

# NEWS OF OLYMPIA LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

BY FRED HUDSON, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OLYMPIA TRADES COUNCIL

## THE LOCAL GRIST

### RELIABLE LABOR NEWS.

Editors of the big city dailies, commonly designated as the "kept" press, are notoriously biased against organized labor. They suppress or garble news favorable to trades unions, and emphasize, enlarge and add from the imagination when handling events that might be considered to reflect upon the judgment of trades unions.

At the other extreme are the editors of the "red" papers, who paint employers and business men of all degrees as the arch enemy of the working class, devoted wholly to the profit system as that system advantages them. This class of editors characterizes the common garden variety of union man as impelled by either cupidity or boneheadedness in all his acts.

Between these two extremes of newspaper publicity is the weekly newspaper. The editors of these are in the main very nice gentlemen, devoted to the community interest as they see it and ordinarily free of any intent to misrepresent. But as a rule they are out of touch with the labor movement; they are innocent as babes of the experiences, hopes and aims of organized labor, and often unwittingly do an injury to the working people by accepting the malicious viewpoint of the daily paper as current coin.

In order to obtain fair publicity it therefore becomes necessary for the laboring people to have labor papers, directed by members of their own class who, by personal daily contact are given possession of facts about the activities of organized labor. These facts furnish adequate reason for the publication of this labor department. The editor and publisher of the Standard bears no responsibility for the views expressed therein. The matter in this page is furnished by a trades unionist, and cooperating with him are the officials and members of the different local unions.

The Labor Movement is the great, intelligent, progressive force of the nation. Practically all social and political reforms of the last half century have had their birth in the ranks of organized labor, and certainly the years have been fruitful in desirable social and political changes. Progressive ideas, springing from the labor movement, have often been seized upon by ambitious and clever people to lift themselves into political power and, having grabbed a seat upon the bandwagon, they forthwith claim authorship of the music and the words and assume the right to wield the baton. Trade unionists are not fooled, however, though many other citizens may be.

Laboring men are regrettably retiring and few among us are possessed of the great desire for authority that seems to urge forward the professional man and often the business man. Working people are all for the progressive principle of social justice and give little thought to the political instruments supposed to forward those principles. In this respect we are weak. A prime purpose of the labor press is to correct this fault. This department hopes to do its share along those lines. Representative working people should be in the city council, on the school board, on the library board, in the county building and in the state capitol in much larger numbers than at present. If we are able to inspire one or more members of organized labor to seek public office, to accept the sacrifice for the common good that honest conduct of the business of many of these political positions entails, we will be well satisfied.

Olympia, Dec. 31st, 1917.

Fred Hudson.

Press Representative, the Olympia Trades Council.

Dear Brother Hudson:

With the passing of the Old Year and the coming of the New it may be profitable that we take stock of the good that has been accomplished in the year past and of the progress that has been made in the field of organized labor.

We do not go back over the days that are gone for the purpose of satisfying ourselves with what has been done by us as individual members, but to learn from what we have accomplished the lessons that will teach us to make better use of the days that are coming and which will surely give us opportunities in the future for greater accomplishments than those of the past.

In beginning the year just past

organized labor in this city was represented by less than half of the active organizations and less than one-third of the membership in this city at this time. Some of the organizations were struggling between life and death for existence, while others were merely holding their own, and in very few instances were material increases in membership being made.

As we will remember, shortly after the first of the last year the Shipwrights and Shipyard Laborers were organized and following them came the Steam and Operating Engineers, and others followed in rapid succession until at the present time, when the last union to be added to the list is the Blacksmiths. This makes a grand total of 22 local unions in the city at this time, with nearly a thousand members.

It is unnecessary to enumerate individual cases where great good has come to the workman from organization, but in a general way I want to emphasize the good that has resulted to organized labor generally and the possibilities for betterment of working class conditions in the very near future.

While wages have not in all cases kept pace with the increased cost of living, most all of the unions have secured material increases in wages, and some of the crafts have been successful in securing adoption of their wages scales in their entirety. This means that the justice of the demands were conceded. Working conditions are an important factor, and in a number of cases these have been improved. It also has been admitted by the employer in a number of cases where the working conditions have been changed to meet the demands of the unions that a greater degree of efficiency has been secured under revised conditions than under the old.

With the greatly increased force of union men it should not be a difficult matter to complete the organization of every available individual and to organize a number of new locals in industries now unorganized. To accomplish this, however, requires effort on the part of the membership of older locals, and, indeed, the united cooperation of all the present organizations.

One thing needed is a labor paper, to carry to members of the several organized bodies the local news and matters of general interest in the labor world. In no way can the members be more generally benefited than by such a paper.

It is impossible at present to have a local labor paper which will issue daily, but it is possible for us to have a paper which will issue once a week and which will come to the members at a nominal cost. This has already been arranged for with the publishers of the Washington Standard and it will in turn be presented to the local unions for consideration.

It is impossible to comprehend the great amount of good that this labor page will do, but it is reasonable to assume that it will be far-reaching in its influence, in placing before the members of the several unions the issues to which their attention should be called, and also in placing before the public our side of issues as they come. It has always been one of the greatest drawbacks that the labor movement has not had a paper in which it could express itself and the laboring people have been taken advantage of often as a result. Now we trust that this opportunity presents itself every organization will get behind the movement and see it through. Suggestions that may help are wanted. If you have any item of news of interest to this page, send it in. Let us all feel that each is a cog in the great wheel of the Labor Movement, that each has his responsibilities, and if we faithfully perform our part of the work, and do our bit there are sure to be great returns to us this year—returns in which we will all share.

With kindest personal regards to you, and my best wishes for a very happy and successful New Year, I am  
Yours fraternally,  
C. B. YOUNG.

### SHIPYARD LABORERS.

Shipyard Laborers, at their last meeting reaffirmed approval of the system of employing a business agent through the Trades Council, appropriated \$17 to the Red Cross music fund, contributed to the telephone operators' defense fund, and considered many communications. This union has just adopted a quarterly working card system.

### DISSATISFACTION AT SHIPYARDS TO BE CLEARED UP.

A committee of the local chamber of commerce will present a brief to the U. S. Labor Adjustment Board with a view to settling definitely the meaning of the Macey decision as it applies to local shipyards.

This proceeding is something out of the ordinary, and the viewpoint of the chamber of commerce committee is unusual, in that the brief, in the main, will support the claims of employees as to the correct interpretation of the award of the government commission.

There has been dissatisfaction with practices of the Sloan Corporation since acceptance of the Macey decision. Business Agent McCaughan of the Shipwrights, Carpenters and Joiners, unable to reach an understanding with company officials, brought about a conference between representatives of the union, of the Sloan corporation, and of the chamber of commerce, for the purpose of discussing the terms of the decision handed down from San Francisco recently, and applying to all shipyards of the Pacific coast.

The gist of the matter is that the shipbuilding company sought to use a sliding scale of wages, with the will and judgment of the employer fixing the compensation of the individual workman. Company officials interpreted the Macey scale to be the maximum, and graded compensation of the workmen from this maximum downward, according to their estimate of the individual's ability and worth. The union looked upon the scale as a minimum wage, and in this it is supported by the practice and demands of its own organization as well as that of all other trades unions. It is permissible, for instance, to pay a highly efficient worker more than the agreed scale, but it is not permitted to the employer to decide upon a sum lower than the scale as proper to be paid to any particular person. It is easy to see that a concession of this nature would render any scale contract worthless to the employee.

In order to come to an understanding upon these and other matters affecting employment, and ask the government commission to "re-affirm its original decision," according to Agent McCaughan, the local conference was had.

The representatives of the union presented convincing arguments, apparently as the chamber of commerce committee will ask the adjustment board to hand down a definite and clear interpretation of their decision, favoring the claims of the employees.

This probable settlement of a controversy that was creating strained relations between the employees and the company will be gratifying to the citizens of Olympia. There has been a great deal of half-splitting and side-stepping by employers in carrying out decisions of government boards on questions affecting employment of labor, and this attitude upon the part of the employers and their agents is "getting on the nerves" of the employees. Unless there is a change in this respect something is sure to happen that will not be to the welfare of the employers.

### TELEPHONE DANCE.

The benefit dance given at Tumwater clubhouse New Years Eve was largely attended and a great social success. Soldier boys were much in evidence, outnumbering the civilians. Raymond's six-piece orchestra furnished the music. Business Agent Young was chairman of the dance committee, E. R. Mohler was ticket seller and M. C. Burrell and C. E. Rose presided at the door. Misses McDonald, Irwin and Heye and sub-committees of the Telephone Operators looked after the sale of tickets and were assisted by members of the different local unions. While a detailed statement has not yet been made by the dance committee, the net proceeds of the dance will be approximately \$160.

### PAINTERS CHOOSE LEADERS.

Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers elected new officers for the year 1918 at their last meeting. The officials are: President, Arthur J. Douglas; vice president, Ralph Kidder; secretary, P. M. Kendrick; treasurer, T. H. Newall; trustees, A. Darley, George Kane and James Naismith; assistant business agent, J. S. McGill. One new member was initiated.

### OLYMPIA TRADES COUNCIL.

Brothers Danielson and LaFountain presented credentials from the Shipwrights, Carpenters and Joiners and were seated as delegates in the Council.

Communication from the Washington State Federation executive committee endorsing the plan of the Seattle Union Record to publish a daily edition, was filed, the Council having approved the project at a previous session.

Letter from Dorchester (Mass.) free home for consumptives, seeking financial help, was tabled.

Communication and resolutions of the Oakland, California, Central Labor Council, protesting against the importation of Asiatic labor were considered and the subject matter of the resolutions endorsed.

Letter of thanks from Telephone Operators' Union was placed on file.

E. R. Mohler made report on the work of telephone operators fund committee to the effect that unions had responded liberally with financial help.

Delegate Walters reported official information had been received of the re-employment of all telephone operators in Tacoma and Seattle.

The secretary was instructed to write the Journeymen Barbers and explain the controversy which exists between the Star laundry and the Teamsters and Chauffeurs union and the Union of Steam Engineers.

H. L. Hughes was called upon by the chair, and spoke upon recent developments in judge-made law. He declared that the United States supreme court, in rendering the decision in favor of the employers in the West Virginia injunction cases, placed itself in contempt of the people, the decision of the court being opposed to the spirit of the Clayton amendment. The judge-made anti-picketing law also placed the courts of this state in contempt of the people, the electors having disapproved such a law by a three-to-one vote. The speaker said such decisions had the effect of inspiring the trades unions to increased activity and that they were forerunners of the recall of judges.

It is announced that at the first meeting in January nominations for officers for the ensuing term will be in order. The new officials are to be elected at the second meeting in January.

### TYPE UNION SENDS DELEGATE TO PORTLAND CONFERENCE.

Local Typographical Union elected Frank Satterlee delegate to the Northwest Typographical Conference, which meets in Portland, January 21. The conference has to do with coordination of the work of the unions of the Northwest territory—British Columbia, Washington, Idaho and Oregon. Satterlee was one of the organizers of the Conference.

Other business of the local union meeting, held last Sunday afternoon, was consideration of a goodly grist of communications and discussion of the whys and wherefores of some recent activities among the local labor forces. The union appropriated \$10 to the Telephone Operators' defense fund, and authorized the payment of its share toward the Red Cross music fund. H. L. Messegue deposited a San Francisco traveling card and expects to tarry in Olympia for a season.

### GEO. W. LISH RETURNS.

George W. Lish, former secretary of the Trades Council, came back to the city from Portland last Friday. He has gone to work in the Sloan shipyards, where he formerly had charge of a crew of sealers. Lish reports a subdued attitude in the labor field of Portland as compared with the Puget Sound cities. A former member of the United Mine Workers, he is accustomed to the aggressive style of the Washington labor unions and he is glad to get back and resume active work in the local labor field.

### COOKS AND WAITERS.

Local 567, Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Alliance, at its last meeting, elected new officials for the ensuing term, as follows: President, Mae Davidson; vice president, Eva Rollman; financial secretary, Earl C. Fields; chaplain, Katherine Pfeffer; instructor, Win Robinson; guard, C. A. Love.

Twenty dollars was appropriated for benefit of the telephone operators defense fund, and a large amount of routine business was cleared away. This union meets semi-monthly, the first and third Fridays.

## WHAT OF THE COMING POLITICAL CAMPAIGN?

### ARE WE RULED BY JUDGES IN A GOVERNMENT OF SELF-GOVERNING CITIZENS?

(By Charles Perry Taylor)

The supreme court of the state and the supreme court of the nation have within the past few weeks rendered decisions that vitally affect the power, influence and usefulness of the union movement. Notwithstanding the declarations of the Clayton amendment to the Sherman anti-trust law, notwithstanding the constitutional guarantees of the freedom of speech and press, notwithstanding the legal declaration that labor is not a commodity, these decisions will thrust labor back into the chattel class if they stand as the final decision in such matters. Courts render so many decisions on precedent rather than on actual law, and rely so much on what is called common law, and so many times, seemingly, place so little reliance, in the judgment of many, on commonsense, that thoughtful people may well seriously consider whether we are not ruled by judges, who, by their assumption of power, assumption not always upheld by actual law, constitute these judges a well nigh kingly class in a republic of self-governing citizens. When both divine and human law says citizens may exercise the right to tell the truth, nay, must tell the truth and the truth only under penalty of punishment, then for a court of either high or low degree to deny that right is a travesty on free government.

Decisions defining the rights of both organized labor and employers were rendered December 10 by the United States supreme court. The court held that workmen may organize for lawful purposes, but that employers may legally operate their plants as open shops and prevent efforts to bring non-unionists into the unions. The opinions were rendered in the cases of the Hitchman Coal & Coke company and the Eagle Glass Manufacturing company of West Virginia, the court deciding that both were entitled to operate their plants as "open shops." Lower court decrees holding the United Mine Workers of America and the American Flint Glass Workers union were illegal organizations, and under the Sherman anti-trust law they were secret conspiracies in restraint of trade, were ignored by the supreme court opinion. Justices Brandeis, Holmes and Clark dissented, the first making the statement he believed the unions had the right to do the things to which the members of the court objected.

The state supreme court of Washington, in a recent decision, abolished the right of picketing in the state and, to all intents and purposes, the union movement has lost the right to obey that commandment from the Creator which forbids lying. "Thou shalt not lie," says the Creator. "Thou shalt not tell the truth if it hurts my business," says American business, and business is supported by court decisions. This is not to be wondered at, considering that judges are made out of lawyers, and lawyers are made out of business or corporation legal work.

The frequency of the abuse of the power of injunction in industrial disputes is a byword among members of organized labor. How frequently do employers rush into court and, in fear of imaginary dangers, pray for injunctions against fellow citizens engaged in a God-given right to cease work when conditions become undesirable, and engaged also in compliance with both divine command and influence of righteous civil law in telling the truth about the industrial conditions that brought on the strike, the employers depending on hysteria and the sympathetic ears of corporation-trained judiciary to secure for them an injunction against fellow citizens engaged in an effort to improve the condition of wage-earners. Why is it that an employer can get the aid of courts to resist the efforts of wage earners to improve the conditions of industry, while at the same time the wage-earners can get no help from courts to bring about such improvement? Are the courts for the employers only, or are the wage-earners negligent in invoking their power?

The year 1918 will be one in which legislatures and courts will be partially or wholly elected by the votes of sovereign citizens who own no man king save their own conscience.

We have enjoyed, or, rather, suffered from the usurpation of power by courts almost wholly in sympathy with the buyers of labor, buyers who regard it and treat it as a commodity, in spite of the dictum of the Clayton act. We have suffered from the indifference, even the antagonism, of legislative bodies made up of business and professional men, politicians and plain blockheads. And nine-tenths of the population is made up of those who are poor, who are wage-earners or agriculturists, who are victims of the legislation called into being by vested interests, predatory and corporate interests.

Did not the people of this state at the polls repudiate the anti-picketing measure enacted by the late legislature? They surely did that very thing. Did the courts hearken to the voice of the people? Not so you could notice it. When the mill companies rushed into lower courts for injunctions against the timber workers and the shingleweavers in their recent effort to establish the eight-hour day in the lumber industry, unions as unions were absolved by the courts, but union men were punished for violating judge-made law. And the repudiation by the sovereign voting strength of the state of the anti-picketing measure had about as much bearing on the situation as a fly on a cartwheel.

We hear a lot in these days of war about the necessity of the wage-earners giving loyal support to the government. It is being given. Wage-earners and their unions, in spite of a cost of living mounting at rapid rate to record prices, while wage increases creep slowly upward, are buying Liberty bonds and thrift stamps and giving their money to the Red Cross and their sons to the battlefield. But none of the wage-earners have been summoned to Washington to answer to charges of profiteering, while president's commissions investigating strikes and labor troubles invariably, in their settlement, compel the unwilling buyer of labor to grant wage increases and other improvements. Have you heard of any arbitration board advising a reduction of wages or a lengthening of hours?

We hear a lot about being patriotic, and if the conduct of the wage-earners is not and has not been patriotic, then the word is a figment of the imagination, a diatribe on commonsense. The wage-earners are, in truth, the only ones who have been patriotic. True patriotism is sacrifice for the common good. How can one sacrifice if his share of wealth prevents any sacrifice except that of a false pride?

While the winter is upon us, while we ponder over the struggle in the trenches of France, that liberty may not die on this earth, that democratic government and not slavery may be the portion of mankind, let us not lose sight of the fact that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty here at home as well as on that bloody ground so well named No Man's Land. While American manhood and womanhood gives its life that the glorious heroism of the French may not be sacrificed in vain, forget not that at your elbow perhaps there exists, masquerading in the guise of an American employer, a profiteer who howls loudly against the labor union while he robs your government and his for aeroplane spruce stock, or who corners the necessities of life while he invokes the aid of the courts to keep down the wage rate which the labor union is trying so hard to raise in order to partially at least meet the cost of living in war times. While he hides behind your flag, he robs his government and you. Tear off his mask. The highest patriotism is that which fights the tyrant wherever he be found which hates the enemy of the country, whether that enemy be a pro-German in our midst or an exploiter of fellowmen at our elbow. Keep your eyes wide open and your thoughts clear. By the side of the pro-German place the profiteer of the rich variety like they have in Everett or of the poor variety that has first begged money from union labor and then used that money to disrupt union labor, or whether the anti-unionist be a ghoul who would enrich himself out of the necessities of a war-ridden nation.

But how about the personnel of our elective courts? How long are we going to leave to those who have an ax to grind the selection of those who shall sit in the seat of Solomon and balance the scales of justice between contestants? Remember the story of the Irishman who, a prisoner at the bar, asked his honor: "Sure, now, judge, and isn't this a court of justice?" and was answered by that dignitary, "By no means, my good man; this is a court of law."