

WEEKLY TIMES-RECORD VALLEY CITY, NORTH DAKOTA

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The price of wheat is down, but they are not saying it with flour.—Lisbon Free Press.

Now that the election is over the C.-N. pulls off its usual election aftermath in the way of a long editorial condemning the Forum for stirring up all the bitterness and strife of the campaign for their own profit and at the expense of the C.-N. This is the usual frantic effort to gain some support from the merchants of Fargo against whom the C.-N. has used every method possible to injure their business with the farmers of the state and we do not believe it will result in much greater business for the C.-N. It is a nice little neighborly scrap that makes interesting reading but really doesn't mean anything.

The Fargo Forum, in an article relating to road improvements west of Casselton says, "This highway is now gravelled from Fargo to Mapleton, the new stretch will carry it into the natural sand roads which begin about two miles west of Wheatland." We object. While it is true that the Red River gumbo ends at about the point mentioned it is not true that the land is natural sand from that point west. If the statement were true Barnes county land would be in the sand belt and we maintain that Barnes county land is, while of different quality, fully as productive as Red River valley land and much more sure of producing a profitable crop than that land. The writer for the Forum should use more care in describing land outside of the immediate vicinity of Fargo.

The sheriff's office is receiving information almost every day regarding cars that have been stolen. They have little chance of getting track of these cars unless they receive the information from others. If every resident of the county would make it a point to call up the sheriff's office whenever they see an abandoned car by the road or whenever some fellow tries to sell a car at a low price a good many of these cars could be recovered and the thieves caught. Not many days ago a man was trying to sell a car in Kathryn at a ridiculously low price. The sheriff was not notified for several days and there was no chance of catching the man although it later developed that the car he was trying to sell had been stolen in Minnesota. A phone call to the sheriff would probably resulted in the recovery of the car and the arrest of the thief. A little cooperation with the police officers will result in a good many of these men being caught and the subsequent reduction in the number of automobile thefts.

Sometimes it is hard to twist facts to suit your own conception of conditions but the C.-N. goes a long way around this morning to prove that independent papers in the state are wrong, that the defeat of McCumber means the defeat of the independents and that the nonpartisan league is fully as strong as ever. After an extended amount of "supposing" they state that "if" Nestos had supported McCumber he would have gone down to defeat also and consequently the league was really victorious in the election. This line of argument is really a trifle too involved to get at their point of view but we suppose it explains everything and that really the independents are licked, even tho they did nominate all the principal officers of the state and seem to control the legislature. However, if the nonpartisans can get any satisfaction out of the nomination of Frazier, which is a long way short of an election, we suppose we would be selfish to deny them that pleasure.

The strike committee of the shop craft union at Grand Forks has notified the Great Northern railway that the members will volunteer their services without pay at any time that life is endangered thru wrecks or property loss seems likely from fire, during the strike. This is a different attitude than is generally taken when members of any union strike and it will do more to aid the union thru public sympathy than the methods of lawlessness which generally prevail. The union maintains that the wages of the members should not be reduced until such a time as living costs are reduced in proportion. Freight rates have a large share in the high living costs but the railroads insist that the wages of their employees be reduced before they make any attempt to bring down the freight rates. The workers claim that this attitude is forcing them to bear an unequal share of the burden and we are in-

clined to agree with them, in part at least. The railroads seem to want the employees to obey the orders of the United States Labor Board without question while they themselves use every means to avoid the observance of these rules. In other words the railroads want the labor board to act as a board of arbitration on the claims of the employees but do not want to abide by the decisions of the boards applicable to themselves. Under these conditions we believe that the stand taken by the union is justifiable, and, while we do not think they have cause for striking on the strength of the wage reduction, we do believe that their insistence on the observance by both sides of the rules laid down by the board contains considerable merit.

Visitors to the city, by car, appreciate our beautiful tourist park but it is evident that a few citizens in the city do not fully realize just what this park is for. This park is equipped for the benefit of the touring public or such part of the public as elects to stop in the city for a short time. The stoves are placed there for their use without charge that they may have some means of preparing their meals while in the city and the other equipment of the park is for their comfort and convenience. Nothing should be done by any citizen of the city that would in any way interfere with their thoro enjoyment of the park and the hospitality of the city as a whole. In spite of this several townspeople went to the tourist park last Sunday, in the absence of the caretaker, and monopolized the kitchen and other equipment, resulting in great inconvenience to tourists who were stopping there and forcing them to wait until the local people were thru before they were able to cook their own dinner. Those persons would not think of inviting guests to their home and then doing anything to mar the pleasure of their hospitality and they should not mar the hospitality of the city by interfering with the pleasure which the tourists get from the park. If local people want to have a picnic chautauqua park and the city park are open to them at all times. The tourist park is for the exclusive use of the traveling public. It will be well for local people to remember this and not interfere with the use of the park by tourists.

The supreme court of the state has decided that the proposed plan for the financing of the soldier bonus claims is not legal as a part of the money represented by these claims would, of necessity, be spent outside of the state. They pointed out the fact that this was a matter which should be addressed to the legislature that the present law might be amended to provide some means for financing the claims until such time as the money was available from the special tax levied each year. The plan was to sell these bonus claims at a discount of 18 percent, that discount being arrived at as being the average amount of interest which would accrue on the claims before payment would be made. Aside from any question as to the advisability of granting soldiers a bonus, the fact remains that the bonus has been allowed and the ex-service men of the state see little hopes of obtaining the money while it is of any use to them. The majority of ex-service men need that money, need it bad enough to be willing to discount their claims 18 percent, and the state should make every effort to see that the claims are taken up at the earliest possible moment. If a legislative amendment is needed to pave the way for the financing of the claims why not make that amendment include an interest rate sufficient to make the claims an attractive investment without discount? If the state of North Dakota can afford to pay its ex-service men a bonus it can afford to pay that bonus in full. The ex-service men should not be required to finance the state's promise to pay. It is evident that the next legislature will be forced to do something to correct the mistakes in the original law and they should go all the way and see that the ex-service men get 100 percent of the claims and get them without undue delay.

A good many newspapers carry articles telling of the money spent in their respective cities by tourists stopping in their tourist park. Some cities even go as far as to hand to each party of tourists a postal card which they request them to fill out and return to them stating just how much money the party has spent in the city while stopping in the park, even going as far as to ask them to itemize their expenditures. This does not look right to us for several reasons, the principal one of which is that it is putting a premium on hospitality. Everyone knows that any party of tourists stopping in the city overnight is bound to spend some money but that is not the primary object of establishing a tourist park. The tourist park is to the city as a man's reception hall is to his home. It is a place for tourists to stop while in the city

but it is also, in its equipment and appointments, an index to the hospitality of the city. A man would not think of asking a visitor at his home to sign a card telling just what he expected to do for that man to pay for his entertainment while being his guest and we do not think that the city should ask a tourist to do so upon entering the tourist park. We know that some such suggestion has been brought forward as being a good system to establish in our park but we do not think it would be the proper course to pursue. Valley City is being advertised from coast to coast as a beautiful city and a city where the tourist is looked after in every up-to-date way possible. The advertising will more than repay the citizens for any expense to which they are put by reason of the park—even though the tourists do not spend a cent while here, which is manifestly impossible. If that is the case why belittle our hospitality by asking our visitors to account for their expenditures and send them away with the secret feeling that our hospitality must be bought and paid for?

Senator New, of Indiana, has come out flat-footed against the primary election law and says that it is a breeder of political corruption and inefficiency in government. We suppose Senator McCumber will also be against the law. While the statement does not carry the conviction that it should, coming from Senator New, we agree with him that this law has made the election laws cumbersome and has not raised the type of candidates to any noticeable degree. Under the old caucus system the state of North Dakota would not have found itself in the position in which it now is as regards the United States Senate. McCumber, as the incumbent in the senate, would have naturally been the first choice for the candidacy. However, before he could have hoped for the support of the republican party of the state he would have been forced to state his position clearly on state and national issues. He could not have side-stepped the questions which were put to him before the Jamestown convention and received the indorsement of the convention. The old time caucuses did not indorse men who refused to state where they stood nor did they allow their names to appear on the ballot. Under the primary law any man who can obtain a few signatures to a petition may have his name appear on the ballot. As a consequence we have a long ballot filled with so many names that the average voter who has not followed politics closely becomes befuddled when he goes to the voting booth and is not certain in his own mind just what the different candidates stand for. The old system gave the choice between two men for each position, one from each party, and the men and issues were clear cut. Of course the argument is that the candidates were hand picked but we do not believe that they were any more hand picked than are the candidates under the present system. The only candidates in the recent election who were not "hand picked" were those few disgruntled politicians who "also ran", just fast enough to split the vote and hurt the chances of one of the regular candidates. We now have two elections and the usual precinct caucuses, county and state conventions in every election year. The old style political deals are put over the same as in the old days and the only thing the primary law has done is to force the expense of two elections onto the candidates in addition to keeping the state in a political turmoil for nine months instead of three. It strikes us that the primary election law is an experiment that has not fulfilled its promises.

JOHNSON'S VINDICATION

Evidently the voters of North Dakota favor law enforcement, and admire a public official who tries to do his duty in that respect. The highly complimentary vote given Attorney General Johnson in the recent primary can be construed in no other light than a vote of confidence in his efforts to bring to justice the wreckers of the Scandinavian American bank. Mr. Johnson had a clear lead of more than 10,000 votes over his nearest rival in a field of 11 candidates, all of whom had a wide acquaintance in the state, and all of whom might be expected to be a more formidable opponent. He was the one candidate for the supreme court bench against whom any vigorous campaign was waged, and the one charge brought against him was that he had been guilty of bringing "political prosecutions" against the men believed to be responsible for the bank's failure. The attacks against him for his activity in this direction were most unfair and untrue, and evidently the voters sensed this, for they rallied to his support in surprising numbers. The incident provides additional proof, if any were needed, that the public admires courage in an office

holder. The man who does his duty in enforcing the law, no matter how unpopular the law may be, always makes more admirers than enemies, if the public is convinced he is fair and does not allow personal grudges to sway his judgment. The result in this case is a clear mandate from the voters to proceed with the prosecutions in the Scandinavian American bank case, with all possible vigor, with the aim of punishing any who may be found guilty. Any other outcome would have been a severe blow to the cause of law enforcement in North Dakota.—Forum.

THE "OUTLAW STRIKE"

Attempts to classify the present strike of railroad shophmen as an "outlaw strike" have some merit, but they would be deserving of more consideration if the railroads had clean hands in the matter. The railroad labor board as established in 1920, has nine members, three representing labor, three the employers, and three the public. Every wage decision must have the approval of five members, of whom at least one must be a public representative. The board not only may, but must, hear all disputes which are likely to tie up traffic. It has the power to investigate and summon witnesses, but it has no power to enforce its decisions. The only pressure which it can bring to bear is the pressure of public opinion, and that force it is now seeking to invoke. The chairman of the board has issued a statement setting forth these

fact that men who work during the present strike cannot be called 'scabs', inasmuch as the controversy is not between the men and their employers, but between the men and the railroad labor board. He points out that the men who take positions will be accepting wages and working conditions established by a government tribunal and not accepting conditions which an employer is trying to enforce arbitrarily.

The argument has much merit, undoubtedly, but unfortunately for the carriers their record for observing the rules laid down by the board, is not all that it should be. Several systems are following the policy of "farming out" certain work. They let contracts to real or dummy corporations for work formerly done by the roads themselves and thus escape the conditions as to wages and hours laid down by the labor board. The board has banned this plan, but its orders are ignored. One of the largest systems has also refused to acknowledge the board's power to fix working rules and has installed the so-called "company union" plan. In view of these facts the roads are not in position to lay too much stress on the "outlaw strike".

The chairman of the board moreover draws a rather dangerous distinction between ordinary strikes and "outlaw strikes" when he says: "Under these circumstances it is a foregone conclusion that both public sentiment and government power will protect the men who remain in the service of the carriers and the new

men who take the service." Why qualify that statement? Why should not the government and public sentiment protect any man who wants to do lawful work? The right of any man to quit work should be held sacred, but it should be no more sacred than the right of any man to work when he wants to work. The men who take the position of the strikers in this so-called 'outlaw strike' are entitled to protection, as the chair man says, but not one whit more than were the victims of the murders in the Illinois coal fields. Also these men have just as much right to quit work as the men in the Illinois fields, whether this is an outlaw strike or not.—Forum.

MORE FOOD PRICE INCREASE EXPECTED

Washington, D. C., July 8.—Further increases in the cost of food are in prospect, Senator Walsh Mass., democrat, forecasted today on the heels of the labor department announcement that 18 out of 22 cities registered increases during the past month. Officials of the commission likewise predicted increases. Walsh charged that the high schedule of the tariff bill would operate to make prices still higher. Commerce department officials held that agricultural prices on the rebound following a severe slump are responsible.

Current Business Conditions

By GEORGE E. ROBERTS

(From the Monthly Bulletin for July Issued by The National City Bank of New York)

THE events of the past month present a contrast between, on the one hand, those which show encouraging progress toward normal conditions of industry and prosperity, and, on the other hand, those which indicate that human adversity or distrust is the chief obstacle to progress. The trend in business has been favorable, at home and abroad. In Europe, industrial conditions would improve rapidly but for the political conditions. The prospect of a foreign loan for Germany has been abandoned for the present, because it is impracticable for Germany to give security for such a loan without a complete settlement of the reparations debt, and France cannot afford to make a final settlement for any amount that could be raised by the loan. The currencies of both Austria and Germany continue to decline in value as the result of new issues. The German mark, before the war worth about 238 cents, is now worth about 27 hundredths of one cent. The bitter antagonisms which exist between political factions within Germany are indicated by the second assassination in high circles, this time of Walter Rathenau, minister of foreign affairs. In Ireland a state bordering upon civil war exists, and Sir Henry Wilson, Field Marshal of Great Britain, has been assassinated in front of his residence in London, an act presumably related to the Irish situation. The energies of the world are being largely expended in strife.

In this country unemployment has been diminishing and the crop outlook is good, but the growing menace of coal shortage or of railroad congestion, if not railroad suspension, overhangs the situation. The Coal Strike. The anthracite field is all unionized and the shut-down is complete. Stocks of anthracite coal are now getting low, and as there is no great surplus capacity for production the danger of a short supply next Winter is becoming serious. Anthracite is used mainly for household purposes, and the supply is not so vital to the country as that of bituminous. Of the latter the non-union districts are producing about one-half the required supply, and industrial and railway stocks are getting low. President Harding has taken steps to bring about some kind of a settlement. The mining industry needs something more than a temporary adjustment that will provide coal for immediate needs. All accounts agree that it is over-developed. George Otis Smith, Chief of the United States Geological Survey, in a recent address said: "Mr. Peabody as a representative operator admits that one-third of the operating mines represent a burden on the industry, and he suggests their elimination through bankruptcy. Ellis Searles, the editor of the United Mine Workers' journal admits that 150,000 miners, like one-third of the mines, should be eliminated, and he suggests that they leave the mine for the farm. Mr. Peabody estimates that the idle days of our bituminous mines involve an annual loss to the capital and labor employed of not less than \$400,000,000, and I suspect that most of this loss is paid by the consumer. "A longer working year for a reduced force is the only possible method of bringing about the lower wage scale and the larger annual earnings, both of which are generally needed. It is largely by reason of the high unit rate of wages that coal costs too much, and on broad economic grounds it may well be questioned whether the producer should be paid a wage out of all proportion with the wage of the consumer. Can a \$5 a day workman afford to buy coal mined by a \$10 a day mine worker?"

permanently maintain a superfluous force. If there were too many shoe factories and too many shoe-makers it would not follow that the public should pay enough for shoes to allow all the factories to be maintained on half time operations, at double the normal cost for shoes. Questions of this kind must be settled with a view to the economical operation of the industries, for the good of the greatest number. Everybody wears shoes and uses coal; of the two, coal is the more important, for it enters into the cost of everything else. It is no kindness to the laboring people of this country to maintain artificial conditions, which increase the cost of coal. They bear more heavily upon people of small incomes than upon others. Every wage-earner pays more because of them not only to heat his home and cook his meals, but upon every purchase he makes. The improved conditions in the steel and other industries, with wage advances indicating a shortage of common labor in many localities, give reason to believe that the superfluous labor in the coal industry would be quickly absorbed if the industries all received the stimulus which cheaper coal and cheaper transportation together would give. Indeed, with a general revival of industry it probably would be found that there were not so many superfluous men in the coal industry as now thought. If the natural economic laws were allowed to have full play the whole situation would clear itself rapidly.

The Rights of the Public. The matter of fuel supply so deeply concerns the public, that the latter unquestionably has rights to be protected in the controversy between employers and employees. If the latter fail to reach an agreement, and a fuel famine develops which threatens to prevent the operation of the railroads and close down the industries generally, the government will be obliged to take the settlement into its own hands. When individual rights or the interests of groups come in conflict, the government, representing the entire body of people, has a right to determine and enforce policies that in its judgment will best serve the interests of society as a whole. This is not the doctrine of capitalism; it is the essence of democracy. The principle that the government has the right to safeguard the common interests and maintain policies that are essential to social progress is fundamental; it is paramount in all disputes, because it is more important to everybody than any dispute over his own wages or his own property rights possibly can be. It is the principle upon which orderly society is based.

The question of compulsory arbitration has been much discussed in an abstract way, and tried in Australia without on the whole very satisfactory results. Few people believe in it as a method of settling ordinary disputes. So far as the interests of the immediate disputants are concerned, it is better that they have the opportunity to fight it out and reach their own settlement; but where the interests of the public are vitally involved there must be a way of protecting it. The interests of the many cannot be subordinated to the interests of the few, no matter whether the few are rich, or powerful for some other reason.

So long as the theory is maintained that any relatively small group, like the coal miners or the railroad employes, has a right to take advantage of its relation to a vital public service, to shut off that service by agreement among themselves, regardless of the damage or suffering caused to the great public which sustains the service, just so long there will be danger of an attempt to put the theory into effect. It is to be hoped that such an attempt never will be made, but that by the gradual spread of so-

cial reform all men will come to see as a social necessity that the government must have authority to maintain the services by which the common needs of the community are supplied.

The Railroad Strike. These comments apply to the railroad strike as well. The constant assertion of personal rights causes men to lose their balance where their own interests are concerned, and there is no knowing how far they will go. Utterances of some of the leaders among both miners and railroad men have indicated a belief that they have only to tie up the mines and the railroads and wait for a flag of truce from the owners. They expect the industries to gradually shut down, the millions of wage-earners to be thrown out of employment, the transportation of food products to cease, and the population en masse to be brought to the verge of starvation, and to actually starve unless the employers give way. This policy, if it is a real policy, is based upon the assumption that the government is either impotent or afraid to take action in such an emergency as they hope to create. The assumption, however, is certain to be disappointed if such a situation ever arises. It is inconceivable that any government, however composed, would fail to take action under such conditions, and a government that has been maintaining a great organization to feed the starving people of Russia is not likely to allow its own people to starve or freeze.

The railroad cases have been dealt with in the only manner by which the public ever can attempt to adjudicate such disputes. A commission was created for the purpose. Its composition is unique for a judicial body, for it is made up of three members named by the railroad employes, three members named by the railroad companies and three members named by the President of the United States to represent the public. Of course, the latter are the only members who can be regarded as occupying a judicial position. The others are there to give the proceedings something of the character of a conference of all parties at interest. When the three members representing the public agree, the judicial decision is practically a unanimous one.

They have agreed in this instance, holding that it is necessary in the interest of the public that transportation costs be reduced, and that the reductions that have been ordered leave the wages affected higher than for similar work outside of the railroad service. The Ideal Standard Wage. On the other hand, the dissenting members of the commission, like the attorneys who argued the case for the employes, set up a vague standard of living, which, if applied to the 25,000,000 families in the United States would require expenditures more than 50 per cent. in excess of the total national income.

Their argument seems to suppose that the wages of railroad employes are paid from some fund not in any way related to the income of the companies or to payments of the public for transportation services—in other words, that they present an abstract question which can be settled without any consideration for the people who in fact must ultimately pay the bill. When it is remembered that the ideal standard wage which is thus evoked must be paid out of the earnings of people who live on very much less, the appeal on the ground of justice loses all force. Everybody would like to see the minimum wage raised in all industries, and it is being raised by all the improvements in industrial efficiency, but to arbitrarily set up high standards for favored groups at the expense of others is not social reform.