

### THE A. R. U. STRIKE.

(Continued from page 3)

hostile to the A. R. U. strike. This is absolute untrue, as is also his charge that when we left New York for Chicago, we stated that we were about to "attend a funeral." It is true that this falsehood was published in the newspapers at the time, but we not only publicly repudiated the misrepresentation, but we also stated it to Mr. Debs in the presence of the gentlemen who participated in the conference.

In Mr. Debs' letter he asserts that the trade unionists of Chicago denounced me for treason and cowardice. The only name he mentions is that of Mr. Thomas I. Kidd. Immediately upon seeing this, we sent the following telegram:

Washington, June 9, 1905.  
Thos. I. Kidd,

Clarendon Hotel, New York City.  
Eugene V. Debs in a letter asserts that you among others denounced me with treason and cowardice during the A. R. U. strike. Is this true? Please wire answer.

SAMUEL GOMPERS.

To this we received the following reply:

New York, June 10, 1905.  
Samuel Gompers,

President, American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

The statement of Mr. E. V. Debs that I charged you with treason and cowardice during the A. R. U. strike is absolutely untrue.

THOS. I. KIDD.

Nor is it true that we refused to answer the call to go to Chicago. Several telegrams were received from persons entirely without authority, requesting us to go to Chicago; to these, of course, we could not respond, but when a conference of trade unionists, including Mr. Mahon, of the street railway men; Mr. Kidd, of the wood workers; Mr. Dodd, of the cigarmakers; Mr. Sovereign, of the Knights of Labor, and many others, was held in Chicago, and a united authoritative request for our presence in Chicago as president of the American Federation of Labor, was received on Monday morning, July 9, 1894, we invited the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, as well as the officers of representative international unions, to a conference in Chicago on

Thursday morning, July 12. At that conference with us the following participated:

C. L. Drummond, Jas. Brettell, P. J. McGuire, Wm. H. Marden, vice presidents; Chris Evans, secretary; John B. Lennon, treasurer, all of the American Federation of Labor, and the following representatives of international unions: Thos. I. Kidd, of the wood workers; G. W. Perkins, of the cigarmakers; M. F. Fox, of the iron molders; J. W. Kenney, of the painters; T. Elderkin, of the seamen; G. L. Horn, of the bakers; E. Kurzenkabe and C. F. Beshtold, of the brewery workers; P. McBryde, of the United Mine Workers; M. C. Carroll, of the typographical union; Owen Miller, of the musicians; Charles Baustian and W. Dolpheide, of the carriage workers; M. M. Garland, of the iron and steel workers; T. Kurtzer, of the furniture workers; P. H. Morrissey, of the railway trainmen; and F. W. Arnold, of the locomotive firemen. It will be observed that Mr. P. M. Arthur was not present at the conference, as stated by Mr. Debs.

The general situation was discussed and Mr. Debs invited to the conference. Accompanied by George W. Howard and Sylvester Kelher, he presented a document which he wanted President Gompers to submit to the Railway Managers' Association. The matter was freely discussed for fully three hours, Mr. Debs participating and thanking the conference for the cordiality and courtesy extended to him.

It was then decided that Mr. Debs be advised that the conference would authorize him to select any one or more officers or members of the conference to act with him and others for the presentation of the document to the Railway Managers' Association. This, of course, included, though it did not specify by name or title, the president of the American Federation of Labor. To this Mr. Debs never vouchsafed so much as a reply or acknowledgment.

However, in the interest of truth and for the better understanding of all, we publish here the document which Mr. Debs and his colleagues desired the conference to instruct

the President of the American Federation of Labor to submit:

Chicago, July 12, 1894.

To the Railway Managers' Ass'n.  
Gentlemen: The existing trouble growing out of the Pullman strike having assumed continental proportions, and there being no indication of relief from the widespread business demoralization and distress incident thereto, the railway employees, through the board of directors of the American Railway Union, respectfully make the following proposition as a basis of settlement: They agree to return to work at once in a body, provided they shall be restored to their former positions, without prejudice, except in cases, if any there be, where they have been convicted of crime.

The proposition looking to an immediate settlement of the existing strike on all lines of railway is inspired solely by a purpose to subserve the public good. The strike, small and comparatively unimportant in its inception, has extended in every direction until now it involves or threatens not only every public interest, but the peace, security, and prosperity of our common country. The contest has waged fiercely. It has extended far beyond the limits of interests originally involved, and has laid hold of a vast variety of industries in no wise responsible for the differences and disagreements that led to the trouble.

Factory, mill, mine, and shop have been silenced. Widespread demoralization has sway. The interests of multiplied thousands of innocent people are suffering.

The common welfare is seriously menaced. The public peace and tranquility are in peril. Grave apprehension for the future prevails. This being true, and the statement will not be controverted, we conceive it to be our duty as citizens and as men to make extraordinary efforts to end the existing strife and avert approaching calamities whose shadows are ever now upon us.

If ended now, the contest, however serious in some of its consequences, will not have been in vain. Sacrifices have been made but they will have their compensation. Indeed, if lessons shall be taught by experience, the troubles now so widely spread will prove a blessing of inestimable value in the months and years to come.

The difference that led up to the present complications need not now be discussed. At this supreme juncture every consideration of duty and patriotism demands that a remedy for existing troubles be found and applied. The employees propose to do their part by meeting their employers half way. Let it be stated that

they do not impose any condition of settlement except that they be returned to their former positions. They do not ask the recognition of their organization or of any organization.

Believing this proposition to be fair, reasonable and just, it is respectfully submitted in the belief that its acceptance will result in the prompt resumption of traffic, the revival of industry, and the restoration of peace and order.

Respectfully,  
EUGENE V. DEBS,

President.

G. W. HOWARD,

Vice President.

SYLVESTER KELHER,

Secretary, American Railway Union.

We invite a careful rereading of this document with the further information furnished by Mr. Carroll, representing the International Typographical Union, that the proposition that Mr. Debs submitted had been agreed to by the A. R. U. and presented to the Railway Managers' Association a week before it was submitted to the Chicago conference. In other words, the proposition that had already been rejected was to be represented by the President of the American Federation of Labor with all the responsibility that would attach to its rejection.

It should be stated that Mr. Charles Dold and a committee of one Chicago local union requested the conference to call a general strike, but from him and his committee alone, and not from Mr. Debs or his colleagues, did any request, either direct or indirect, come for the calling of a general strike. As to the wisdom and practicability of complying with such a request, a careful perusal of Mr. Debs' document will clearly demonstrate what the situation was, for when a strike is declared off without imposing any condition of settlement, is it not itself a declaration that the strike is lost?

This was not denied by any one appearing before or participating in the Chicago conference. Without at all discussing the merits or demerits of a general strike, either then or now or for the future, the absurdity of calling a general strike in support of a strike already lost must appear queer even to the merest tyro in the labor movement.

It may be of additional interest to say that later even Mr. Dold and his colleagues of the committee who urged the conference to call the general strike cheerfully and openly admitted the unwisdom of the request made and the absolutely accurate position taken by the conference in the interest of labor and all organizations.

But Mr. Debs would have it appear in his letter to Mr. Damm that the American Federation of Labor, and particularly its president, was hostile and antagonistic to him and to the A. R. U. To show how far from the truth this statement is, we call attention to the fact that two members of the railroad organizations alone opposed the motion adopted by the conference for the endorsement of the position of the A. R. U., and we call attention further to the fact that the American Federation of Labor appropriated \$500 out of its then scanty funds, and issued an appeal for financial aid for the legal defense of Mr. Debs. We ask Mr. Debs to read that appeal drafted for his aid and published upon page 127 of the American Federationist for August, 1894. We ask him to read the article we contributed to the North American Review and published simultaneously in the American Federationist the same month. In the same issue of the American Federationist we published another editorial opening with those words: "It is a lamentable fact that success does not always attend the right of those who struggle to achieve it. If any doubt existed as to the truth of this statement, the strike at Pullman and the strike of the American Railway Union in support of it have dispelled that doubt. It is indeed difficult to conceive a cause in which right was more on the side of these who were defeated than in the one under consideration."

Has this language the sound of antagonism? That editorial set forth the causes of the strike and the awful conditions prevailing at Pullman, and it closed with this: "The end is not yet. Labor will not down. It will triumph despite all the Pullmans combined; and as for Pullman, he has proven himself a public enemy. His name and memory are execrated today and will be forever."

And so on throughout the entire relations of the American Federation of Labor and its officers toward Mr.

Debs and the A. R. U. There has been no instance other than that of kindness and friendliness; whatever alienation has taken place has been due entirely to the hostile attitude of Mr. Debs and those with whom he has allied himself, in the antagonistic endeavor to divide, destroy, or undermine the American Federation of Labor, the trade union movement of our country.

We can say now, frankly and candidly, that there is no man on earth toward whom we entertain the slightest personal ill will. With us the trade unions are not a matter of opinion, conjecture, or mere passing enthusiasm. We recognize the trade unions as the natural, historically developed organization of the wage-earners of our time; that their mission is to protect and promote the interests of the masses of labor, to abolish the wrongs from which the workers suffer, and to attain the rights which have too long been denied them. In that cause and in that struggle we are enlisted, and neither cajolery nor flattery, neither sophistry nor the bitterest opposition and hostility to us, officially or personally, will swerve us one jot.

The trade union movement has progressed; it has grown in numbers,

in power and influence for good. It is organizing, uniting, federating, and solidifying the masses of labor who are maturing plans to be of practical aid to their fellows, to help cement the bond of union and to spread the spirit of fraternity among the workers that shall last for all time to come.

\* That is the work of the American trade unionists; that is the mission of the American Federation of Labor.

The trade union movement has met hostile forces before; it has overcome them; it will withstand the antagonistic forces of ignorance, viciousness, and tyranny. It will grow day by day as time goes on, and be the harbinger of the hopes and success of the workers when its present day defamers and enemies are long forgotten.

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