

Lincoln Steffens Defines His Position Says He Is Working for Society's Good

Author Sees in M'Namaras Men Who Did What They Thought Best.



Lincoln J. Steffens.

It is understood between the editors and Mr. Steffens that he is to go where the facts call him and report them freely as he sees and feels them unrestrained by the editorial opinions of the newspapers he serves and that the editors on their part are to be unrestricted in putting headings on his stuff, contradicting and refuting his facts with reports of their own and in criticizing either him or his writings.

By Lincoln Steffens.
(Written for the Associated Newspapers.)

The purpose that took me to Los Angeles is the pursuit I should like to resume now to investigate in the field and report in a large group of (mostly) conservative newspapers the condition, the feelings and the thought of labor and, also, the troubles that result to the employer together with the reasons of capital upon them. My studies in politics and business have led me to this, the so-called labor problem. It is the next step to the social problem which underlies politics, business and labor, and I want to go on to satisfy my own mind. But some of my editors, of whom there are between 20 and 30, object. They protest that my plan was blown up by the explosion of the McNamara case and that I myself was considerably damaged by the attack of dynamite Judge Bordwell put in my alley.

"The first thing for you to do," said my best friend among these wounded editors, "is to prove that you are not a liar."
Not to Offer Proof.
I don't want to do that. In the first place I don't think I matter so much as some people think I think I do. In the second place I like the rule followed by a certain public man we all know well: "Never deny a charge unless it is true." And in the first place, I cannot completely vindicate myself without relating facts and circumstances which should not be reported now. They might irritate, hurt the feelings of some sensitive persons and jeopardize the experiment to be made in Los Angeles. There is more to be told, of course, but later, when feelings don't run so high. I'd like to get down to the real things, the things I went out there to get, the situation back of the McNamara case.
"But, no," say the editors, in effect, "you must tell at least enough to patch up your injured reputation and present an appearance of respectability."
This can be done with a bit of news picked up here. William J. Burns has ceased to work for Los Angeles county.
Two Assertions Disturbed.
Two assertions of Judge Bordwell are disturbed by this one fact. One is that there was no agreement back of the

settlement of the McNamara case; the other that I had nothing to do with that agreement. Now my original proposition, accepted by Darrow and sent by Thomas C. Gibbon to Captain Fredericks, the district attorney, was that Los Angeles begin its move toward an understanding of labor by putting a stop, not only to the McNamara and all other prosecutions, but to all pursuit of individuals indicted or wanted in all these labor cases—so far as Los Angeles was concerned. And I understood and counsel for the defense reported and the McNamaras certainly went to prison believing that this point was agreed to. And, having it in mind, when I saw Burns here in New York, I asked him who his clients were. He named them:
"So-and-so, and so-and-so and until a few days ago, Captain Fredericks."
Said County Had Withdrawn.
"The county of Los Angeles has withdrawn from among your clients."
"Yes," he said, "Fredericks represented the county as district attorney."
For further verification, let the local Los Angeles reporters inquire quietly whether, besides Burns, all the rest of the county's "shadows," detectives and constables are not called in and the offers of rewards for arrests called off. These things will have been done if my clause in the agreement which was made is kept, and I have no doubt it is. And with all the respect to Judge Bordwell's position, I submit that there is a better, more impressive reason for acknowledging both the fact and the terms of that agreement. Taken by themselves, as they were presented in

the News, the McNamara plea looked like a defeat. Like one more good licking for labor. This was not intended, and it is neither just nor intelligent. The honorable discharge of Burns by Los Angeles county, goes to show that the McNamaras got some important concessions from the district attorney. It would help to take the soreness out of labor. It would mitigate the ungenerous congratulations of capital and it might promote fairer judgment on the part of the public if everybody could be informed of all the conditions of the perfectly proper official agreement made by the state. But these are for the officials to publish, not me.
Another Agreement Made.
Back of this official agreement is another, which I may report. It is not official. Neither Judge Bordwell nor Captain Fredericks would, and the judge said he couldn't take any cognizance of it. But the McNamaras were cognizant of it; it was among the considerations that weighed with them in making up their minds to plead guilty. There are some 15 to 20 leading citizens of Los Angeles who are taking cognizance of it. And I think that, unofficially, the city of Los Angeles, if not the United States, is bound by it.
It's an agreement to listen to labor and to try to understand, not with, but of the point of view, the grievances, the wants and the aspirations of the wage workers.
Appeal Is Made.
The need of this, and the best appeal for it, is contained in a document which it is time to publish. It is the second statement drawn for James B. McNamara to present with his plea of guilty. There were three altogether. The first was dictated to me by Mr. Darrow. The second I wrote after a talk with James B. The third was written by James B. himself with the help of his attorneys, and that is the one that was used. But I think the second is the complete expression both of his disposition and his view of things. At any rate, it presents the case of labor best. Here it is:
"I plead guilty to the charge of crime against me, but I do not feel that I am a criminal. I am a member of organized labor, and have been for many years. The interest of my life is in the cause of the working men. And I am one of a group that believed in direct action as the only effective way to fight our fight. A small amount of dynamite was placed in the alley back of the Los Angeles Times building, but it was not intended to kill anybody. The purpose was to scare those who had bitterly assaulted the union. That's all. No one regrets more than I do the deaths that resulted."
"And I am not pleading now to save my life. I would willingly give that for the cause of organized labor. I make my plea and this statement in the hope that better men than I will consider the problem of the wage-workers as a class and show us some better way than fighting to raise our wages and improve our condition. You don't want us to strike; you don't want us to go into politics, as we are doing here in Los Angeles; you don't want us to organize; we cannot afford individually to go to law and we feel, whether we are mistaken or not, that we can't get justice in the courts. And yet the employers of labor say they cannot raise our pay. What are we to do? If my act today brings this question fairly before the world and leads to any an-

swer except the war we have waged, I shall feel that, though I may be in prison, I shall be serving my cause."
Feelings Toward Felon.
Now the court and Los Angeles and society may not feel that they can make a deal with a confessed felon like James B. McNamara. But I can. I have sat down hip to launch with thieves, grafters, reformers, business men and—all sorts of men and women, and I have learned out of my talks with them all, that I am not so much better than they are as I once thought I was. Not by a long way. I haven't committed any crimes for which I could be hanged, but I have committed some sins for which I ought to have been lynched.
I yelled for some years in the pack of man hunters that had our tongues out for the blood of somebody to kill for what we our very selves were in part guilty of. And I caught myself, as John Graham Brooks has said. But society hasn't caught me yet. And until society has caught me society will afford to deal with me as a member in good standing of the union to which all men belong. I have a card. I can speak for my kind. I can speak to my kind, any kind. I have spoken to those two dynamites in their prison and I spoke for society.
Seeks for the Cause.
I may be presumptuous, but before you judge me, listen to what I know, how I reason about it and what I promised the McNamaras in your name. I know that there is a group of labor which is increased to the point where they have adopted the policy of dynamiting and which proposes, if that is stopped, to resort to sabotage; the general spoiling of goods in the making. I reasoned that if a group of labor was so desperate to that degree of desperation, there must be some cause for it that can be found and dealt with. And, since the McNamaras were of this group, which hoped thus to call attention to their complaints, I said that I believed that if they would plead guilty, and so convince labor, capital and society, of this big fact, I said that I believed that the pursuit of individuals would be stopped and the search for the cause of their troubles, and ours, might be really begun. In other words, my promise was that we'd change the question from "Who did it?" to "What's doing it?"
That, then, was the substance of the unofficial agreement back of the McNamara settlement. That's the main part of what is meant by "the Los Angeles way" of tackling the problem of labor, generously and afresh and with good will. That's the agreement back of Los Angeles' promise to call off the detectives. That's the local "compromise with murder" which ought to be made a national bargain. The McNamaras are carrying out their part of it. Captain Fredericks is evidently doing his share. W. J. Burns understands, and he promised me he would do his.
The committee appointed at the last large meeting of leading citizens in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, stands ready to hear the case of labor when the hate shall have abated a bit. And I will do mine; I will get and from time to time report the point of view, the grievances, the wants, the thoughts and the aspirations of the wage-workers and their employers, if society, which means you, will only

listen and try to come to an understanding of both sides; not with them, but of them, and so get at the truth which lies, I think somewhere in between the two, about where you and I lie.
Piano Bargains.
Here are some fine piano bargains. Chickering small upright piano, \$60; Steinway ebony upright piano, \$140; Weber mahogany piano, \$265; Fischer oak upright piano, \$50; Gabler piano, \$40; Stoddard rosewood piano, \$30; Limball mahogany piano, \$70. Terms to suit the buyer. Kohler & Chase, 375 Washington street.
WAREHOUSE OR LIGHT MANUFACTURING FLOORS, for rent in new brick building now under construction at Hood and Baker streets. Each floor has 3500 square feet. Rent reasonable. Apply to A. L. Fish, care The Journal.
\$5 will place an upright piano in your home; a few dollars each month will keep it there. Kohler & Chase, 375 Washington.

Theodore Jr., a Fireman.
(United Press Leased Wire.)
San Francisco, Dec. 27.—Fire that threatened destruction of Henry F. Bowie's home and \$200,000 worth of oriental antiques, was extinguished last night by Hillsboro's hundred million dollars volunteer fire department. Among the firemen were Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Richard Tobin and George Howard.
"Prize Beauty" Must Stand Trial.
(United Press Leased Wire.)
San Francisco, Dec. 27.—Despite her husband's willingness to "forgive and

forget," Mrs. Ruth Smith, Denver prize beauty, who took \$1900 of his money, left him several weeks ago and is now under arrest in Los Angeles, must stand trial for grand larceny.
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☐ The great volume of holiday business has so far exceeded our expectations, and the inroads made upon our lines by an unprecedented fall business in general have been so heavy that we find ourselves with hundreds of odd pieces on hand which must be disposed of in order to effect a complete adjustment of stock before January inventory.

A Sale That Is Different

☐ This is a sale that is entirely different from the yearly clearances of furniture featured elsewhere—different, in fact, from any sale we have ever held or will be in a position to hold again, inasmuch as it involves furniture less than a year old, which was installed in our new building April last, direct from Eastern markets; but broken lines have no place in a great establishment like ours, and, even though the pieces scheduled to go are worth just as much today as they were when first bought, the question of profit must be waived.

Use Your Credit During This Great Sale

☐ For those who have homes to furnish, this is a golden opportunity. The fact that prices are reduced far below the regular values does not curtail your privileges of credit, and selections made from sale goods may be paid for at your convenience the same as at original pricings.

Parlor Furniture

☐ Three and four-piece Suits, Davenports, odd Chairs of period styles, Tables of exclusive patterns, Gold-Leaf Cabinets, Music Cabinets.

Bedroom Furniture

☐ Brass, Wood and Iron Beds; Dressers in oak, mahogany, walnut and white enamel; Chiffoniers, Bedroom Rockers and Chairs, Dressing Tables.

Dining Room Furniture

☐ Buffets, Tables, China Closets, Serving Tables, Diners and Arm Chairs, several complete Matched Suits in high-grade designs.

Kitchen Furniture

☐ Solid Oak Kitchen Cabinets, Kitchen Tables, Chairs, Utensils and Dishes, as well as Hardware of almost all kinds for household use.

Library Furniture

☐ Bookcases, Magazine Racks, Massive Library Tables in Mission and other styles, Morris Chairs, Leather Couches, Mission Chairs and Rockers.

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