

THE LABOR WORLD

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MRS. OLESEN THE VICTOR.

To Anna Dickie Olesen belongs the credit for defeating Senator Frank B. Kellogg. Dr. Shipstead could not have won alone. He might have come near it, as the Farmer-Labor party did with its state ticket, but without Mrs. Olesen in the field Mr. Kellogg would have pulled through. Had Mrs. Olesen put up a less strenuous campaign the chances are that the result of the election would have been different even if she had remained a candidate. It was her persistent pegging away at Kellogg's record that weakened the morale of the conservative voters. Thousands of them went to her who would not go to Shipstead.

And Mrs. Olesen is a wonderful campaigner. She is a woman of vision. She is well grounded in true democratic principles. She is a progressive and understands the philosophy of the present liberal movement. There is nothing superficial about her at all. She stands head and shoulders above the average man in public life. While she may have lost the election she gained a tremendous moral victory. She served the people better than they can now appreciate. She will be heard from again. Such a brave and fearless champion of the people's cause can not lose.

Every friend of Shipstead in Minnesota should doff his hat to Annie Dickie Olesen. The workers and farmers and the masses of the people are indebted to her for the great service she rendered to their cause.

LABOR FIGHTS ILLITERACY.

Organized labor fought for the universal free school system. Organized labor has fought always for education. For that reason organized labor is for American Education Week, which this year is the week of December 3 to 9.

The fight for education must go on. Democracy cannot live without education. Census figures show the startling extent of illiteracy. The army tests likewise showed the amazing lack of even rudimentary education.

Literacy tests show only the percentage who can read and write. But to be able to read and write a little doesn't mean education—the possession of knowledge and to make use of knowledge.

Illiteracy is slowly disappearing, but too much remains. The census of 1910 indicated there were 5,516,163 illiterates in the United States above 10 years of age; the figures for 1920 show a total of 4,931,905 above 10 years of age.

The following table shows how this illiteracy is divided: 1910 1920. Per cent of total population illiterate above 10 years of age 7.7 6.0. Per cent of native whites of native parentage 8.7 2.5. Per cent of foreign-born whites 12.7 13.1. Per cent of negroes 30.4 22.9.

The above census figures are based upon inquiry merely. Persons who can write their names or a few words often consider themselves literate. Many authorities have long thought that a test of ability to use the language in a practical way would reveal a much larger number of illiterates in this country.

The late Secretary Lane estimated that perhaps 20 per cent of the citizenship were illiterate. A practical test administered to a million and a half soldiers in the war revealed, to the amazement of many, that 25 per cent of them could make no practical use of written English.

All thoughtful persons seem agreed that this appalling situation is a menace to the Nation's highest interests. The total urban population is now slightly in excess of the rural, but the number of illiterate in rural exceeds those in urban communities by one million. Compulsory school attendance laws, well enforced in urban districts, evidently have had a beneficial influence in reducing the number of illiterates 10 to 15 years of age to 0.5 per cent. In rural districts the percentage is 3.8, almost eight times the number in city or urban districts.

There are four illiterate aged 16 to 20 in our rural districts to one in our urban districts; and of voting age, 61 years and over the number of illiterates in rural districts is twice the number in city or urban districts. Of those whose parents are "native" there are more than four illiterates in rural communities to one in urban communities.

SCHOOL DAYS

LIBRARY anywhere is a menace; and it is an unbeatable handicap to those who are illiterate and who remain so. The aim of democracy must be to fit each person for intelligent participation in the affairs of democracy. Education Week will stimulate interest in education. That is good. But Organized Labor must continue its efforts all of the time.

THE POOR BOOKSELLERS.

Standard Oil (of New York) has declared a stock dividend of 200 per cent. This increases the capital from \$75,000,000 to \$225,000,000. There hasn't been a dollar of real value added by this hokus but many persons will have bigger bank accounts because of it.

It is a matter of bookkeeping. The par value of the stock was reduced by the directors from \$100 per share to \$25. At the same time, when the announcement of the big melon was made the stock jumped 20 points on the stock exchange to a 596, a new high mark. More hokus.

Back in 1913 a stock dividend of 400 per cent was declared. Like a pondrous avalanche the mountain of wealth moves on. Once upon a time Judge Landis, now the mahout of baseball, cut the original Standard Oil company of New Jersey into thirty-three parts. These parts were supposed to crawl off by themselves to eke out a bare existence in a cruel and competitive world.

They have had a hard time getting along. Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller, senior and junior, have been at the verge of destitution. These crippled fractions of a once mighty combination have found it difficult to get all they want in Persia, Mexico and other parts of the world. They have had to be most round-about in grabbing the naval oil reserves; and in general they have just had to skimp and scrape along. It is tough to be all cut up that way!

But somehow the various little Standard Oils ooze their way along, lubricating their pathway as they go, finding ways over the rough places and keeping the wolves from the door. Standard Oil of New Jersey, parent of the flock, hasn't gone bankrupt. Standard Oil of California is expected to declare a stock dividend of 100 per cent soon. Practically all Standard companies are listed to come across in the near future, some of them handsomely. Most all have built up tremendous surpluses.

Among the companies mentioned in this connection and the amount of their surplus on December 31, are: Standard Oil of New Jersey, \$592,021,632; Standard Oil of Indiana, \$143,222,710; Prairie Oil and Gas company, \$87,796,851; Ohio Oil company, \$72,806,626; Vacuum Oil company, \$62,664,918; Atlantic Refining company, \$61,709,049; Standard Oil company of Ohio, \$17,344,463; Standard Oil of Kansas, \$6,768,408; Solar Refining company, \$4,608,550.

Nothing was gained, of course, by the magnificent gesture of Judge Landis in "smashing the trust." It was all very foolish. Nothing was smashed. It's all a matter of bookkeeping. "Each for all and all for each."

But this is not a dissertation on trust-busting. We here call attention to the inordinate profits—the grand take-off. Profits go on forever. Standard Oil merely duplicates what the whole world of corporation operation is doing. Steadily, year by year, during the last ten years, before the war and since the war and during the war, the rate of corporation dividends has gone up and up and up. Every year has seen the aggregate of dividends higher than it was the year before.

And that ought to be of interest to the workers for organizing unions and fighting for an even break in the rewards for productive service. TENDERS TO PROFITEERS. Attorney General Daugherty indicates a tender regard for the feelings of the profiteers. He assures them, according to the public press, that he will not prosecute them "until it is established absolutely on the face of the records" that the case against them will "stand the acid test."

This means that the profiteers need not fear prosecution unless the department of justice (which the attorney general calls the government) will be compelled to act. The profiteer is guilty of the most contemptible offense that can be committed against a people involved in war. He even lacks the nerve often shown by the man who commits treason, the most heinous offense against a nation.

The profiteers, however, need have no fear from the department of justice, if they present any sort of a bluff defense, and if they employ attorneys who are versed in legal de-

SCHOOL DAYS By DWIG



WAGES AND PROSPERITY

(From a statement of the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.) Of the 41,500,000 persons gainfully employed in the United States, 24,800,000, or nearly 60 per cent, are actual wage earners. In this class are skilled workers, semi-skilled workers, laborers and servants.

If, to these one adds the nearly 14 per cent engaged in clerical and kindred work, we have practically 30,500,000, or 73 per cent of all those gainfully employed on a wage or weekly salary basis. Our workers are the great buying public. If they are enriched they are better buyers and so are a stimulant to both production and consumption. The manufacturer himself is prosperous only as his and all other wage-earning employees are prosperous. The man who pays good wages is only paying himself good dividends.

If wages were such that every one of the 7,097,223 women clerks and the wives and daughters of the 23,246,373 men clerks and wage earners in the United States could buy another cotton dress, another woolen dress, another silk dress, the question of unemployment in the textile trade would be solved, as well as the problem of better wages there.

The worker has gone up a step. He is strong enough and numerous to cling to his position on this higher level. It is to be supposed that the rung next lower down on the ladder has been sawed off. The worker has mounted and will never climb down.

DEFINES "STRIKEBREAKERS"

The Associated Press has discovered something new about strikebreakers. It has discovered that "men who act individually in accepting positions" are not strikebreakers. How the Associated Press made this discovery is not known. The Commercial Telegrapher's Journal quotes the following from the Associated Press service orders, the orders to men who write and handle A. P. copy.

"Look out for that word 'strikebreaker.' It is associated in the public mind with the bully or thug supplied by professional strike-breaking agencies and should not be used to describe men who act individually in accepting positions." So it is "discovered" that those who are not "professionals" are not to be known as strikebreakers. This is very kind of the Associated Press, and doubtless Mr. Atterbury, Mr. Loree and other union busters will be appreciative.

DAUGHERTY DOUBLES

To Labor—"So long and to the extent that I can speak for the government of the United States I will use the power of the government to prevent the labor unions of the country from destroying the open shop."—Mr. Daugherty's comment on the Shommen's injunction. Mr. Daugherty then spent a million and a half dollars in seven weeks, got 17,000 affidavits, the truth of all of which has been challenged. To Business.

"Sleuths are not to be sent snooping around into the highways and by-ways of commerce in search of well-meaning officers or members of trade associations who, from ignorance of the law, may have fractured one of the many provisions of the well-known but little understood, Sherman Anti-Trust Act."—From Nation's Business. "Keeping Business Out of Jail;" an authorized interview with the Attorney General of the United States by a member of the staff.

The World War lasted 1,823 days.

READ THEM AND WEEP

Because fabrication is not distinguished from production of utility of time and place as well as of form, we hear the cries. "The producer gets too little out of what the user finally pays" and "Labor produces all wealth." This emphasis on fabrication gets men into the bad habit of considering that in fabricating goods they produce value, and just thing they acquire a right to demand other services in return for theirs.—From address of Ernest F. DuBrul, at convention of the Society of Industrial Engineers.

Following are a few excerpts from an article in Nation's Business, the organ of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, entitled "Keeping Business Out of Jail—An authorized interview with the attorney general of the United States by a member of the staff." "Sleuths are not to be sent snooping around into the highways and byways of commerce in search of well-meaning officers or members of trade associations who, from ignorance of the law, may have fractured one of the many provisions of the well-known, but little understood, Sherman Anti-Trust Act."

The Attorney General believes that to number of violations of the law can be reduced to a minimum if the government will only provide a means of assisting the business men of the country to keep within the law. "The Attorney General said: 'Business has a conscience; business as a whole is inherently honest and upright. I am Attorney General I am not going unnecessarily to harass men who have unwittingly run counter with the statutes.'"

LABOR LAWS THAT BITE

By GEORGE W. PERKINS, President Cigarmakers' International Union. (In Cigarmakers' Journal) The next congress will no doubt attempt to pass a compulsory arbitration law. Such a law in some form is evidently desired by the present anti-union forces. The railroad workers have apparently been picked as the goat, perhaps with the hope that they can be placed in the public service class and thus a greater pressure can be brought to bear against them.

It is proposed to "put teeth" in the Esch-Commins law. This means that railroad employees will then have to submit their wage demands and adjustments to a hand-picked United States labor board or commission that will be empowered to compel the workers under penalty of fines or imprisonment to accept any decision the board may see fit to award.

Such a proposition in any form is wholly impractical and is dangerous. American workmen in any line are not going to submit to being forced to work for wages arbitrarily set, nor are they going to tamely accept any punishment for their refusal. Price fixing by the government in industries in which it is not directly and actively engaged has; proven economic failure. Wages is the price of railroad labor, and price fixing along this line will meet with abject failure at least so long as the government does not own and control the industry.

The principle is not new. It has been tried and found a failure from the time of the French revolution down to the recent fiasco of the Australian labor. Labor hating congressmen had better forget such reactionary legislation. Such a law "with teeth in it," if passed, is liable to be up against a whale of a dentist's bill.

A 'KEEPING ALIVE' WAGE

By J. M. BAER, The Ex-Congressman-Cartoonist. The "Railroad" Labor Board now denies the right of the workers to receive a living wage. In other words, it does not believe that the twenty-five million wage earners should live! If the board were real frank it would make its decision read like this: "To H— with the working people! Let them starve to death." That is really what the decision means.

Even extremists like President Harding and Judge Taft have stated that the workers should not receive a living wage but a "saving wage." "They're for the workers"—especially at election time. But here is an autocratic governmental institution, established by a law which declares that the workers shall receive a "just and reasonable wage" coming out against a living wage. This Board denies the right of the laborers who do the physical work required to keep this great nation running prosperously, sufficient food to keep them physically fit to do the work. Surely the men who toll are the ones who more than anyone else require their share of vitamins.

The railroad workers ask for a living wage. Any fair-minded tribunal would give them such a wage under the terms of the law. Surely the terms "just" and "reasonable" in the law can be interpreted to be at least a decent living. There is some question as to the formula for arriving at a living wage. President Jewell and other labor leaders definitely showed the Labor Board what it costs to keep a family according to the American standard of living. The maintenance of way workers, who receive \$562.04 a year, know that it is not enough to maintain a family in self-respect. They care not what formula is used to determine the wages. As essential workers in one of the most essential industries—transportation—they demand to live.

COMPANY UNIONS ARE BAIT FOR LABOR

By W. A. LOGAN (In The Auto World) Company unions were not thought of until labor unions began to function. The employers never made any attempt to give the workers employed by them any kind of representation, until the unions got strong enough to demand and receive some recognition. As the labor organizations gained in strength and power; made demands, called strikes, and in other ways displayed a militant, aggressive attitude; the value of organization was vividly impressed upon the minds of an ever-increasing number of workers.

The employer knows the value of organization. He knows it so well that he has no desire to see the workers organize and gain the strength and power that unity of purpose and concert of action always bring. He Discourages Labor. Every employer does his best to discourage the formation of unions, for in them he sees an agency that takes away from him much of his power to dictate wages, hours and working conditions.

After using every means that fertile brains could devise to disrupt and destroy the organizations of labor, the "Company Union" has been brought into being, in company with several other so-called "Welfare" and "Profit Sharing" schemes. All of these schemes have been devised for the purpose of wearing the unthinking worker away from his labor organization. The "Company Union" is a very poor substitute that some kind of organization is needed to satisfy a well-defined desire that must be gratified.

They Are Not Honest. Employers, who advocate the formation of "Company Unions" are not entirely honest in their professions of interest in the workers nor are they actuated by motives that are entirely disinterested. Workers will do well to bear these things in mind and reason out for themselves why an employer is willing to have some form of an organization among his employees, that he is able to control to a certain degree. A labor organization is composed of workers employed by many employers. It is not one shop or factory affair. The success it has, in elevating conditions, shortening hours and raising wages, does not apply to one shop alone, but applies to all unorganized shops, and is felt, indirectly, in many unorganized shops. A worker does not have to be bound to one shop, to reap the benefits of a labor organization.

For Fullness Freedom. The labor organization furnishes a meeting place, where regularly stated meetings can be held and where there is freedom of expression. No employer has any control over the affairs of a labor organization nor are foremen and other subordinate officials of any firm or corporation, allowed to have any voice in determining the policies or movements of such an organization. A labor organization not only covers the shops and factories in one city, but there is a nation-wide field.

The fact has been burned into our hearts that the only time a working man has the "right to work" guaranteed him by the government is when he is under the protection of a strike-breaking agency," says the Journal of Electrical Workers and Operators. "If this were not true, and if Mr. Harding really meant what he said, the government would have enforced the "right to work" of the thousands, yes, millions, of jobless men; were were compelled last winter to tramp the streets, because they did not have the 'consent' of a small set of men. At that time Mr. Harding and his imitators did nothing about sustaining the sacred right of those hungry and desperate men to work, eat and live.

"All this cant about a workers' 'right to work' is simply an attempt to uphold the disgraceful act of scabbing, make a strikebreaker agency out of the federal government and pave the road and try to take away his right to quit—to strike. "So we must drive home to every wage earner that the only rights he possesses are those he is strong enough to get and to keep—no more. At all times it is a question of organization."

"Illiteracy is slowly disappearing in the United States," says the federal bureau of education in advertising the "American education week," Dec. 3 to 9 next. Insisting that the need for a continuous campaign for education is necessary, the bureau says: "The late Secretary Lane estimated that perhaps 20 per cent of the citizenship were illiterate. A practical test administered to a million and a half soldiers in the war revealed, to the amazement of many, that 25 per cent of them could make no practical use of written English. All thoughtful persons seem agreed that this appalling situation is a menace to the nation's highest interests.

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A ONE-SIDED THEORY

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