

CURRENT TOPICS

FOLLOWING the explosion at the depot at Independence, Colo., in which fourteen non-union miners lost their lives, things have been going on at a rapid gait in Colorado. The city officials who are known to be in sympathy with union men were required to resign and to leave the vicinity. On June 11, a special train, carrying 91 union miners from the Cripple Creek district, all under the guard of militiamen, was unloaded on the prairie half a mile west of the Kansas line. The men were left on the prairie without food or water, and the train with its load of militiamen moved away, leaving the union miners to shift for themselves. The miners finally marched to the Salvation Army colony near Holly where they were supplied with food.

AS THE special train was nearing the Kansas line, it was met by Sheriff Brady of Hamilton county, Kansas, accompanied by forty deputies. Brady notified the militiamen that they would not be allowed to pass the Kansas line, as the deported men were not wanted in that state. The men were then ordered to leave the train. Governor Bailey in an interview announced that the sheriff acted without authority, and said that the miners would be welcomed to Kansas if they wanted to take up citizenship in that state and were willing to obey the law.

THE situation in Colorado is attracting world-wide attention. The Colorado governor justifies the deportation of men and other unusual proceedings by an opinion delivered by the Colorado supreme court in which opinion the court said that when any portion of the state was in insurrection, the governor's power was supreme. Many thoughtful citizens express great doubt as to the wisdom of the course adopted by the Colorado governor; but those who approve of that course point to the destruction of the lives of the fourteen non-union men, together with other lawless acts which they charge against the union miners and they say that under the circumstances strong and unusual measures are necessary to the re-establishment of law and order. Representatives of the labor unions, however, deny that they are at all responsible for this lawlessness and they even go so far as to intimate that the destruction of the Independence depot was the work of detectives in the employ of the mine owners.

IN THE presence of the conflicting claims made by the mine owners and by the union miners, it is not at all strange that the reading public has become considerably perplexed. A writer in the Chicago Tribune gives what he calls a non-partisan statement of the troubles and their origin, pointing out that an armed camp on the verge of war has existed in Colorado for a year. This writer says: "The reign of lawlessness is ostensibly due to a struggle for the eight-hour day. But since it began that has been lost sight of. An eight-hour law was passed by the state legislature in 1901. After a legal fight by the employers the law was declared unconstitutional by the supreme court. The labor men declared that the courts were under the influence of capital. An amendment to the constitution to cover the point was authorized by the voters at an election, but the legislature failed to act. Then the labor unions joined in the determined struggle which reached its climax in the wild scenes of yesterday."

THE Western Federation of Miners objected to the importation of non-union labor and since then many violent deaths have been recorded. The Tribune writer says: "One of the first of the long list of deeds of violence came in the battle at Telluride in 1901. A strike had been called against the piece work system and declaring for regular day work, and the places of the strikers had been filled by non-union men. The local union of the Western Federation of Miners ordered 250 rifles and 50,000 rounds of ammunition. As the night shift was leaving the Smuggler-Union mine the morning of July 3 they were fired upon from ambush and one man was killed and a number wounded. All the non-union men were then driven from the district at the point of the rifle. As an indirect result of this trouble, Arthur L. Collins, manager of the Smuggler-Union mine, was assassinated on the evening of

November 19, 1902, as he was sitting by a window in his home, and the assassin was never apprehended. At Idaho Springs, in July, 1903, the Citizens' alliance, organized to put down lawlessness, marched fourteen union miners beyond the city limits and told them to keep going until they had left the county and never to show their faces again. This was because the electrical power plant of the Sun and Moon mine had been blown up with dynamite, supposedly by or under the direction of union strikers."

ON DECEMBER 4, 1903, martial law was declared in the Cripple Creek district. In January, 1904, martial law was declared in Telluride. The Cripple Creek proclamation was read in the city of Victor by a cavalry major guarded by fifty troopers, the citizens of the town gathered about, silent. After proclaiming that a condition of anarchy there existed, that civil government had become abortive, that life was in peril, and property unsafe, the government pronounced judgment upon this commonwealth: "Now, therefore, I, James H. Peabody, governor of the state of Colorado, by virtue of the authority in me vested, do hereby proclaim and declare the said county of Teller, in the state of Colorado, to be in a state of insurrection and rebellion." In the town of Victor, the Record, one of the newspapers, was put under military censorship. The paper had declared that some of the militiamen were ex-convicts. The paper was the organ of the union men. A "bull pen" was established and those who expressed sentiments of lawlessness were locked up without warrants and sometimes held for days without a hearing.

TWO striking incidents are related by the Tribune writer, as follows: "Just before the troops were called into the field last fall an inoffensive old Scotch carpenter named Stewart, a respectable citizen who owned his own home, but who was unfortunate in not being a union man, went to work in one of the Cripple Creek mines. On the night of September 2 four masked men appeared at his home. The old man, who had been quietly reading a newspaper, let them in; they set upon him and beat him frightfully with a pistol butt before the eyes of his wife, and then dragged him out, shot him through the back, and left him for dead. On November 21, while the troops were in control, Superintendent McCormick and Beck, shift boss, were descending into the Vindicator mine, which had opened with non-union labor. At the sixth level a terrific explosion wrecked the cage and killed both men instantly. An infernal machine, the remains of which were found, had been set so that the descent of the cage would explode a keg of powder. No one knows who did this awful deed, and the coroner's jury could fix no blame."

IT IS asserted by this same authority that the civil officers were largely under the domination of the labor unions and several instances are cited where sheriff and under sheriff showed not only partiality for the unions, but violated the law in order to please union leaders; but the other side is not entirely excused by this writer, for he says: "In its efforts to cope with the lawless the militia itself is said to have gone beyond the bounds and to have denied constitutional rights to citizens. In answer to the charge that the constitution was being violated Judge Advocate McClelland is credited with this remark: 'To hell with the constitution; we are not following the constitution.' Col. Verdeckberg, commanding in the Cripple Creek district, is said to have declared: 'We are under orders only from God and Governor Peabody.'"

THE extensiveness of the Colorado strike may be better understood by this statement: "The strike in the mining districts of the state during the last year are said to have kept 35,000 workmen in idleness for five months. There were 4,000,000 working days wasted and \$10,000,000 in wages was lost to the men, while the loss from non-production and from direct damage to property is placed at \$40,000,000. Added to this must be the cost of keeping the Colorado militia in the field. Militiamen have been in active service almost continuously longer than a year." A dreary picture of the future is drawn in this way: "La-

bor and capital are determined to fight to the end. The armies engaged are large. The Western Federation, the mine workers, and other union members numbering 143,000, are resolved not to yield. They are opposed by the 39,000 business men, who constitute the Citizens' alliance, and to these must be added nearly every mine owner in the state, and the thousands of unorganized independent workmen, who insist upon their rights to work regardless of the will of the unions."

THE extent to which feeling has been aroused in Colorado is shown by the tone employed by former Governor Thomas. The Associated press, under date of Denver, June 14, says: "I have nothing further to say about plans for reopening the Portland mine," said former Governor Thomas, counsel for the Portland Gold Mining company, today. "We all realize that if we open our mouths about anything connected with Cripple Creek, we lay ourselves liable to the bull pen or some other of the drastic measures that come under the head of military necessity. Matters remain absolutely in status quo. We have not decided fully as yet what course will be taken to reopen the mine. I suppose that if I talk too much I might get what Frank Hanks received. His only offense was acting as legal counsel for some men charged with crime several months ago. Perhaps if I should talk actively in regard to my client, I might be burned at the stake."

THE executive board of the Western Federation of Miners has issued a statement in which it denies responsibility for the lawless acts committed against non-union men. Referring to the Independence explosion, this statement says: "We are fully convinced from information by trustworthy persons that the original explosion and subsequent outrages perpetrated are not only the work of the Citizens' alliance, but are thoroughly of the opinion that the whole matter was planned in advance. Perhaps no single occurrence has so much bearing on this conclusion as the forcible resignation of various regularly elected officials in the district. What 'public necessity' justified the mob to compel the resignation of these officers we will leave to the reader to judge for himself. To set aside the expressed will of the people to depose officials named by the majority to conduct public affairs is of itself a crime against citizenship that we cannot pass without severe criticism. Beside this all other crimes are puny—are parlor jokes, or comic opera."

REFERRING to the imprisonment and deportation of union miners and the refusal to permit any merchants to supply provisions to the families of such men, the executive board says: "The very fact that union men are deported by the military is of itself sufficient to show that no evidence has been obtained against these men, for if evidence of crime was at hand does any reasonable man or woman suppose that the military commandant, or that the mob sheriff, would be simple enough to deport to other parts the guilty persons? No, indeed. What evidence there is acquits the miners, but apparently fastens the crime upon the heads of hired assassins and thugs in the pay of the Citizens' alliance. The apparent success of this line of action at Telluride has evidently prompted the recent acts of violence in the Cripple Creek district. The lawless mob at all times had access to the state guns and ammunition. When the mob had committed outrages without number, the power of the great state of Colorado steps in, takes up affairs where the mob left off, deports union men, abuses others, and brazenly heralds to the world the palpable lie that the miners' unions are criminal organizations and must be wiped out. At no time during all this struggle has the military power or the civil power been used to protect our members in their rights of citizenship. Even at the present time no determined effort is being made by the authorities to discover the real perpetrators of the Independence explosion. Nothing is attempted to be done except to fasten this unholy crime by imputation and innuendo upon the heads of our innocent membership."

IT IS evident that the Colorado strike is by no means ended, for the executive committee of the Western Federation concludes its state-