

him, how he "put over" twenty-three people's amendments in California. His whole being bespeaks power—not force, mind you—but conscious, intelligent power. And his hearers responded more sincerely, more spontaneously, than I, at least, have seen this same group respond to anything that has been said to them since this convention assembled. That simple, but majestic sentence, "For this is the power of truth," has been saying itself over and over in my mind all day.

Before me is a letter from a friend in New York who writes, "I attended a very interesting meeting of the Insurgents' Club and heard another Johnson, the California Governor, who is the real thing." I believe my friend is right in his estimate of this man as "the real thing." I believe he is "another Johnson."

ELIZABETH J. HAUSER.

## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

### EXPERIENCE IN GETTING INITIATIVE SIGNATURES.

Portland, Oregon.

Last year a very earnest and honest working-man came to my office, whom I will call Jenson. He had made up his mind to circulate an Initiative petition to put the "employment sharks" in Portland out of business. They are harpies on the back of labor, and he had suffered from them as have thousands of others.

His draft of the petition was legally faulty, redundant and badly worded. I advised him to go to a lawyer and have it properly drafted, and offered to have it submitted to the advice of two or three attorneys of State reputation if he would let me take it up.

I saw that the patient pertinacity of the man would secure the signatures all right, and I recognized that properly adapted it would be a very popular move in the direction of establishing municipal employment offices throughout the State. We have a very good one in Portland, but it is not able to do all the work of that nature for Oregon.

Jenson flared up. He would have no lawyers. No one! He insinuated that I was half a lawyer myself. He didn't care to have his measure "butchered up" by newspaper sharps or lawyers, either. He went at it, and the printer got up his petition blanks in legal form for the sake of the job, but could not budge Jenson from the idea that no lawyers need apply.

The securing of initiative petitions was undertaken with that determination that has so often shoved members of the Scandinavian race into success. He lived on very little and asked no help from anybody. The employment sharks were to be put out of business. "Sign your name dere," said Jenson.

Right away he bumped up against the questions of "Who is backing this? Did U'Ren advise on this measure? Did the Central Labor Council put this out? Have the Socialists started this up? Does the Labor Press stand for it? Has Parkison endorsed this scheme?" and so on.

"I put dis out; nobody advised me," Jenson would

say. "I don't go to U'Ren, nor to Parkison, nor to Vood (C. E. S. Wood), und Shudge McGinn don't know nothing about it. Der Central Labor Council don't run me. Dis will put the employment shark out of peesiness. You sign it or not?"

It was not signed, usually.

After Jenson had been out several days he showed me his petition, and I called his attention to the fact that the signers did not give their street address, and that he had not kept a copy of them on the back of each sheet as required by law.

He told me he was going to appear before the Central Labor Council and get its endorsement of the measure, for the reason that local unions would not endorse it without. I attend the Central Labor Council regularly and therefore observed with interest the poor fellow's attempt to get before that body. It referred him to the Legislative Committee. That committee referred it to several lawyers, and reported that it was impossible, unconstitutional, badly drawn and would not possibly carry. After several somewhat piteous attempts Jenson gave up the fight, his soul full of bitterness, firmly of the opinion that the Initiative is no good to the workingman.

The idea that any man can draw up an Initiative measure and trot around for a few hundred signatures two or three days and thereby become a law-maker, does not pan out in Oregon. Several who have tried it with even more ability, means and pertinacity than Brother Jenson have found this out. His individual efforts were entirely thrown away.

ALFRED D. CRIDGE.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of *The Public* for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, March 5, 1912.

### Strike of British Coal Miners.

A gigantic coal-mining strike in Great Britain has begun. Rumors of it had colored the cable dispatches for several weeks, with stronger indications each week of a complete cessation of coal mining unless the Government interfere. Notices of intention to quit work on the 29th day of February were given in behalf of nearly a million coal miners prior to the 17th, and the executive committee of the International Federation of Mines was called to meet in London to consider the situation with reference to the advisability of calling a general European strike. This possibility is still in abeyance. The strike is over the question of minimum wages, the strikers demanding a living wage as the minimum for the poorest paid coal miners, and the mine owners insisting upon a guarantee of a minimum output as the condition of granting the minimum wage.

Steps were taken by the Ministry on the 20th to adjust the controversy between the coal miners and the owners of the coal deposits of Great Britain, the Prime Minister having on that day invited representatives of these owners and of the miners to meet the Cabinet on the 22nd for conference. The invitation was formally accepted, and at the appointed time on the 22nd, one conference between the Cabinet and the mine owners' representatives was held and two with the representatives of the miners, but there was no joint conference. A further invitation was given by the Cabinet to the miners and the mine owners to a conference on the 27th, when the National Miners' Federation was to meet in London. Several conferences were accordingly had, but not jointly and there was no result. Some of the miners—about 30,000 in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire—quit work on that day in accordance with their local notices which had fixed the 27th instead of the 29th for quitting.



After conferences on the 28th, when some 70,000 additional miners had quit work, the Cabinet issued its first formal statement on the subject. This statement is reported by cable to have declared that the Ministry are satisfied that there are cases in which underground workers are not able to earn a reasonable minimum wage, and that the power to earn such wage should be secured by arrangements suitable to the special circumstances in each district, adequate safeguards being provided to protect employers against abuse. The statement added that the Ministry were prepared to confer with the parties concerned as to the best method of giving practical effect to these conclusions by means of district conferences, representatives appointed by the Ministry to attend in event of failure to arrive at a settlement within a reasonable time, and these representatives to decide jointly any outstanding points. The proposals, the statement continued, were considered by representatives of the coal owners, with the result that those in the federated area, which includes Yorkshire, Lancashire, the Midlands, and North Wales, about 60 per cent of the mine-owning interests, accepted them. Replying in behalf of the miners to those Ministerial proposals and notice of their acceptance by mine-owning interests, the National Miners' Federation adopted the following resolution:

There can be no settlement of the present dispute unless the principle of an individual minimum wage for all underground workers is agreed to by the coal owners.

The Federation added, however, that it was willing to meet the coal owners at any time to discuss minimum rates to be adopted in each district.



No further progress had been made on the 29th,

the Ministry intimating that they had not yet been able to induce all the coal owners to agree to the demand for a minimum wage as made by the miners. But the Prime Minister was reported to have declared that if the principle of a minimum wage was not agreed to it would be made effective by the Government. As quoted by the dispatches he told the Miners' Federation that the Ministry were "determined that the minimum wage should become 'part and parcel of the organization and working at the coal industry by whatever appropriate means the Government can command'; for the Government felt it was face to face with a warfare between Capital and Labor in the coal industry which might paralyze all other industries in the country. The conclusion the Ministry had reached was, he said, that a case had been made out for insuring to the underground workers in the coal industry, with adequate safeguards, a reasonable minimum wage. Already a majority—certainly 60 per cent—of the coal owners of the country had assented to the Ministry's proposals, which were 'consistent with justice and the best interests of the community.' Mr. Asquith gave assurance to the miners' delegates that means would be found to compel the minority of the coal owners to fall into line with the majority on the minimum wage."



Fully 800,000 miners had by that time quit work, and at midnight of February 29-March 1, the great strike formally began. All the underground workers of England, Wales and Scotland, except a few who remain to care for the safety of the miners, had then gone out. Only two small nonunion mines in the entire country were still at work, one in North Wales and the other near Berwick on the Scottish border. Over a million men were out, and the consequent cessation of other industries may enormously increase the number of the unemployed. The principal districts affected are reported to be Durham (which produces about 40,000,000 tons a year), Yorkshire (36,000,000), Lancashire (23,000,000), Staffordshire (13,500,000), Derbyshire (16,900,000), Northumberland (14,000,000), Monmouthshire (13,000,000), and Nottinghamshire (11,000,000).



#### The Lawrence Textile Strike.

Before the Committee on Rules of the lower house of Congress on the 1st, American Woolen trust strikers from Lawrence representing eight nationalities were examined about the strike. Several of these witnesses were children. The investigation was pursuant to resolutions of Congressmen Berger and Wilson. Dispatches describe them as "a motly group of serious-faced, poorly-clothed, but clean children who seemed to have prematurely aged from responsibilities," who