

THE INVESTIGATION.

Proceedings of President Cleveland's Labor Commission.

Light Is Sought Upon the Causes Which Resulted in the Late Strike—Debs' Version Is Given on the Fifth Day.

MANY UNION MEN TESTIFY.

CHICAGO, Aug. 18.—On Thursday was opened the second day's proceedings of President Cleveland's Labor commission.

George W. Lovejoy, former yardmaster at La Salle, Ill., for the Rock Island, to testify that he was discharged June 19 for reasons unknown to him. The employees of the Rock Island struck because of a local grievance and of the Pullman troubles. The Rock Island people, the witness declared, will not employ a member of the American Railway union. His plan for preventing strikes was government ownership of railroads. He thought compulsory arbitration unsatisfactory.

Sydney Kellogg, secretary of the American Railway union, was the next witness. He thought that the cause of the boycott was the grievance of the Pullman employees. The Pullman employees were organized as a lodge of the American Railway union. The committee of the American Railway union, which included Mr. Lovejoy and Mr. Kellogg, said the grievances would be investigated, and these gentlemen promised that the members of the grievance committee of forty-three should not be discriminated against. Notwithstanding this, the members of the committee were discharged the next day. Then the Pullman employees went out and the convention of the American Railway union voted to sustain them.

Mr. Kellogg said he thought the best prevention of strikes on railroads would be government control of all railroads; the next best thing, compulsory arbitration.

B. Ray, who was assistant yardmaster for the Rock Island road at Rock Island, Ill., but was discharged previous to the strike because he joined the American Railway union, was the third witness. He gave the usual account of what led to the strike. The remedy for strikes, he thought, lay in compulsory arbitration.

At the afternoon session T. W. Heathcote, who was chairman of the Pullman strike committee, was the first witness. He presented to the commission the wage scale that obtained at Pullman in 1893 and compared it with that in force at the time the strike was inaugurated. In June, 1893, he said he knew first-class mechanics who had been paid \$4 and \$4 in two weeks. A year later he said it was necessary for the men to do four times as much work to get the same pay, there having been a reduction of about 60 per cent. in the pay of the men. While wages were reduced to this remarkable extent Mr. Heathcote said there was not the slightest reduction in the rents collected by the Pullman company out of the wages of its employees. Mr. Heathcote also presented an official copy of the "black list" prepared by the Pullman company and forwarded to other corporations with the request that the men whose names it contained be not employed.

Jennie Curtis was a seamstress for five years in the repair shops of the Pullman company, president of the girl's local union 269, American Railway union, at Pullman, and also a member of the committee that called on Mr. Wickes and Mr. Pullman on behalf of the girls employed at the carshops town. In her department, she said, employees made in June, \$93, \$25 a day, and at the time of the strike from 40 to 80 cents a day. "My father worked for the company for thirteen years," she said, "and last fall he died. He was a tenant of the Pullman company. He owed \$90 rent, and out of my small wages I had to pay that \$90 or leave the employ of the company."

R. W. Combs had been a carpenter in the freight department of the Pullman works for ten years. He testified: "A year ago my wages averaged \$2.30 a day and in March, 1894, they were 68 cents. The cut commenced in November, 1893."

Proceedings of the Third Day.

CHICAGO, Aug. 20.—The first witness before the labor commission at the opening of its third day's session was Ray Goodwin, one of the directors of the A. R. U. Mr. Goodwin was somewhat inclined to be uncommunicative, and occupied the stand but a short time. He thought the way to prevent strikes was to have a cooperative commonwealth.

Vice President Howard, of the A. R. U., again became a witness, and created something of a sensation when he informed the commission that the United States government was boycotting 3,000 of the A. R. U. men and the strikers in the courtroom became interested. The Union Pacific road receivers are United States officers, and the men refused to recompense the 3,000 men who struck on that road. This, according to Mr. Howard, is a boycott of the men by the United States.

The commission did not consider the statement of Mr. Howard relevant, but he stuck to his ground. He proceeded to say that half a dozen roads are engaged in a boycott on the Missouri, Kansas & Texas road on account of a passenger rate made by the latter road. Yet the government had not interfered as it had in the boycott on Pullman cars. It should let the railroads and their employees fight out their differences just as it does not interfere in disputes between one road and another.

There was a volley of hand clapping as Mr. Howard finished. The commission decided, however, that the matters he referred to were not germane to the investigation.

E. W. Bemis, associate professor of political economy in the University of Chicago, appeared as a witness. Arbitration, he said, seems to have worked well in the settlement of disputes in private industries in Massachusetts, where there is a state board of conciliation and arbitration. In cases where either side refuses these conciliatory measures the board may make an investigation. Where the parties consent to arbitrate the commission has the right to compel employers to show the books as to wages, but they cannot be compelled to testify as to profits.

As to railroads, it was likely that some time in the future they would have some government control and that civil regulation would prevail. But that time is remote, and as a present remedy Prof. Bemis suggested the creation of state courts for the settlement of disputes between company and employees on interstate roads, and of a federal court of inquiry, conciliation, and arbitration for the adjustment of labor difficulties on interstate railroads. These courts should have power to make exhaustive inquiry and compliance with their decisions should be obligatory. He thought it would be a good plan to license all railway employees, just as lake and river engineers and pilots are licensed.

H. F. Griswold testified in regard to blacklisting. He is a switchman, 28 years old, and had been a railroad man about ten years. He was one of the American Railway union organizers for the Northwestern road. "I applied for work less than a week ago at Altoona, O.," he said. "I wrote out my name and then the trainmaster turned to a book, and, finding my name there, said I was blacklisted and could not have work on that road. The same experience was met with at Columbus."

A. B. Connors, the next witness, also had some experience with the black list. He learned of it for the first time when he applied to the Union Stock Yards & Transit company for work. His name was upon a list, he said, which the company had in the office, and he was turned away because of his participation in the strike.

Rev. William H. Carwardine, of the Pullman Methodist Episcopal church, testified at the afternoon session. After stating briefly the origin of the strike, Mr. Carwardine said: "After the strike was declared I felt in justice I must state my views on the question, and I discussed the matter in the pulpit. The wages were cut severely and unequally. There was dissatisfaction with the local administration and with the abuses of the foreman. The men did not have a reduction of the rent when

the wages were cut, and the men felt that justice could not be received. Mr. Pullman and Mr. Wickes and no one seemed to blame the present state of affairs. The blame is with the local administration. If Mr. Pullman had been in closer relationship with his men and if rent had been reduced when the wages were the strike would have been averted. I don't know how much the rent should have been reduced. The Pullman company starts out with the idea of a system of paternalism and the system was founded to improve the workingmen. I contend that the company should not cut the wages of their old employees, but act from the standpoint of the paternalistic system."

Mr. Carwardine went on to explain how he had met the committee of the Pullman strikers and had interviewed Mr. Debs and endeavored to have them declare the boycott off. He was not an advocate of strikers, was inclined much in favor of arbitration and the government management of railroads. He had been charged with being an anarchist and a socialist. It was impossible to be both. Anarchy he repudiated entirely; he was what might be called a Christian socialist. Referring to the strike, he said he thought the conduct of the strikers had been responsible. He said he knew sixty-four families were soon to be evicted at pullman, and after he left the stand said he was in the city to raise money some way to stop the evictions.

Eugene V. Debs had telephoned the commission that he is recovering from his recent illness, but on account of the sickness of his wife, he will not be able to appear for examination before the middle of next week.

Additional Testimony.

CHICAGO, Aug. 21.—The first witness before the labor commission at the opening of the fourth day's session was Thomas W. Heathcote, chairman of the Pullman strike committee, who has been recalled. He said that the Pullman company's statement that the company's books might be looked over by the clerks was merely a statement by one of the clerks.

When the clerks were refused to investigate the books they were refused. He said that the Pullman branch of the American Railway union was formed during the last of March and the month of April. Nearly all of the 4,000 employees of the company joined the union. Each man paid one dollar for the privileges of membership. Of all the employees between 2,500 and 3,000 lived in the houses of the company.

Miss Mary Abbott Wood, who worked in the electrical department at Pullman, was the next witness. She said she was a member of the American Railway union and was one of the Pullman strikers. Her father had died some time ago in the company's employ. She had to support her mother on the one dollar a day she received from the Pullman company. She lived in one of the Pullman houses and paid \$17.71 a month. Miss Wood showed the commission a notice of eviction, dated May 3, she had received from the company. She testified that she had paid her rent to April 30. The company, by mistake, had credited the rent to her sister. When she asked for a rectification she was refused. She had not yet been evicted.

Frank P. McDonald, a locomotive engineer on the Chicago Great Western was next called. He said that sometimes he was compelled to remain on continuous service from sixty to seventy-two hours without rest. Mr. McDonald went into an extended account of the trouble on the Chicago and Great Western. It was caused by a refusal of the company to restore wages, which had been cut.

Mr. McDonald said he opposed the recent strike because he thought the American Railway union was not strong enough to fight the general managers in the hard times when so many men were out of work. He did not think the strike would be successful. He voted for the strike only because he was so instructed by his local union.

"I am opposed to strikes in general," said Mr. McDonald, "but when the federal government will do nothing for us, and we have no weapon but the strike, we must use it. If we were not for strikes the railroad men in this country would be working for one-half the pay they are now getting."

Asked what he knew about the stoppage of mail trains the witness said that the Chicago & Great Western mail train No. 3 on June 28 last was "killed" by the management of that road and its crew was to take out an excursion train to St. Claire. This mail train was obstructed by the railway managers and not by the strikers or the members of the American Railway union.

McDonald told how it was impossible for him to obtain employment after the Burlington strike, when he was blacklisted. The company's influence was used against him, he said, even to the extent of protesting to Gov. Francis, of Missouri, against McDonald's appointment as oil inspector at St. Joseph, Mo.

Miss Jane Adams, superintendent of Hull house and member of the board of conciliation of the civic federation, was next called. She recited the efforts of the civic federation to bring about a settlement of the trouble. The employees of the A. R. U. were always willing and anxious to arbitrate, but Pullman and his officials would say to the committee only that they had nothing to arbitrate.

Arthur M. Wilson and Nettie M. West, employees of the Pullman company, testified as to the reduction in wages.

J. W. Pearson, real estate agent who operated at Kensington, Roseland, Southwest Pullman, and other localities adjacent to Pullman, said he had which for \$17 in Pullman could be had for \$10 a month in Kensington. In all cases, in his judgment, rents were about 75 to 100 per cent. higher in Pullman than in the adjacent town.

The commission adjourned to 10 o'clock Monday. Application has been made the commission to hear statements by representatives of unorganized labor. All persons who think they can give the commission any information as to the conditions of labor, organized or unorganized, will be heard.

President Debs' Testimony.

CHICAGO, Aug. 22.—On the fifth day of the proceedings President Debs told his story. After relating the situation as he found it early in May, Mr. Debs said he was satisfied that the employees were justified in striking, and he resolved to do all in his power, under the law and in justice, to help right their wrongs. Mr. Debs then recited the history of the strike, relating the various attempts to induce Pullman to submit to arbitration.

Mr. Debs denied that he had sent or ordered sent any inflammatory telegrams. Explaining the telegram, "Save your money and buy a gun," he said it was written by a clerk named Benedict to a former employer at Butte, Mont., as a joke and nothing whatever to do with the strike.

Mr. Debs severely criticized Gen. Miles for calling at the offices of the General Managers' Association on the day he came to Chicago as being vulgarly out of place, and maintaining that his only duty here was to maintain order and preserve the peace.

Continuing, Mr. Debs desired the commission to understand that he as president of the American Railway union did not and could not order strikes which were decided on by the local unions themselves. "I am not shirking any portion of my responsibility," said he. "I heartily concurred in the action taken and I had a voice in the ordering of the strike I would have ordered."

"Five days after the strike was declared we had the railroads completely beaten and at our mercy, as we believed," continued he. "They were paralyzed. They could not get men to take the places of our men who were out. Then I am my associate officials were involved with a sweeping injunction issued by the United States courts restraining us from performing our functions as officials of the American Railway union. Similar injunctions were issued at all terminals. A few days afterward we were arrested for alleged contempt of court. We were unable to direct the men, and that defeated the strike."

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