

PRES. MAUPIN'S SPEECH AT THE CONVENTION

Following is the annual address of President Will M. Maupin of the Nebraska State Federation of Labor, delivered at South Omaha, January 4.

Fellow Workers:—It is with a feeling of pride that I stand before this convention this morning to deliver my annual message as the president of the Nebraska State Federation of Labor. I hope the pride is pardonable, for not only is this the first annual message ever delivered by a president of this organization, but it is delivered by one who has had some humble part in the making of this organization. To many of you the brief history of this organization is familiar. But lest some of you may not be familiar with it I venture to give a historical outline. The outline of necessity must be brief, for the history itself is brief.

For the last six or eight years I have talked at odd times with my fellow unionists about the necessity of such an organization as this, and there was a unanimity of opinion that was surprising in view of the failure of all efforts to get something started. Each one seemed to be waiting for the other to take the initiative.

Early in January, 1909, I was honored by appointment to the office of deputy commissioner of labor by Governor Shallenberger. I immediately began laying plans to secure a state organization, but was delayed on account of the legislature being in session, which made it imperative that I spend my waking hours in seeing to it that an already half-starved and wholly inadequate bureau of labor was not utterly annihilated. Immediately upon the adjournment of the legislature I proceeded to carry out a long cherished ambition, namely, the organization of a State Federation of Labor. I took it for granted that a Bureau of Labor really ought to undertake something in the interests of labor, and with that idea in mind I issued a call for a delegate convention for the purpose of organization. I expected to meet with success in my efforts, but I confess that I was agreeably astonished at the response made to the call. Eighty-three delegates, representing as many local trades organizations, responded, and at Lincoln, on June 25, 1909, was organized this splendid State Federation. Charge me with egotism if you will—if I have done nothing more for labor of this state than to be the cause of this splendid and promising State Federation, at least I have done something in the way of service for the toilers who have made the growth of this commonwealth possible.

The Lincoln convention was harmonious in the extreme. The earnest and willing delegates took up the work in hand, and in short order a live organization was perfected.

The chief work of the officials elected by the Lincoln convention was to get the organization's machinery in working operation. Without any well-known plan of action mapped out, wholly without financial resource, and with nothing but enthusiasm and hope to build upon, your officers buckled down to work. The first burst of enthusiasm over it was necessary to begin a systematic campaign for affiliation. By reason of a policy which in my individual opinion was detrimental to the best interests of organized labor, this State Federation is deprived of the wise counsel and financial support of a great body of union men in this state. I refer to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The railroad brotherhoods, through a policy of exclusiveness long pursued, also refused to affiliate with this organization. And many local unions which by every right and rule of self-interest should have affiliated, refused or neglected to do so. Yet we meet today with a splendid convention, made up of representatives of live unions. I speak without fear of successful contradiction when I say that the unions represented here at this convention are the unions that are always up and doing; never asking somebody to do something for them, and always willing to make sacrifices for the common good. If there be those who have opposed affiliation because their minds have been conjured up by nightmares of partisan politics, I have only this to say: Men who habitually use their unionism to promote their partisan ends are always quick to charge others with the same motive, and he who is always frightened lest he

be misled should use his leisure time in fitting himself so that he can detect such schemes and thwart them, instead of spending it in charging his fellow workers with dishonest motives.

Since the organization of the Nebraska State Federation of Labor the organized industries of the state have enjoyed peace and a fair measure of prosperity. While wages have not kept pace with the increased cost of living, yet because of union activity we have at least managed to prevent any widening of the difference through a lowering of the wage scale. Several new unions have been organized since the Lincoln convention, and so far as your officers are informed not one has surrendered its charter.

But one strike has taken place within the ranks of the Federation. Reference is made to the strike of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of Omaha against the Omaha & Council Bluffs Street Railway Co. The company, claiming it was financially unable to pay old and faithful employees an increased wage scale, paid out thousands of dollars to imported thieves, thugs, porchclimbers and professional strikebreakers whom it hired to take the places of men asking merely for justice and humane treatment. The money the Omaha & Council Bluffs Street Railway Co. paid out to defeat the request of old and faithful employees would have paid the increased wage demanded for many years to come, prevented great public discomfort and relieved the community of the presence of a horde of men who are strangers to honor, unacquainted with honesty and never on speaking terms with common decency. It should not be forgotten by the wage earners of Omaha and her sister cities that it took the combined influence of business men who had not a dollar of stock in the railway company to defeat that just strike. It was but one more proof that there is a body of shortsighted business men in Nebraska's metropolis who are endeavoring to break down labor organizations. They put up a hypocritical pretense of working for the good of the free and independent worker, but they deceive none but those who are anxious to be deceived. The wage earners of this community have the remedy in their own hands. Business men who refuse to accord to organized labor the common rights of humanity are not deserving, nor should they have, one dollar of patronage from union men and women. No man known to be in sympathy with such men should receive a penny of union patronage nor the vote of any self-respecting, family-providing, country-loving, God-fearing union man.

The strike in question calls with emphasis for concerted action that will result in securing, through legislative enactment, a board of arbitration and conciliation that will safeguard the public's rights while making it impossible for arrogant corporations and insolvent capitalists to crush the hopes and aspirations of the toilers. I can think of no greater work for this organization to do than to undertake the task of securing a law which will give the workers an equal chance with the employers. In concluding this reference to the Omaha strike I want to pay my tribute of respect to the brave men who refused to be coerced, browbeaten or bribed; who refused to violate their union obligations, and who refused to surrender their manhood. It was my pleasure and privilege to mingle with them during that strike, and never have I met a finer body of men. I learned from them much of devotion to principle. Had they received the proper support, and had organized labor in years gone by performed its duty at the polls instead of being the plaything of political manipulators, the results of that strike might have been different.

It is with regret that I must report that during the month of November another contract for prison labor was executed by the Board of Public Lands and Buildings. This contract calls for the manufacture of work shirts at the penitentiary, and was executed while I was absent from Lincoln, attending the American Federation of Labor convention at Toronto. The contract was originally prepared and urged by a majority of the board was outrageous in the extreme. As the contract

now stands it is a great improvement over the original draft, but it is bad enough. The amended contract stipulates that before any of the goods manufactured thereunder are shipped out, the state shall have the privilege of buying at first cost all it needs to supply the state institutions. It is further provided that none of the goods manufactured thereunder may be sold in the state of Nebraska. These amendments were forced into the contract by Governor Shallenberger, who is one of the five members of his board.

Until the law is changed and prison contract labor prohibited by law, there will always be this same trouble. The chief argument advanced by those who seek to profit from convict contract labor is that the poor convicts must have work or they will go crazy. We humbly suggest that a little of the maudlin sympathy wasted upon the criminal might well be spared, and a little practical sympathy shown for the honest worker who is struggling against untoward conditions to support his family and give his children an education. A policy which encourages criminality by making it almost imperative to commit a crime in order to secure a steady job is not calculated to build a better citizenship. Nebraska stands at the head of the educational column, and it is not too much to hope of such a state that in a short time it will, in its wisdom, evolve some system whereby the convicts may be kept employed without putting the product of their labor into competition on the open market with the product of free and honest labor. The present condition is in itself a crime, and the society responsible for it should be indicted and tried and sentenced. And the man or woman who would teach a convict to make brooms or work shirts under the specious plea of teaching the convict a useful trade, ought to be put into a kindergarten for the purpose of learning the first principles of industrialism. The one is a trade largely followed by invalids, cripples and old men; the other is followed by underpaid women and girls working in sweat shops and tenements. The convict who emerges from prison and attempts to follow either trade for a livelihood, soon finds himself back in prison. I would recommend that this convention go on record, with no uncertain sound, against the present system of leasing convict labor, and that it throw the weight of its influence in favor of the abolition of the infamous wrong to free labor.

I further recommend that this organization demand, and back up the demand in every possible way, that the State Bureau of Labor be adequately provided for, to the end that it may be of some real service to the wage earners of the state whose toll represents such a large part of the prosperity of the commonwealth.

I would recommend some course of action whereby a greater revenue may be raised, to the end that the legislative committee may not be hampered in its efforts to secure needed legislation.

One year from this date the legislature will be in session, and we should begin now to prepare the way for a concerted demand for labor legislation that will benefit the workers. We ask nothing but justice for ourselves, and would work injustice on no man. Heretofore we have worked at random in our legislative efforts. I would urge union men everywhere to make strong effort to secure representation upon the legislative tickets, and wherever a union man is nominated for a legislative office let us forget partisan politics long enough to send union men, instead of partisans to the legislature. With a few live union men on the inside, and a strong legislative committee on the outside, organized labor will stand a reasonable show of getting something in the way of legislative relief.

I urge this convention to make an insistent demand upon the parent organization, the American Federation of Labor, for the appointment of a permanent salaried organizer in this district, to the end that the work of organization, so long neglected, may be prosecuted with vigor.

I urge upon every organization affiliated with the Nebraska State Federation of Labor the necessity of an active organization propaganda, let us organize in every section of the state; let us strengthen our lines wherever and whenever possible, and let us present a united front to those who keep us apart, and by so doing make it easier to exploit us. Let us learn wisdom by experience, and forgetting per-

sonal prejudices and animosities, laying aside political partisanship and religious differences, get together for the common good.

In conclusion, allow me to thank the State Federation of Labor by the honor it has conferred upon me. I can wish nothing better for my successor than the same hearty support that has been given me. May the Nebraska State Federation of Labor grow and flourish, and may it become a potent factor in the industrial and social uplift.

BEAR IT IN MIND.

The Labor Temple is for All Who Toil for a Livelihood.

The Labor Temple's doors are always open to men who toil for a livelihood. It is not exclusive. The managers want you to become a stockholder, but whether you are or not will not make bit of difference in your welcome to the Temple.

Consider it your home—and act therein as you would in your home home. Be careful of your language therein as you are in your own home. Don't scratch matches on the wall, Don't expectorate on the floor. Come in and get acquainted with your fellow workers. You will be as welcome as the flowers in spring.

Bill posters have signed a five year agreement with the Pittsburg Bill have received \$2 more a week than Posting Co., in which they claim to be asked for.

LOOKS LIKE PEACE.

Promising Signs of Getting Together on Part of Electrical Workers.

General President Reid and Secretary Murphy arrived in town Wednesday evening and remained over several days. Their mission is to arrange an unloading of the funds in the local banks in conformity with the A. F. of L. convention decision last month. The officers are meeting with some technical difficulties but hope to overcome them in a short time. Both Reid and Murphy speak enthusiastically of the outlook to establish peace in the Brotherhood. They believe the committee having the peace arrangements in charge are absolutely fair and will see that justice is done, and that is all that can be or is expected. "It would do your heart good to see the way the Brotherhood is growing despite all our unfortunate differences," said President Reid. "I believe the organization will be one of the greatest on this continent in a few years. The outlook for peace in the trade is being hailed with satisfaction by all our locals, and we sincerely believe and hope that a unification will come soon, as the labor movement, as a whole, is confronted by many grave problems and we must close our ranks to meet them."

TEMPLE STOCKHOLDERS MEET.

Last Tuesday night the Stockholders in the Lincoln Labor Temple Association held their annual meeting for the purpose of electing directors. Each union holding 100 shares of stock is entitled to a director on the board in addition there are six directors at large elected by the stockholders. The directors at large for the coming year are Bingham, Typographical; Vaughan, Brick Layers; Mayer, Electrical Workers; De Lacy, Painters; Parker, Cigarmakers; Maupin, Typographical. The different stockholding unions re-elected the same directors with the exception of the Carpenters, who sent Isler vice Kates and the painters who sent Hale vice De Lacy. The directors re-elected the old officers to serve for the ensuing year.

COFFEY IS HONORED.

F. M. Coffey of Lincoln Typographical 209, Honored by State Federation.

South Omaha, Jan. 5.—The Nebraska State Federation of Labor to-night elected F. M. Coffey of Lincoln president. Mr. Coffey is a prominent member of the Typographical Union at Lincoln. Frank P. Hart was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

The Wageworker will publish the complete proceedings of the convention next week.

Spotted.

"I just had a talk with Judge Renter and he said he was a firm friend of organized labor."
"What office does he intend running for this time?"

CURT COMMENT ON THE TIMELY TOPICS

One of the first things that the unionists of Nebraska should do is to ascertain where Senators Brown and Burkett stood when the matter of confirming Judge Lurton was before the senate. Recently President Taft appointed Judge Lurton of Tennessee to the supreme bench of the United States, and the senate ratified the appointment. Judge Lurton is notoriously committed to the corporation cause and it follows, as the night the day, that he is committed against the cause of the organized toilers. Time after time, in the trial of damage suits before him, wherein injured railway employes have sought to recover damages, Judge Lurton has shown his bias in favor of the corporations. Time and again he has ruled directly against the decisions of judges in neighboring circuits, and has held in direct opposition to the rulings of the high tribunal to which he has just been elevated. The Nashville Tennessean, published in Judge Lurton's own home, says of him: "He belongs to that school of jurists who are looked upon as exponents of the rights of property rather than of the rights of men." That is a correct diagnosis of Judge Lurton. His whole judicial career is marked by evidences that he can see property rights with the naked eye, but is unable to see human rights with a microscope. In one particular case, the Hecla-Osceola copper controversy, he made a decision which, if he continues to hold good, will compel him to decide against the government and in favor of the Standard Oil Co., in its appeal from the United States circuit court of appeals. Organized labor protested unanimously against Judge Lurton's appointment, but the backing of "trustees of providence," the men with the money and the corporation property to safeguard, received more attention than the men who had nothing but their manhood at stake. hat we want to know, and what every wage earner has a right to know, is this—how did Senators Burkett and Brown vote on the confirmation of Judge Lurton?

Judge Carpenter is another one of President Taft's recent judicial appointees. And his record as a corporation judge is even worse than that of Judge Lurton. He has always been quick to recognize property rights, and equally slow to recognize personal rights. He was backed for the appointment by the big corporations who have always found him willing and ready to serve corporation interests. Some of these days the whole body politic will learn, what trades unionists long since learned, that the whole appointive federal judiciary is a menace to free institutions, and a mockery on a republican form of government.

O, Yes; the protective tariff is a great blessing to the workingmen! The men who shout loudest for a protective tariff are the men who most have the interests of the wage earners at heart. And the whole thing works out so beautifully in favor of the wage earner. Like the old woman kept hotel! The rich man who imports diamonds pays a duty of 10 per cent. The diamond dealer who imports \$1,000 worth of diamonds leaves \$100 duty at the customs house and tacks that much more on his selling price—10 per cent. The dealer who imports a thousand shirts worth a dollar each leaves \$601.60 at the customs house and adds 60.16 per cent to his selling price. The rich man who can buy diamonds is taxed 10 per cent for his luxury; the poor man who has to buy a shirt is taxed 60 per cent for that necessity.

The dealer who imports a \$5,000 automobile leaves \$2,500 at the customs house. But when he imports \$5,000 worth of yarns he must leave \$6,960 at the customs house. The rich man's auto is taxed about 50 per cent. The poor man's yarn or blanket is taxed 110 per cent. Gee, but they do carry the good of the poor workingman almighty close to their hearts!

The garment working industry is notoriously the most underpaid and the worst "sweated" industry in the country. But the tariff on clothing is prohibitive. The importer who brings in \$5,000 worth of furs pays a duty of \$1,650. The man who imports \$5,000 worth of clothing pays a duty of \$4,320—which is added to the selling price, and the American manufactur-

er takes advantage of it to increase the price to the consumer and at the same time pays his employes a less wage than is paid in any other skilled trade. The republican national platform declared for protection that would equalize the difference in wages at home and abroad. Yet the tariff on clothing, yarns, blankets, etc., is more than the total labor and cost of materials combined. And workingmen who foot the bills are a difficult lot to convince that they are not being worked both ways from the middle by a lot of scheming manufacturers.

Recently N. Z. Snell of Lincoln addressed the Commercial Club, and during his remarks said:

"It would be as consistent for a Catholic to contribute funds to propagate the protestant faith, for a brewer to furnish aid to the local option league, or Senator Cummins and La Follette to advocate the re-election of Speaker Cannon as for a Nebraskan, except in extraordinary cases to take out life insurance at the present time in any one of the big eastern companies."

The more you study that remark the better it sounds. Mr. Snell has uttered a keynote that should ring in every Lincoln citizen's ears. It is applicable to a hundred other things than insurance. The insurance—life, fire, and accident—that may be purchased of Lincoln companies, is just as good and just as cheap as that which may be purchased of eastern companies. If purchased from home companies the money remains at home and gets into the channels of local trade. Every citizen gets a share of it—the printer, the pressman, the plumber, the carpenter, the bricklayer—and so all along the line. If sent to an eastern company it is lost to local business. Why should Lincoln workers contribute to the building of huge office buildings in Hartford and New York when by patronizing home companies they will soon compel the erection of such buildings right here in Lincoln? But while Mr. Snell and his associates in home insurance companies are making a plea for the purchase of home insurance, are they following it up all along the line? Are they buying all their printing in Lincoln? Are they smoking only Lincoln made cigars? Are they giving all their patronage to Lincoln tailors? Come on, gentlemen! Mr. Snell has given a new start to an idea that the union men of this city have been working on for these many years.

Now is the time to set in motion the machinery to have a park bond proposition submitted to the city at the coming spring election. Lincoln has adopted the initiative and referendum, and if a sufficient number of voters petition to have a bond proposition submitted it is mandatory upon the council to submit it. Lincoln ought to have a park system worthy of the name, and the only way to get it is to raise the money and pay for it. And the way to raise the money is to vote bonds. This is the fair way, because the generation to follow will then pay its share. Many of the present generation will not live long enough to benefit by a fine park system. Those who benefit most should pay for it. The park commission ought to have at least \$50,000 right now, and not less than \$100,000 a year for the next ten years. The workers of the city are the ones most vitally interested in the establishment of parks, and The Wageworker suggests that they take the lead in demanding a referendum on the bond proposition. This is a matter that the Central Labor Union could take up with credit to itself and advantage to the men and women it represents.

There ought to be a live, active Woman's Trade Union League in this city. If the club women of Lincoln really want to perform a service in the interests of their working sisters they will organize such a league. The Wageworker makes this proposition to the Lincoln Woman's Club: If you will guarantee that a majority of the club's membership will turn out and listen to an address from the president of the International Woman's Trade Union League, The Wageworker will agree to have the president make the address. If she fails to continue on Page 4.