

# THE LABOR NEWS.

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## THE BIGGEST THING YOU HAVE.

By Norman D. Lippincott.

The future of the South is in the hands of the people who work. The aristocracy is dead and has been dead for forty years. Even while yet alive, its value was always in proportion to its actual work of superintendence. The portions of the South which will bear any comparison with similarly populated western areas are those in which industrial development has been proceeding on a considerable scale. Your union holds the key to the situation. If you can control the workers in any section you can demand a steadily increasing portion of the profits of such development. Bradstreet's agency tells you that 95 per cent. of the people who embark in the small retail line fail. You will find the vast majority of small tradesmen are not receiving the net yearly income that you are, while the average clerk's wages are nothing like as high as your own. Your motto in demanding an increase should always be that of Morgan: "All the traffic will bear." Don't let abstract rights worry you. They never worry the organized privileged classes. I always liked that motto. When applied to union demands it means many things:

First, that the increase should be simultaneously demanded in all contiguous industries in any given line. It should never drive an industry from one town to another or from one state to another.

Second, it should always take existing conditions into account. While this panic lasts, many demands would be worse than useless. And, by the way, if the workers had been thoroughly organized enough to enforce a full wage return for their work, they could have continued buying back all which they produced, and there would consequently have been no overproduction, and no panic.

One town may suffice, as compared with another through location, railroad extortion or other causes. When such a case is plainly evident to the intelligent heads in any line of work the demands should be modified accordingly.

Third, the union man should never forget that the larger part of wage increase is immediately shouldered, by the organized employers, back on himself and every other unorganized worker. If a union of masons, for instance, enforce an increase from \$3.00 to \$3.50 per day, every house which they build, the farmer, or the servant buys, costs a certain amount more or rents for more per month. To place the union idea on the firmest foundation, every class of workers should be organized, so that they may participate in the benefits of such organization; and until that time comes the unorganized classes should be given a certain consideration. The union is the biggest thing you have in life. It has raised you from poverty to a tolerable existence. It is giving you decent clothing, a comfortable home, it is permitting you to educate your children. Their wants will be more than yours. Prepare the way for them to step into an income in proportion to their needs and intelligence.

They are not all going to be doctors, lawyers, or professors. Teach them the dignity of useful work. Teach them the intelligent use of the spare time resulting from shorter working hours. Teach them to read promiscuously. Keep the union idea alive in them. You can't afford to let any of the next generation drift into the superintending ranks, and align itself against you. Make your union the center of your life. Organize a club, and reading room. A part of what you spend in many places would, if spent in a co-operative club room, pay all running expenses. There is not a single educational or social feature of your life which could not as well be built up around your union as any other institution. Advertise and popularize the union idea in every possible way, and above all things study politics.

## FROM PHILADELPHIA.

Editor of Labor News:—According to a table published in 1907 by Louise Bullard Moore, a computation of the income and expenditures of 200 workingmen's families in New York city is made for the purpose of showing how much of said income goes for rent.

In this table we find that rent absorbs a little over 19 per cent. of the gross income and also that the poorer the family the larger is the share going for this purpose, in some cases it being 30 per cent. We also find that the total average incomes were \$851.28; nineteen per cent. of this is about \$161.74.

It might be interesting to anyone of the inquiring turn of mind to find out why the American working man has to pay this large share of his income and who receives it and what does the receiver give in return.

When the builder employs the architect, the masons, bricklayers, carpenters and the host of others who help build houses, it is right and just that they should be compensated for their time and labor. The owner of the houses is entitled to enough income to cover the current expenses and a reasonable interest on his investment. So far nothing seems to stand in the way of justice and equity.

Now let us suppose a builder from the town of Green Valley reads the above statement and he figures it out this way: "Each of these families will give \$160 a year rent; that is 10 per cent. on \$1,600 invested. I can build a six or seven room house of good quality for \$1,600, for which



W. H. SINGLETON,  
President Bookbinders Union, Raleigh

these people will pay \$160 and will gladly leave the evil smelling tenements in which they are now compelled to live."

The proposition looked good to him, so he boards a train for New York. Upon his arrival he hunts up a friend and states his proposition to him. He is surprised at the pitying look on his friend's face, and asks him to explain wherein his proposition is faulty. "Where is the land on which to build the 200 houses?" The builder said he didn't know, but judged that a matter of small consequence because on his way up from the ferry he saw enough vacant lots on which he could build many times 200 houses. "Yes," said his friend, "although that land is vacant, yet it is very valuable." "How can that be?" said the builder. "No labor has ever been expended on it, there are no crops growing on it," "I understand." "You're from Green Valley. Well it's this way: Land, owing to the present and prospective population of New York City would yield an enormous crop of dollars, and as the population increased it would soon make the \$160 rent now paid by the workmen look very small." In proof of this assertion he showed him a statement in which the land value of New York City is far in excess of the value of the improvements on the land.

"If you say the present and prospective population of New York City makes the land so valuable, then, why don't the people who make that value appropriate it to the needs of the community and no one would suffer, because it would come back to them in added communal benefits; besides such a course would help the builders and mechanics, as well as allow every one to purchase or rent a home at a reasonable cost."

His friend didn't attempt to answer this last statement, except by telling him that he was one of those Henry George cranks and that his scheme was impracticable.

Very truly yours,  
OLIVER MCKNIGHT.

## IS SOCIALISM PERMANENT?

By the Rev. Charles Stelzle.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that socialism would bring about all that is claimed for it by its most ardent advocates. Does anyone who has studied history imagine for a moment that our solution of the social problem will be satisfactory to the next generation? It does not matter how high our ideals may be nor how perfect our system—the ideals and solutions for our day will be laughed at fifty years hence, just as we smile—aye, and are ashamed—of the social and economic system of fifty years ago, when the system of slavery was quite generally accepted even among the very best and most sincere people of the times. So thoroughly did they believe in it that it was one of the occasions of the greatest civil wars in history. But who is there today that believes that any man, no matter who he may be, has a right to enslave his fellowmen. It is true that even some of the churches believed it fifty years ago, and no one enjoys reminding us of this more today than does the socialist, even though he would have us repeat the mistake of advocating a social system which future generations will declare obsolete, if not worse.

It is quite generally admitted even by the socialists that socialism is not the ultimate ideal toward which we should strive. Many of the best informed among them say that socialism is simply a step toward philosophical anarchy, a system which would completely annihilate the law, and which today frankly declares that the law is the source of all evil—standing at the opposite extreme of socialism, which would apply the law to society in all of its ramifications. If socialism is to be discarded and something better is to take its place sometime in the future, why should the church stop short of anything that is not the highest and best? Why should it not stand for certain fundamental principles which are applicable to society in every generation and which were taught by Jesus Christ himself? These principles are eternal and it is for these that the church must ever contend.

When the socialists have been accused of preaching "class consciousness" for instance, they tell that they preach this doctrine in order to wipe out all class consciousness among men, so that they may assert the reign of the spirit of brotherhood.



## I. A. OF M.

J. N. CURTIS, Recording Secretary  
J. W. MCENTEE, Vice-President  
C. E. FISHER, Financial Secretary

But why should the church preach class consciousness in order to bring about the high ideal for which it is contending? Is it not better to strike at once for the ultimate ideal toward which we all profess to be aiming? Every man knows that his ideals are constantly advancing. When he reaches the ideal of former days, already his conception of what he ought to be has gone far beyond. Indeed, we will never reach our best aspirations in this life. No matter how advanced our progress in this generation, we cannot legislate for the next. The labor question will never be settled until the last day of work is done and the church cannot afford to be sponsor for any system which may embarrass future generations, both inside and outside of the church.

## FROM BAINBRIDGE, GA.

Editor Labor News:—In New South Wales, the premier state of Australia, there are no hard times, if the official report of the Labor Bureau of that state are to be believed. According to that report; there are no unemployed in the country. Not only that, but wages are actually rising—noticeably among agricultural laborers. In the adjoining state, Victoria, on the other hand the government is making frantic efforts to find work for the unemployed, and wages are falling. Why this contrast? Is there any difference in the administration of the two governments that might account for it?

The most radical distinction between the two systems is in the matter of taxation. In Victoria, the generally accepted taxing methods prevail. In New South Wales, we find the most striking instance on earth of radical tax reform.

Early in the year 1908 this new system came into operation. It was established by the state parliament, and required all town and county councils (only excepting the city of Sydney) to place a tax of one penny in the pound on land values, irrespective of improvements—other taxes to be placed on land or improvements, at the option of the local council, subject to referendum vote of land holders. There are 324 such taxing bodies in New South Wales, all subject, in part, to the will of the land owners in the matter of taxation.

As a result we have the remarkable spectacle of landowners placing all taxes on land in 299 of these 324 communities. They think it worth while to pay a greater tax on land values in order to exempt their improvements.

This leads directly to the question of why there are no unemployed in that country. Increased taxes on land make it unprofitable to hold land idle, and consequently, much land is thrown on the market, and the price conspicuously drops. On the other hand, exemption of improvements makes the idea of building look far more attractive to the man of limited resources. Cheap land and untaxed improvements have started a building boom—which means the employment of labor in many fields, and may be reasonably credited with the favorable condition of labor in New South Wales.

Very respectfully,  
MARY HICKS.  
Bainbridge, Ga.

"There's one thing that I've noticed about the charity that begins at home," sneered the crusty old bachelor.

"What's that?"  
"It becomes so extremely domestic that it never calls on the neighbors."  
—Exchange.

"Joy is well in its way, but a few flashes of joy are trifles in comparison with a life of peace."

## THE SORT OF SCHOOLS THE SOUTH NEEDS.

But without disparaging the college or the university, I would say that first of all, we must give greater attention to the public schools. It is in them that the farmer, the average man, gets his education. We cannot make our Southern farmers adopt Iowa methods so long as in the average Southern State, there are five times as many white farmers who can't read a farm paper or fertilizer formula, as there are in Iowa. We cannot improve our farming until we educate our farmers; we cannot develop the South until we develop our Southerners.

Nor is it enough that we have longer public school terms; we must have better public schools. And we must make them train for life, for practical things. Teach the farm boy how cotton and corn and tobacco may be improved by seed selection; how a plant feeds, and how soils are exhausted; what elements are found in common feedstuffs, and which make fat and which make muscle, which cows make money in the dairy, and which should be selected for beef—and a thousand other things. Not only should the elements of agriculture be a public school study in the rural districts, but there should be a revolution in the text-books for other studies. In your spelling book, for instance, where do you find such words as nitrogen, potash, protein, or even such common farm terms as clevis, singletree, mattock, etc.? Made by city people for city people, the books and teaching have not been adapted to the needs of the country children. We shall take a long step forward when the farm boy has proportionately fewer problems in arithmetic about foreign exchange and latitude and longitude and the metric system of weights and measures, and more about how to calculate a feeding ration for cows or a fertilizer formula from certain quantities of potash, phosphoric acid and nitrogen, and when he studies proportionately less about far-away Australia and Kamchatka, and more about the soil that he walks over and plows in every day of his life.—From an address by Clarence H. Poe, editor of the Progressive Farmer and the Southern Farm Gazette, before the Southern Commercial Congress, Washington, D. C.

## THE AIM OF ORGANIZATION.

Sometimes people talk as if we organized unions and paid dues, talked unionism and endured the hardships of strikes just for the fun of the thing—just because we want to disturb the peaceful owners of all property. Really, we should assure these people, this is not true. We are not passionately in love with the word "strike" or with the minimum wage of our trade. What we want and work for is life—more life and fuller, mental and physical. The practical justification of our struggle always to shorten hours, always to raise wages, is thus expressed by Wendell Phillips:

"Lift a man, give him life, let him work eight hours a day, give him the school, develop his taste for music, give him a garden, give him beautiful things to see and good books to read, and you will starve out those lower appetites. Give a man a chance to earn a good living, and you may save his life. So it is with woman in prostitution. Poverty is the road to it; it is this that makes them the prey of wealth and the leisure of another class. Give a hundred men in this country good wages and eight hours' work, and ninety-nine will disdain to steal. Give unto all women a chance to earn a good living, and ninety-nine of them will disdain to barter their virtue for gold."—Dallas, Tex., Laborer.



GEO. R. MATHEWS,  
President Central Labor Union,  
High Point, N. C.

## BRAINS.

Thomas L. Masson, in Lippincott's Magazine, thus wittily discourses upon a fruitful theme:

"Brains are common to all parts of the country, and traces of them have even been discovered in summer at Lenox, Bar Harbor and Newport.

"They are originally used to obtain money; but when money is obtained by them it usually takes their place.

"The quality of brains varies in different localities. Mixed with ginger, they become very valuable. With a spice, they are a necessity in every household.

"At one time they influenced literature, but the discovery was made that literature could do without them. Since that time they have been almost exclusively devoted to advertising.

"Brains are employed in various enterprises. They make bridges, railroads and other systems of transportation. They also create capital, and are used extensively in evading the law. They mix with water and gasoline, but are absorbed by alcohol.

"Brains are bought and sold in the open market. They may be traded in on the exchange in Washington and Albany or in other political centers. The best quality, however, are not traded in. Indeed, oftentimes they are not even heard of until long after they have passed away."

## THE UNION SHOP.

An Advantage to Both the Employer and the Worker.

In connection with the open shop campaign in the District of Columbia Sam De Nedrey, secretary of the Central Labor Union, is sending out some educational literature to both bosses and workmen. One of the "union shop statements" follows: "The trades union enables the fair employer, who, like the fair unionist, predominates, to estimate his labor on a living basis. This system is a good deal preferable to figuring on what his unfair competitor can procure his cheapest help for. Not only that, but it is a protection for the merchant. It enables the trades unionist to live as becomes an American citizen and has a powerful influence in procuring fair compensation.

"Again, the union headquarters act as a clearing house for the employer. It is convenient to send there for additional help.

"The trades union is not flawless by any means. It is a good deal easier to tear down than to build up, but the latter course applied with intelligence to the labor movement will overcome many of its deficiencies. The gains are greater than the losses. While the dominant trait of human nature is selfishness just so long will we find both sides endeavoring to get the best of the industrial situation. The trades union has come to stay. It is a natural outgrowth of present-day conditions."

## DOLLS AND DOLL CARRIAGES.

We have entirely too many dolls and doll carriages. We have our regular quantity bought and through a misunderstanding of the salesman we were shipped double the quantity; while we are not the sole losers on this deal you are the gainer. These dolls and carriages must be sold and sold quick and there's but one way to move them, and that is to sell them less than any one else can afford to, which we are doing every day. We have the greatest line of dolls and toys that has ever been shown in Greensboro, and we are selling them at the same small profit in which we move all our merchandise. We don't offer you any extra premiums in order to move this merchandise and then in a cunning way tell you we are going to give you something, and then on every twenty-five cents worth you buy from us add 10 per cent. extra.

This old premium business has played out. Every dollar's worth the merchant gives away his customers pay ten for. So why not come to a store which has been doing business and treating the people right for twenty-two years, and business increasing every year. We guarantee to save you money on every dollar's worth you buy from us and you will notice it more

on our holiday line than on anything else you buy.  
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A. V. SAPP, Prop. - 318 S. Elm St.

## WISDOM FOR EMPLOYERS.

Judge George Gray, speaking of organization as a factor in industry that must be recognized, said:

"Trade unionism is rapidly becoming a matter of business, and that employer who fails to give the same careful attention to the question of his relation to labor or his employees which he gives to other factors which enter into the conduct of his business makes a mistake which sooner or later he will be obliged to correct. In this as in other things it is much better to start right than to make mistakes in starting, which necessitates returning to correct them. Experience shows that the more full the recognition given to the trades union the more business-like and responsible it becomes. 'The worker has the right to quit or to strike in conjunction with his fellows when by so doing he does not violate a contract made by or far him.'

## UNION MEN.

Patronize the merchants who advertise in your paper. THE LABOR NEWS is appreciated by merchants who are in sympathy with the workers' cause, or who look for the business of the wage earner, and they use its advertising columns. There is hardly a firm in this city that could stand out openly and say it did not care for the workmen's trade, but names could be mentioned of business men who have nothing but hard words to hand in return for a generous patronage. Stand by the business men who stand by you. You can purchase as cheaply and advantageously from THE LABOR NEWS' advertisers, with as good treatment thrown in, as from any or all others combined. Patronize Home Industry. Patronize our Advertisers. Help your Friends. Get Union Label Goods.

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