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KIRBY ERUPTS AGAIN

Spits out Another Tirade Against Trades Unions at Young Men's Meeting

John Kirby, Jr., the pugnacious bantam who occupies the bad eminence of being president of the National Association of Manufacturers, has had another exudation of bile, but it did not relieve to any great extent his surcharged liver, for he was compelled to eat part of it after vomiting it up. At a meeting of the Young Men's Hebrew association, held last Sunday in New York city, he read a carefully-prepared and highly-tinted address on "The Disadvantages of Labor Unionism," but before opening his sluice-gate of abuse he announced his willingness to answer any questions his hearers might ask him.

Littlefield a Ready Tool.

Former Congressman Littlefield, who left congress to become attorney for several union-smashing corporations, presided over the meeting and showed himself to be the same ready tool of the plutocrats in a public meeting that he had been in the national house of representatives. Kirby's address violently denounced trades unions and labor officials as monstrous, vicious, immoral, criminal, barbarous and many other odious things, and when he sat down a lady sang sweetly a vocal solo the burden of which was "Everything Seems to Breathe of Love Tonight." Then the fun began. Thirty-seven written questions had been passed up to Mr. Kirby, and after pondering over them for a considerable time, he declined to answer them. Chairman Littlefield went to his relief with a statement that most of the questions had been disposed of by Mr. Kirby in his speech; that some of them had evidently been prepared beforehand for the purpose of trapping him, and that some of them were very sarcastic.

Moffett Makes Kirby Crawl.

E. A. Moffett, former national secretary of the Bricklayers' union and still a member of that organization, was on his feet promptly with a protest. Mr. Littlefield gently tried to sidetrack him, but Moffett wouldn't be silenced.

"I demand to be heard," said Moffett. "Mr. Kirby has talked about the restriction of production by forbidding men to lay more than a certain number of brick a day. I am an official of the Bricklayers' union, and I deny that it has ever placed any such restriction on output. I want Mr. Kirby to say where there is any such rule in our constitution or by-laws or agreements. I want him to answer my seven other questions. They were asked for, and I demand that they be read. Let the audience judge whether they are worth answering."

Kirby Tries to Explain.

Kirby explained through Mr. Littlefield that he had used the brick business merely as an illustration of a principle. He didn't know whether there was any such rule among the bricklayers, but there was in other trades, he said, and so he used brick-laying as a handy illustration.

"Oh-o," said Moffett, "so there are no facts, only 'illustrations'—a kind of moving picture show of 'illustrations' without facts. The inference that the bricklayers had such a rule was plain, and it is untrue. Are all his illustrations like that? I want the rest of my questions read. Read those questions!"

Then there was a lot more disputation and evasion, and finally one question, by some one else, was read,

It was the only one that saw the light, and it was: "Don't you think the best trade unionist is a dead trade unionist?"

Moffett got disgusted and remarked sarcastically: "Being a labor man, I've got an engagement to dynamite a building tonight, so I've got to hurry home." He changed his mind, however, and stayed, making a motion that his questions be read, which was not put to the audience.

Kirby Called a Coward.

William Karlin, a Socialist candidate for the assembly in the recent campaign, then took a hand in the game and added to its fervor and interest. He also made a vigorous protest against the suppression of questions, and demanded that those submitted be read.

"You are a coward," he shouted at Kirby, while half the audience applauded and the other half protested. "You have misrepresented labor, and you are afraid to meet the questions of the audience."

At this Kirby, who is a little bantam rooster type of man, jumped forward to the front of the platform, bristling all over, and shook his fist at Karlin.

"No man can call me a coward," he shouted. "I am ready to meet any man. There are a whole lot of questions here and some of them have been studied out beforehand. Let me take these questions and study them over, and I can answer them all. If you have anything to say, say it, but don't try to call me a coward."

The Charge Repeated.

Karlin reiterated that Kirby was afraid to answer the questions and began to talk about capitalist morality as exemplified by the Seelye dinner. The meeting was adjourned with Karlin, Moffett and others still insisting on the questions.

The meeting began peacefully with a song by Mr. Brennan, a tenor, who "Long for the day, Katrina, When the sky will be blue And the grass will be green."

It was a fair inference from Kirby's speech, however, that the sky would refuse to grow until the paralyzing influences of unionism were extirpated forever.

Kirby's Only Objection to Unions.

The only things that Mr. Kirby had against the unions were that they insisted on having members; that they favored the union label and the closed shop; that they went on strike; that they were against injunctions, and in favor of a minimum wage; and an eight hour day, and that they had no use for scabs or child laborers as apprentices. With these few exceptions, Mr. Kirby said that the unions were a good thing—oh yes, except that violence and murder were a part of their daily life.

Kirby also had a good deal to say against the limitation of output, but evidently did not think this applied to the hot air industry, as he talked the ears off his audience, being very long-winded for such a little fellow.

UNIONISM.

Are you a union man? What is the creed? Is it part of yours to knock the paper that is doing its level best for you and the trade union movement and all that the term implies? Is it part of your creed to find various excuses for ducking the subscription list, or finding excuses for the union's not taking it as a body? Is it a part of your creed to brag of your "unionism" and then say that you have so many other papers to read you don't find time to read the labor paper? Of course you believe the other papers are free of scab advertising and that they will fight

for your organization against some employer who has been unfair to you. Of course you see numerous articles praising the great work of the trade union movement and the desirability of better pay and shorter hours and they, of course, take your side of it when an employer refuses to give you the conditions you ask for. Of course that is the reason you find so much more time for them than for the labor paper. May you never have to wait for better conditions until the pet paper of yours gets it for you. As a matter of unionism, don't you think it is just as necessary for you to be ready and willing to aid the other fellow as he is ready to aid you? Then how can you longer ignore the only means of publicity open to the wage earners? Get a germ started and see if you are not in duty bound to give your little mite toward making your paper the success it deserves. The history of the labor press all over this country is one big book of grand, self-sacrificing effort on the part of those who undertook to run them and of the ungrateful, unappreciative and un-unionism of those who should and could have made them great powers for good. The labor paper is what the readers give it the power to be. Ready and hearty support of the labor paper always brings the emancipation of wage slavery. It is one of the peculiar characteristics of some wage earners—they like to get licked into submission if the hand that smites them is only fair and bedecked with jewels—then they go around kicking and growling at conditions. Why don't they support their officers and their press so that the large public may be enlightened as to the time of trade unionism and enlisted under its banner? It can be done. Are you going to help do it here in your home valley? Are you going to let personal feeling get the better of your unionism? Or are you going to support trade union propaganda first and

fight your personal battles outside? Do you not think that the best way? Do you not find extenuation for your lack of support? Then don't kick if you fail to get better conditions.—Cincinnati Chronicle.

BELIEVES IN LABOR UNIONS.

Mayor Wing, of Tampa, Fla., in welcoming the Building Trades department of the American Federation of Labor had the following to say:

"If you will show me a city where organized labor is weak I will show you a city that is on the decline, because unionism means good wages for an honest day's work, and the prosperity of every community depends to a large extent upon whether or not the workmen get just compensation for their labor. If they receive proper compensation for their work they can better support and educate their children and make better citizens of them. From the ranks of your children today we must look for our future presidents, senators and lawmakers. In organization there is strength."—Colorado Industrial Review.

CONDITIONS DEPLORABLE.

Announcement in Regard to Tobacco Workers is Startling.

Secretary Tracey of the Union Label Department A. F. of L., has issued a statement regarding the conditions in the tobacco trade that are most startling.

Secretary Tracey bases his announcement on statistics recently issued by the United States government that "about 90 per cent of all the smoking and chewing tobacco and cigarettes manufactured in the United States, are the output of the American Tobacco Co., more familiarly known as the tobacco trust. In none of the factories operated by this gigantic corporation are there

employed any union men or women. In fact, to be known to have membership in a union means instant discharge. Nor is the output of the other 10 per cent, to any degree, the product of union workers."

In referring to the cigarmaking branch of the business, he says: "This same corporation is also endeavoring to control the cigarmaking industry, and is operating factories in all parts of this country, in which the great majority of their employees are children, who receive but scanty wages and are compelled to work long hours in poorly lighted and badly ventilated shops. Together with this, the cigarmakers are confronted with a large number of non-union shops, in which practically the same conditions apply. The subsidiary branches of the American Tobacco Co., are in control of the cigarmaking industry in Porto Rico, and before many weeks have passed will be in control of a large portion of the industry in the Philippines.

"At the present time, and for several years past, there have been arriving at the several ports along the Atlantic coast from Porto Rico an average of 10,000,000 cigars a month, and the number is increasing.

"Before the year has expired there will be dumped on the Pacific coast another 150,000,000 cigars from the Philippine Islands, and this amount is to be admitted free of duty every year, making the total amount of cigars that will come to this country from both places amount to about 300,000,000 a year. The production of cigars in the United States has been materially reduced in the past two years, and with these amounts above mentioned, it means loss of employment to over 6,000 cigarmakers in this country."

There is no gainsaying the fact that this is a deplorable condition that faces the tobacco and cigar workers, and it also exposes the sham shibboleth of "protection to American labor" paraded by demagogical politicians. The tobacco trust, having obtained control of the large factories and plantations in Porto Rico and the Philippines, and no further use for "protection" and clamored to have its coolie-made products admitted free of duty—no matter whether such a proceeding would drive American workers into the poorhouse.

The trust was partially successful and secured a compromise that placed a powerful club in its possession with which to pound the independent union factories, and a Washington correspondent stated after the Aldrich monstrosity came "downward" with a dull thud on the people's backs that the American Tobacco Co.'s agents are already busy planning to secure legislation at the first favorable opportunity to admit all tobacco products from "our possessions" free of duty.

If this conspiracy goes through and because of the political helplessness of the workers it looks as though the trust will triumph for the "interests" control enough congressmen and senators to gain almost anything demanded by "non-partisan" and "patriotic" methods—then it will be a sorry day for the tobacco and cigar workers, for it is out of the question for them to compete successfully with

the Asiatic coolie laborer who receives but a few cents a day.

The Cleveland Citizen in summing up the situation says: "There is no way out of this dilemma except to send a few of the cigarmakers and other craftsmen to congress, instead of smooth-tongued lawyers and others hostile or indifferent to the needs of the toilers, to kick up a rumpus and expose the hypocrisy and corruption of the old political gangs.

"This may sound like a stereotyped recommendation, but the trusts appreciate its full meaning much more readily than the workers. They know that the Lord helps those who help themselves.

"Meanwhile those who use tobacco must demand the blue union label on the packages and boxes. It is the only immediate protection the tobacco workers and cigar makers have, notwithstanding the fact that they have patiently listened to dunco statesmen blowing their bazooks for years."

IN TORONTO.

Labor Temple Has Proved to be a Profitable Investment.

The annual statement of the directors of the Toronto Labor Temple shows that the year's business was a profitable one. The receipts amounted to \$13,568.33, leaving a balance of \$1,856.18. The assets of the company are the building, \$35,888.34; furniture, \$7,500. The profits show an undivided dividend of over 13 per cent. The excess of assets over liabilities is \$17,309.87. The original allotment of stock has been taken up, and the single transaction of \$5.00 for the year closed the final allotment. At present there is no stock on the market, and the company will not issue any more, as the stock as it now stands is worth more than double what was paid for it.

When the wife of a union man goes through her husband's clothes in performing her regular "touching ceremony," she should respect the label. If she finds one in his clothes she should go easy and at least give her spouse an even break. If no label, she should take everything in sight and spend it for label goods.—Western Laborer.

It is only by organization that labor will be able to demand its just share of what it produces.



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