

VISION OF THE DARK DAYS OF 1893-1896

Extracts from The Omaha Bee Recalling that Period of Business Stagnation, Industrial Paralysis and Financial Distress.

DO YOU WANT TO BRING BACK THOSE CONDITIONS?

Facts Presented Relate Largely to the Gloom which Pervaded this Section. To Cover a Wider Scope would Require Volumes. Genuine Calamity.

"Lest we forget." Turn back to the files of any newspaper for the years 1893 to 1896 and you will find chronicled, day by day, the indelible record of suffering humanity during the hard times. At this time, when the people of the United States are enjoying unprecedented prosperity...

erty and breathed the blasts of the storm last Tuesday to gather coal and wood in baskets. Deserving workmen who had always provided for their families in former years were out of employment and their families were on the verge of starvation and freezing.

HARD BEDS FOR UNEMPLOYED. Hundreds of Homeless and Hungry Men, Unable to Find Work, Seek Shelter and Food.

Stratched without bedding on the battlefields of life, seeking to numb the miseries of destitution with snatches of sleep, 200 homeless men passed last night at Rescue hall in this city.

for weeks, are waiting to work at anything that will earn bread and butter. The unemployed are not confined to the masculine gender. Women in rags, with little children crying piteously for food, often ask for a loaf of soup and a bed.

An illustration of the willingness of the men to work was demonstrated yesterday. Mr. Clark announced in the presence of the men at the hall that he had a job for some men to shovel coal. It meant 75 cents to the one who shoveled it. No sooner had the words left his lips ere he was surrounded by 50 or 60 impoverished men with outstretched hands.

DEPLORABLE CONDITION OF THE UNEMPLOYED. Workingmen the Subject of an Eloquent Sermon.

Rev. W. M. G. of the First Baptist church spoke yesterday for the workingmen in reply to the question: "What have you to be thankful for?" He said: "The daily papers on Thanksgiving day, which described the general festival, also contained reports of the suffering and distress of the millions of our people who are unemployed."

In the main portion of the hall, around the other stove, another large bunch of sleepers reclined in various positions on the floor. Similar scenes existed here. On the stage a number of bunks had been fixed up for the night.

A register is kept at Rescue hall and it contains the name, age, nativity, occupation, address and religion of all applicants for relief. A perusal of this record disclosed the fact that 428 men had applied for food and shelter within the past few weeks.

DEPICT DIRE DEPRESSION. Congress Being Flooded by Petitions from Workingmen Against Passage of Wilson Bill.

There is no doubt that a most profound impression is being made upon even the rational faculties of Congress by the flood of petitions coming in from the farmers and wage earners in the country against the passage of the Wilson tariff bill.

them, and they are without work and without bread. They beg their friends in vain. They have no money. They have no hope. They are in a state of despair. They are in a state of hopelessness. They are in a state of utter despair.

WORKINGMEN IN DISTRESS. Speakers Think the Emergency Justifies Course of Action Out of the Usual Order.

Half a hundred workingmen, or those who would be workingmen if they had the opportunity, met at Knights of Labor hall yesterday afternoon to hear the problem of providing relief for the unemployed discussed.

Major Bemis said that he was ready to assist in any feasible plan that could be devised to provide work for those who were in need of it. He mentioned the fact that in Cincinnati \$20,000 had been appropriated to beautify the parks and thus furnish work for a large number of the unemployed.

Famine, Plain and Simple. It is Obvious from the Results of Investigations that the Prime Cause of Many Cases of Destitution in this City is the Same that has Afflicted Every Metropolitan Center of the United States.

It is obvious from the results of investigations that the prime cause of many cases of destitution in this city is the same that has afflicted every metropolitan center of the United States, namely, the aftermath of the financial depression caused by the national depression last summer.

To Aid Suffering Poor. Mayor Lawrence of Council Bluffs has Issued the Following Call: Upon the Request of the Worthy Pastors of our Churches and Many of our Prominent Citizens I would Earnestly Recommend that our People should Assemble in Mass Convention at Dobney's Opera House, Thursday Evening, the 21st Inst., at 7:30 p. m., for the Purpose of Perfecting an Organization and to Devise Ways and Means to Aid the Suffering Poor of our Community.

At the meeting of the Knights of Labor last night the unemployed were talked of more than anything else. One of the members thought that the evening should be asked to appropriate a few thousand dollars to provide work for the unemployed.

Forty-five State Banks Suspended. (Lincoln Correspondence.) In Omaha Bee, Jan. 17, 1894.

The past year has been a particularly trying one upon the state and private banks of Nebraska. The causes which affected so many of them were not, however, local. The same causes operated in every state in the Union, and Nebraska was no worse off, and perhaps a great deal better, than many of her sister states.

Eight to Twelve Dollars a Month. One of the Conductors of the Omaha Street Railway Company said today: "The public does not know what many of the employees of our company have to contend with. There are enough extra men on the list to man 'em' entire running force, and the hardship these extra men have to go through to drive a man crazy. I know of several of the extra men who hang around headquarters every day, week in and week out, to catch a run whenever they can."

Throughout the country we do not expect more than 50 per cent of this meeting. The working people, to a great extent, blame themselves for the condition in which they are now placed. They have the power through the ballot to elect a president and a great many of the laws that have been enacted to their detriment.

Seven Thousand People Destitute. (Omaha Bee, Jan. 27, 1894.)

When Dr. Duryea, after a personal investigation of many cases recently issued an appeal to the citizens of Omaha to rescue men, women and children who were without food and fuel and in danger of starvation and freezing, his utterances were somewhat in the nature of a surprise and were regarded by many with a certain amount of incredulity.

(Following this introduction is a two-column story describing the poverty-stricken condition of a number of workingmen's homes visited by the reporter. As the story related the names of the unfortunate sufferers it is not deemed proper to reproduce it at this time.)

County Aid to Idle Men. (Omaha Bee, Jan. 19, 1894.)

After resolving the matter in their minds for some time the county commissioners have concluded to make a new departure and furnish employment to some of the needy men who have been drawing supplies from the county warehouse.

Need Necessaries of Life. (Omaha Bee, Dec. 15, 1893.)

A movement is on foot to organize an association of charitable people of Council Bluffs for the purpose of supplying the worthy poor of the city with such help as they may need. There are scores of families in the city that are in need of the common necessities of life.

HALD ON THE LABOR UNIONS. A Few Items From the Bee Files for December, 1893, and January, 1894.

The Omaha Central Labor union held a meeting last night. One of the speakers, who had addressed the union in that town who had been receiving \$17.50 a day were now only receiving \$12.25 per day.

Half a Union Out of Work. (Omaha Bee, Dec. 22, 1893.)

Knights of Labor assembly No. 274, composed of upholsterers and mattress makers, held a regular meeting last night. It developed at the meeting that about one-half of the membership is at present without anything to do and unable to find work in their line in Omaha.

LABOR MEN TALK ABOUT CHARITY. (Omaha Bee, Dec. 9, 1893.)

At the meeting of the Knights of Labor last night the unemployed were talked of more than anything else. One of the members thought that the evening should be asked to appropriate a few thousand dollars to provide work for the unemployed.

STAGNATION OF INDUSTRIES. Items From Omaha Bee Files for Winter of 1893-4 Show Thousands Out of Work.

There are 3,000 idle workmen in Akron, O. The poor of Cleveland, O., are being fed on beans and bean soup. The weavers at Lawrence, Mass., have accepted a cut in wages. A large knitting mill at Troy, N. Y., closed down indefinitely last week.