

CURRENT TOPICS

OMAHA IS IN THE MIDST OF A GENERAL labor strike. A number of employers, said to be 800, have organized what is called the Business Men's association. So far, all suggestions looking toward arbitration have been rejected by representatives of either side. Representatives of labor claim that Omaha has been chosen by business men, acting at the suggestion of D. M. Parry, as the ground upon which the test which Mr. Parry invited is to be made.

THE INJUNCTION WRIT HAS FIGURED IN many labor strikes and yet this writ has played an unusually interesting part in the Omaha controversy. Members of the Business Men's association, having to deal directly with the teamsters' strike, appealed to Federal Judge Munger for an injunction against the teamsters. The appeal to the federal court was based upon the ground that the lumber merchants, the coal merchants, general jobbers, and the transfer companies who were plaintiffs in this suit, were engaged in interstate business and were therefore entitled to protection from the federal court. As a result, on May 6 Judge Munger issued a restraining order. It was made returnable May 26. In this order the striking teamsters were prohibited from doing duty around the business houses or interfering in any manner with the plaintiff's employes or interfering with the plaintiff's teams. In the same restraining order occurred this statement: "And further restraining and enjoining the team drivers international union, local No. 71, its officers and members, from continuing said organization." This clause in the restraining order was very generally condemned and Judge Munger, as soon as his attention was called to it, promptly struck the clause from the order, explaining that he had not closely examined the same, but had depended upon plaintiff's attorney to prepare it. Following the federal court injunction, representatives of the Business Men's association obtained a restraining order from the state court prohibiting waiters and other strikers from interfering with the representatives of the Business Men's association.

THE REPRESENTATIVES OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, however, have conceived the notion that the injunction process was not devised for the exclusive use of employers and on May 12 John O. Yeiser, the lawyer representing the labor unions, applied to Judge Charles D. Dickinson of the district court of Nebraska at Omaha, for an injunction against the Business Men's association and the members thereof. In the petition the attorney for the labor men alleges that the Business men's association is a national organization having branches in all of the larger cities; that that association was organized by various railway officials and their sympathizers as a secret organization for the purpose of disrupting and discouraging labor unions. It is further alleged that the members of the Business Men's association have entered into a conspiracy to force into the Business Men's organization merchants, business men and all employers of labor by threats of injuring business of the members and by boycotting such members; of threatening to refuse, and refusing to sell them supplies and commodities of necessities in their business if they would not join the conspiracy. It is further alleged that the members of the Business Men's association have conspired to boycott and refuse to sell supplies to any of its members and any business man or employer of labor who in any way recognizes a labor union. It is further charged that in April, 1903, the Omaha Builders' Exchange as a part of the general plan and conspiracy obtained an agreement among all material men in the cities of Omaha and South Omaha to refuse to sell building material to any contractor who had entered into any agreement with the labor union and as a result of this alleged conspiracy, it is claimed that since that date no contractor having an agreement with union labor has been permitted to purchase material for construction and that as a result more than fifteen contractors who had contracts for buildings were unable to execute said contracts. It is further alleged that said employers of labor unions have been threatened with blacklisting unless they give up their organization; that the Business Men's association has collected a large sum of

money to be used for the purpose of disrupting the union and that in pursuance of said plan, the association has agreed to pay out to any employer who will lock out his employes generous sums of money for the purpose of paying the expense of the lockout; and that members of the labor unions have been prevented by the Business Men's association from renting rooms in the city of Omaha for the purpose of opening restaurants and engaging in business in competition with the defendants. It is further alleged that the Business Men's association has threatened to bring a multiplicity of suits to harass and annoy the representatives of the labor unions.

IN RESPONSE TO THE PETITION OF THE representatives of the labor unions, Judge Dickinson issued a restraining order in the following terms: "Upon the application of the cross-petitioners, Omaha waiters' union No. 23, for an injunction upon their petition duly verified, and it being necessary that these defendants to the cross-petition should have notice of the application before an injunction is granted, it is therefore ordered that said cause be set for hearing on the 25th day of May, 1903, at 10 o'clock a. m., at room No. 7 in the Bee building in the city of Omaha, Douglas county, Nebraska, and that cross-complainants be required to notify defendants of the time and plan of said hearing and that until the further hearing of the court a restraining order be allowed against each of the defendants above named, upon cross-complainants executing a bond in the sum of \$500, as required by law. Until decision of hearing each of said defendants is restrained: First, from in any manner threatening to injure the business or person of any employer or member of complainants' union or member of labor unions or any person who may employ or desire to employ such union men or from refusing to sell commodities and supplies of merchandise to employers of such union labor and from discriminating against such persons in the prices charged for any such commodities. Second, from threatening or intimidating in any manner any person into joining the said Business Men's association or any organization to destroy labor unions. Third, from threatening or intimidating any person who may have become a member of said association or organization if he employs a member of organized labor or recognizes labor unions, into discontinuing such employment. Fourth, from imposing any fine upon its members or any person for violating any agreement not to employ organized labor or not to recognize a labor union. Fifth, from receiving or paying out any money whatever in pursuance of any agreement to break up labor unions, excepting attorneys' fees. Sixth, from paying or offering any money to any officer or member of labor unions directly or indirectly as a bribe to do or not to do any act in pursuance of any agreement of any of said defendants against such unions. Seventh, from importing or engaging agents and servants to import any laborers into the city of Omaha or state of Nebraska in pursuance of any plan to destroy labor organizations or under any similar or new arrangement or plan. Eighth, from bringing any other injunction suits or actions in pursuance of any general plan of prosecution to break up labor unions or any new or similar plan connected directly or indirectly with any such existing plans."

THE POLITICIANS OF THE WORLD HAVE been considerably agitated recently by Russia's attitude toward Manchuria. In the United States, new interest was aroused in this situation by the report that Secretary Hay had telegraphed to President Roosevelt suggesting joint action on the part of Great Britain, Japan and the United States in preventing Russia from carrying out its Manchurian designs. It was later denied that Mr. Hay had sent such a telegram to the president and from Washington as well as from London come reports that there is no dissatisfaction with Russia's actual position. London authorities report that the Russian government has said that it would adhere to its engagements with respect to Manchuria and that it has no intention of adopting any measure tending to exclude foreign consuls or obstructing foreign commerce or the use of the ports. The Russian

ambassador at Washington says that his government has not violated any pledge made to any nation and that whatever steps have been taken in Manchuria are "only in self-defense."

WHILE THERE ARE A GREAT MANY PEOPLE in the United States who cannot understand why this country should be so deeply interested in far-away Manchuria as to engage with Japan and Great Britain in a joint action against Russia, the diplomats and world traders in our own country appear to imagine that Manchuria is really one of the great problems confronting this country. The position of these gentlemen is explained on the ground that the trade of Manchuria is valuable to the United States. The United States consul at Niuchwang says "this country is much nearer to the United States than to any other of the great producing nations. Its trade is now largely in our hands with unrestricted commerce with the United States, we know no reason for our not continuing to maintain this supremacy." A writer in the New York Sun declares that "the trade of Manchuria is worth negotiating if not fighting for." And this writer points out that in ten years the increase of the imports has ranged from 100 to 500 per cent. In 1902 the total value of the export and import trade in Niuchwang was \$40,000,000, but large quantities of goods and products entered the country duty free by way of Port Arthur and Dalny. Beans, bean cake, and bean oil comprise the chief exports of Manchuria. The export of grain is restricted, although the Sun writer says "Manchuria promises to be one of the great grain growing countries in the world." It is pointed out by this writer that "our great rival is naturally Russia. Her oil sold by the Russo-Chinese bank is driving out American products and American manufacturers will have to be up and doing to cope with the Russians." And this writer concludes that it is therefore plain that Russia will in time practically dominate the commercial and industrial affairs of the province. Even thus, in the presence of this terrible prediction, there are many people in the United States who decline to become alarmed and who imagine that after all is said, the United States have too many problems of their own to be drawn into the Manchurian difficulties.

SOME VERY INTERESTING CONTRIBUTIONS have been made to Manchurian literature in the United States. For instance, one of the United States civil service commissioners has been persuaded to say that the United States should adopt "the Manchurian doctrine" which might be expressed in language similar to that employed in expressing the Monroe doctrine; for instance, "that the United States do not view any interposition in Manchuria in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward this government." Although this suggestion has been laughed to scorn by many people, it was seriously made and has been as seriously reiterated. Indeed there are some who believe that Secretary Hay really suggested to the president joint action between Great Britain, Japan and the United States with respect to Manchuria. Mr. Hay's predisposition toward joint actions between Great Britain and the United States seems in many quarters to discount the denials of the report that Mr. Hay sent a telegram to the president suggesting joint action in this instance.

A WRITER WHO IS DESCRIBED AS "A former officer in the United States" has written to the New York World an interesting statement with respect to the Russian occupation of Manchuria. This writer says that Russia will retain possession, that while the excuse for this is Russia's necessity for an outlet to the open sea, the impelling purpose is her desire for expansion and domination—the imperialistic spirit of her government." This writer warns the United States not to become further involved in foreign complications. The American people are reminded that they should devote themselves to their internal affairs, solving the great and pressing questions of finance and political economy, making just laws and having them impartially administered, so as to build up a free, contented, intelligent, and patriotic citizenship." This