



BRICK BY BRICK

Even with one ear practically out of commission I hear men discussing the doubling of dues—I have heard little else in the past five years and I swear that that is what put my ear on the bum.

I never hear men talking about doubling the wages. Strange. Oh no, they are willing to accept a 30 per cent increase—and giggle over it like a funny bone with a seven year itch or a hoosier orchestra with knee-teasing *jimmies*. They act as if there is no figures after 50; that one dollar follows four bits; that two dollars follows one dollar with nothing in between—they must be from Montana—I hail from Missouri, and I'm always willing to be shown—and further, they act as if Bryan had won the free and unlimited coinage of silver issue.

True it is that our organization could use more money advantageously—the four bits is now worth 31½ cents compared to what it was worth 10 years ago—but in the absence of figures on the amounts collected through voluntary (so-called) assessments we cannot know how much of an increase is needed. We do not know whether the general dues coupled with assessments amounts to one dollar per man or not, and we have been assured that it is only "the few" that carry assessment stamps—

If that be true then, evidently, we have been experimenting with trouble . . . we are in need of a direct, clear-cut system of gathering funds.

F. W. Cheesebrew has a very good plan, a plan that would remedy that condition, but it is too revolutionary—it will be difficult to get the members to accept it, in paying numbers.

A plan we must have. We have tried this, that and the other—and tried them over again—until some have gotten the idea that, since no stable plan can be found, that we should at least rotate the plans, spring, summer, fall and winter. . . .

Personally I am opposed to the dollar dues—because it isn't necessary—and I can't see, for the life of me, why we should make an exception of dues alone.

We hear (with that bad ear) much about compulsory assessments. Let me see have I got it right: The members are going to compel themselves to pay extra assessments. Gee whiz, won't they be threatening! Or, is it possible that some other outfit will do the compelling—I must be frank—sposing they quit paying dues entirely; sposing they themselves prefer to do all the compelling?

(Needless to say a sensible man won't quit.) Outside of slavery, there is nothing compulsory—but death. Ha ha haa!

A body of men will get together, admit their disinclination to pay and use force on themselves. In other words, they will make a mountain of a mole-hill, throw a dignified fit of self-scaring, self-chastening and self-chastisement—"I'm going to compel myself to do this. I'm gonna give myself orders. No sympathy for yours truly goes. I'm gonna do as I say. Myself must listen to me.

Isn't compulsory grand!

Isn't it!

What men want, what they desire, what they demand and *what they vote for* cannot be considered compulsory . . . I'm most thoroughly sick of that word, and would suggest to the compulsorites that they apply for a job as court of last resort.

Going back to F. W. Cheesebrew article will say that the other provisions *hinge on the dollar dues* and therefore, if the dollar dues are tried again, the rest of the plan should be put in force at the same time—it's a good plan.

But, as it is, we are now under a reconstruction period—a poor time for overhauling—that is, we have seen days, and we will see more of them—when we were and will be in a better position to make a change—we're not strong enough to die of apoplexy nor weak enough to die of garlic. *Right at this time we can't make a complete change.* We must do like the boy of the golden west, grow up with the gravel.

Apology here, etc., and here, etc., etc.!

My plan: Increase the dues to 65 cents.

The 15 cents to go to the papers. There's your start. The editors thus strengthened will cause activity, build the organization—when results begin to show, start weeding out the assessment stamps—not before.

I most thoroughly believe in direct tax—all alike—in a direct way; I do not believe in fostering petty business men by printing their advertisements—the big ones we can't get. That's too round about.

I believe in stretching out one hand with the ONE FULL DUES in it to the organization and holding out the other hand for the boss to fill—make the two moves with one motion, like husking corn. Fifteen cents per month more amounts to half a cent per day—so, I would tell the boss pay me five dollars and one cent per day instead of the usual \$5.

That would leave me a profit of 15 cents per month—see, it's not what you've got but what you get—that way, too, the boss supports your press as directly as it can be done under present system of peculiar ownership and the papers wouldn't have to even tell "what a fine man he is."

As before stated in apology this would be right in line with *building a new society* within the shell of the old—not the whole works at once, to a miscarriage—but brick by brick. Going as the extra money does to a worried press doing wonders, even as it is—the organization would soon double its membership and efficiency—but even before that: The Industrial Unions can, if they desire, remember their papers and carry some of the burden. . . .

Now in conclusion I will say (lacking

space, time and brains) that at this time the doubling of dues will not double the organization efficiency and it may decrease the membership in several directions.

But 15 cents per month increase will double the membership—saving each member 35 cents per month—support your papers.

The question is what CAN be DONE?

I was thinking of using that stale ear of mine as a pencil carrier.