

EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS

By JOE BOYD, Representative of L Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union

Employers have a right to organize associations. I am calling to your attention that many employers have long exercised the right. The workers want to bring individual managers to a realistic equality of bargaining to a position where the economic strength is somewhat evenly matched. Employers' associations often frustrate the possibility of equality in collective bargaining. On the manager's side of the industrial conflict, the activities of some employers' associations are analogous to the sympathetic strike on the workers' side of the conflict. The public often reacts unfavorably to the collusion of various workers' organizations in industrial disputes. It is well to make clear the analogous alignment, the very similar line up, of aggressive employers in a given area through sympathetic cooperation in an employers' association or industrial council.



Much is sometimes said about labor leaders as "outsiders." It is well to observe that often the agents and full time executives in employers' associations are not themselves employers, and many times have never had first hand experience as industrial executives. They are secretaries, attorneys. They are agents for employers, "buffers" and sometimes "agitators" in the industrial world. The employees of employers' associations frequently stand between the workers and management in interpreting the motives and acts of both workers and managers to the public, and in representing the managers in the negotiating of agreements with the workers. All of which they and the managers have the right to accomplish, but the practical matter of fact is that the workers must take this set-up into account in their effort to accomplish effective collective bargaining. When we get a majority in a plant in the Basin, usually we do not talk to a manager only. Behind him is an attorney.

Labor as a whole has not sought to deny the right of employers to organize. How could labor resent this right when labor itself insists upon its own right to organize as it wishes? However workers have not always sensed the enormity of the problem precipitated. It should also be made clear that there are two types of employers' associations: (1) the organization that sets out militantly to crush all union organizations among the workers, (2) the organization that claims to recognize the principle of collective bargaining, even offers to deal with workers. The first type of organization has invited the violent dislike of the workers. The second type has yet to win the confidence of workers that it acts in a manner to enlist their good will; that is, the workers suspect that the second type of association has merely shifted the conflict from the field of violence to the conference table where the skilled executive may manage to outwit the representative of labor. I maintain, the employers have a right to approach labor from this angle, if they choose; but the workers ought to know what they are up against and how to meet it. The employers' association is not new. It has a history. That history goes back to the early American colonies. First business in America organized; then labor attempted organization. To meet the corporate strength of expanding business, unions were organized among tailors, and shoe makers to maintain a minimum wage and set up working rules in the shops. The associations of master merchants resisted the unions by advertising for non-union help and prosecuting the unions as criminal conspiracies. This sort of thing continued in the United States until 1824. Employers resisted the movement for the ten hour day with the propaganda that if the workers worked for as few as ten hours, they would spend the rest of their time in "idleness and vice." By 1838 there was an employers' association in nearly every industry in which there was a union. In fact, their history is co-extensive with the labor movement. Business has become corporate and highly organized; labor is still trying to organize, hindered all the while by the active resistance of employers' associations.

Far more than is generally known, the resistance of employers' associations brought about the collapse of the Knights of Labor in the formative years before the AFL

was established. Concurrent with the story of the Knights of Labor there were employers' associations organized either sectionally or industrially to combat the unions. It was during these years that three devices or methods were inaugurated: (1) the "BLACK LIST" i. e. the circulating of names among managers of so called "undesirable workers." Many states now have legislation prohibiting this practice. Such laws would not be in existence in the lumber states of the northwest, if the abuse had not been there. (2) The "AD" or the "yellow" worker to a union. (3) The "lockout" that he would not belong to a union. Labor's resistance to this practice is a long story culminating in the Wagner Labor Relations Act. This practice is now illegal but some operators manage to get the same results without the contract by the simple device of keeping the men afraid to talk unionism. (3) the USE OF DETECTIVES to spy into meetings and conversations of workers and to foment trouble. Again an exceedingly ugly story about what labor calls "snitching" and "double crossing."

As the unions grew into national and international organizations the employers' associations also became national in scope. The conspicuous example is that of the National Founders Defense Association in the stove industry. Here the so-called "open shop" was born. The open shop is an apparently plausible argument for keeping non-union men on the job along with union men in order to prevent the effectiveness of collective bargaining.

With the turn of the present century other devices were introduced by employers' associations: (4) LABOR BUREAUS where managers could select the type of workers they wanted or have the selection done for them. Employment agencies sometimes sort out union men from non union men. In Klamath Falls I have personally registered a protest against the practice of requiring idle men to list on application cards whether they belong to a union. (5) STRIKE BREAKERS came on the field, i. e. professional workers would go into a strike situation and maintain production for management during a cessation of work by the regular crew.

(6) LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS came into prominence, notably the Dayton Assn. Here new and clever tactics were established. The method was instituted of giving the worker a card of dismissal upon which was inscribed the employers' recommendation. If a man were refused a card for union activity the worker was placed at a severe disadvantage. Another thing, rewards were paid to workers out of a reserve fund when workers stayed on the job during a strike. Again, a premium was paid to members of the association who suffered from labor trouble. This particular association was of the militant type and was willing to accept into membership employers who were under threat of difficulty. It not only protected its members as a sort of insurance association, but took the initiative in seeking out "poor risks". Sometimes instead of the member paying dues, the association paid dividends to the member of \$1 per day per striker in order that the association might help crush a particular strike.

(7) In 1895 the NATIONAL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION was organized. It is said that the membership of this organization if graphed over a period of years would correspond roughly with membership fluctuations of the AFL. When labor has been strong and well established the Association has been numerically and financially strong. In 1907 the National Council for Industrial Defense was organized out of several employers' associations. The purpose of this organization seems to center in opposition to labor legislation. It is said to be the political and legislative wing of the National Association of Manufacturers.

(8) In 1903 in Denver, a new and startling device was starting in combating unions. It was called a CITIZENS ALLIANCE. Into this association employers and citizens of the community are admitted to membership. A sporadic attempt was made to follow this pattern in Klamath Falls not long ago. It consists of a psychological arousal of an entire community to fight against an overstatement of radicalism. This is an old method and analogous to the sympathetic strike formerly used by labor.

These Citizens Leagues or Law and Order Clubs generally claim to speak for the community as a whole. On occasion a peculiar appeal has been set up which pulls great numbers of middle class people into these associations and an atmosphere is deliberately created which is very tense. Appeals are made thru skillfully directed publicity which can put a community into a state of panic. Much is usually made of catchwords like "racketeer" "radi-

cal" "agitator" "menace" "goon" and the legitimate objectives of organized labor are glossed over. You will recall the radio propaganda preceding the late anti-picketing bill in Oregon, which propaganda it is thought was largely sponsored by an employers' association.

All in all there is an ugly story thwarting and defeating collective bargaining in America for over one hundred years by the tactics used by organized business.

(9) There was the abuse of the INJUNCTION finally stopped by the La Guardia Act. (10) THE INCORPORATION OF UNIONS is an ingenious proposal to subpoena officers and funds and records of a union and tie them up in the courts and expose humans to property centered corporation laws.

(11) The LOCKOUT is still available under hidden circumstances. It may vary in degree from releasing a few men in a department or a shift to closure of a plant. I call attention to the history of all these practices. The hands of management are not rosy white and clean. The employers' association is co-existent with the labor movement. The analogy is complete. Local unions—local employers' associations close knit or informal; central labor council—city association of employers; state federation of labor, state association employers; national union—national association; American Federation of Labor—National Association representing all national associations.

This question becomes of moment at this time of National Defense. It is the policy of the government of the United States to encourage and foster the practice and procedure of collective bargaining. The recent book "Labor and National Defense" written by a symposium of outstanding educators and statesmen concludes that all employers in American industry should endorse and use collective bargaining "ungrudgingly" as a national policy in this emergency.

Does anyone have the impression that the lumber operators in the Klamath Basin are actively cooperating in supporting this national policy of the United States? No trespass signs have greeted union representatives who have sought on the workers own time to inform the government about the policy of the government. Each time that a crew of men during the last year and a half have asked for collective bargaining they have been referred to an attorney. The attorney acts, not to guide the manager legally in establishing collective bargaining, but these attorneys have brought about every conceivable subtlety and delay. When objection was made to one of them he said, "what do you expect us to do, capitulate?" It is not a matter of capitulation, exactly. We expect employers and attorneys to be as patriotic as workers. We expect them to support the policy of the government. If this country is a good place in which to do business it deserves wholehearted support. Collective bargaining is just as much a policy of the United States as is the Lend-Lease Bill, and of the two policies it may turn out that collective bargaining is the most important. Democracy is at stake. Collective bargaining seeks to put the democratic principle of representation into industry, before it is too late. The employers have their representatives. To deny representation of workers is to perpetuate industrial autocracy in the face of a crisis. In this sense, yes, we expect employers and attorneys in the Klamath Basin to "capitulate" to throw overboard as fast as possible the stubborn defense of industrial autocracy that prevents or denies the representation of workers, especially when the government policy is that workers are free to choose representatives without interference, coercion or intimidation from management.

The most severe social indictment that can be made against any manager in the lumber industry in the light of all the facts, is that he is still working a crew of men under individual bargaining conditions. There is no social, or moral, defense of individual bargaining. To say, "We are satisfied. We are getting along without unions," is no defense for any manager with ten years of enlightenment. The church, both major political parties, the government itself have all put the weight of their influence on the side of collective bargaining. How can any employer or group of employers defend the existence of a non-union, individual bargaining set-up. Collective bargaining is the better way of doing things. Collective bargaining is here to stay.

Read the Classified page.

ROUNDUP QUEEN
PENDLETON, July 28 (P)—A princess last year, Maxine McCurdy will reign as queen of the Pendleton roundup this fall. The wild west show officials selected her Saturday.

Read the Classified page.

ASSOCIATED PRESS PICTURE NEWS



WHERE ROMANS OF OLD RELAXED—Ancient Romans used as a health resort this now dried mineral spring in Anatolia, Turkey. Odd form of salt crust was caused by drying of spring.



BUST NO TRUST—This statue in the Piazza Navona at Rome seems as enthusiastic about a bath as a small boy at bedtime.



PETER AT THE PUMP—Yugoslavia's exiled King Peter puts in a lick of work on his car at his English country home.



BOSS OF BIG HOUSE—Robert H. Kirby, 31 (above), succeeds Lewis E. Lawes as warden of Sing Sing prison.



CLOAK OF JUSTICE—Robert H. Jackson (right), retiring as attorney general to become a supreme court justice, gets judicial robe from Acting Attorney General Francis Biddle as Jackson's wife (left rear) and daughter, Mary, look on.



CIGARET LIGHTER—This brain-storm, tested by Blanche Tremblay of Albany, was exhibited by a wit at the Inventors Congress in N. Y. A lever sets the mouse in motion and finally other mechanism causes the match to light. 'Tain't exactly vest-pocket size.



ON THE LISTENING END—Henry Ford listens attentively to his wife after the wedding of their second grandson, Benson, and Miss Edith McNaughton at Grrosse Point, Detroit suburb. The wedding united two families in the auto industry.



LITTLE BOY BLEW—And blew, and blew. But blowfish held its own against Nicholas Wright, 5, at Beach Haven, N. J.



A WAIL OF AN AUDITION—Police Commissioner Joseph F. Timilty pulls a switch in Boston, setting off an eerie wail from this huge siren, studied for use in the event of an air raid.