

# COMPANY UNION FAKE CONFRONTS OMAHA WORKERS

## Need for Shop Papers, Local Campaigns

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

OMAHA, Nebr., (By Mail.)—Company unions hog-tie the workers industrially while "progressive" republicanism keeps them bound to the political chariot of the party of Coolidge and Mellon in this "progressive" state of Nebraska. The Railway Clerks' Union of Omaha, with its 1500 members, will soon find itself in a life and death struggle with the company union that the U. P. is forming to combat it, while the railway shopmen in the Omaha shops have been blessed with company unionism since the defeat of their last strike.

### Armour Company Methods.

The packing house of the Armour Company here publishes taffy about the workers going to work in autos, throttles all attempts at organization with a "sucker's union" and gives its best paid workers (the skilled butchers) \$24 a week while its other "car-owning" workers average \$17 and \$18 a week when times are "good" and get \$1 forcibly deducted as an installment on a share in the company.

The Workers Party has a shop nucleus in the Armour plant and I found the workers here still talking of the special packinghouse numbers of The DAILY WORKER and deploring the fact that the campaign was too short.

### Views of Bryanism.

Nebraska is the state of Norris and Howells and William Jennings Bryan. Progressivism is strong and the remnants of populism still persist. The records of Norris and Howells include voting against Mellon's tax reduction schemes for shifting the burden of taxation from big business to the rest of the nation, against the world court, against the Italian debt settlement, for income tax publicity, for the retention of the inheritance tax, etc. Moreover, Howells has been a consistent advocate of municipal ownership in Omaha and the ice plant, gas plant and water supply are now municipally owned. Consequently, the bulk of the workers and farmers of the state believe in and swear by Norris and Howells.

But disillusionment is beginning, not on the score of national politics but as a result of local developments in the municipal ownership field. The ice house of the city has paid off its indebtedness and is now running at a profit. The heroic apostles of municipal ownership declare that they are in a quandry. What shall they do with the profits? The Workers Party professes that they use them to reduce the cost of ice and sell it at cost. "But this would ruin the private ice dealers," answer the "progressives."

### The Franchise Fiasco.

Another fiasco of the municipal ownership advocates in the Republican Party was exposed in the traction franchise question. The local traction company's 40-year franchise expires in 1928. The progressives, labor and the Communists united in demanding that the franchise be not renewed and a referendum to renew the franchise for another 40 years was defeated. Then the traction company began to bring political pressure to bear and it soon became evident that the traction interests are much more powerful than the ice companies. The progressives who had advanced no positive program are now proposing not municipal ownership but a 20-year franchise in place of a 40-year franchise. Some victory! These fiascos of progressivism on local issues are beginning to destroy the political illusions of the Omaha labor movement and the field is becoming more favorable for the Communists to agitate for independent political action on the basis of these issues.