

## HOUSE SERVANTS ORGANIZE UNION FOR OWN PROTECTION

Open Headquarters in Washington and Elect Officers; May Soon Apply for Charter in A. F. L.

Washington, March 29.—Something new in the labor union movement is the National Association of Wage Earners which women of the country have formed primarily for domestic workers. Headquarters have been purchased in this city and a practise house established, which has many of the features of a school of domestic science.

Miss Nannie H. Burroughs of the District of Columbia is president of the association. The other officers are Mrs. Mary Bethune of Florida, vice-president; Miss Minnie L. Bradley of Connecticut, executive secretary; Mrs. Maggie L. Walker of Virginia, treasurer; Miss Elizabeth C. Carter of Massachusetts, chairman of the investment board, and Mrs. Lizzie Fouse of Kentucky, registrar.

The association is heralded as "a labor organization with a constructive program." This program is set forth categorically and strangely enough a demand for "more pay and shorter hours" does not appear as the first fundamental object of the movement.

To develop and encourage efficient workers, to assist women in finding the kind of work for which they seem best qualified, to elevate the migrant class of workers and incorporate them permanently in service of some kind and to standardize living conditions are the listed primary purposes of the union of colored women. Then comes the wage question which is stated merely as a desire to "secure a wage that will enable women to live decently."

Other objects enumerated are: To assemble the multitude of grievances of employers and employes into a set of common demands and strive mutually to adjust them; to enlighten women as to the value of organization to make and supply appropriate uniforms for working women through a profit-sharing enterprise and to influence just legislation affecting women wage earners.

There are three million Negro women engaged in domestic and personal service occupations in the United States. "Negro women wage earners are the only large unprotected labor group in America," says the announcement of the formation of the new union. "Unorganized labor will be exploited and mistreated. An organized labor group gets fairer wages, better living conditions, greater respect—economic justice. Then too, a labor organization that functions properly develops in the workers greater skill and general efficiency, pride of occupation and improvement in general conduct. The latter improvements are as important as the former considerations."

In one of the reports of the National Woman's Trade Union League of America the statement was made that "of all the hard fates to be met, the hardest that the American born child can face is to be born a little colored girl baby, and this sad truth is here put into words that may be reserved in expression, but contain depths of suffering for our colored sisters."

Representatives of the Women in Industrial Service listed 156 establishments in the Middle West employing over 16,000 Negro women, and reported that general standards for this class of workers were found to be somewhat lower than the average and their

industrial opportunities to be decidedly more restricted than those of other women workers.

"In the face of these findings," says the president of the new association, "nothing has been done to help our condition, and we are lacking in common sense and constructive initiative if we sit down and wait for white women to do for us what we can do for ourselves. After reading this report a few colored women talked the matter over seriously and decided not to stop until we have organized all Negro working women into a labor union." She adds that "what we want is help to get this message over to white people who will get just as much benefit out of it as the colored people—perhaps more."

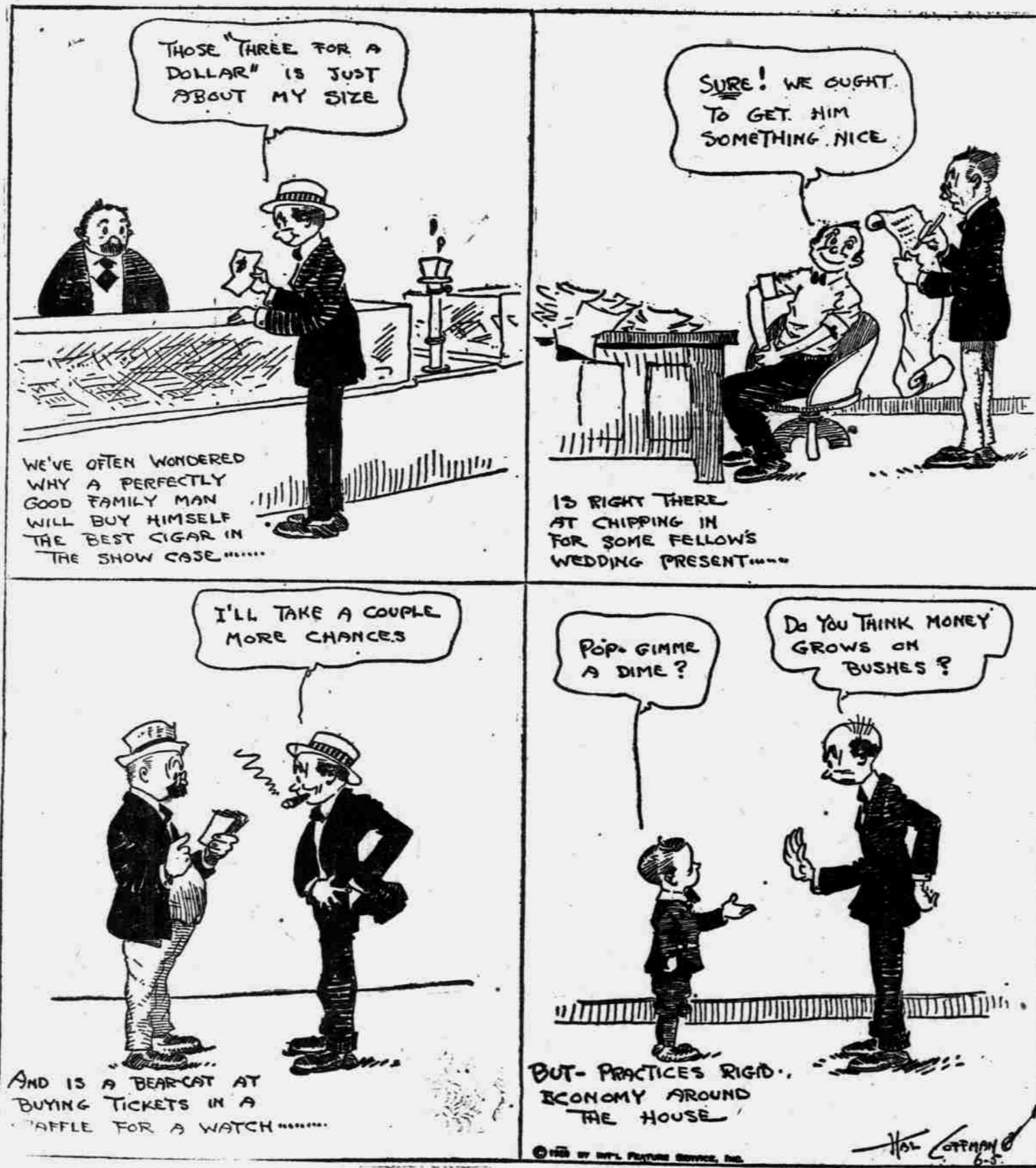
Emphasis is laid upon the statement that domestic servants are the only wage earners that are not improving the quality of their service. Housewives put up with more slipshod methods and harum-scarum work than employers in any other field. The air and the magazines are full of complaints, but complaints alone will not stimulate in household workers a desire to give better service. It is also pointed out that people have been keen to provide schools for the training of workers in stores and factories, but the women who have the closest personal contact with the family are picked green from the streets or greasy from employment agencies.

It is upon the hypothesis that women cannot do domestic work without training and that nine tenths of such workers are in service by reason of necessity, therefore the work is distasteful to them and they do not try to become efficient, that the Domestic Service Practise House has been established. Short-cut courses, not from books, but with the materials and problems they are to handle in the homes, will be given women who seek positions as cooks, chambermaids, laundresses waitresses, nurses or maids.

All who apply for work will be given practical examinations or tryouts. It a woman wants a place as cook she will be given meat, vegetables, bread and pastry to cook. If she seeks a position as a waitress, she will be required to set a table, serve a meal and tell what she knows about serving and caring for the dining room and its appurtenances. All applicants will be given instructions in good manners and general conduct and advised as to the kind of clothes to wear for their particular work. They will also be taught how to care for their own rooms.

Applicants will be graded according to the way they handle practical tests, their general manner and their personal appearance. Each woman will be given a service and rating card, the one to be kept at the service center and the other to be sent to the employer. Employers are asked to co-operate by keeping the rating card accurately and encouraging the workers by fair treatment.

Training in the habits of courtesy and standards of conduct and improvement in personal cleanliness and care of living quarters will be stressed, it is said. In the matter of dress, an effort will be made to popularize a dress of which the domestic workers will be just as proud as the nurse is of her uniform.



### Textile Workers Ask Coolidge to Intercede

Lawrence, Mass., March 29.—The local Dyers' and Finishers' union has sent an open letter to President Coolidge, asking that Congress pay some attention to the condition of the New England textile industry. The letter says that "thousands of people who depend upon that industry for a livelihood are now out of employment, many families and persons are in dire want and the outlook is not encouraging." "The people in the textile communities look to Congress for help," the letter adds. "They are greatly disappointed and disheartened in view of the fact that this problem has been overlooked."

Notices were posted today in the Everett mills that the plant, normally employing 1,800, would be idle all next week. Recently it has been operating on a four-day schedule.

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