

Recognition: The Reward for Midnight Murder in Mexico

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LEROY ARMSTRONG

Editor

DOWN WITH THE TELEPHONE.

I notice that my other friend, the government at Washington, has instituted proceedings calculated to hamper, impair and destroy the Bell Telephone Company. Of course that is not the title of the action that has been started at Portland. This new bit of business crippling wears all the gay garb of the Sherman anti-trust law—a bit of ancient law fathered by the chilliest old party that ever broke into either house of congress, not excepting the late Benjamin Harrison, of frigid memory. The theory is that the suit is instituted in the interest of the people of these United States, and that when the government has carried the case to a successful termination—from the standpoint of the prosecution, then telephoning will cost the people less, and be of better service quality than it is now, or could be without the prosecution.

And that is a silly and a baseless assumption. If there is any business on the face of the earth that ought to be left alone, it is the telephone. We of Salt Lake have had our day of experience in that sort of thing, and it isn't at all a pleasant memory. It wasn't the fault of either company that the service lacked something of perfection when both the companies were here but it was the fault of both of them that there were two. No man could do any considerable business without having two phones, and the expense was doubled, while the vexation, annoyance and profanity were trebled.

That same Portland in which this new suit has just been launched is at this goodly hour in the throes of a double telephone system. There are few cities between the oceans in which the same is not true. And in every one of them a better service could be rendered by the Bell than

Once a Democrat stayed in the clear
On a dollar a day, pretty near.
But now they have jobs,
And the perks, and begobs,
They can't live on twelve thousand a year.

by any opposing concern for the very excellent reason that the Bell has the long lines, and no alleged independent company on earth could hope to secure that equipment—and none of them do expect to secure it, now or evermore.

It is no curtailing of the commercial liberties of investing gentlemen to say they ought to find something else as good as the telephone business in which to risk their money. Unless they expect to make their profits by selling out to the big firm, there is small chance indeed for them to get rich by the hello route. And there are such a host of other opportunities where the profits are sure, the way is clean, and the wild zest to serve the dear people is vastly more easy to gratify.

The government spent money enough to build the Lincoln highway—of its own and that of the defendants—trying the Northern Securities, the Tobacco and the Harvester and the Southern Pacific cases. And all the effect was to lay on the people of the republic a little heavier burden. It doesn't make freight rates or passenger tickets any cheaper. It doesn't add a whit to the ease by which farmers can get a mowing machine or a package of tobacco.

And the only effect of this suit against the telephone company will be to deprive the big bulk of the citizens of cost and convenience in the use of the most necessary and most highly valued agency that ever has been added to the forward march of the race.

For the love of peace, prosperity and improved service, let the government quit!

We city folk hold a position
That may be no more than transition,
But if it costs more
Than ever before,
What the deuce is the good of commission.

THE MANUFACTURERS' LOBBY

It seems we will have to accept the Mulhall stories. He backs them up with so many letters that look genuine. I am trembling every day for fear he will hit some one between Colorado and Nevada; but for the present we have escaped.

But, granting the truth of all he has said, what is the significance? Just this: The manufacturers of the nation have tried to defend themselves. It is very clear that business was menaced, that men engaged in legitimate enterprises were being blackmailed by practical politicians, men who cared for no political party and fattened on threatening trouble for their own nation; men who lived by big interests, and got forced contributions as reward for keeping hands off. Very clearly the demagogue was abroad in the land, and he played on the harp with the labor union string. It is evident that playing charmed congressmen and senators and

—more's the charm, a President of the United States—into concessions inimical to business, and which representatives of business asked for in vain. They had to counteract that influence, and they did it by trying to put in congress and to keep in congress the men who were loyal to the substantial interests of the nation.

So far as shown the American Manufacturers used no really improper methods. They did help the right candidates in their campaigns, and if they hadn't done it the walking delegates would this day be annulling the federal statutes and vetoing the vetoes of the president.

This nation needs nothing so much as a square deal for the business men. And what a sensible nation needs—it gets.

Said Noah to Grant, in the Ark:
"Don't you dote on the song of the lark?"
Said Grant: "Hain't you heard?
I have a new 'rd,
And he does what I say. It's Sam Park."

LAND OF THE FREE

My other old friend, the plumbers' combine, seems to have been having a good time with that outrageous enemy of special privilege, the Midgley Brothers, who show a pernicious tendency to violate all labor conventions by attending to their own business. And the thing grows more interesting as one observes that the combine claims the right to close shops, restrain workmen from work, abrogate any old sort of contract not approved by the combine, and in a general way to do all the things the Standard Oil, the American Tobacco and the International Harvester can't do. I always am proud to note the superiority of Salt Lake people in any line of endeavor, and find here that the blessed plumbing combine of this city is bigger than Harriman ever was, and that its edicts seem to stand while he couldn't even combine two of his own railroads. It just goes to show that there is no law superior to the laws of labor unions.

Here are the plumbers—the workmen—getting six dollars a day. I don't hesitate to say they can't earn it—not a man of them. It is an imposition and an outrage on the home owners of the community. But it goes, because it is committed in the sacred cause of organized labor.

Not only that, but the combine can prevent any man working for the Midgley company, no matter what the pay, unless that company joins the said combine. And even after coercing the firm into the trust, the trust can lift the ban or let it lie till the magnates controlling the trust conclude they have made the punishment fit the crime of even a transient hesitation.

If the plumbing combine can tie up one shop