

Refusal of Garment Workers

To Sign Agreement Attended by Renewed Disorder.—City Employees Organize at Pittsburg, and Leave Jobs to Demand Higher Wages.

New York, July 26.—Garment workers rejected the agreement entered into by their leaders with the Garment Manufacturers' Association and were ordered back on strike today by Benjamin Schlesinger, president of the workers' union.

Refusal of the striking garment workers to ratify the agreement was due to failure to provide for arbitration of differences by a disinterested board, it was learned tonight.

Robert W. Bruere, former city chamberlain, who has acted in an advisory capacity for the workers, said the revolt clearly demonstrated "that it is impossible to arrive at an agreement that will be fair alike to employers and to workers, and that will secure durable peace, without the intervention of a board of arbitration in which the public is adequately represented."

The strike, together with a lockout involving in all 60,000 workers, has tied up the garment-working industry in this city longer than three months.

The action refusing to ratify the agreement reached by their leaders was taken by the members of the union today at a mass meeting attended by scenes of disorder. Schlesinger and other leaders were denounced by the workers for "betraying" them by consenting to the agreement. Police reserves had to be called out to quiet the disorder. More than 10,000 of the workers jammed the hall or the streets adjoining.

The agreement had been described by leaders as offering many concessions to the workers. After its rejection by the workers President Schlesinger said that there was nothing to do but continue the strike.

SHAMEFUL CONDITIONS IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Chicago.—C. M. Brown, state deputy inspector of factories, reports on the shameful conditions under which striking metal miners at Rosiclare, Hardin County, ave. The state official says that the houses are built about four feet from the ground on posts or rocks piled on top of one another with no cement or mortar between them.

"The cisterns," he continues, "are located between each two houses, the gutters on the houses are wood, the downspouts are wood and are rotted off just above the ground, which leaves dirt, bugs and filth go into the cistern. They strain all the water through cloth before using it and then it is not fit to wash in, let alone drink. The furnishings in these homes are awful, no screens or windows, and I never saw more flies around the stock yards than I saw there. No carpets, no pictures, nothing but beds, a few chairs, table and stove is about all they have, all except the men folks barefooted. The water closets are about 50 feet back of the houses, no walk leading to same, no fences around place. It would make one's heart sick to see how they have to live and to think that they would have to strike in order to get a small raise in order to live."

The Illinois trade union movement is assisting these workers, who were forced on strike because of poor working conditions, low wages and a 12-hour day. The Farmers' Union of this state is also rendering valuable assistance. In a letter to the organized farmers of Hardin County officers of the state branch say: "With the eyes of the whole state upon you, we feel that you will aid these striking brothers of toil by every means in your power."

MACHINISTS VICTIMIZED.

Allentown, Pa.—Because the International Motor Company discharged the shop committee representing organized machinists, every member of this craft employed in the plant has suspended work to force the reinstatement of the victimized unionists.

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"NO STRIKE" SCHEME FAILS

Denver, Colo.—Over 200 cracker bakers, employed by two large companies, are on strike for higher wages and improved working conditions, as a result of the state industrial commission's refusal to support their demands.

Under the law it is illegal for workers in this state to strike prior to 30 days' notice to the commission, on the theory that "both sides will cool off." The bakers complied with the law and the commission investigated. The companies told them competition with eastern concerns made the request impossible. Despite high freight rates to the west and the increased cost of living in Colorado, the commission favored the employers. The workers declined to "cool off." They suspended work.

Shortly afterwards the companies forgot their claims regarding eastern competition and offered to increase wages if the strikers would abandon their union. As an extra inducement the companies offered to install "welfare plans," similar to the Rockefeller "union." Both offers were unanimously rejected by the workers, two-thirds of whom are women and girls.

The companies are advertising for "help" without including the statement that strikes exist in their plants. This is in violation of the state law.

One of the struck concerns attempted, last summer, to deduct from the pay of its employees the cost of insurance under the workmen's compensation law. The workers organized as a result and since then have been affiliated to the International Union of Bakery and Confectionery Workers.

"PROTECTING" THE POOR.

New York.—The New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor is a rather well-rounded title, but it justifies its existence by the discovery that a man—or, rather a "poor" man—need spend only \$29.20 a year for clothing. The list includes one suit, valued at \$10, and one pair of trousers that costs \$2. If the unexpected happens to these necessary garments, the association saith not. One necktie at 25 cents, one pair of suspenders at 25 cents, and four collars at 50 cents is included in the year's raiment.

The association figures that a woman's needs can be supplied at a cost of 45 cents less than the man's. An even half-dollar difference would probably be classed as extravagance.

After announcing its discovery, the association gives this somewhat needless advice: "Clothes should be bought for use and not for display."

LABOR IS NOT A COMMODITY.

Washington.—In a speech in the House of Representatives on the labor sections of the Clayton law, Congressman Lewis, a member of the labor group, said:

"Everybody understands that Section 7 would have been written into the Sherman Act in 1890 had there been any thought of the interpretation since made of that great act. Everybody knows that Congress at that time had no thought of legislating with regard to the relations of employers and employees.

"While a barrel of oil is not only a commodity in the market, it is a commodity before the courts; it is a commodity before the Legislature. The legal attribute of a commodity is property, but the legal attribute of the workingman is citizenship."

TO HELP FARMERS SELL CROPS

Harrisburg, Pa.—The state commission of agriculture has approved plans for community associations of farmers, who will pool their products and market them under the supervision of state experts.

The purpose is to cut down the various charges between producer and consumer and to increase the profits of the agriculturist by enabling him to sell produce that now goes to waste upon many farms.

The state agents will take charge in localities in which these farmers have a small surplus of various sorts of produce without any one of them having enough to branch out as a shipper. When the local organization among the farmers is completed arrangements will be made to provide for a selling end of the venture in the city that appears to offer the best market inducements.

LABORERS' STRIKE ENDS.

Kansas City, Mo.—Hod Carriers and Building Laborers' Union has raised wages from 35 cents an hour to 37½ cents. These workers suspended work the first of last month because the contractors refused to consider any increase. Building operations have been at a standstill since that time.

WANT WAGES INCREASED.

Cincinnati.—Moving Picture Operators' Union has submitted a new scale to their employers to replace the present agreement, which expires the first of next month. A 10 per cent increase is asked. Over a score of picture houses have already accepted the new contract.

WORKERS' LAND PLAN UP TO OREGON VOTERS

Salem, Ore.—Secretary Stack, of the State federation of labor, has filed with the secretary of State petitions of over 25,000 voters that the proposed people's land and loan law be submitted to the next referendum. As the law requires 21,136 names, organized labor is now preparing to conduct an active educational campaign in behalf of this measure.

The law was first proposed by the Portland Central Labor Council, on recommendation of a committee appointed to investigate unemployment. It was later endorsed by the State federation of labor and the executive council of the A. F. of L., to which it was referred by the San Francisco convention of the A. F. of L.

The law is based on the theory that as the State has never been able to limit taxation a State land tax will be levied per year that will equal land rent, whether the land is used or not. A third of this rental will be placed in a homeseekers' loan fund, from which men and women in the city and country can borrow from the State a sum equal to 1,500 for 20 years. For the first five years no interest will be charged except for administration purposes. No tax can be levied except by a vote of the people. If property is sold for delinquent taxes the State will pay the taxes and the value of the improvements that have been made. When the State acquires property under these conditions it can be leased but not sold.

The purpose of the bill is to pry land loose from speculators who hold it at exorbitant prices, thereby making a real "back-to-the-land" movement impossible.

PORTO RICO WRETCHEDNESS.

San Juan, Porto Rico.—Justica, official trade union newspaper prints the following report from the Porto Rico bureau of labor:

"The strike among the cannery workers in Mayaguez last week was on account of the miserably low wage being paid. The men were receiving 5 cents an hour, the women 2½ cents per hour.

"About 400 people were involved in the strike. After several conferences with the chief of the bureau of labor the employers offered to increase the wages 1 cent per hour for both men and women. At first this proposition was refused by the strikers, but many women who were not on strike offered to work for the old wage, and consequently the Porto Rico Canning company started up again with practically a new force."

"An inspection made during the week of the number of small tobacco stripping shops in Manati disclosed that in nearly all the factories very little attention was being paid to the laws governing the employment of women and minors. The sanitary conditions were particularly bad."

STREET CAR MEN OUT.

Yonkers, N. Y.—All local street car lines were tied up here, July 22, by a strike of motormen and conductors, who demand an increase of 5 cents an hour in wages and shorter hours.

QUARRYMEN RETURN.

Sandusky, Ohio, July 29.—Nearly all the 300 strikers in the Kelly Island stone quarries returned to work today. The company refused to meet their demand for a wage increase and notified them unless they returned to work at once they would be discharged.

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