Labor News From Coast to Coast.

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When The Labor Unions Strike Against Strikes

THROUGH CO-OPERATION STRIKES WERE PRACTICALLY ELIMINATED

Have you ever gone through the agony of needless delay after delay in waiting for your new house? Or for your quarters in the new office building? Or even for your garage? Have you sweat blood while your carpenters fought with your metal workers as to which craft should put in the metal trim on your job? Have you had them both walk out because they could not agree, and leave you literally holding the sack through no fault of your own?

If so, here is news for you.

The problem of the jurisdictional strike—those quarrels in which men quit work not because of wage disputes, or hours, or trouble with the boss, but because the unions themselves could not agree as to which should do certain parts of the job—has been solved.

And it was solved by those most intimately concerned by the simple expedient of getting round a table and putting all the cards on it.

With speed, but not without difficulty, a board composed of representative sof the contractors, builders and workers, to gether with the public's representative from the United States Department of Labor, found a common ground for agreement.

It is an amazing fact that this board accomplished in a few months what the employers and laborers had been struggling to do for more than twenty years. Since the board came into existence millions upon millions of dollars have been saved for builders and many more millions to the laborers, in time. But most important of all is the restoration of morale in the workers.

Moreover, the work of this board has dried up the greatest source of labor graft. Overnight it destroyed the weapon that made possible extortions of men like the late "Skinny" Madden of Chicago and Bob Brindell, late of New York but now of Sing Sing prison.

Although the jurisdictional strike had been practiced for a quarter of a century, not many realized how its tentacles reached into the vitals of the building trades. Through it building in whole cities was tied up season after season, contractors and investors were forced into bankruptcy, while workmen, who perhaps could stand the loss least of all, lost weeks and months of employment.

Because of it no workman leaving home in the morning for his place of employment was sure that he would not be on strike before the day was out, not on account of wage dispute or any other difficulty with his employer, but because the representatives of two unions differed as to whose men should do a particular job.

With men of one trade off a building, work on it soon ceased, for the trades are interdependent. Nor did it help any for the employer to fill the places of the craft that struck with nonunionists. When he did so, the other crafts quit, anyway. Whichever way he turned, he was between the devil and the deep blue sea. The rank and file of the workers were no better off.

Business Agents With Itchy Palms.

Moreover, honest disputes were not the only difficulty. Where, as very frequently happened, business agents developed itchy palms, it was an easy matter to set up a technical dispute that could only be settled when the itch was cured by coin of the realm freely applied.

"In fifty-two weeks," says William Dobson, general secretary of the bricklayers' national organization, "I have been in fifty-four jurisdictional strikes. Frequently I did not know what I was talking about."

This condition obtained in the autumn of 1918 when Edward B. Russell, of the American Institute of Architects headed a delegation sent from that body to the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, to ask if some way could not be devised whereby these needless strikes could be averted. John Donlin, president of that department, replied that they would welcome the assistance of all other elements in the industry, but more particularly the architects, the so-called "aristocrats" of the industry, "who had previously held aloof from all labor matters."

With their assistance and that of John B. Lennox of the Department of Labor, it was, after much discussion, arranged to set up a "supreme court for the building trades" to be made up of representatives of all elements in the industry—the investor in the person of the architect, the contractors, the engineers, and labor, with the latter in the minority.

Accordingly, nine months later in Atlantic city, the National Board for Jurisdictional Awards in the Building Industry came into being with Mr. Russell, representing the architects, as chairman; E. P. Miller, the American Engineering Council; Colonel J. L. Wiggin and F. J. C. Dresser, the Associated General Contractors of America; E. M. Craig, the National Association of Building Trades Employers, and John J. Hayes, Thomas L. Preece, and William L. Hutcheson, the unions, with William J. Spencer, secretary of the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, as secretary, but without a vote.

To this body the seventeen building trades unions in the American Federation of Labor agreed to refer all disputes, the technical men agreed to write decisions, when made, into all contracts, and the employers to stand on the specifications. Each group further agreed to suspend any member or local organization breaking these pledges, and—this was the big point—also the unions agreed that, in any dispute in the future, work should continue, and that the employer was empowered to say which of the claimants should do the work in dispute.

This meant, in a word, an end to delays in construction of a building, while two unions battled for the privilege of doing work the employer was willing either should do, so long as it was done. It ended also the excuse for many "holdups."

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NOTIFY TEACHERS SALARY REDUCTION

Trustees of Verdun, P.Q., Take First Step With Elementary Teachers.

Montreal.—The beginning of a campaign which it is stated may extend into Ontario and even throughout the Dominion was commenced Friday evening when reduction of salaries of elementary teachers was mooted at a meeting of school trustees to which teachers were invited, held at Verdun, a suburb of this city.

At this meeting the teachers were informed by the chairman of the trustees that the board considered that salaries were too high and a minimum of $950 was suggested for elementary teachers.

Miss C. C. Smellie, president of the Verdun branch of the Protestant Teachers' Association of the Province of Quebec, affiliated with the Federation of Teachers of the Dominion of Canada stated tonight that a meeting of the executive would be held tomorrow evening to consider the matter and that a general meeting of the teachers later in the week would be called to protest against salary reductions

MINE OWNERS CAN CONTINUE DEATH TRAPS

Scranton, Pa.—A twenty years' fight by the people of the anthracite region has been defeated by the decision of the United States supreme court declaring unconstitutional the Pennsylvania law forbidding the mining of anthracite coal in such a way as to cause a cave in of the surface of the ground. The law was enacted last year.

Under the supreme court decision, coal companies can—and of course will—continue their policy of reckless mining which has ruined millions of dollars worth of property and endangered many lives during the last 20 or 25 years.

The fight for the legislation now outlawed has been conducted against the most powerful political and industrial forces in the state It was undertaken after homes, school buildings, and churches had been tumbled down, and in some cases even dropped into the mines; after cemeteries had been tora to pieces and the bodies of the dead exposed.

It was not until after these cave-ins had actually killed a number of persons that the citizens of mining towns were able to bring enough pressure to bear on the legislature to force a bill through to prevent such catastrophes in future. The Kosler bill, passed in 1921, made it a crime for coal companies to conduct operations in such a manner as to wreck or damage property on the surface.

The coal companies at once began a legal fight to nullify the law. The Pennsylvania supreme court, however, declared the law constitutional. The fight then was carried to the United States supreme court by the companies, and there the law was killed.

IN THE STRIKEBREAKERS' CAMP

"Yesterday a fellow was saying to me," a husky fireman told at the supper table, "how a guy goes into the roundhouse up at B——and tells the scabs there: 'Boys, a big airplane's outside, and it's goin' to drop some bombs down on you Wops right away; you'd better beat it,' he says, 'and damn me if they din't every one of 'em run out into the woods, and there a gang of union men was waitin' ready to sap 'em over the head. Lord, but it must 'a been funny!'"

I could listen to this jest of assault and battery work with some composure because in that place I was working in a maintenance-of-way storeroom which was not on strike and so I was not scabbing. But even at that it gave me a start when, a little later, another friend described how "the company bull (guard), ye see, was insultin' one o' the women here in town. When he run, our town dick (policeman) told him to stop, and when he kept goin' he let him have it—right through here (pointing to his stomach). Don't know when they bury him—nor care."

All this kind of thing, of course, hasn't been on the strikers' side—not by any means.

"A colored scab was passing right over by that pole, when a picket called to him: 'Come over a minute!'" a station man explained at a junction point on my way to the second job. "When the picket called him again—friendly like he was, you understand—the scab pulls out an automatic and shoots the picket five times; right through the heart—like this. Probably scared to death he was."

"Last week two guards killed a striker here—just for tresspassin'," said the marshal in another railway centre "We got the guards under arrest—tough guys they are I'll say. Whenever a guard or a strike breaker comes up town we arrest him for carrying a gat—if he has one, or for anything else, if we can."

I Become a Scab.

At various other centres no job was to be had as a second fireman or in any of the departments a little removed from the too active fighting line. Because of the shortage of good engines, numerous trains were being cut off with their crews:

"W'y, man alive, we got regular men furloughed all over the place. You wouldn't expect to go on ahead of them, would you? No, there's no job, not even workin' on the section"

So at a great terminal I had to pack my ordinary worker's clothes—plus my scruples and my fears—put my overalls into a rough-looking 98-cent paper suit case, and walk as casually as possible down past the strikers' pickets to present myself to a tough-looking guard as a guy that just had to have a job and wanted to see the master mechanic.

I am willing to say that it took all the nerve I had.

After my week in a roundhouse back in '19, I should have asked for a machinists' and not a helper's job, if I had learned as quickly as did the chap with whom I fixed a leaking valve stem just above the steam box of a handsome big engine.

Primrose Path to Money.

"About three weeks ago," he muttered confidentially after we got acquainted, "I was gettin' 47 cents an hour, like you, but after seein' my buddy mend a few things like this, I blowed. A little farther down the line I got on as a car knocker (repairer)—that's 63 cents. See? And when I made my stake there—after fifteen days—I came here at 70 cents as a regular machinist." That was his primrose path to easy money.

"I think I'd know what to do for this machine," one lad exclaimed after he had climbed the locomotive's front end, opened up to let the workers into the smoke box, "if the blinkety-blank thing only needed a shave!"

Three of my fellow machinists are merely "taking on a piece of jack" during vacation from their own work of photographing blue prints in a railroad office.

"Carpenterin' is my line," said my new boss after I was changed to the night shift, "but slack work in my town made me right smart of this easy money. If you don't take it too easy, they may make you a foreman, like they did me. Last night my two helpers hid themselves after midnight and slept till monin'. I'll do my best to give you overtime. Sometimes I've worked a plump twenty-four hours—and got paid for thirty-two. That's $22.45. At that rate I'll clean up around $500 in six weeks—and no place to spend it so long as we're gettin' free board and room at the camp—an' taking no chances on gettin' a cracked nut by tryin' ti get up town past these here pickets outside."

With our torches, hammers, and wrenches we would sit at the entrance of the round house stalls and wait until the turntable delivered a returned engine into our hands. Then we inspected evry bolt and tightened every loose nut we could find on the wheel trucks or the journal boxes that held the barings for the great steel axles of the engine's tender or tank. It is remarkable how much you can tell about the tightness of a nut by the sound it makes when you hit it with a good hammer Our trouble was to find the good hammer, or torch or wrench, because the tools were lying in confusion among the litter of dirt and waste and ashes all over the house.

Amateur Car Knockers.

While we hammered or tightened, others were making sure that the boxes were properly filed with oil and waste, while up ahead a half dozen different groups were in the cab or down beneath in the pit, or alongside the steam box or the drivers, attending to water, steam, fire, air, or grease.

Most of these men were as far as it is possible to conceive from possessing any degree of either skill or re-

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ATTEMPT ASSAULT EDMONTON MAYOR

Ex-Employe of the Sewer Department Makes Violent Attack.

Edmonton.—Martin Ryder, former employe of the city sewer department, and alleged to be a strong strike sympathizer, forced his way into Mayor Duggan's office on the pretext of showing him a strike bulletin. When the mayor was reading the bulletin, Ryder pulled off his coat and shouting "you can settle the strike if you want to," made a rush at Mr. Duggan. Miss Brown, the mayor's secretary, screamed and made a grab at Ryder's arm, thinking he might have a gun, and it was this scream that brought Commissioner Yorath dashing into the mayor's office Yorath grappled with the intruder, receiving a blow on the head, but in the meantime, reinforcements arrived. Fortunately, six special constables had been waiting to be sworn in, and they soon over-powered Ryder and he was taken to the police cells. Desks, flower pots and other furniture in the mayor's office were overturned in the melee, and one of the special constable's received a black eye. The mayor was uninjured. Investigation showed that Ryder was unarmed.

INDIANS MAKE BIG IN FUR MONEY

The Chipewyan tribe of Indians of the Beaver River reserve, near Cold lake, have returned to their home teepees after a six weeks' hunt, during which period the average individual catch for each of the natives totalled from $800 to $1,0000.

The Chipewyans have the reputation of being good hunters; they travel far into the hinterland, north of Cold lake, where but few white men penetrate and as a result they are well fixed for the winter. Fur is reported to be very plentiful, this being especially true of foxes, large numbers of which were taken by the natives, while many of the silver variety were included in the catch.

The Beaver River Indians number about 200 souls, all told, out of which about forty are hunters, but the entire tribe takes to the wilderness, once the trapping season is open, and one old man of 75 years of age himself accounted for two valuable silver foxes.

The meat hunt this year is reported to be more or less of a failure, due to the lack of snow, so that even the Indians, shod in their silent moccasins, were unable to approach the plentiful moose, who were alarmed by the crackling of the dry twigs and leaves long before the hunter glimpsed his quarry. As a consequence the natives are living mostly on fish and rabbits; the latter are commencing to die off, but, though diseased, are being eaten by the Indians, the condition of the animals apparently having no effect on their internal organisms

UNION'S FOES TALK BENEFITS OF "OPEN SHOP"

Waterfront Employers Say Boss Must Be on Alert Against I. L. A.

Seattle.—Employers who operate on the "open shop" basis are living over a volcano, according to a warning given members of the Waterfront Employers' Association by K. J. Middleton of Dodwell & Co., at a recent meting. Minutes of the meeting were secured Friday and show that a genral discussion was held concerning the best methods of combatting unionism.

Employers are inclined to be flush with success after a temporary victory, says Middleton, and must remember that past instances of such "victories" finally culminated in the employers, through necessity, being compelled to sign up once more with the International Longshoremen's Association. The union, Middleton declares, owes its success to the fact that it offers tangible rewards to its members. Eight hundred non-union waterfront men are making not less than $141 a month in longshoring work, said the speaker.

Capt. J. S. Gibbon, president of the association, said that employers had formed a union of their own to fight the longshoremen 16 years ago, but that following each victory by the employers apathy had set in. Employers must be ever on the alert to successfully combat unionism, he warned.

Joseph Webber of Griffith & Sprague cited benefits the employers had received under the "American plan." In August, 1921 he pointed out, wages had been voluntarily reduced from 90 to 80 cents an hour straight time, and from $1.25 to $1.20 overtime. In April, 1922, said the speaker, a thorough revision of working conditions and elimination of penalties had been effected. Holidays were worth $1,600 to $5,0000 through the elimination of overtime pay Pilfering also had been reduced he said.

Other speakers showed that the employers' own labor bureau is costing $18,000 to $20,000 yearly to maintain, and appealed that all waterfront houses join the association

CROOKEDNESS OF COAL MINE OWNERS BARED

Further Revelations by Committee That Probed Pa. Conditions.

New York.—Besides being guilty of gross brutality and virtual peonage, the Berwind-White Co. is accused of dishonesty in weighing coal and paying the miners in the Somerset county, Pennsylvania, holdings, in the report of Mayor Hylan's committee which investigated conditions there. This and other feudalistic actions resulted in the strike.

Striking miners charged the company:

1.—With giving false weight on coal mined and paying the miners for only a part of the coa they took out.

2.—With refusing to let the miners see the scales on which their coal was weighed.

3.—With maintaining company stores in defiance of the law against employes to trade there under threat of dismissal.

4.—With overcharging employes 20 to 100 per cent on merchandise purchased at the stores and with falsifying accounts, frequently charging for mechandise not bought.

5—With keeping the employes in a state of economic subjection so they never received any cash for their labor but were always in debt to the company.

6.—With controlling the miners' votes, presenting them with marked ballots on election days and threatening them with dismissal unless they voted as ordered.

HALF MILLION FACING DEATH.

Moscow.—Narly half a million men, women and children are doomed to death from starvation in the famine districts of Russia before the winter is over, according to conservative estimates made here. Despite optimistic reports given out by Bolshevist officials it is known that nearly 8,000,000 persons in the starvation zones are so hard pressed for food that they are living upon rations scarcely fit for animals.

G. T. RAILMEN THANK PREMIER FOR REAL AID

Veterans of 1910 Strike Given Seniority.

Ottawa, Can.—Officers of practically every labor union connected with the Canadian National Railways are in Ottawa to confer with Tom Moore, president of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress and Director of the Canadian National Railways

In the course of the meeting the union officials will also interview Sir Henry Thornton.

Resolutions expressing appreciation of efforts which have resulted in the restoration of the pension and seniority standing of Grand Trunk Pacific employes who participated in the strike of 1910 have been forwarded to Premier King, Sir Henry Thornton, president of the Canadian National Railways; Major Graham Bell, vice-president; Right Hon Arthur Meighen and W. D. Robb, vice-president of the Grand Trunk division, Canadian National Railways, by L. L. Pelletier, Canadian legislative representative of the Order of Railway Conductors.

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN SIR H. THORNTON

Officials of C. B. R. E. Call on the Members to Give Public Ownership a Fair Trial.

"The eyes of the world are upon us. Government ownership is on trial, and as we as an organization have advocated and supported goverment ownership and operation of public utilities, we are in duty bound to lend every assistance possible to make government ownership a success." This appeal was issued to employes of the Canadian National and Grand Trunk Railways by A. R. Mosher, grand president of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employess.

The confidence of the officials of the brotherhood in Sir Henry Thornton, recently appointed president of the National Railway lines, was expressed by Mr. Mosher when he declared that "The conclusion I have arrived at is that in the new president we have a gentleman with whom we can and will most heartily cooperate in making the Canadian National Railways a success from every standpoint."

In the furtherance of the cooperative effort, Mr. Mosher calls upon the employes to put the greatest possible measure of efficiency into their work, to avoid waste of every description, and declares that such steps will pave the way to better conditions for the men themselves. Suggestions from the employes which will effect economy and will add to the efficiency of the National Lines are invited by the brotherhood.

HEADS OF 587 RETIRE FRIDAY

Chief Interest Centres in Outgoing Business Agent Stevenson.

Nwly elected officers of Street Carmen's Local 587 of Seattle, will assume their duties Saturday morning, it was learned Wednesday. The old officers, with the exception of President M J. Murray, who was re-elected, will retire Friday evening.

Chief interest in the outgoing official board centres around J. A. Stevenson, business representative, who for five years has been one of the leaders of thought in the councils of the carmen.

Largely as the result of Stevenson's activities, according to his close friends, Seattle street car workers have maintained one of the most satisfactory wage scales in the country. In city hall circles Stevenson's tireless efforts in behalf of the carmen have been favorably commented upon by civic officials and councilmen.

Stevenson has been under the doctor's care for some time, mainly as the result of overwork and has reached no definite plans for the future. His last official act was the signing of the new agreement with the Seattle and Rainter Valley Railway Company.

Items of Interest From Overseas

SUPPORTS REPORT OF LABOR MEMBER

University Labor M.P.'s Approve Abolition of Political Honors.

London.—At a conference of University labor members of parliament at Liverpool, representing all British universities except Edinburgh and St. Andrew's, a resolution was carried unanimously welcoming Arthur Henderson's minority report on the conferring of honors and supporting his recommendation that political honors should be abolished

Arthur Greenwood, M.P. (Nelson and Colne), who moved the resolution, said the whole philosophy of the labor party was against political honors, indeed against absurd distinction of any kind. There had been attempts to destroy the labor party by means of a measure which would have prevented trade union funds from being used for political purposes. Trade unions, he said, ought to be as free to dispose of their funds as were employers associations or any other voluntary body. The labor party raised its money openly but now it was clear that other political parties relied almost entirely for their resources on revenue from honors sold by them when they were in power. The proposals of the Royal Commission which investigated the honors question were quite inadequate to deal with the evil. They only threw a little carbolic acid on the system so that it might smell sweeter in the future.

RUSSIAN TRADE GROWING.

Evidence of the stead increase in Russian trade is afforded by the record of two years' work, just published by "Arcos, Ltd.," the commercial agency for London of the Russian Trade Delegation.

In 1920-21 (a perior of about 15 months) the total turnover of "Arcos, Ltd." amounted to £11,856,186, and of this only £1,765,287 represented sales of Russian produce. All the rest consisted of "purchases for Russia."

During the first nine months of this year the total turnover had already reached £10,507,675, out of which £2,484,713 consisted of sales of Russian produce. The increase, it is noted, coincides with the adoption in Russia of "the new economic policy."

"HOUSE RULES" OFTEN PUZZLE LABOR M.P.'S.

London.—Some of the new labor M.P.'s are finding the etiquette of the House of Commons rather irksome.

There is no official guidance in the form of printed rules of what members may and may not do so the new arrivals have to tread with circumspection

Recently a Labor member was observed to be reading an evening newspaper He was promptly called to order by the chairman and felt like a criminal

They have found out, too that the ban on smoke in the House of Commons is very extensive Not only may they not smoke in the debating chamber, but the rule also applies to the lobby, any of the corridors leading to the lobby, and also the central hall.

Absent-minded new members coming in from the dining rooms downstairs not infrequently find themselves pulled up by the policemen.

Members may put their feet up on the ministerial table or on the seat in front of them but woe betide them if they lie at full length on their seats.

LABOR LEADERS NOW OUTNUMBER LAWYER M.P.'S.

London, Eng.—For the first time in 50 years, the legal profession is not the occupation of a majority of the members of the House of Commons The new Commons has 83 members who make their living as trade union officials, while only 80 of the members are lawyers. The number of lawyers are less than the average for the last half century and represents less than a third of the number of members of the profession who were candidates. The trade union officials were more successful in the last election, electing 83 out of 102 candidates.

The standing of the trades and professions in the new House of Commons is approximately: Trade union officials, 83; trade workers, 57; Company directors, 40; journalists and authors, 30; miscellaneous professions, 25; merchants, 25; engineers, 20; farmers, 11; publishers, 9; brewers and distillers, 7; lawyers, 80; army and navy officers, 46; manufacturers, 37; ship-owners, 30; teachers, 25; land owners, 22; bankers and brokers, 11; doctors, 9; contractors, 6; housewives, 2; clergymen, 1.