

A Message From the Employees of the Real Silk Hosiery Mills to the Public

Because Real Silk Hosiery Mills, Inc., is an important industry in Indianapolis, affecting the lives of some thousands of our citizens, we believe that the public has a right to know the facts about the strike of a small minority of the employees.

The trouble is caused by one group of workers refusing to recognize the authority of an organization of fellow-employees that had been duly constituted to deal with all matters pertaining to labor.

All the employees of this company voted at an election held under the auspices of NRA last October to determine what form of employee organization they preferred.

The choice was between the American Federation of Full-Fashioned Hosiery Workers Union, and the Employees Mutual Benefit Association of Real Silk Hosiery Mills. The Employees Mutual Benefit Association had been functioning satisfactorily for twelve years. The result of the election was an overwhelming vote in favor of having the Employees Association continue to act as the representative of all the employees.

It was understood that the company, as well as all of the employees, should be bound by the result of the election. Accordingly, the company entered into an agreement with the Employees Association by which all matters pertaining to wages, hours of labor, working conditions, etc., should be determined by that organization, with provision for arbitration in case of a deadlock. Individual employees or groups of employees have the privilege of presenting complaints, grievances or suggestions to the executive board of the Association.

The representative of the NRA who conducted the election posted a Bulletin prior to the election, stating that the organization receiving the largest number of votes should select a committee to deal with the management for the period covered by the National Recovery Act.

The company management contends that this arrangement still obtains, and holds that those who assume to represent any class or group of employees, should appear before our E. M. B. A. board rather than seek to have the company deal with them direct.

That was the position of the Company when approached by officials of the Union.

The Union, instead of appearing before our E. M. B. A. board, carried its demands to the Regional Labor Board, with a threat to call a strike. We are informed that the Labor Board strongly advised against a strike, but the Union officials ignored the advice.

With all these facts in mind, it must be obvious that the action of the Union is inspired by the desire to force the Company to break its agreement with our Employees Mutual Benefit Association.

During the twelve years that the E. M. B. A. has functioned, this company and its employees have worked together in peace and harmony. It was largely because of the fine spirit of co-operation between the management and our Association that the Real Silk Mills continued to operate during the whole depression. Even during 1933 an average of 2,968 employees were afforded employment and with an average of over 36 hours a week, per employee.

Most of the Real Silk employees went right on with their regular work yesterday and the management is co-operating in every possible way for the comfort and convenience of the workers. Out of a total of 3,200 employees, exactly 755 did not report for work yesterday.

The plant does not operate on Saturdays as we have a five day schedule, but operations will be resumed on Monday as usual.

Executive Board of
Employees Mutual Benefit Association
of Real Silk Hosiery Mills, Inc.

Letter Addressed to the Regional Labor Board by Executive Board of Real Silk Employees Mutual Benefit Association

Indianapolis, Indiana,
April 5, 1934.
To the Regional Labor Board,
Indianapolis, Indiana.
Gentlemen:

We have received a letter from Mr. J. A. Goodman, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Real Silk Hosiery Mills, Inc., stating that he has had a conference with your honorable Board. Mr. Goodman, at your request, asked us if we would be willing to put up to Washington this question of minority representation and be bound by the decision handed down there.

For your information, we wish to state that our Employees Mutual Benefit Association was organized twelve years ago and was incorporated under the laws of the State of Indiana. Last Fall our employees requested a vote under the NRA to determine whether the Employees Mutual Benefit Association or the Federation of Hosiery Workers should represent the employees for the purpose of bargaining collectively with the management. Last October a Washington representative of the NRA came to Indianapolis and announced to our employees, through the medium of bulletins, that the results of the vote under his supervision, indicating the wish of the majority, would be binding on the company and on all employees for "the period covered by the NRA."

Subsequently the election took place by secret ballot, under the supervision of the NRA, and the Employees Mutual Benefit Association was selected to be the representative of all employees by over a two-thirds majority.

The Employees Mutual Benefit Association, under its Constitution and By-Laws, handles all matters pertaining to the operating conditions, hours of labor, wages, discharges, lay-offs, etc. As a matter of fact any group of workers or any individual may come before our Executive Board for a hearing concerning any dispute or grievance.

As you no doubt know our Employees Mutual Benefit Association functions through employee representatives from all departments of the mill and all complaints, and all matters of dispute, come finally before our Executive Board, which is made up of eight members, four are elected by the employees by secret ballot, and four are employees appointed by the management. In case any dispute can not be settled by a majority vote of this Executive Board, which is made up of eight members, or in the event of any tie vote on any issue between the company representatives and employee representatives of the Board, the By-Laws of the Employees Mutual Benefit Association provide that all such matters be referred to a Board

of Arbitration made up of men not associated with the company in any way. One arbitrator is selected by the employer members of the Board, and one arbitrator is selected by the employee members of the Board and those two arbitrators, independently, select a third arbitrator as Chairman, and the decisions of that arbitration committee are binding upon the company and all employees.

Our organization has functioned in this manner for a period of twelve years and all disputes and complaints have always been amicably settled.

Now we understand, through Mr. J. A. Goodman, that a group of employees has presented certain complaints and demands to your honorable Board, which complaints and demands those employees have never presented to our Board which, as a result of the election, is the duly constituted authority to handle such matters.

The employees who are making these complaints and demands are the same employees who demanded the election last Fall on the clear-cut issue between the Union and the Employees Mutual Benefit Association and were enthusiastically in favor of the basis of the election which was that the will of the majority of the employees would prevail. It was never contemplated, at the time of the election, that the

losing minority group would be entitled to separate representation, for in that event there would have been no need for the type of election we had, which was fully agreed upon in advance by the parties concerned.

Now a group of these employees apparently wishes to nullify the results of the very election that they demanded. They now wish, so we are informed through Mr. J. A. Goodman, to deal directly with the management and to be able to completely ignore our duly elected Employees Mutual Benefit Association Board.

The answer of our Employees Mutual Benefit Association is that in view of the type of election which we held, we have a responsibility and obligation to all of our employees, who themselves have decided what form of representation they want and that decision they have already made through their election by secret ballot. Our Board, therefore, would be powerless to agree to changing the form of representation we have been instructed to carry on.

We believe that you can clearly see from the above facts that our situation is very clear in that any issue of employee representation that is now before your Board has previously been brought out and definitely decided in a clear-cut manner. We see, therefore, no occasion at this time, to try to decide something again which has already been definitely decided. However, if for any reason your board should see fit to refer this matter to any authority in Washington, we, of course, stand ready to appear at any such hearing and personally present the above facts.

In conclusion, we feel compelled, in the interests of all of our employees, to call upon your honorable Board to use your proper authority to see that if there are any employees who have complaints to register, that they be registered directly with our Employees Mutual Benefit Association Board, which is their duly elected authority. Any such complaints that are presented to our Board will receive proper consideration, whether presented by individuals or groups.

Yours very truly,
EMPLOYEES MUTUAL
BENEFIT ASSOCIATION
of Real Silk Hosiery Mills, Inc.
EXECUTIVE BOARD
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Catherine Monroe
G. E. Burke
Indore Krieger
Wm. Haugh
COMPANY MEMBERS
G. E. Burke
Wm. Blum
A. Stein
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