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Weekly News Letter

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Strike Unjustifiable, Asserts Hon. Mr. Murdock

CONDEMNS MINE WORKERS IN DISTRICT 18, ALBERTA, AS BEING UNLAWFUL MENACING WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY

"I shall lose no opportunity of condemning the strike as unlawful, and, so far as I can see, unjustifiable, since it appears to have no other purpose than the securing of a closed shop, an object which menaces alike the freedom of the individual and the welfare of the community."

"If you and those associated with you persist in maintaining the present situation, I shall most certainly hope to assist in framing some changed methods or laws that will prevent a recurrence of such attitude on the part of those assuming to represent labor." These declarations are made by the minister of labor, Hon. James Murdock, to Robert Livett, international board member, United Mine Workers of America, with respect to the mine workers' attitude in District 18 (Alberta) coal mine strike.

On December 11, Mr. Murdock wired to Mr. Livett as follows: "Referring to strike called by your organization in Edmonton district, information reaching me indicates that principal if not only object of strike is enforcement of claim for union recognition. Now I am, from past experience and otherwise, well aware of the conditions resulting from the fullest recognition by employers of the trades unions to which their employes belong so as matters of grievances and wages and working conditions may be dealt with by direct negotiation, but I have yet to learn any situation in which the principle of recognition of the interests of either party to a dispute or those of the public at large is advanced by the declaration of a strike."

"It is, as you will be aware, but a few months since the close a disastrous strike for other, and in a sense more justifiable, in the Southern part of District 18, and it is specially unfortunate that your organization should have seen fit at the present time, when the coal industry has by no means recovered from the long cessation of work in the spring and summer months without any effort to secure redress by the means provided by law, to bring on the present strike on a matter which can be satisfactorily settled only by negotiation. I trust your vote will yet be cast in favor of an immediate resumption of work and an adjustment of existing grievances in the manner prescribed by law. Kindly let me have conclusions of your committee on this point."

(Signed) "James Murdock, minister of labor."

Mr. Livett's Reply.

To this telegram Mr. Livett replied on Dec. 14 as follows: "Replying to your wire Dec. 11, I cannot understand why you consistently drawing to our attention that we violate the law when you have been clearly informed as to our past actions in connection with the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act. It will be useless for us to further ask for a board in view of the fact that the operators of the Edmonton field have vowed they will do business with the U. M. W. of A. To apply for a board arrests and it is not our intention to apply for same."

Minister's Explanation.

The Minister of Labor then sent the following reply to Mr. Livett: "I acknowledge your message 14th. In expressing surprise investigation at this time would only be a detriment to our country I continue to regard strike your organization is conducting in Edmonton coal fields as contrary to law, you overlook the fact that it was in message from Mr. Peacock, secretary of your organization, that question of law was first raised, he having objected to enforcement of laws that regulate picketing, whereupon it became necessary to point out to Mr. Peacock his inconsistency in protesting against the enforcement of one law at the very moment was defying another law."

Threat to Change Law.

"I shall lose no opportunity of condemning the strike as unlawful, and, so far as I can see, unjustifiable, since it appears to have no other purpose than that of securing a closed shop, an object which menaces alike the freedom of the individual and the welfare of the community. By experience and observation I know the value of sound trades unionism and am aware that in accordance with the laws of the land, even a strike may be only power left to wage earners to change the attitude of a shortsighted and rapacious employer, blind to reason and justice, of the type sometimes found, and in such a case I should count with equal vigor the conduct of the employer who himself would be responsible for the use of the strike weapon."

"You are well aware no such condition exists in the present case, strike being declared without affording department opportunity of inquiring by Conciliation Board or otherwise."

(Signed) James Murdock, Minister of Labor.

ESTIMATES FOR RELIEF WORKS

Government Allocates a Further Million Pounds. Particulars have been issued of the supplementary estimate of £1,070,000 for the relief of unemployment, bringing the total amount estimated for this purpose this year to £2,570,000. With the estimate is a memorandum explaining that of the £1,070,000, a sum of £600,000 is for additional expenditure in respect of existing schemes, while £470,000 is the amount required in the current financial year in respect of new assistance, which will total £1,620,000 in all.

THE CONSUMER'S EMANCIPATION.

There are only two ways in which the consumer can struggle against the high cost of living: By demanding more money for his labor, or by seeking to purchase the necessities of life at a lower price. The gains secured by higher wages are often wiped out by still higher prices. The savings made by co-operative purchasing cannot be taken from you. By cutting out useless middlemen and organizing distribution on a basis of service instead of profit co-operation insures reliable goods, honest weights, and fair prices, thus emancipating the consumer from the yoke of the profiteer.

FATAL IN MOST CASES.

Bonar Law proceeded to illustrate his point by telling the story of a fisherman who was lying ill in the last stages of exhaustion in a hospital, and asked that some one play for him on the bagpipes. The nurse had a warm heart and brought a piper into the room to play his entrancing music. The highland soldier recovered, but other patients in the hospital all died.

DRY LAW IGNORED IN UNITED STATES

President Harding Calls For More Effective Enforcement of Volstead Act. When the complaint comes from the President of the United States himself that the Government's prohibition enforcement machinery has broken down the matter cannot be blinked at. President Harding wants the law strictly enforced. The accession of so many Democrats to power in the last election is responsible for freely letting down the bars.

WOULD ABOLISH FREE HOUSES

Northumberland Owners Offer To Abolish Old Practice. The question of "free houses" for North country miners was raised at a meeting of the Northumberland Miners' Council at Newcastle, Alderman W. Weir presiding. A long discussion took place on the subject, following which a resolution put forward by the Executive, was carried by 27 votes to 22.

MUTUAL AID IN INDUSTRY

Whitley Councils Have Stayed Wage Cuts, Says T. U. C. Chairman. "Trades which have refused to form Whitley Councils are those which have suffered most heavily in the matter of wage reductions." This was the statement of Mr. J. B. Williams, chairman of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, speaking at the annual dinner of the Industrial League and Council in London.

TAILORS ON STRIKE

London Dispute Over Introduction of Non-Union Labor. Members of the United Ladies Tailors' Trade Union employed by Messrs. Freedman and Co., Watling street, are out on strike against an alleged attempt to introduce non-union labor.

BRITISH LABOR EXCHANGE STATISTICS SHOW LITTLE IMPROVEMENT.

The number of persons on November 20 recorded on the free-register of the Employment Exchange in Great Britain as wholly unemployed was 1,379,000. This is 1,847 more than in the preceding week and 444,733 less than the figure recorded at the beginning of last January. The number working short time and drawing benefit for intervals of unemployment was 59,900 on November 20, as compared with 50,234 on November 13, and 934,786 on July 1, 1921.

NEWS ITEMS FROM ACROSS THE LINE

Henry Ford applied to the Interstate Commission recently for authority to put into effect on his railroad a system of profit sharing somewhat similar to that effective in his manufacturing plant. A nation-wide campaign for the Third Federal Child Labor Law is under way. The National Child Labor Committee believes the new law will be adopted throughout the country and for this purpose hopes to obtain the signatures of ten million men and women.

Secretary Hoover of the Department of Commerce recently indicated his sympathy for the principle of a living wage for the railroad workers by declaring that the 1920 Transportation Act carries the obligation of the public to secure just wages to the employees. In a brief filed Saturday in support of the defense motion to dismiss the government's injunction against the Federated Shop Craft Union, it was charged that there was better evidence of an unlawful purpose on the part of the United States Attorney General than of Labor Union officials in connection with the shopmen's strike.

The Packard Motor Car Co. has declared a 100 per cent stock dividend on its nearly 12 million outstanding common stock, payable on December 31. In recent months the Packard's net profits have been running at a monthly rate of \$500,000. Congressman Britten, of Illinois, November 20, reintroduced the bonus bill vetoed by President Harding at the last session of Congress, amended so as to provide the necessary funds by the taxation of beer and light wines.

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM OVERSEAS

Dr. W. F. McCaleb has resigned as manager of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Co-operative National Bank of Cleveland, and goes to New York to take charge of the new labor bank that is being organized by the Central Trades and Labor Council of New York City. In accordance with his programme of applying for himself all raw materials in the manufacture of automobiles, Henry Ford has bought a coal mine in West Virginia for which he paid \$1,250,000.

An embargo on anthracite coal shipments to foreign countries was proposed in a bill introduced recently by Representative Rogers of Massachusetts. By the bill the President would be authorized in his discretion to embargo coal of all other classes or foreign markets. The average received for each ton of freight by the U.S. Shipping Board was 30 per cent less in August of this year than in August of last year, and 50 per cent less this September than last September, but the net operating loss of the Board shows a decrease this year, according to Chairman Lasker.

The administrative committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America asked President Harding to recommend to Congress such special amendment of the restricted immigration law as will permit temporary entry into this country of Greek and Armenian refugees from the scenes of war operations in the Near East. Four representatives of the Department of Labor were ordered to the Bituminous coal fields in Somerset County, Pa., to investigate the working conditions of the miners on strike in the Berwind-White Coal Co.'s mines.

Efforts will be made by the State of Michigan to keep 56 alleged radicals said to have participated in the Communist Party of America meeting in Michigan last August, back to the State to stand early trial in January. Attorney General Smith announced that 76 radicals attended the meeting and only 29 of them were arrested. In an opinion filed November 21 in the U. S. Court in Baltimore, Judge Rose held that the Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation had no right to reduce the wages of the crew of its steamer Caullada during the time for which they shipped.

Organization for a huge government corporation with a capital of \$100,000,000 for the purchase and sale of farm products is the plan which Senator Norris, of Nebraska, announced today he is working out for the relief of the farming industry. A bill to this effect will be introduced in a few days. A crisis in the affairs of the New York organization of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in America, not affiliated, became apparent when it was announced that the New York Joint Board and its staff had resigned because of the activities of Communists and other radicals and had appealed to the General Executive Board to act at once to save the local organization from collapse.

"In spite of the decision of the U. S. Railroad Labor Board that the shop contracts of the Western Maryland Railroad Co. are in violation of the Transportation Act, it is understood those contracts. This means that the Western Maryland will refuse to be bound by the Labor Board's decision. An aster suit against the Ku Klux Klan was filed in the Kansas Supreme Court November 21. The petition charges that the Klan is operating illegally in the State of Kansas because it has no charter. An invitation to participate with the International Federation of Trade Unions in a general labor anti-war conference at the Hague, December 10, was rejected by President Gompers and the Executive Council of the A. F. of L. "Participation in the decision of the Supreme Court in a case brought by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company which will be reviewed by the Supreme Court."

Items of Interest From Overseas

EXECUTIVE OF MINER'S MEET

"The Men Are Starving; Something Has Got To Be Done." The Executive of the Miners' Federation met yesterday to discuss the Prime Minister's reply to the deputations of Saturday last. Subsequently the executive met the mining M.P.'s at the House of Commons to confer on the situation, which is regarded as serious, and indeed intolerable.

RAILWAY WAGE AGREEMENTS

No New Proposals for Variation Have Been Made. It is stated by the Railway Review that no new proposals, apart from those originally presented by the railway companies, regarding wages and working conditions, and which were rejected by the unions, were submitted by the companies at the further conference with the union representatives this week.

A FAMOUS MAN'S START

The story of how Sir Eric Geddes got his start in life is told by Mr. E. T. Raymond, author of "Unsuccessful Celebrities." A great railway magnate, Sir George Gibb, happened to meet Mr. Geddes (as he was then) at a dinner party. He marked him down as a man of promise, and not long afterwards called him from England: "Will you take a post on the North-Eastern?" Back came the reply: "Starting on Monday."

IRISH LABOR AND THE OATH

No Barrier to Freedom of Action. Dramatic Outburst. An unexpected dramatic statement on the position of Labor members regarding the oath of allegiance was made by Mr. Thomas Johnson in Dail Eireann—the day on which the Irish Free State entered the Commonwealth of British nations.

ASKS FOR HER HUSBAND "THE PRINCE."

Claiming to be the wife of the Prince of Wales an unknown woman, who has been lodging for some time at Windsor, paid a visit to the castle, and announced that she had come to take possession of the apartments set aside for her own and her husband's use. She refused all particulars of herself, but alleged that her parents were "the Marquis and Marchioness of Malvern," and added, "I am hunting for my husband, the Prince of Wales."

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