

COUNTY UNIT BILL OPPOSED

Farmers Address Letter to Senator Gray Explaining their Objections.

The following letter explaining the objections of the farmers of this community to the County Unit Bill, was forwarded early this week to Senator Howard Gray at Jefferson City. The letter was authorized by D. H. Wampler, Cal Shell, John Carter, C. V. Ballard, W. H. Clouser and J. M. Sanford, who also requested that it be printed in The News, which request we cheerfully grant.

Jasper, Mo., Feb. 21, 1921.
Senator Howard Gray
Jefferson City, Mo.
Dear Senator: In your kind re-

ply to our recent communication concerning the opposition here, among the farmers, to the "County Unit Bill," you requested that we state the reasons the farmers have for opposing this legislation.

The County Unit Bill takes from the local community the control of their district school, leaving to the local board only the privilege of doing the scavenger work, providing the fuel and a few other menial tasks. The district school, along with the country church form the community center of all those districts which lie beyond the radius of the small towns. To

take from these people the control of a matter so vital to the life and happiness of a community, to destroy their local pride and initiative by action as autocratic and uncalled for as is proposed by this bill is not in harmony with our institutions.

There seems also to be a general fear among the farmers that this bill would result in a marked increase in our taxes. This fear seems to be well grounded as the advocates of this legislation, in the printed matter they are circulating, state that this bill would no doubt result in an increase of

our tax levy to about 100 cents on the hundred dollars valuation, where under the law as it now stands the levy can not exceed 65 cents. They argue, however, that the benefits resulting from this law would amply justify the extra tax expenditure.

We find by examining the statutes of this state that there is existing legislation which will provide all of the benefits claimed for this bill, if the people want to take advantage of them. The law now provides for the consolidation of small depopulated rural districts where it is practical to do so. The law now provides for Township or Country High Schools, where ever the people want them, and in many counties of this state the people have acted under this law.

As this bill now stands all of the small towns of the state, such as Jasper, have the option of coming into the County School District or not, as they see fit. The farmers are not given such option, but will be forced into it. Why this discrimination in favor of the town? The presumption seems to be that the country people have not sufficient intelligence to know what they need, or not enough public spirit and ambition to provide adequate educational facilities for their boys and girls.

Much argument is produced to show the inefficiency of the rural schools. If the teachers do not possess the qualification that they should have that is not the fault of the rural school. The state prescribes the qualifications. That the rural teacher does not receive the same salary that the specialists and technical teachers of the large city schools receive is true, and they never will. There always will be a difference in the salaries paid by different schools, as there is a difference now in the salaries paid by the different towns. Admitting the inefficiency of the country schools we observe, however, that the towns and cities are continually drawing their teachers from the rural districts.

The County Unit Bill should more appropriately be called the "Teachers Bill," as they are the only class who are advocating it and the only class who would be benefited by it. It is perfectly right for them to desire better pay and to get it if they can. We who have these taxes to pay feel that we should also have a voice in this matter and at a time when it is impossible to borrow money at the bank to pay the taxes which have already accrued we feel that this proposed increase in our taxes comes at a most inopportune time.

Surely it is possible for the state to foster education without taking out of our hands the control of our schools. Even under this bill its advocates say that it will take \$900,000 state aid money to administer this law—and who knows that it will take twice that sum? The state now provides state aid for the backward rural districts and more can be provided as they meet the conditions provided by the law. When the farmers want to turn the control of local matters over to the county they will make their wishes known: until that time we will thank all town people to help us in our protest against this unfair, unjust, and ill-advised legislation.

Mother's Mistake.

A little girl asked her mother: "Why did you go to the hospital to get me?" Her mother answered: "Because I wanted a nice little girl and you are a nice little girl, are you not?" The little girl, thinking of her baby brother Jack, answered: "Yes, I am a nice little girl, but you made an awful mistake when you went and picked Jack out."

LABOR RULES
BURDEN COSTS
OF R. R. SERVICE

Urging emergency action by the United States Railroad Labor Board to end "gross waste and inefficiency" prevailing under present working rules and conditions, General W. W. Atterbury, vice president of the Pennsylvania railroad, in a statement to the board in session at Chicago said in part:

Many railroads are not now earning, and with present operating costs and traffic have no prospect of earning, even their bare operating expenses, leaving them without any net return and unable to meet their fixed charges.

The emergency presented can be met either by an advance in freight and passenger rates, or by a reduction in operating expenses.

With declining prices and wages in industry and agriculture, the country demands that the solvency of the railroads must be assured by a reduction in operating expenses, and not by a further advance of rates.

The National Agreements, rules and working conditions forced on the railroads as war measures cause gross waste and inefficiency.

Would Save \$300,000,000

I estimate that the elimination of this waste would reduce railway operating expenses at least \$300,000,000. It would be far better to save this sum by restoring conditions of efficient and economical operation than to reduce wages.

We believe that as the wages of railroad employees were the last to go up they should also be the last to come down, but we do insist that for an ample wage an honest day's work shall be given. The public has the right to insist that this must be obtained.

The public has also the right to expect that the railway executives, with the co-operation of the regulatory bodies and the employees, will as rapidly as possible reduce the cost of railway operation so as to insure eventually a reduction in rates. Ultimately a readjustment of basic wages will be required. Meantime it is to the interests of all concerned, including labor, that the rules and working conditions shall be made conducive to the highest efficiency, in output, per man.

Losses in Income Irreparable

When wages have been too low the harm done has been offset by retroactive increases. Losses of railway net operating income are irreparable. You cannot make retroactive tomorrow the savings that should have been made today.

The board cannot possibly write the rules and working conditions of every railroad in this country and adjust them equitably to varying geographical, operating and social conditions.

It rests entirely with the board to determine whether this whole situation shall drift into chaos, and orderly procedure become impossible except at the price of railroad bankruptcy, financial shock and still wider unemployment.

The Labor Board can prevent this catastrophe by declaring that the National agreements, rules and working conditions coming over from the war period are terminated at once; that the question of reasonable and economical rules and working conditions shall be remanded to negotiations between each carrier and its own employees; and that as the basis for such negotiations, the agreements, rules, and working conditions in effect on each railroad as of December 31, 1917, shall be re-established.

If the board will do this, the Labor Committee of the Association of Railway Executives will urge upon every railroad company a party to Decision No. 2, that no proposal for the reduction of basic wages shall be made within the next succeeding ninety days. This will afford an opportunity to gauge the economies which can be accomplished through more efficient rules and working conditions.

It also will afford additional time in which to realize the benefits of a further decline in the cost of living.

Relief Imperative and Equitable

The course which we are recommending is not only imperative but equitable.

The War Labor Board declared that the war period was an interregnum, to be used neither by employer nor employee for the purpose of bettering or impairing the position of either.

To perpetuate as the normal rules and working conditions on the railroads, the extraordinary provisions of the war period is a distinct violation of all promises. The war has now been over more than two years. The time has come when, if the railways are to be efficiently and economically operated, in accordance with the provisions of the Transportation act, normal conditions of employment and of working conditions must be restored and increased efficiency of labor be secured.

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Featured are tailored styles with newest sleeve and collar ideas; simple and refined models or adorned with hand beadings, braidings, artful pipings or saddle stitchings. We suggest an early suit selection while assortments are complete.

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Very fashionable for early spring wear. Just received New Stone Marten or Mink Pieces that are extraordinary values. Genuine Furs.

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Each and every one of them is exclusive; individual as to crown, to trimming or tilt or shape. If you love to see the new in millinery modes, you will enjoy whatever time you spend here.

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\$3.95---\$4.95