

# Our British Letter

Lloyd George and his Opponents

London, Eng., May 31.—The chief topic of the week has been the Transport Workers' Strike, to which I briefly referred in my last letter. It was at first feared that it would not only spread in the immediate district affected, but would also break out at other seaports. This was owing to the probability that vessels which had no chance of being unloaded on the Thames might put in at other places, and the order had been given by the labor leaders that where this was the case the dockers there should refuse to handle the cargoes thus diverted. Fortunately this fear has not yet been realized, but nevertheless thousands of tons of frozen meat and perishable foodstuffs, as well as other goods, are now lying on the Thames. As regards the first, so long as coal and the necessary service to keep the refrigerators going are available the meat will not suffer, but great inconvenience has been caused by delay in delivery, and, of course, prices have greatly gone up. In the case of the perishable goods the probability is that much will have to be thrown overboard.

On Monday, which was the Whitsuntide bank holiday, steps were taken to run the blockade in the case of a shipload of Argentine beef. The Home Secretary had expressed the intention of the government to assist in maintaining the food supply of London, and early in the morn-

ing a strong force of policemen, 60 mounted and 600 on foot, put in an appearance at the Albert Dock. When all was ready a mixed company of clerks and porters from Smithfield Market, about 100 in number, selected from willing volunteers, set to work to transfer the carcasses to a fleet of motor trucks, and with very little interference from the strikers, who watched the proceedings, a portion of the cargo was safely carried to the meat market 6 miles distant. By this work, and the unloading of a few other vessels, completed under police supervision, the threatened famine has been averted. Intense indignation is of course felt by some of the strikers at what they call the unwarranted interference of the government. On the other hand, their action is warmly approved by the vast mass of the general public, especially as there appears to have been no sufficient reason for this particular strike. It is strongly felt that all that the men could justly ask, and are likely to get in this case, could have been easily obtained as a result of negotiations which the government would have been quite willing to institute, and which, in fact, they have already taken steps to bring about.

## Owners Will Not Arbitrate

The preliminary enquiry entrusted to Sir Edward Clarke terminated on Saturday. Mr. Gosling, on behalf of the strikers, suggested that a conference of representatives of the men and all classes of the employers should be held, and the Board of Trade at once issued invitations for this day. It is much to be regretted, however, that the chairman of the Shipping Federation has replied that the ship-owners of London are of opinion that the men have failed to abide by previous decisions and they have no confidence and no assurance that any negotiations that now take place will have any greater reality or be more permanent, and that they therefore do not see their way to confer further. The Port of London Authority and a few other bodies have also declined the invitation. Other sections of the employers will no doubt be represented, and it is hoped that certain proposals of the government, backed up if necessary by legislation, may put an end to this strike, and also prevent the likelihood of a repetition. In the meantime the strike leaders have expressed their willingness to co-operate in securing that needful supplies of certain foodstuffs shall be put upon the market. Sir Edward Clarke also has done all in his power to expedite a settlement and has already issued his report as the result of the enquiry held by him. Seven points were submitted by the men as the causes of the present strike, and of these he has answered 4 in favor of the men, 2 in favor of the employers and as to the other, he expressed no definite opinion. He finds that in the case of the man Thomas, as to whom the present dispute arose, the men were in the wrong, but that in several respects the masters have not kept the terms of previous awards. The refusal therefore on the part of some of the employers to meet the men, especially for the reason given, comes with a very bad grace.

## What Labor Wants

Mr. Philip Snowden, a Labor M.P., has this week contributed a very interesting and forceful article to the Daily News and Leader. It is one of a series on "What Labor Wants" and I presume the word "wants" is used in the sense of "needs" rather than "desires." He urges that fuller recourse should be had to what the labor party has been very glad in particular cases to avail itself of, namely, government intervention. Two short extracts will, I think, interest readers of The Guide:

"Four-fifths of the resolutions passed at the Trades Union Congress are demands for state interference in the interests of the workers. Even the Socialists, who ought to have clear ideas about the relation of the State to industry, are as inconsistent and equivocal in their demands as the trade unionists. In one resolution of their conferences they demand a State-fixed wage of 30s. a week; and in the next they repudiate State arbitration and applaud the strike. Syndicalism, which is the very antithesis of Socialism, has attained to recent notoriety by



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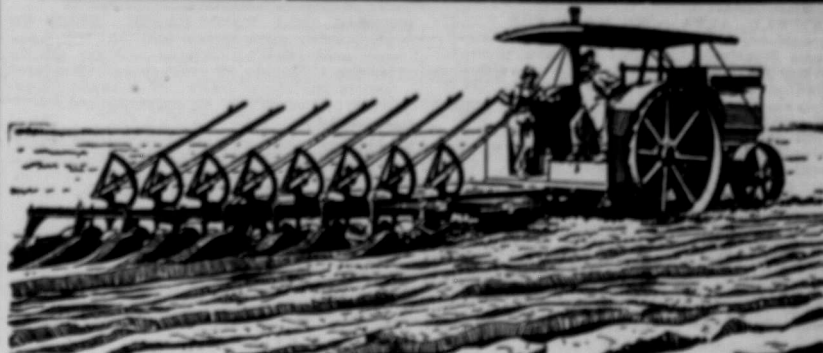
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