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BIG RAILROADS BACK OF PETITIONS

Unskilled Workers Forced to Demand.

TREATS USED ON AMERICAN EMPLOYEES

Foreigners Unable to Speak English Unable to Understand Meaning of Petitions.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18.—Evidence that some of the big railroads now defying the brotherhood in the latter's demand for the eight-hour day are forcing their unskilled and their unorganized employees to "petition" President Wilson...

It appears that the Rock Island lines have begun collecting these "petitions" from the Mexican section hands who understand no word of English...

Here is a letter from a Texas town which reached the Socialist congressman. It is eloquent of the whole situation:

"Dear Sir: Today Roadmaster C. B. Lane of Dalhart, Texas, Rock Island line, N. M., to Dalhart, getting signatures of all employees of the company except trainmen and engineers, to a petition to Congress asking them to intervene in the 'Eight-Hour Day Proposition'."

"The Mexican laborers are required to sign this after it is explained in English to them, which, of course, they do not understand. Some of these Mexicans believe yet that they signed something regarding the controversy between the United States and Mexico."

"We were all told that if we did not sign the petition we might all lose our jobs, including the officials of this division."

"This letter is being written to you in hopes that Congress and the president may learn of the circumstances under which the names of railroad men are signed to this petition. Every man here that signed it did not wish to be realized that a strike is nothing but comply with the request in the form of a threat, or maybe lose their job. And if every town on the line was approached like the railroad boys of this one were, no doubt there is a false impression created by these finished petitions."

"These petitions are to be in within forty-eight hours, and no doubt quick action will be brought to bear on both Congress and the president."

DEMAND EIGHT-HOUR DAY.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 17.—Several thousand culinary workers, bakers and musicians, are employed as the result of a strike by culinary workers to enforce an eight-hour demand and because of a lock-out by the Restaurant Men's association, which has declared for the non-union shop. The workers charge the so-called "law and order" committee of the chamber of commerce with being responsible for present conditions, because of interference in mediation proceedings.

STREET CAR MEN RAISE WAGES.

DUBUQUE, Iowa, Aug. 17.—The new wage scale of Street Car Men's union took effect last week. For the first six months wages are raised from 17 to 20 cents an hour; second six months, 20 to 21 cents; second year, 21 to 22 cents; third year, 22 to 23 cents; fourth year, 23 to 24 cents; fifth year and thereafter, 25 to 27. About 60 per cent of the 100 employees are within the five-year section of the agreement, which means an immediate increase of 2 cents an hour.

ATTEMPT TO BUY UP PUBLIC PRESS

New York Traction Head Spends Vast Sums to Prejudice Opinion.

DECLARES UNION AN ALIEN ORGANIZATION

Dante Barton Says Fight Involves Right of Workers to Organize.

(From Committee on Industrial Relations, Southern Bldg., Washington.—By Dante Barton.)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 17.—With the street railway workers of New York trying to exercise their legal right to organize, Theodore P. Shonts, president of the New York Railway company, is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars of the nickel-payers' money in buying page advertisements in the New York newspapers to inform and consequently to prejudice the public against the men, and to attempt to bribe the newspapers against fairness to the street railway workers.

Denounced by Unions.

Leaders of the street railway union and executives of the railroad brotherhoods who are now assembled in New York, denounce as astounding effrontery the statement of this corporation's president, Mr. Shonts, that the union is an "alien organization."

These leaders in the labor movement say that it is supreme nerve coming from a man and a corporation who have been notorious for importing to New York and employing subway workers and others who are new to the New York situation, and who cannot even speak the language that the union organizers and workers speak.

Involves Right to Organize.

In a report to the committee of industrial relations, Dante Barton, who, with George P. West of the staff of the committee, investigated the causes of the strike, says that it is a fight for the right to organize and the right to recognition of organization. It grows out of the usual background of low wages, long and broken hours of labor and the arbitrary discharge, which are the conditions always imposed upon workers who are not organized into effective unions. The great effort of the union and the strikers is to organize all the street railway transportation employees into an effective union. Instead of making their appeal chiefly to the sympathies and the humanity of the public, they are making a straight out business appeal to the public to support them in their rights to self-respecting, self-controlling organization.

Mr. Shonts' corporation is doing everything legal and illegal within its power to prevent the organization of its employees into effective unions. It is employing guards, who are necessary for union organizers to go together in squads of eight or ten in order to protect one another from being beaten up. It is using its political influence to prevent the organization of its employees into effective unions.

CONGDON IS PRETTY GOOD SCOLD; ITS WEAKNESS OF ALL RICH MEN

Chester A. Congdon of this city last week took undue advantage of an invitation extended him by the members of the Minnesota State Bar association. Instead of giving the members something new, something really worth while, he proceeded to outline his objections to everything that was, is, and shall forever be.

We do not believe Mr. Congdon has a regular title for his speech. But we know of no more appropriate one than "A Philosophy of Misery," and we suggest this to Mr. Congdon for what it may be worth.

He roasted the administration; politicians who had no courage; Frank P. Walsh, and ended up with a denunciation of the I. W. W.

Yes, he roasted the officeholders who were subservient to the voters. He proclaimed against those public officials who voted solely on the grounds of expediency.

It was Chester Adgate Congdon, he who was a member of the Minnesota legislature for two terms. He who voted against the county option bill in both sessions, and after he got out of the legislature, roasted him out of the breweries. The same Mr. Congdon, Mr. C. A. Congdon who voted against county option because it was "expedient" to do so in order to save this section of the state from the tonnage tax!

He took a whack at the Australian labor government. He lambasted some of the Socialist labor members over there because they wanted to abolish the Australian senate.

But Mr. Congdon forgot that during the last session

of the Minnesota legislature a bill was also introduced asking for the abolition of the senate. And who introduced that bill? Was it a Socialist labor member from Australia?

Not much. It was a member of the Republican party, the party of Hughes, and of Taft, and of Root and of Mr. Congdon. Mr. Congdon didn't mention that fact, and we opine that this particular Republican member who wanted to abolish the senate doesn't care much what Mr. Congdon said anyway and if the truth were known, we hardly think the Australian labor government cares a hang about it, either.

They should worry, to use the expression of the Psalmist.

Frank Walsh also came in for his share of Congdon's. Frank hasn't shown any symptoms of reformation since the speech by Mr. Congdon, however. We doubt if Frank will change his political ideas when he hears of that speech, either.

However, judging from Mr. Congdon's remarks we are convinced that he has read the report of the Commission on Industrial Relations. That helps some.

One good thing that report did: It compelled John D. Rockefeller to make a trip to Colorado for the first time in eleven years. And another thing that we should not lose sight of. If Frank P. Walsh was instrumental in compelling Mr. Congdon, and others similarly situated, to read literature such as the report of the commission, then its work was not entirely in vain.

The "Philosophy of Misery!" Yes, that's it.

EDUCATION PLAN TO REDUCE ACCIDENTS

California Industrial Commission Works With Employer and Employee.

SACRAMENTO, Cal., Aug. 17.—The state industrial accident commission, of which Will J. French, Typographical union, is a member, is conducting an educational campaign for the purpose of lessening the number of accidents and fatalities in industry.

Many of the notices are printed on stout linen and an appeal is made to both employer and employee to work for the common end. The literature is profusely illustrated to show the wrong way and the right way of doing things and the results of carelessness, are vividly pictured. It is shown that there were 524 accidents in 1914 because of piling construction material unsafely. Lumber with protruding nails caused 1,001 accidents. Unguarded floor openings in buildings under construction, defective ladders, flimsy constructed scaffolds, careless handling of explosives and other subjects are illustrated and printed in a form easily read.

The commission has issued special orders that cover many industries and callings. One of the features of this campaign is the use made of California's historic bear. The commission has organized a Miner's Safety Bear club, with the slogan, "I am a bear for safety," on an attractive button. Admittance to the club is free and through an endless chain system "every good safety bear" is supposed to enlist a recruit.

The commission is also working with sub-committees of employers and employees. It is the purpose of this joint movement to awaken a statewide interest in the lessening of accidents and to make prevention of these occurrences a major question in California industry.

MOVIE OPERATORS ADVANCE.

CINCINNATI, Aug. 17.—Moving Picture Operators' union has secured a three years' agreement with picture house managers in this city. Wages are increased.

UNIONS WILL STICK BY FORMER ALLIES

Attempt to Split Workers Organizations in Washington is Defeated.

TACOMA, Wash., Aug. 17.—At a meeting of the executive committee of the Washington state federation of labor it was decided to only favor such initiative measures that "particularly affect the organizations represented in this coalition and which are well understood by our members."

The coalition referred to is the unity of farmers and trade unionists, working through a joint legislative committee, to secure remedial legislative relief through the initiative and referendum. This coalition has been defeated in its recent effort to place four measures on the ballot, mainly because of a law passed by the last legislature which compels farmers to register before they can sign a petition. This handicap is further increased by a state supreme court ruling that the preamble of proposed bills, which serve explanatory purposes, shall not be permitted.

Despite these obstacles the trade unionists are not discouraged and the executive committee of the state federation of labor is determined that the hopes of labor's opponents that the industrial workers and the farmers will split must not be realized. On this subject the executive committee says:

"Nor has any movement in 20 years got under the hides of the exploiting classes in this state as has the legislative coalition of farmers and trade unionists calling under the banner of the joint legislative committee. Every member of that committee is as cordially hated by the powers that prey as were the snakes of Erin's isle by the good St. Patrick."

MACHINISTS' STRIKE ENDS.

ALLENTOWN, Pa., Aug. 17.—Machinists employed by the International Motor company have settled their strike, which was caused by the discharge of six active members of the union. The settlement involves the establishment of the eight-hour day in the near future.

LABOR SHARES NEW WEALTH OF NATION

Wonderful Expansion of Trade and Commerce Made Under President Wilson.

BILLIONS ADDED TO WAGES OF WORKERS

Record Shows That Wage Earners Received Increase of Three Billions Over Previous Year.

NEW YORK.—The second chapter of the Democratic text book deals with the wage problems of America, and shows how the laboring man has benefited in many millions of dollars during the Wilson administration. "This second chapter is a description of the Democratic doctrine that the real prosperity of a nation is to be measured first by the prosperity of its workers."

From Labor Bureau Figures.

"The United States department of labor report shows that the percentage wage increase in the industries is from 5 per cent to 20 per cent during the past four years, and that from 1913 to 1916, during the Wilson administration, wage earners in the United States were paid \$17,600,000,000, against \$14,320,000,000 paid in wages during the four years of Mr. Taft's term—from 1909 to 1912," says the book.

"This record shows that during the Wilson administration the wage earners of the country received in wages over \$3,000,000,000 more than they did during the four years preceding under the Republican administration.

"According to the data of the department of labor upon union wages per hour as the basis of computation, the average wage during the years 1914 and 1915, under Democratic laws and administration, were 10 per cent higher than the average for the six years—1907 to 1912, inclusive—under the Dingley and Payne tariff laws and Republican administration.

Wages Up 10 Per Cent.

"Taking as a basis a tabulation of press announcements of wage increases for 1916, made by the department of labor, it is conservative to place the 1916 wage level at 10 per cent higher than 1915; or 20 per cent higher than the Republican level on 1907-1912.

"The census of 1910 (based on 1909 data) gave the number of wage earners employed in manufacturing industries only as 6,815,000, and the wages paid, \$3,427,000,000. It is estimated (on basis of preliminary returns of 1914 census of manufacturers) that in 1915 American manufacturers gave employment to 7,800,000 wage earners at wages amounting to \$4,407,000,000; or an increase of nearly \$1,000,000,000 over 1910.

"It is conservatively estimated that in 1916 American manufacturers employ 10 per cent more wage earners at 10 per cent higher average rate of wages per annum than in 1915. This would bring the 1916 volume of wages paid in manufacturing only to \$5,300,000,000 or upwards of \$1,800,000,000 over the Republican census record of 1910.

More Than 20,000,000 Earners.

"These figures are for wage earners employed in manufacturing industries only. The census of 1910 gave the total number employed in manufacturing and mechanical industries as 10,658,000, in transportation, 2,637,000, and in mines, 964,824, and in agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry, 5,000,000. The total number of other employees was 6,658,000—making a total industrial army of wage earners of over 30,000,000."

The far-reaching character of the wage increases won by American labor in 1916 is shown, it is stated, by the following cases noted by the labor

FREIGHT HANDLERS STRIKE.

DECATUR, Ill., Aug. 17.—Unorganized freight handlers employed by the Washab railroad struck to raise wages from 18 1/2 to 20 cents an hour. The company is now trying to raise the bonus system into effect. Under this scheme a certain number of tons of freight is handled before the minimum is reached.

COAL DOCK MEN TAKEN INTO UNION

New Organization Is Formed With Membership of 111 Workers.

TO FORM THIRD BRANCH OF LONGSHOREMENS UNION

Strikers in Superior Will Continue Lay-off Until Demands Are Granted.

SUPERIOR, Aug. 14.—Enthusiastic over their decision to come under the wing of the American Federation of Labor, 111 striking coal dock workers last night were organized into a new branch of the Longshoremen's union at a mass meeting held in Finnish hall.

With the knowledge that they were to become organized after a week of valiant fighting for their demands from the coal companies in Superior, the men refrained from cheering as each took his turn in signing the papers and paying 50 cents dues to the chairman. A total of \$55.50 was collected.

Charles Swanson, local organizer for the federation, will mould the workers into the third branch of the Longshoremen's union to be established in Superior. Duluth already has three branches.

W. B. Jones, vice president of the Longshoremen's division of the federation, made his first address to the strikers last night since he was forced out of their assemblage by the I. W. W.'s a week ago.

"Although I am a week late in speaking to you for the second time, I am glad to be back even this late," Jones said. "If we had completed organization a week ago, I believe the strike would be ended by now and you would be back at your work."

Insist Upon Demands.

Although organized into the Federation of Labor, the strikers have still determined to stay away from work until granted their demands. Members of the Longshoremen's union told the workers that efforts will be made to hold a conference with dock superintendents so that they can be approached in regard to a settlement.

Members of the strikers' committee, which is negotiating with Swanson in regard to organization, include Michael Lawrence, L. Putkutek, John Anderson, Edward Christ, Victor Rosseame, Timothy Riordan, Frank Rasilg, Matt Syra and John Vatravage.

A decision to join the federation was reached at a meeting when fully three-fourths of the strikers voted in favor with the rest remaining silent. Several union men spoke at the meeting.

Mayor Konkel was present again and spoke after the vote was taken. He congratulated the men for deciding to become organized.

MEAT TRUST DEFEATED; NOW FAVORS PENSIONS

EAST ST. LOUIS, Ill., Aug. 13.—After 5,000 employees of the Armour, Morris and Swift packing plants defeated these concerns, as the result of a short strike, the Swift company, thoroughly alarmed at the growth of unionism, announced a pension plan that would be absolutely free to employees who stay with the company for 25 years. As these workers are a rarity, the company has secured valuable advertising at practically no cost.

The strike was precipitated by the discharge of a score of employees because of union activity. To check a general suspension of work, the companies agreed to reinstate the victimized workers, and to dismiss strikers, that unionists shall not be discriminated against and that all grievances shall be settled through joint committees.

STATE LABOR DEPARTMENT MAKES A RATIONAL REPORT ON THE MINE STRIKE

The state department of labor under Commissioner W. F. Honk, has just completed the report of special investigators Don. D. Lescohier and Martin Cole, on the strike of iron miners on the Mesabe range.

The report is without color and finds the responsibility for the strike as its causes where it properly belong. The judgment of the investigators, because of their exact fairness, should be accepted by all reasonable people. Their report clears the atmosphere and gives the people information that has been withheld by the daily papers. It is as follows:

The strike started on June 2 at the St. James mine at Aurora. The St. James was opened some years ago and then laid idle until last spring, when work was resumed. The miners were put to work on the contract system, as in all underground mines on the Mesabe range, and at piece prices approximately equal to those in operating mines in the neighborhood. When the month had elapsed it was found that the work was proceeding more slowly than in other mines and the men had not been making decent wages. They complained to the company and were given additional sums to increase their average daily wages

to between \$2.50 and \$3 per day. But friction between the men and the company over the contract prices continued and on June 2 the miners, with out previous notice to the company, left their work and struck.

The strike spread to the Miller mine in Aurora the same day and then swept westward over the range, mine after mine going out. Many of the people with whom we talked believe the strike was a spontaneous outburst against the contract system, and that the I. W. W. men were rather passive after the strike had started. But we reached a different conclusion. We were informed by a greater authority that one of the national organizers had told him that the I. W. W.'s had planted in each mine as early as February, but had no locals on the range. The I. W. W. organization came in only a disaffection with the contract system among some of the miners, that the I. W. W. men in some of the mines fanned that disaffection and that the successive walking out was due to the leadership of these local groups of I. W. W. members or sympathizers. Industrial causes urged the strike, but probably would not have caused a strike of such proportions except for the I. W. W. activity. The strikers and I. W. W. leaders did not do any organizing before the strike was called, but we are inclined to believe that they did do a good deal of planning for a strike and for organization.

"There has been a good deal of criticism of the miners because they did not present their demands to the company until after they had gone on a strike. This criticism is unfair. Unorganized workmen, however dissatisfied, cannot present demands until after there is organization. The mining companies never permitted organization and therefore this phase of the strike was inevitable and unavoidable. "The complaints of the men concentrate on two conditions—the hours of labor and the contract system. They allege that they have a nominal eight hour day, but rarely an eight and one-half or nine hour day with pay for but eight hours. At each mine is a washhouse or changehouse, where the miners change their clothes before going into the mines and after leaving the mines. They demand that pay shall be by the hour rather than by the piece and that pay shall begin when they leave the washhouse to be in their descent into the mines and end when they get back to the washhouse. Their complaint on this score is, of course, duplicated in many other industries in which workmen change clothes. This always looks to the workman as an injustice, and to a certain extent it is, but the employer always contends that this presence of the workman in the washhouse is an essential and incidental to the work. In question, that does not benefit the employer any, and cannot be expected to pay for a workman's time except when he is producing output. In the underground mines of Minnesota, the miner must descend to the level on which he is working, and it is unquestionably true that this consumes a considerable amount of his time—say from 10 to 20 minutes before and after his work. On the other hand, probably no greater amount of time elapses on the average between the time he leaves his home and the time he actually begins to work than elapses in the case of men of other occupations, who generally

take from 30 minutes to an hour to get to and from their work. We are not deeply impressed with this grievance of the miners.

"Their other grievance is the contract system, which is simply a piece work system. But piece work in a factory is one thing and piece work in a mine is another. In a factory a piece worker is employed with materials, appliances and machinery which always remains the same. Each unit of work that he turns out requires the same expenditure of energy, time and skill as each other unit of output. His machinery runs at constant speed or with a constant variation in speed; his tools and materials are practically identical one day and another.

"But in a mine the workman is working in materials of constantly changing quality. No two workmen's jobs are exactly identical and no two days' work is alike under identical conditions. A miner starts to work in a certain drift and if the ore is hard or soft, or if the drift is deep or shallow, he may be able to cut away only one-half as much ore as he is able to mine on another day when the ore is softer or the ground easier to deal with. This constant variation of the natural workman's output, which is not due to any fault of his, but which he cannot control, causes the variation in piece rates that it compels in order to bring about a substantial equality of wages between the various workmen, who at the basis of the whole trouble over the contract system.

He may keep track of the work that he has done and figure out what is coming to him at the contract rate, but he cannot check and find that the rate was cut without notice to him.

"The rate is cut when a miner strikes 'soft ore' and could make good money, but is not increased when he gets into 'hard ore' and his earnings decrease.

"That the companies do not furnish the men with a detailed statement of the gross wage calculated; nor with a statement of the tools, powder and dynamite which they are charged, or the price at which the supplies have been sold to them.

"The fourth and most serious charge is that the companies exploit the men by compelling them to buy tickets for raffles or other activities in which the captains have a financial interest and from which they derive a profit, and that if any man does not buy he is marked for discharge or discrimination.