

“The Granite Cutters’ National Union”

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“The Granite Cutters’ National Union was organized on Clark’s Island, Knox county, Maine, in 1877, the purpose being the advancement of the interests of the trade generally. The first thing to which the attention of the organization was directed was the abolition of the truck system of trading at stores owned and operated by the companies for which the cutters worked. When that was done the union turned its attention to the shortening of the hours of labor. Nine hours is now the maximum day’s work, and at Chicago and everywhere west of that city, except St. Cloud, an eight-hour day has been established.

“The founder of the order was Thomas M. Murch, who was afterward chosen the Union’s first national secretary, resigning his office upon his election to congress from Maine.

“The organization has but one salaried officer, the secretary of the national union. The principle of direct legislation is carried out to the full. Any member who desires the enactment of any legislation places his ideas on paper and transmits them through the local union to the national secretary, who places them before the national union, through the various local unions, for their action. The executive business of the national union is placed in the hands of a national union committee of three, selected every two years by vote of the union at large. The work they do for the union is paid for at the union scale. They are selected from the members of the local union where the seat of government of the national union is located. The union headquarters is moved every two years, the selection of the new location being made by vote of the membership of the various locals. The headquarters is now at Concord, N. H., and Josiah B. Dyer is the national secretary. He is also editor and publisher of the *Granite Cutters’ Journal*, the organ of the national union.

“Wherever there is work in the granite industry, a charter is procured and the state organizer is summoned to organize a local union. This union has the care of all matters relating to the granite cutters, and their interests within the jurisdiction of the union.

“One good provision of the national union is the burial benefit of \$150, which is paid to the widow or is used to defray funeral expenses and pay any outstanding bills a deceased member may have contracted during his last illness.”