

BIG EFFORTS TO AVOID RAILROAD STRIKE

Canadian railroads will not be affected by the strike on lines in the United States, according to Mr. Lee. He said, the wage dispute on the Canadian roads had been amicably settled.

First conference on plans for carrying forward the general railroad strike were begun.

With W. G. Lee, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, already on the job directing plans for the walk-out of members of his



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organization, Mr. Stone, conferring with his immediate subordinates, the three leaders of the other big five transportation organizations. The three other leaders are: L. E. Shepard, president of the Order of Railroad Conductors; W. S. Carter, president of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Enginemen, and T. C. Cashen, president of the Switchmen's Union of North America.

"The men have been asked to accept what is an inadequate living wage. They know the railroads are taking unfair advantage of business depression to force them to accept unfair wages and service conditions. To state the matter briefly, they believe that the companies are going to continue their aggressive warfare against them until they force the men to strike. Therefore, they must reluctantly decide to accept the challenge now."

Mr. Lee's statement in part follows:

"The wages of train and yard service employees were fixed in 1913 and were not changed, except in a very few minor instances, until January 1, 1918. Time and one-half for overtime was not allowed yard employees until April 10, 1919, and for road employees until December 1, 1919. The award of the United States Railroad Labor Board which fixed wages at the peak, became effective May 1, 1920, while the wage reduction on which the present controversy hinges became effective July 1, 1921. The further demands for the elimination of time and one-half for overtime, rules allowing extra pay for extra service performed, and further wage reductions, were made following the award effective July 1, 1921.

"From 1913, through the period in which this country became commercially interested in the European war and until January 1, 1918, transportation employees did not receive any advance in their daily or monthly wages. The enactment of the Atlantic Coast Line Act, which was declared constitutional March 19, 1917, did not increase either the daily or monthly wages of the men interested."

"For the purpose of clearness we offer for exhibit the wages of a through freight brakeman running into New York in 1913, whose wages were fixed by the arbitration of that year and which wage rate remained in full force and effect until January 1, 1918. This is a typical wage earned by an employee whose class transports more than 90 per cent of the freight business of this country. This employee received in the eastern territory \$2.67 for his normal day's work of 100 miles within

10 hours, or \$80.10 for a 30-day month. With the increase of January 1, 1918, he received approximately \$1.04 additional, which made his daily rate \$3.71 and his monthly supplement number 16, effective January 1, 1919, brought his daily rate to \$4.08 and his monthly wage for a 30-day month \$122.40, and the decision of the United States Railroad Labor Board, effective May 1, 1920, brought the daily rate of the through freight brakeman running into New York to \$5.12, which, multiplied by 30 days for the month, gave him a monthly wage of \$153.60. The wage decrease, effective July 1, 1921, reduced the monthly rate to \$124.00 for 30 days' service, on which amount he is expected to maintain himself and family decently and reasonably, and he cannot do it, as everyone who is trying to maintain an American standard of living understands.

"Another source of aggravation to the employees, which they bitterly resent, is the disposition of the railroads to take away from them all of the advantages that were gained during the recent years."

Official Washington's interest in the impending strike centered in the reaction of railway executives and labor leaders to the proposal of the public group of the Railroad Labor Board of "one feasible plan" to prevent the tie-up of the country's transportation system. In brief the board proposed:

1. That the railroads immediately put into effect freight reductions equivalent to the wage reductions authorized last July.

2. That requests for further wage decreases be withdrawn.

3. That the employees withdraw their strike order pending action of the board upon any request for further wage reductions which the carriers subsequently might file.

Federal action in connection with the strike had been confined up to today to the conferences arranged by President Harding between the public group of the Labor Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission, the impression being that the President intended to leave the matter temporarily in the hands of the two agencies created by law to supervise railroad transportation.

Figures collected by railroad men give some idea of the magnitude of the threatened railroad strike.

The United States railway system now facing a strike is ten times larger than the British railway system, which recently was the scene of the world's last great railway strike.

Two years ago the operating revenues of the United States railroads stood at \$5,184,000,000 and operating expenses ran to \$4,419,

000,000. The average number of miles operated was 233,991. Number of revenue passengers carried the first half of last year was 597,266,432, and freight tonnage handled in this period amounted to 1,031,645,138 tons. Railway employees two years ago numbered 1,977,516.

The largest of the roads listed in group one of the roads is the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, which has a trackage of 10,961 miles and runs through most of the states in the northern tier between Chicago and the Pacific coast. The Chicago and Northwestern, covering the central and north central states, is the second largest, its mileage totalling 10,155. The Southern Pacific has a larger mileage than either of the above roads, but part of its system runs into Mexico and it is not yet known whether the strike will affect that country.

An alteration in details of the plan announced gave the eastern states at least two days of grace before the proposed walkout would become effective in that region. The Pennsylvania and the Erie roads, included originally in the first group on which the strike was ordered, were removed from the list, thus excluding at the start all states east of Chicago and north of the Ohio river.

Under this plan, with the men on the roads in group No. 1 walking out Oct. 30, the strike would be in full effect Nov. 5.

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad also was dropped from the first group, according to the list given out by union leaders.

These changes were said by union leaders to complete assignment of roads to the first group on which walkouts would take place and the following was made known as the official list of carriers in that group: Kansas City Southern, Missouri Pacific, St. Louis Southwestern (Cotton Belt), International and Great Northern, Texas and Pacific, Southern Pacific (Atlantic system, including Houston, east and west; Texas & Houston; Texas Central), Southern Pacific (Pacific system), San Diego and Arizona (Chicago and Northwestern), Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, except Chicago, Terre Haute and Southeastern; Northern, Southern Railway (lines east and west); Seaboard Air Line, Virginian Railroad, Chicago Great Western, Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific.

While no official information was forthcoming as to what group the Pennsylvania lines would be placed in, it was understood that they would be assigned to group three on which the walkouts are scheduled to start Nov. 3. All walkouts are scheduled to begin at six a.m., standard time.

The union forces gained strength when Thomas M. Pierson, the vice-president of the Order of Railroad Telegraphers, announced that the 81,000 members of his organization positively were pledged to strike and that they would make every effort to completely tie up the country's transportation system.

"It is out to tie them up so completely that it will be impossible for a train to move," said Mr. Pierson. "If every telegrapher quits work that will mean that no train orders can be issued and trains will be at a standstill. No question but that we will order our members out until October 30 but final instructions probably will not be issued until October 31."

The shop crafts' unions, comprising about 476,000 employees, deferred the formal issuance of a strike call pending a meeting to be held, but their leaders have officially announced that their organizations will be called out and help in sending out the call has been cascaded thereby by the time needed to draft the final plans and orders.

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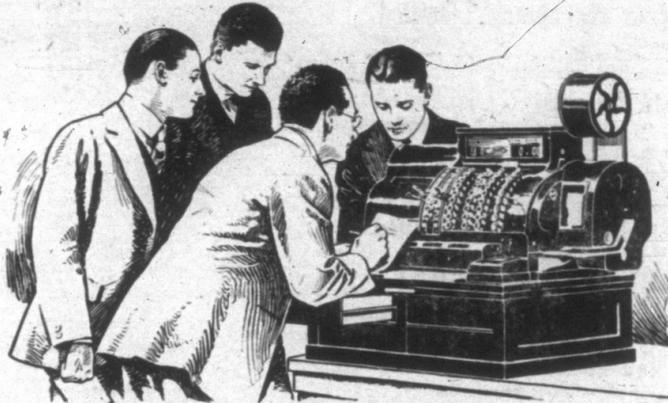
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The high tide in the movement "Back to the Farm" seems to have arrived with the announcement by the Stroud Farm Agency of New York that they recently sold more than one million dollars worth of improved farms in four successive days. The average selling price of the farms was slightly under \$5,000, the lowest purchase price being \$550 for a farm in Vermont, and the highest \$22,000 in New York State. Other sales covered the entire range between these two extremes, embracing improved farms in more than thirty different states. A large proportion

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of the buyers were city men who are buying for permanent homes. All present indications are said to point to a continued increase in the number of farm properties to be purchased and occupied before the end of the year.

Pickets are still active and strike-breakers are turning out very poor work, reports the B.C. Labor News.

Every now and again one of the employers loses an employe through the activity of the pickets, and they are also losing some jobs. Last week a firm lost an \$800 job because it could not supply the union labor.



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