



NEW YORK—The longshoremen happily returned to work. A mighty cheer went up from this group when the longshoremen strike tied up tightly all shipping. It will take weeks to do away with the congestion caused by the several days' lay-off of dock men.

### ORGANIZED LABOR FIGHTING ITS MOST CRITICAL BATTLE

(Continued from Page 1)

ers of capital, who some weeks ago encouraged the steel corporation to hold out firmly against labor in the hope of breaking the back of the union labor movement.

President Gompers' words of warning that they must either deal now with the conservative leaders of the present union labor structure or find themselves face to face with the I. W. W. and Bolshevik elements, who unlike the A. F. of L. leaders, will not argue or appeal, sent a chill down the spines of some of the members of the employers' group who have stood firmly against recognition of the union, collective bargaining, arbitration, and other well-known demands of labor.

Mr. Gompers, in his plea to the industrial conference for adoption of the steel strike arbitration resolution, said:

"You dislike us sufficiently not to wish to meet with us in our representative capacity; you may not want to enter into agreements with us, but let me say this to you: You will either come to agreement with us, or you will destroy the ability of our men in our movement to stand up for the right. We will be discarded as impotent or unfaithful, and if you discard us, if you decline to enter into agreements with us, you will have somebody to deal with and you will not find them arguing and appealing to you.

"The resolution which the labor group has offered is of such a character, to meet a critical situation, to curb this widespread discontent from extending to help in tranquilizing the conscience and judgment and the actions of the people of our country to try and establish better relations between employers and employees, workers and employees, as to commend itself to you, and I trust the vote will be to carry this resolution unanimously. In any event, we shall feel now and for the future that we have done our whole duty."

The labor representatives at the industrial conference called by President Wilson, who are daily bargaining with the representatives of the employers and the public for a better measure of justice for the workers, shrink from the thought that the sudden call for a strike in the steel industry represents the real attitude of labor.

They resent with equal force the suggestion that these walkouts carried out under doubtful authority are a true indication that the American Federation of Labor is losing its grip on the workers.

But President Gompers in his address of Tuesday to the industrial conference, and the other labor representatives in interviews, frankly admit that if the employers' representatives continue unyielding it will weaken the hand of the present conservative labor leaders and encourage the men with I. W. W. and Bolshevik tendencies to insurrection, which may lead directly to a reign of terror in the field of labor.

The diligent efforts of paid agents of the big corporations and the I. W. W. to destroy the organization and discord in the ranks of labor in an effort to destroy the organization and discredit the present leaders of the A. F. of L., was declared today by William H. Johnston, president of the machinists' international union, who is attending the industrial conference, to be chiefly responsible for the sudden walkouts of the longshoremen and express drivers in New York. This activity of the forces seeking to destroy labor as at "present constituted," he added, was one of the primary reasons why the steel workers declined to accept the advice of President Gompers to postpone their strike until after the industrial conference, as urged by President Wilson.

"No fair-minded or well-informed person will, I feel certain, take any of the recent sudden walkouts of the workers in New York or elsewhere as representative of the attitude of the A. F. of L. or organized labor in general, or as showing any real inability of the A. F. of L. to control its affiliated units," said President Johnston today.

"There are two very powerful elements which the A. F. of L. now has to combat in the interest of the laboring men, the public and the country as a whole," he continued. "One is the I. W. W. men who, under claim of having renounced their former ideas, get into the unions and then stir up strife and clamor for strikes. The other element is composed of professional agitators, hired by detective agencies retained by the big corporations, who get into the unions and lead movements calculated to give the labor union movement a black eye with the public and put the men at the mercy of their employers.

"We have been doing our utmost to break up this system employed to destroy the unions. We have found that large numbers of these men move about from place to place sowing the seeds of discontent and committing acts detrimental to organized labor. Recently after we got the proof on 118 of these men in one city and fired them out of the union, we found they moved in a body to another city where a critical labor situation was developing and were industriously at work, trying to destroy the union there.

"I suppose there never will be a time when it will be possible for the A. F. of L. to absolute control newly organized unions, like those which recently struck suddenly in New York, but every fair-minded man knows that thoroughly organized unions do not go on strike before giving full opportunity for amicable settlement, and that isolated cases of ill-advised strikes are no criterion of the purposes of the A. F. of L."

Unauthorized strikes have done a great deal to injure the cause of labor, Walker D. Hines, director general of railroads, declared a few days ago in a letter to Bert M. Jewell, acting pres-

ident of the railway employees department of the A. F. of L., protesting against the hastily called strike in the Altoona railroad shops.

"These unauthorized strikes are doing a great deal to injure the cause of labor," declared Director General Hines. "They are creating the basis for the argument, which is being urged more and more, that it is nonsense to recognize labor organizations, or try to deal with them because the organizations will not obey their own rules, and, therefore, they make the orderly handling of business impossible. I am not willing to accept this view. I believe these unauthorized strikes are due to temporary states of mind which will disappear and which will be succeeded by a due appreciation of the undoubted fact that labor organizations never can succeed in accomplishing important things which they ought to accomplish in behalf of labor until they obey their own rules. Nevertheless, every instance of this sort furnishes another argument for those who are opposed to organized labor and every railroad employee who participates in a strike of this sort is making a weapon to be used by the enemies of labor organizations."

"If a railroad shop is to shut up every time there is a momentary disagreement between the local management and the local employees, before there is any chance to investigate the matter in an orderly manner, everybody might as well give up trying to run the railroads. On the other hand if every time there is such a disagreement, the management must do what the employees demand, that will also be the end of the railroad operation, because every thoughtless act of this sort will stimulate other thoughtless acts and the situation will get worse and worse and become impossible."

These sudden labor walkouts, which the A. F. of L. is trying to stop, towards which the public is becoming very resentful, are the result of a general feeling of recklessness, "carelessness" and indifference among the workers brought about by relaxation from the war strain, President Daniel J. Tobin, of the teamsters' international union, who is attending the industrial conference, as one of the labor group, declared today.

"This feeling of recklessness is much more prominent among the workers of Europe, particularly those in England, than it is in this country," said President Tobin. "The airplane raids are over; the people were insufficiently nourished during the war; the war has been won; every household lost men in the war, and there is a general feeling of relaxation and indifference to everything. The men would as soon quit as work, and it takes very little to start a strike. That feeling spread all over Europe and is now spreading among our working people.

"But it should not be confused with I. W. W.-ism, because the American laboring man is a patriotic citizen and would throw out an I. W. W. in a minute. Remember that all during the war all union men stayed right at

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work, right back of the government in the fight against Germany. It is only a temporary feeling with the workers, I believe, and will soon disappear."

The American labor movement does more to maintain industrial peace between employers and employees than any other means devised, President Gompers told the industrial conference in an address a few days ago.

"I will not pretend to say that all our agreements and contracts with employers are held inviolate and that they are not sometimes broken," said President Gompers. "Our organization has agreements with thousands and thousands of employers. They have worked out satisfactorily."

Many employers are on the same footing with the I. W. W., Mr. Gompers said. "The I. W. W. says, 'we will enter into no agreement with employers.' The employers say, 'we will enter into no agreement with the employees.'"

He then warned the employers' group that if the steel strike is not arbitrated through organized labor, it will be but a short time before the employers of the country will have to deal

with other representatives of the workers who, unlike the A. F. of L., will not argue and appeal but will demand and obtain or destroy."

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