

Organized Labor Opposes Return of Railroads

Washington, May 18.—(By Mail.)—Organized labor in the railroad industry has vetoed the return of the properties to private management. It proposes, before the new congress shall begin to make itself ridiculous in this direction, to convince even congress that it is too late to turn them back on any terms that will be satisfactory to the stockholders or the officials of the railroad companies.

Glenn E. Plumb, chief attorney for the independent railway brotherhoods and for the railway employees' department of the A. F. of L., is authority for the announcement that neither the Underwood bill nor the Watson bill can be passed and enforced, because either bill, if passed, will lead to a strike.

These bills provide that the railroad properties shall go back to the private owners with a guaranteed net income upon the "property investment accounts" of the companies. In the Underwood bill it is 6 per cent, and in the Watson bill it is 6 1/2 per cent. These "property investment accounts" are the private companies' own claim as to the value of the property. They represent all the wind and all the water and all the robbery that is embalmed in the stock and bond issues of all the railroads. The total is about \$12,000,000,000.

If congress adopts the Watson bill, which is the one drawn by the Warfield association of stock and bond holders, this huge body of wind and water and robbery is guaranteed by the government, and the consumers of food and fuel and clothing in this country will have to pay \$535,000,000 more next year in higher freight and passenger rates, than they are paying this year. The Underwood bill means an additional tax upon our family incomes of \$440,000,000 a year. Of course that is an indirect method of reducing wages, because it adds to the cost of living. If either of these bills is enacted, the 2,000,000 railroad workers will promptly call for another wage increase. Plumb says that that will be absolutely necessary, because they are now just getting up with the higher prices of the necessities of plain living.

But congress may think that instead of raising our freight and passenger rates the necessary 15 per cent to pay the private stockholders their dividends on the wind and water and robbery, they will get the money by cutting wages.

"If wages are cut," says Plumb, "there will be a strike that will paralyze the industrial life of the country. To make up the \$535,000,000 additional revenue that the Watson bill provides, wages would have to be reduced about 40 per cent. Resistance to such a cut would be inevitable. Indeed, resistance must be expected to any reduction in railroad wages, whether it be direct or indirect reduction."

Henry Sterling, legislative agent of the American Federation of Labor, calls to my notice the fact that according to records carefully compiled by the labor division of the Massachusetts state bureau of statistics the average income of all workers in the mills and factories of that state in 1917 was only \$759. That measures the standard of living which was possible to the wage workers of Massachusetts at the height of the prosperous period up to the year 1913. White railroad employees are not included, it is notorious that railroad employes in Massachusetts did not average a higher rate of pay in 1917, than the workers in the other industries. The number receiving very low wages was many times as great as the number who were reasonably well paid.

"This average income of \$759 for Massachusetts is a shade higher than the average throughout the United States for 1917," said Sterling, today. "It is higher than the average for New Jersey or Pennsylvania, or for other industrial regions, with the

exception of New York city and a few of the newer developed and organized places. Massachusetts labor is well organized, as is indicated by the fact that the 1,112 unions, out of a total of 1,450 or more, reporting on unemployment to the state bureau last December, gave their membership as 221,000. The state has a population of 3,000,000 odd.

"This average income, then, represents very fairly the income of American labor for 1917. We all know how the cost of living was then mounting up."

Sterling hopes to see the Atlantic City convention recognize the land question and the money question as the two fundamental issues to be settled in order that industrial democracy may be attained. He thinks Secretary Lane's land scheme for returned soldiers is a step in the right direction, but the action of the North Dakota legislature in un-taxing the improvements upon land is still more important. New Zealand, he finds, has gone farther toward solving the land question than any other Anglo-Saxon country.

From 1890 to 1911 the cost of living in New Zealand increased only 8 per cent, while here it increased 54 per cent," he said. "Yet at the same time, wages of men in New Zealand increased 40 per cent, and wages of women and children 70 per cent. They were able to do it and still control the cost of living, because they employed the control of land."

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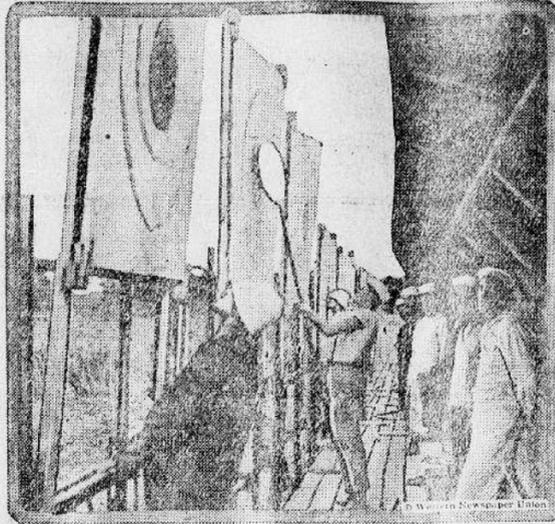
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CALDWELL GETS RIFLE MATCHES



For the first time the national rifle matches, bringing together teams from the army, navy, marine and National Guard, will be held in the East at the United States rifle range at Caldwell, N. J. The photograph shows target markers at the range. The matches will be held in August.

WILL LABOR FIGHT 'GENE DEBS' BATTLE?

By W. K. TENNYSON.

The Arkansas Democrat of April 2 attempts to reconcile labor to its fate by asserting that Eugene V. Debs and Thomas J. Mooney were each found guilty by the "most highest and unbiased courts in the nation." This journalistic peon says: "Neither have been able to break down evidence tending to prove the charge against them." Every man, woman and child of 14 years, or who have attained sufficient education to read a newspaper, is familiar with the evidence that was used to bury Mooney in a living tomb. Every one is acquainted with the report of the committee, appointed by President Wilson, to investigate the Mooney case. But the old saying, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread," is brought back to us by this ink-spiller attempting to write of something he knew nothing of. Or, if he was familiar with the facts, he certainly handled the truth very carelessly.

The unbiasedness of these "most highest courts" is very vividly brought to our minds by the famous Dred Scott decision. The majority of the "most highest and unbiased court in the nation" decided in this particular case that the negro had no legal existence as a person. It pronounced them merchandise or property. The negro at that time was

a chattel, bought and sold on the market for the period of life. Today the working man and working woman is a chattel, bought and sold on the market for the period of one day, or month, or one year, as the case may be. Under the decision of the supreme court in the Dred Scott case what would be the legal status of a wage slave today? He or she would have no legal existence as a person.

Another example of the unbiasedness of these courts may be seen by examining the Hepburn vs. Griswold case, 159 U. S. 279, reported, page 192. And hundreds of other cases that space forbids mentioning here.

In most every case brought before these "most highest and unbiased courts," whose labor or labor's interests are involved, the honesty with which Thomas Mooney was railroad to a living grave is reflected in the decision. The decision of this most profound tribunal in the Debs case was no surprise to labor. Debs is a representative of labor. He has dedicated his life's efforts to the emancipation of those who toil. His every effort has been to elevate mankind. He was a labor leader. Hence he was in the way of capitalism and must be removed. Hence Debs went to prison. But, while he went to prison, he left a career that stands out in bold vindication of that noble soul. A career that repudiates all of the lies that may be given circulation by base and unselfish minds.

It was not Debs on trial. It was not Debs that was aimed at when congress passed sentence of 10 years upon him; it was labor on trial. Debs was selected as one of the subjects through which labor should be dealt, by a judicial tribunal, the constitutional rights given to American civilization, drenched with the blood of the "boys" of 1876.

If it could be put over Debs, O'Hare, Berger, Gerzier and other leaders, it could be put over labor, and hereafter labor must keep its mouth shut about conditions or go to prison, be shot or otherwise silenced.

Labor should make itself heard by the powers that are godding the law-making bodies and the courts on to more drastic actions. It should call a halt while there is a chance for a sane, sane and educational way of doing things, ere it is eternally too late. Labor should strike. Debs in person went to prison, but Debs in spirit will remain free, and will continue to be a thorn in the flesh of capitalism until the principles of a pure democracy is established and he and those persecuted with him are made free. Until constitutions are not regarded as mere scraps of paper.

It was Debs that led the striking Railway Union in 1894, for which he was sent to jail, and by this same "most highest and unbiased court" denied a writ of habeas corpus. At that time it was not in keeping with the interests of those whom this court invariably serves to render a decision permitting labor to organize. So Debs was sent to jail. Today it is not in keeping with the interests of that same crowd that labor shall be permitted to express its opinion freely. Hence Debs goes to the penitentiary.

Debs has always been in the forefront, fighting the battles of labor, carrying its hardships and miseries. It was Debs who said: "There is no slave on earth who is not my equal. For him I am ready to fight and, if need be, die." It was Debs who said: "As long as there is one soul in prison I am not free." Can labor feel free with "Gene Debs in jail"? Can labor refuse to fight his battles? Debs needs your support. Your unflinching, whole-hearted and unswerving support. Debs has spoken for you. It is your duty to speak for him, not half-heartedly, but in a loud, shrill voice that you may be heard.

The Arkansas Democrat. This multiplicity of capitalist imperialism demands all socialists that permit themselves to be led into such an act as no longer Americans. To be no American, according to the paid press, one must bow at the shrine of self. One must accept, without murmur, such persecutions as capitalism and its henchmen dish out. No, this is not essential to Americanism. This is not real patriotism. It is Junkerism, Imperialism, American Prussianism, and cannot be regarded as anything other than American autocracy. It should not be tolerated by a liberty-loving people.

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THE VOICE OF ENGLISH LABOR

"SACRED EGOTISM"

Rumania claims to be attacking Hungary at the explicit orders of the entente. What does this mean? It means that the entente has gone over body and soul to reaction—has scrapped all pledges, broken all faith—has become a mere anti-revolutionary clique. How then can we expect a clean peace? How can Italy's imperialism be withstood? The attack on revolution, the betrayal of national ideals in the peace settlement, are one and the same thing. All the trouble and shame come from the denial of principle.

Why was it that the question of Italian claims on the Dalmatian coast was bound to lead to trouble at the Paris conference? Why was Italian imperialism certain to make demands there, conflicting with the professed ideals of all the allies? Whatever settlement may or may not be reached by the time the peace terms are published, we have a right to ask those questions. And they are exceedingly easy to answer.

The crisis is directly stimulated by the treacherous desertion, on the part of the allied secret diplomats, of the idealistic aims which the bulk of the allied peoples gave their blood.

There were, from the first, two utterly irreconcilable principles face to face. The soldiers died for the first and openly expressed ideal—"a world made safe for democracy." The diplomats schemed for the other—"pinch all you can get and keep it, irrespective of right and justice."

All the fine pretensions of the war for freedom are gone. Right and justice are openly flouted. And our statesmen—all the "democratic" statesmen—sanction the "sacred egotism" of Italian jingoes. The secret treaty of London (April, 1915), handed over, not only the Trentino, the southern Tyrol, Trieste, Gorizia to Italy, but also the Dalmatian coast, Valona, the islands of Ash Minor, and a prospective "pinch" of Turkey. How far will Italy press such claims now?

If Italy wins on this test question, the other jingo elements in Japan and France will triumph beyond control. "The peace of justice" will turn out to be another diplomatic buffoonery after all.

That will mean, quite simply, that the soldiers who died for justice will

have lost. The diplomats who live for egotism will have won. And we shall be back at the state of things which made the war.—London Herald.

ORGANIZED ANARCHY THREATENS SPAIN

WILLIAM PHILIP SIMMS. (United Press Staff Correspondent.)

Paris (By Mail).—News coming out of Spain is pessimistic. A general unrest hovers over the whole country, now manifesting itself in the form of a strike, again as a "separatist" movement and again as plainly revolutionary.

I have just finished reading an article in "L'Information" signed "Homen Christo" and the picture he holds up, if a true one, does not offer much encouragement as to Spain's immediate future. "Each day," he declares, "it is announced that the crisis in Spain has come to an end. But the day after the situation appears to be again at high tension."

It is perfectly evident that a social cataclysm menaces Spain. Popular agitators invoke the question of Catalonia, that of Morocco, or the high cost of living, or the claims of the working people. But the trouble is more serious than that; it is a trouble ancient and deep.

For ten years each succeeding government has been disinclined to stand up and face squarely the difficulties which they have been called to power to solve. In order to stay in office, they have temporized, used various dodges and employed all kinds of dilatory measures, avoiding as long as possible any clash with public opinion. These policies are not without its value, but it has the disadvantage of piling up the debt and its terrible interest as time goes by.

"This absence of a real guide to public opinion, this lack of firmness on the part of the different ministries, has but served to aggravate the general unrest and fortify the public in its worst determinations. And unless some statesman worthy of the name intervenes, the triumph of that 'organized anarchy,' which from the confines of Asia is wending its way towards the Mediterranean, will be certain."

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NATIONAL PARKS OPEN.

Visalia, Calif., May 24.—Sequoia and General Grant National parks were opened to the public for the summer season today. The largest number of visitors in the history of the parks is expected as a result of extensive highway improvements along the routes to these playgrounds.

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