

# "Four Years More of the Full Dinner Pail"

Fifteen thousand school children starving in Chicago—among the causes, lack of employment of parents, and the constant increase in the cost of living without a corresponding increase in wages.

This is the startling announcement made in the daily newspapers of Chicago and which has brought gloom and consternation to the managers of the republican national committee in that city. They have been preaching prosperity and the "full dinner pail" through the continuance of the republican party in power and the maintenance of a high tariff. The republican newspapers of Chicago without exception have given this republican claim the lie direct. In publishing with big headlines the report of the special committee appointed to investigate the conditions in public schools, they show that thousands of children are suffering from hunger and actually dying from starvation in the great industrial and commercial city of Chicago.

Here are the headlines, running across three columns of the paper, from the Chicago Inter Ocean (rep.):

## HUNGER MENACES 20,000 PUPILS IN CITY SCHOOLS; MANY BEG REFUSE TO EAT

Startling Conditions in Chicago Shown by Report of Investigating Committee Who Find Starvation Has Many Victims

### 5,000 HAVE NO MEAL IN MORNING

Body Asks Food for Children, Some of Whom Have Forgotten Taste of Butter, Living on Dry Crusts Earned by Heroism of Mothers Who Go to Bed Fasting

The Tribune heads its article:

### HUNGER STALKING IN CITY SCHOOLS

Five Thousand Pupils Don't Know What a Full Meal Means and Ten Thousand Others Are Underfed

The Record-Herald (Ind. Rep.) heads its story with:

### THOUSANDS OF PUPILS SUFFER FROM HUNGER

The Inter Ocean begins the horrible story telling of the starving of the little ones in the midst of "republican prosperity" with the following:

"Five thousand children often go to school breakfastless. Fully fifteen thousand school children of Chicago are underfed and habitu-

ally hungry. Mothers go to bed hungry in order that their children may have food in the morning. Half-clad and crying children have been found on the streets begging dead fowls and rotten fruit to eat.

"These are some of the statements in the report on indigent children filed with the school management committee of the board of education."

The Tribune (rep.) says: "Many wage earning mothers have incomes of not more than eighty cents a day."

Summarizing the causes which produce the conditions of hunger the same paper cites, "lack of employment," and the "constant increase in the cost of living without a corresponding increase in wages" as the chief reasons for the horrors.

Among numerous instances the Tribune cites the following:

In Armour school district: Father out of work, mother sick; not a scrap of food in the house; five children, three half naked and one garbed only in undershirt, crying for bread. For three days they had lived on tea—no bread, milk or sugar.

In Jenner school district: One mother supports a family of four children on \$2.50 a week sewing pants.

In Drummond school district: Family of seven. No food in the house. Father out of work. Went to lake to commit suicide, but changed his mind and committed misdemeanor in order to be locked up and get prison meal.

In southwestern district: Family of six found hungry, almost crazed by lack of food. Had lived five days on bread and water, and last loaf had been eaten for breakfast.

These are only a few of the many which the Tribune cites out of the thousands reported. During the present republican panic hungry children have not even been provided with free soup houses.

### MOVED TO RELIEVE HUNGRY CHILDREN

The Lincoln (Neb.) Star (rep.) printed in its issue of Monday evening, October 5, the following dispatch:

Chicago, October 5.—Shocked by the revelation that there are 15,000 starving or half fed children in Chicago, Mayor Busse has taken immediate steps to effect some organized system of relief. He was promised the co-operation of numerous charitable organizations and philanthropic individuals.

Mr. Busse telephoned instructions to Private Secretary Mullaney to procure for him all the information possible on the actual conditions.

The mayor, as soon as he returns to the city, will have a conference with the school officials and with members of his cabinet on the question of adopting adequate measures for alleviating the sufferings disclosed in the report made to President Schneider of the board of education.

In addition the mayor, who is particularly compassionate of the sufferings of children, announced that as a private citizen he would cooperate with other citizens in any relief plan found feasible.

"If these reports represent actual facts the condition is alarming," said the mayor. "I am going to give my full attention to a remedy of the evils as soon as I can consult with my advisers. Speaking offhand, I would say that it probably would be unwise to begin feeding the children in the schools on a wholesale scale on account of the abuses that would be bound to creep into such a system. But there are other ways, I am sure, in which we can work to relieve this suffering."

It was a new and complex problem in charity that was put up to the Chicago public by the publication of the report that 15,000 school children are either habitually hungry or insufficiently nourished. To care for these children it is necessary, according to authorities, either to take them from their parents or to educate the parents in the proper feeding of the young. Financial assistance is seldom required, they say.

Miss Rebecca B. Holmes, assistant superintendent of the Chicago bureau of charities, said the means of rescuing these unfortunate children is already in existence in the machinery operated by the bureau. All that is needed is a larger fund to enable the organization to extend its work and reach all of the cases of distress. She proposed these three classes of remedies:

Where children are starving for lack of money to buy food a pension should be paid the family until it is able to support itself properly.

In cases of distress resulting from drunkenness or other depravity of the parents the children should be placed under the care of the juvenile court.

Where children are improperly and insufficiently nourished through ignorance the mother should be instructed in the proper selection and preparation of foods.

"If for every family in which starving children are found some person would volunteer to undertake the education of the mother in the care of her children there would be comparatively little distress of this kind," said Miss Holmes.

### THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING

If there is one thing of more interest than politics to the majority of citizens in this country it is the cost of living. The people are hearing constantly of the wonderful benefits that will come to them through the continuance of republican rule in nation and state, yet concerning the most important matter to them—moderate prices for the necessaries of life—nothing is accomplished.

The public knows that trusts are chiefly responsible for most of the exorbitant prices, yet after years of attacks on these pernicious combinations, the prices continue to increase year after year. There will be sufficiently large crops of wheat, corn, oats, etc., this year and there have been phenomenal yields in recent years, but all this prosperity has been of no real benefit to householders. In fact, the more plentiful the crops and the larger the production of articles which people must purchase, the higher are the prices, not only in one section, but in all parts of the country.

The complaints by householders from time to time that prices for the necessaries of life were unwarrantably high are fully borne out in an official report just published by the national bureau of labor. This report deals with the retail prices for food in the years 1890 to 1907 inclusive, and the statistics cover the retail prices of thirty staple food commodities as sold in sixty-eight localities in the United States by 1,014 dealers.

Retail prices of food in 1907 were higher than in any other year of the eighteen year period named, and 4.2 per cent higher than in 1906. The articles which showed the greatest advance in prices are: Flour 8.9 per cent; butter 8 per cent, evaporated apples 7.8 per cent,

milk 7.3 per cent, corn meal 6.8 per cent, cheese 6.7 per cent and potatoes 5.4 per cent. The only article which showed a decrease is tea, the decline being 0.2 per cent.

Retail prices in each month of 1907 were higher than in the corresponding month of 1906; in January they were 3.9 per cent higher, in February 4.2 per cent, in March 4 per cent, in April 3.9 per cent, in May 4.1 per cent, in June 4.3 per cent, in July 4.5 per cent, in August 4.8 per cent, in September 5.1 per cent, in October 5.4 per cent, in November 4 per cent, and in December 3.1 per cent higher. Thus it is seen that October, 1907, showed a greater increase over the corresponding month of 1906 than any other month of 1907, and December showed the least increase.

The articles which showed the most marked advance in prices in December, 1907, over December, 1906, are flour 17.5 per cent, evaporated apples 15.3 per cent, corn meal 11.9 per cent, potatoes 10.1 per cent, and milk, fresh, unskimmed, 9.6 per cent.

The average prices of twenty-nine of the thirty articles were higher in 1907 than in any other year of the eighteen year period, 1890 to 1907. The price of every article, except coffee, was higher in 1907 than in 1896, the year of lowest prices during the period, and in the case of sixteen of the thirty articles it was more than 25 per cent above the level of 1896. The increases in the price of some of the more important articles over the 1896 prices were as follows: Bacon 62.7 per cent, potatoes 56.6 per cent, eggs 48.4 per cent, salt pork 47.9 per cent, fresh pork 46.3 per cent, and lard 45.1 per cent.

All these increases in prices since the year 1896, when Mr. Bryan first ran for the presi-

dency, are significant. Since that year the householders certainly have not prospered so far as moderate prices for food are concerned. The meat and other food trusts have had their way and demanded and received exorbitant rates. Should there not have been some improvement in this matter in a dozen years of republican rule in the nation?

The trouble now is that the purchasing power of a dollar is far less than in past years. In 1890 a dollar would purchase 7.81 pounds of fresh beef, and the same in 1896, but in 1907 it would only purchase 6.47 pounds. For the United States, as a whole, the average cost of food per family in 1890 was \$318.20. In 1896, the year of lowest prices, it fell to \$296.76; in 1907 it reached the highest point of the eighteen year period named, being \$374.75.—Boston Globe.

### SURPRISE OF THE CAMPAIGN

One of the great surprises of this campaign, in my opinion, will be the vote which Bryan is to get in Greater New York. In 1900 he had only 30,000 over McKinley in the area comprising the metropolitan city. This year all the signs are his plurality in the whole town will be upward of 100,000. It may be 125,000. Unless the republican managers can do something to stop the labor people going wholesale to Bryan it may even be more than that.—Walter Wellman in Chicago Record-Herald.