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Our readers are requested to send us court decisions and newspaper clippings relating to railway interests.

It is desirable that communications, new advertisements and changes in old advertisements be handed in before the 10th of the month.

W. B. CAMPBELL, Publishers,  
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#### THE LESSONS OF THE STRIKE.

No subject is now so generally discussed in railway circles, either in the United States or Canada, as the great strike of engineers and firemen on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. The American railway journals devote a great deal of space to discussion of the merits of the dispute, each having a very decided opinion as to which side is right and which wrong in the matter. Living in another country in which the railways and their employees are much differently circumstanced from those of the United States, we do not presume to express an opinion upon the merits of the case, leaving that to those who are more deeply interested and whose opinions may have some weight in the dispute. But there are certain general principles involved, which have been more or less discussed, and the consideration of which is a matter of interest and profit for Canadian as well as for American railway men.

The first principle, and that which in fact covers all the others, is as to the right of the men to strike at so short notice as they did. If we read the newspaper reports aright, the men left their locomotives at a fixed hour, regardless of where they were at that time. If this was the case, they did exactly what was done in the case of the Grand Trunk in the strike of twelve or thirteen years ago. Under the antiquated law then in force in Canada summary desertion of employment was a criminal offence, but in discussion which followed led to a law being passed exempting from the criminal charge all desertion of employment save by persons upon whom the public depends for important services, such as this very case. Under the law as it stands the same action which we understand was taken by the "Q" engineers would be a crime. Without discussing the right or wrong of this, it may be pointed out that there has been no strong attempt to further change the law so as to exempt these classes from the criminal list. But many of the newspapers go further and declare that the position of the Brotherhood men is tantamount to an assumption of the right to dictate to employers what wages they shall pay. This is absurd. The men simply decline to work for less than a stated wage, and they would not be free men if they had not a perfect moral as well as a legal right to take this position. Do not the railway companies do the same thing every time they make a schedule of freight or passenger rates? The men sell labor and fix the lowest rate they will take for it; the companies sell transportation, and they exercise the same right of naming their own terms. But there is this difference between railway companies and engineers. The companies cannot absolutely refuse to work without foregoing all their rights, for the reason that they exist by reason of a public franchise guaranteed to them and accepted upon the terms of rendering certain public services. Every engineer on the line would have a perfect right to give up his position and cease work altogether if he chose, and would violate neither legal nor moral rights of others, nor would he render himself liable to any penalties whatever by doing so. Taking this view of the case, such utterances as the following, from the *Railway Register*, seem a trifle absurd:

If to bring to a standstill the business of every community on 6,000 miles of railway does not constitute a conspiracy, we are unable to understand what does. The acts of the engineers partake more of the nature of communism than anything else.

So far we have not noticed that the engineers have engaged in any rioting or threatened violence to those who have taken their places. If an organized effort on their part to improve their wages is to be declared by respectable and intelligent editors to be a conspiracy, what is to be said about a "trunk line arrangement," or any of those numerous devices for keeping up rates on railways. In view of the tremendous effects of such a strike as the one now pending, it is to be expected that American writers will get excited about it, but it would be much better to keep cool and say less until something can be said which can be logically defended.

The fact is that railway employees have a perfect right to decline to sell their labor except on terms satisfactory to themselves. It may be a great inconvenience to many people, but the employee, receiving nothing from these people, is not bound to consult their convenience. It is not a case of absolute refusal to do what is desired, but a conditional one, the condition being the refusal to grant the terms demanded. To compel men to stay at work under conditions with which they do not wish to comply would be tyranny, and enough of that exists under the name of democratic freedom already.

A great outcry is made concerning the power wielded by such men as Chief Arthur of the engineers and Chief Sargent of the firemen. It is true that these men have power beside which that of the autocrat of many a state is insignificant. If that power is derived directly or indirectly from any legislative enactments, those holding it should be held responsible directly or indirectly by the people who make those enactments. But, so far as we are acquainted with the matter, the authority of Messrs. Arthur and Sargent is theirs solely by reason of the belief among the men that they have a common cause, and that these two leaders are best fitted to represent that cause before the world. It is true that even such power may be, as it too often has been, used for the injury of the people. But it has