict union policy is justifiable, if not a necessity, under existing conditions. Some of this is due to the feeling of revulsion that accompanies the discovery that what has been written on the subject is a riot of misrepresentation. This also demonstrates that unions will not be without forceful and friendmaking arguments if the matters get beyond the academic stage.

It is stated above that in many instances union men refuse to work with non-unionists. In explanation of this it must be remembered that, contrary to current general belief, exclusion of non-unionists from the workshop is not a cardinal principle of all unions. The members of some organizations work with non-unionists, and though it may be true that many of these are weak sisters, yet some of the strongest and most successful unions are in this category. The determining factor in shaping the policy of the various unions will be found to be the economic conditions surrounding the various industries. If an industry is conducted in such a manner that non-unionists cannot be utilized to menace the position of the unionists, the

lines are not drawn tightly, and the most efficient and determined opponents of the closed shop are among the unionists of such crafts. On the other hand, if circumstances are such that the non-members may be instrumental in endangering wages or working conditions, their employment is looked on with disfavor.

Trades unionists are aware that this policy has its weaknesses, the principal one being the impressment into the union of men who are unconvinced of its efficiency or desirability, and who are consequently far from being a source of strength. There are also unionists in the printing trade organizations for whom the open shop has no terrors. They believe any possible temporary decrement in membership following its institution would be more than offset by the progressiveness resultant from relief from the load of dead wood. It is a surety that unions would have to "spruce up" and pay more attention to those features that attract non-unionists. But this unterrified minority is seldom heard from, for its dreamy speculations are answered by the assertion that the open shop in the printing trade would lead to the adoption of unfair practices and reduction in wages by unscrupulous employers, with the inevitable climax that fair and generous employers would be compelled to do likewise. In this way the workers reduce the question to a dollar-and-cents proposition, and that is plainly what it is. Notwithstanding all their grandiose talk about "sacred rights," it is as plain as noonday that most of the advocates of open shops think they see "money in it." Their love of liberty is a newly-found emotion, but the pursuit of the dollar—clean or dirty—has been the ruling passion of their lives, and it is too much to ask us to believe that their grand passion has naught to do with their present hysterical situation.—W. B. Prescott, ex-president International Typographical Union in Inland Printer.

THE WOMAN WORKER.

Miss Mary McDowell Applies a Few Figures to Her Case.

"Woman," said a big trade union official last year, "is the white Chinaman of the industrial world. She wears a coiled-up cue, and wherever she goes she cheapens the worth of human labor." An illustration follows:

Miss Mary McDowell, of the University of Chicago Settlement, was observing a girl who was operating an unusually heavy and intricate machine in a large hardware factory in an Ohio city.

"Strong, clever girl," remarked Miss McDowell, or words to that effect.

"She's doubled the output of that machine," said the superintendent.

"How did she get such a good job?" asked Miss McDowell.

"Her father," said the superintendent, "had the machine before she had it. We just thought we'd try her."

"How much," said Miss McDowell, being Scotch and suspicious, and not completely satisfied with this proof of the Advance of Woman; "how much do you pay her compared with what you paid her father?"

"Half," said the superintendent.

This girl, therefore, since she was producing twice as much, and earning half as much as her father had produced and earned, was selling her labor at one-quarter of the masculine market price. It doesn't

seem exactly fair from the standpoint of society.

"It doesn't seem exactly self-respecting from the standpoint of the girl," said Miss McDowell, in discussing the question. Miss McDowell, who is the head worker in the University of Chicago Settlement and lives "just back of the yards," will be the orator at the Labor Day celebration in Lincoln on Monday, September 6.

"PROTECTING AMERICAN LABOR."

You doubtless have heard that before. It's the plea the big manufacturers put up. They want a protective tariff because it enables them to employ American labor at remunerative wages—so they say. We used to believe it, but we've learned better. They use the tariff to rob the consumers, and then they fill their mills with the cheapest foreign labor they can import. They lose all interest in the welfare of the worker just as soon as they get a tariff license to rob. If you want to know just how much these tariff-protected manufacturers think of the American workingman, just ponder over this:

The American Steel & Wire Company is a typical tariff-protected institution. It is also a typical union-hating institution. It is located at Pittsburg, Pa., the heart of the tariff-protected district. Its great machines are run by electric power. Posted everywhere around the wires carrying the high tension currents that drive its wheels the

American Steel & Wire Company has posted danger signs. In English? Not so. Here's the way they read—for there are no English-speaking men around:

Niebezpieczne
Nie Dotaykarj-Idzpreez
Niedraj
Opasno-Nepriblizujse
Farligt
Ror Ieke-Akta Dig
Pericoloso
Toccare-State Lontano
Veszelyes
Hozza-Nuylni

The Wagemaker

Dollar a Year For Union Workers
DO IT NOW

WHEN YOU MOVE.

Moving is not a pleasant task under the most favorable circumstances. Why not make it as pleasant as possible? The Lincoln Transfer Co., with their large, roomy, padded vans, and expert packers and helpers, make a specialty of moving household goods. Every day is moving day with them, and they will make it an easy task for you. Call at their office, 938 P street, and talk with them on moving. Or phone Bell 176 or Auto 6495, the next time you are going to move.