



OVERHEAD CHARGES

At this time I would suggest that all stores except the 5 and 10 cent stores be abolished — our progressive prosperity would seem to warrant this. It is very seldom that a worker (nowdays) has more than 10 cents to invest at one time—and it is so hard to get them to save their dimes. They simply refuse to become as millionaires by the dime route—dime-millionaires, of course. They seem to have no business-sense. Different here!

Only the other day I saved and saved until I had two dimes. Then all of a sudden a spending-vice took hold of me and I blew the whole fortune for a safety razor and four blades at a 10 cent store.

Without a trace of guilt and with light heart and feet I marched down to the Wobly hall and let a fellow worker use it—he wanted to buy it:

"All right," says I, "It has cost me 20 cents; you can have it for 50 cents."

Business sense.

He called me a propheteer, an unprincipled gouger and a reprobate of the most scandalous character; that I was trying to grab 60 per cent profit in these times of ortho—orthodox p'prosperity and said, further, that I should let him have it for 20 cents.

Where's his business sense?

Here I've sunk two dimes into the deal—my hard earned money.

Here I've walked two miles—on high-priced sole-leather—to buy it.

(He don't want to pay me for the hour's walk). Such ungratefulness!

Here I've spent years and years in school learning to trade with wisdom (just like the doctors) and he refuses to let me charge him a slight tax for all the lickings in which I par-participated.

I was struck dumb. A terrible fear entered my soul: can it be possible all workers are that way? Is it possible that mornings, before the whistle blows, they are all wrought up over the day's work; that they are not free, but under orders; that they expend time, energy and shoe-leather for hours every morning before the pay starts—for which they get nothing? If this be so, it is an outrage and I demand that time-clocks be moved up against the bed, so that you can punch it when the alarm goes off. There's no sense in keeping the clock on the job; the work doesn't begin there nor does it end there—after quitting time your work to get home begins (and other work, a part of your life as a slave—patching, gardening, fighting the landlady, star-boarder and six bulls, shopping and other work necessary to make yourself successful as an industrial slave—pay being light). All that should go in as over-time! But does it?

Certainly not—that shows where labor lacks business sense.

A business man would tend to overhead expenses first of all. It would go on the price of goods something like this:

Heat, rent and light, 30 per cent.

Preacher, bootlegger American Legion, 30 per cent.

K K Klux 10 per cent.

Community Chest 5 per cent.

Lodges 5 per cent.

Beggars (general) 5 per cent.

Miscellaneous (repairs) 5 per cent.

And so on.

When all these are added to the cost of shoes, a \$1.65 pair of shoes will cost (you) \$3.30. So, you see, if a business man gives 50 cents to a beggar, it doesn't cost him a cent.

The customers pay that in the per cent racket.

On the other hand:

A worker, shy of business sense, neglects to keep track of his overhead expense. He neglects to charge for railroad fare, with the result that he must ride an apple-car. He forgets to add on "the price of a new suit," with the result that he runs a chance of being arrested for exposing his s-s-spine. And so on.

And finally, he quite forgets the beggar. He fails to charge the boss enough so that he could help a brother in distress; so that he could give his charitable nature full reign. He forgets this. He neglects this.

Such carelessness, I saw nothing else but! He, the man that produces everything hasn't got six bits to toss his kind.

Allmighty Labor, the one most entitled to deal charity (help) is broke, and bumbling "lumps."

Business men and professional men, who produce nothing, are the only ones capable of giving aid—which doesn't cost them a cent—because they include "charity" in their overhead charges—and then keep it themselves.

Such is "overhead charge."

Labor has its doubts whether it could put into effect an equitable charging system, and I know it can't.

Why?

Because it is unorganized.

For years and years it has been working for the lump sum of \$40 per month—even in seasonal work like harvest work, the scissors have been working for \$4 per day; 10 days per month.

You don't get your new suit that way.

You don't ride cushions that way.

You won't pass around many \$2 bills that way.

But if you organize, and find out what your running expenses are, and add to that a reasonable profit, you can do just about what you like.

This doesn't mean that you join a union and drop out just when another man joins.

It means that you join the I. W. W. and stay joined.

P. S.—I cannot resist the temptation to point to the workers the necessity of delegates. We cannot grow without them!

Things are bad all around—on jobs. Also let me point out that speakers, writers and entertainers are just as necessary—a ship "without a rudder" is as badly off as one "without a propeller." And the papers—ah—"without the engine" the ship will float only. "Without the papers" enthusiasm will run in streaks like a delirious cyclone. In fact, "without the papers" we can not progress—all these are important. Equally important. Still, I would suggest that we encourage delegates, (stand by them) at this time—and get out more of them; plenty of them.