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WELCOME FARMERS!

The Farmers' Conventions held in Edmonton this week have a particular interest to organized Labor, especially in view of the fact that representatives of the organized wage-earners of this city were present to extend fraternal greetings to their fellow toilers from the farms of the district.

The history of human society is an economic history. Every other phase of human activity has been and is influenced and to a large extent regulated by the economic phase. The whole development of society has in fact been more than anything else an economic development. It was most logical, therefore, that the organization of society along economic lines should take place. The Farmers' organizations like those of Labor is a part of this natural development. That the Farmers were the last great economic group to realize the group interest and the necessity for group organization, has not by any means had an adverse effect on the efficient functioning of their movement after it did come into being. Labor welcomes the Farmers' organization as a step necessary in the development of a social order that will bring about justice and equity to all classes of society.

We are told that there can be no permanent alliance between organized Labor and the organized Farmers, and in the majority of cases the wish is the father of the thought. There may be, however, some matters upon which Labor and the Farmers can not see eye to eye. They would not be separate economic groups if such were not the case. But the thing that links Labor and the Farmers together is the humanitarian aspirations of both movements. Both movements seek to uplift humanity and to adjust social and economic conditions that are now unjust and inequitable. This common aspiration of the two groups so dominates every other phase of the movements, that it will hold Labor and the Farmers together in spite of other differences that are in reality very trivial indeed when considered in conjunction with the humanitarian objectives of the two workers' movements.

A COMPARISON OF RESULTS—U.M.W.A. AND O.B.U.

In the southern part of Alberta the U.M.W.A. controls the mining situation as far as men working in and around mines are concerned. Last fall as a result of the activities of District 18, the miners in the south secured an increase in wages of 14 per cent. In a conference just concluded, an additional 13 per cent increase has been agreed upon, making a total of 27 per cent. over the wages paid prior to last fall. In the south, also, a closed shop agreement exists and only members of the union can be employed in the mines. The foregoing is in brief what the miners in Southern Alberta have gained from affiliation with the International union.

In the Edmonton coal field a different situation exists. Here is where, to the present, the O.B.U. has had undisputed sway. This is the district that O.B.U. organs have boasted about as being "cleaned out" as far as the U.M.W.A. is concerned. Here also may be found "the open shop." Here also the miners have all winter received 14 per cent. less than the miners under the jurisdiction of the U.M.W.A. in Southern Alberta. In some cases, as a matter of fact, the men have not even received the ninety-two cents per day bonus which is part of the southern miners' wages. Such in brief is what the O.B.U. has done for the miners coming under its jurisdiction in the Edmonton coal field.

It is not the function, neither is the intention of the Free Press to slander individuals. We leave that to those who have nothing better to offer. But it is our business to advocate the kind of organization and tactics that will result in the economic betterment of the workers. We contend that the value of an organization is determined, not by the number of clever spellbinders it contains, but by what it can accomplish for the workers. The U.M.W.A., we understand, intends to give attention to this district in the near future. It will then be up to the miners in the Edmonton field. If they desire the beneficial conditions that exist in the south, they must affiliate with the organization that can secure those conditions for them. If they want a continuance of the open shop, and lower wages than elsewhere prevail, they can have those conditions by placing their further dependence in the O.B.U., whose activities are alone responsible for the conditions that now prevail in this district.

SLACKERS

It is not surprising to find some employers that oppose trade unionism. Where a strong organization of workers exists in an industry, the people there employed have some say in the determination of the conditions of employment and the rate at which they shall dispose of their time and energy for a given time each day. They demand as their right, sanitary workshops and other conditions that tend to produce a comfortable existence. They endeavor to establish a workday sufficiently short to allow time for leisure and the improvement of mind and body. There are some employers who, being imbued with the kind of ideas that upheld the Divine right of Kings in medieval times, oppose trade unions with all the bitterness and much the same tactics as was characteristic of their middle-ages counterparts. Trade unionism is the beginning of democracy in industry, and those who would fight democracy will be found among the enemies of organized Labor.

Not all reactionary, despotic kings of industry are unkind or cruel. Some indeed are wonderfully benevolent. But in their benevolence they are still autocratic. They give or withhold as they graciously or otherwise desire, recognizing no right on the part of the worker to demand certain conditions in his own stead. There were in medieval times benevolent kings also. But democracy did not prevail in their kingdoms because of their benevolence, and the same rule applies to industrial autocracies today. The kings of industry who believe in their divine right to rule, be they benevolent or harsh and cruel, will oppose trade unionism just as naturally as the kings of old who believed in their divine right to govern, opposed the establishment of the people's constitutional rights.

The opposition of some employers to trade unionism can well be understood. But the individual who is past the comprehension of the ordinary mind is the worker who fights the principle of organized Labor, or who is merely indifferent or unsympathetic. Every time a union succeeds in raising wages, the standard is also raised for non-unionists who benefit by the efforts of the union. As a matter of fact since its inception organized Labor has carried the unorganized worker on the back of the movement, so to speak. Not because of their efforts but in spite of them, non-unionists have progressed along the road broken by the vanguard of the working masses—organized Labor. Every movement has its hangers-on. Accepting benefits obtained without contributing anything. But the most ungrateful hanger-on of all is the worker who while taking all the union is able to gain for him, pays for what he receives in abuse of the workers' organized movement. A mild term by which individuals possessing that peculiar frame of mind may be designated, is contained in the title of this article—Slackers.

A LIVING WAGE AND PROFITS

Alberta Baptists in convention in Calgary, no doubt with the very best of intentions passed a resolution declaring that employers should see "that employees not only received a living wage, but that employees, where possible, be made actual partners in business, sharing profit and loss." There is no disputing that Labor should receive a living wage. We contend also that Labor should be given a full share in the control and conduct of industry. Not as a favor but as an inalienable right. But that covers all, to our mind, that was neces-

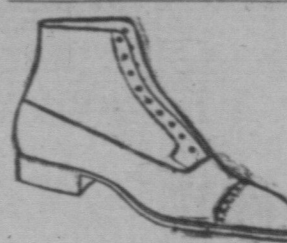
AN EXTRA SPECIAL SHOWING OF HIGH-GRADE FOOTWEAR

We are making a showing of several lines of high grade footwear for men and women which will prove of great interest. After all is said and done, footwear of this description is the cheapest in the long run. Apart from the satisfaction of wearing something nifty the wear is infinitely greater. Here are a few lines we should like you to see.

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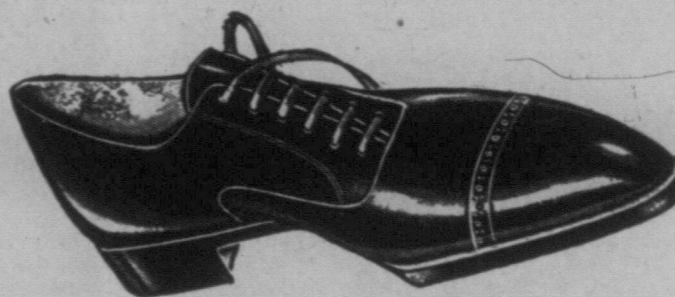
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sary in the resolution referred to.

A living wage embodies all the "profits" from industry that Labor desires. By a living wage we do not of course mean bare necessities of existence. All those actively engaged in productive work should have an opportunity to enjoy everything that is worthy of being produced. That kind of a living wage is all that Labor or any other class in society should require, and it should constitute all the "profits" of industry. A business that is economically sound will not have "losses" for anybody to share. If it is not economically sound it has no right to exist. If it cannot provide a living wage such as referred to above, the energy and material expended in it are being wasted.

ABOUT COMPULSORY INSURANCE

The care of the dependents of a breadwinner who meets death is not alone the concern of the family affected, but has a relation to the welfare of the community and thus of the nation. It would then appear that provision should be made for the maintenance of a family, should the breadwinner be taken, and such care should not have any semblance of charity. Life insurance is one way in which such provision may be made for dependents when their breadwinner is removed by death.

But the administration of life insurance as we have it today is a source of great economic waste. In no line of endeavor does competition play a greater part. In no section of business enterprise is there greater multiplicity of service and non-productive effort. Under a system of compulsory state insurance, it can be conservatively estimated that one-twentieth of the effort now expended in privately-administered insurance concerns in Canada, would be all that would be found necessary to successfully administer such a department of the state's activities. A tremendous economic saving could thus be effected and thousands of men would be released for productive work.

Compulsory state insurance has another strong point to commend it. As pointed out in the beginning the nation's welfare is affected by the family's welfare. And what is the business of the whole people should not depend upon the whim of an individual. That is precisely the condition that now prevails in so far as provision for dependents is concerned. By a system of compulsory state insurance maintained by a direct tax, provision could be made for the independent maintenance of families whose breadwinner was removed by death or incapacitation.

EDITOR'S NOTES

A diligent search might still reveal some spots in Edmonton that the clean-up campaign had not affected.

An American Labor paper states that to adjourn for the summer is the best thing the U.S. Congress did. The most satisfactory event in the history of our camouflage union government will be when its history comes to a close.

The Fargo Courier-News rises to remark: "We fail to remember any nation which fell because of too great freedom of discussion. But history is marked by the bleaching bones of those nations that tried to stifle freedom."

A boast of the O.B.U. is that some International members are carrying dual cards. Well, didn't some person once say something about fooling some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time? The best the O.B.U. could do, however, was to fool some of the people some of the time. Duality of cards won't last long, when the workers holding them realize the difference between action and hot air. The card they are holding because it means economic betterment is the one that they will take good care of.

FIRST NUMBER ALTA. TEACHERS' OFFICIAL ORGAN

A.T.A. Magazine is Name of New Publication—H. C. Newland is Editor

The A. T. A. Magazine is the name of a new monthly publication published in Edmonton and the organ of the Alberta Teachers' Alliance. H. C. Newland, Edmonton, is editor of the new publication; J. T. Cuyler, Medicine Hat, is news editor. The educational editor is T. E. A. Stanley, Calgary, while John W. Barnett of Edmonton is business editor. The initial number contains speeches and reports presented to the Teachers' convention at Easter and on the front cover is a powerful appeal to Alberta teachers to rally to the support of the A.T.A. and assert their independence through organization. The new monthly has a large field for useful work and its publication is in the hands of capable men. If it were our place to criticize, the typographical make-up of the paper would be the only point upon which an adverse criticism

SWISS BUILDING INTERESTS WOULD CRUSH UNION LABOR

Berne, May 26. (By mail).—That the Swiss lumber and building interests determined to crush union labor in these industries is indicated by the fact that the employers are refusing to take back some 10,000 strikers and locked-out men who have offered to go back to work. They declare that the spirits of the unionists who demanded a two-hour reduction of the working week, must be broken.

In a secret communication between the officials of the Swiss Lumber Association it is pointed out that during the recent strikes in Berne the unions had organized co-operative building associations, had taken contracts to construct houses, and had thus interfered with the employers' profits. This statement has just been published in the Berne Tagblatt. The Swiss Lumber Association has therefore forbidden any of its members to furnish any union co-operative with lumber under penalty of a heavy fine.

might be levelled. We predict a bright future for the A.T.A. Magazine and welcome its entry into the field of working class propaganda. E.E.R.

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