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NEWS OF THE LABOR WORLD

Boston.—The general reduction of ten per cent in the wages of New England cotton-mill operatives which was recently decided upon became effective in mills employing 120,000 persons. The reduction is due to the depression of the cotton-goods market, which forced many mills to curtail production. The city of Fall River, Lawrence and Berkshire county are not included in the general reduction, but may be affected later on. The curtailment is general throughout New England. The average curtailment is placed at from 20 to 25 per cent. of the production. The cotton mills of New England have about 15,000,000 spindles. In Fall River, production of print cloths was lessened by about 155,000 pieces, the largest amount held from the market this year. It is probable that most of the Fall River mills will adopt M. C. D. Borden's policy and run on half-time, closing every other week.

Washington.—In the next 60 days the railroads of the United States will have to find between 250,000 and 300,000 men to mend their tracks and road beds and another large army to go into their shops and repair their cars and their locomotives. The railroads centering in Chicago alone will require more than 100,000 laborers, who will be employed in remedying the ravages of the winter months which, with their frosts and their snows, have made many miles of shaky track and as many more of softened roadbed. The managements of all Chicago roads have decided to engage in repair and renewal work this spring and early summer on an extensive scale as ever, owing to the fact that labor will be plentiful, and possibly cheaper, and also owing to the fact that there are signs of business renewal everywhere.

Chicago.—Employees of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road, by co-operating with the management in operation, have saved the necessity of a reduction in the rate of pay. During January \$160,000 was thus saved, of which \$33,000 was on coal. This is, perhaps, the one item in which the greatest economy is possible, as careless firing of locomotives is one of the most productive fields for extravagance to be found.

Reading, Pa.—At the close of work in the Reading Railway company's car and locomotive shops March 31 600 employees were laid off. This is in addition to 250 who were indefinitely suspended last week. The force had been previously reduced, so that less than two-thirds of the men are now at work. Foremen have been placed in the ranks and the plants are working four days of eight hours each. Similar suspensions took place at Palo Alto.

Washington.—The Employers' association has thrown down the gauge of battle—the battle for the open shop—and it is said similar organizations of employers in the large cities, backed by the Manufacturers' association, will make united and determined efforts to maintain open-shop conditions, and that the contest in the coming spring will be general.

Springfield, Ill.—Illinois operators and miners were unable to reach an agreement on the differential between machine and hand mining. The operators want the price for machine mining ten cents per ton less than for hand mining, the same as it is in Indiana. The miners want the difference now existing of seven cents per ton retained.

Pittsburg, Pa.—From the year 1890 to the close of 1906, 22,349 men met death in the coal mines of the United States. Not since 1897 has the annual list numbered less than 1,000, and each year the number has grown larger. In 1906 the fatalities were 2,061, and 1907, when the figures are all in and compiled, will number more than that.

Paris, France.—Statistics show that in 1906 there occurred in France no fewer than 1,200 strikes, in which 438,466 persons were concerned. This number included 386,425 men, 31,331 women and 16,710 young persons of both sexes. Most of these strikes were successful in securing shorter hours for the wage earners.

Springfield, Ill.—William Scaife, for 11 years employed in the office of the secretary of the Illinois state bureau of labor, has been appointed editor of the United Mineworkers' Journal, published at Indianapolis, Ind.

Sedalia, Mo.—A notice was posted at the Missouri, Kansas & Texas railway shops announcing that the shops, which employ 500 men, would be shut down on April 1. No explanation was given.

New York.—Controller Metz received three letters threatening him with death unless work on proposed subways is begun at once. The writers declared themselves to be neither black hand operators nor anarchists, but laborers out of employment who must either work or starve.

New Haven, Conn.—As an outcome of a strike of cigarmakers in the factory of J. P. Kilfeather, the Cigar Manufacturers' association threatens to close all factories in this city unless the Kilfeather shop is declared open to union men. This will affect approximately 2,000 men.

Indianapolis, Ind.—The Boot and Shoe Workers' International union makes claim that its system of 25 cents a week dues saves it from the fear of strikes, and in such emergency does away with the necessity of calling upon sister crafts for financial aid. High dues also enable the union to prosecute more successfully its campaign for the union stamp. In Great Britain the stamp has never been adopted by the union of that country, though agitation for its adoption is now going on, because the Britishers are beginning to recognize the power there is behind the American stamp with a reasonably high rate of dues. As one argument they point to the successful operations of the American union with its surplus of \$100,000 in bank.

Austin, Tex.—Judgment enjoining the Western Union Telegraph company from doing an interstate business except in the transmission of messages of the federal government until such time as it shall take out a permit to do business in the state and pay the required occupation and franchise taxes was rendered by District Judge Calhoun, who stated that he adopted the finding of the Kansas supreme court in a similar case, under a like statute there. The judgment in no way affects nor interferes with interstate business of the telegraph company. Motion for a new trial was filed by the defendant and acts as a stay of the injunction order.

Pittsburg, Pa.—An order issued by the Pennsylvania railroad to discharge all foreigners and employ none but American citizens has caused a sensation. The order affects only the laborers, as the office force, operating and mechanical departments have always been operated by English-speaking men. The Pennsylvania railroad system, when operating at its full capacity, employs about 180,000 persons.

Chicago.—Officials of the Wholesale Grocery Employees' union signed the new wage agreement for the coming year. The old scale, ranging from \$11 to \$16 a week, was agreed upon. The men receded from their demand for a nine-hour day, ten hours constituting a day's work under the agreement. The union is affiliated with the freight handlers' organization.

Chicago.—The strike voted by the milk wagon drivers' union was approved by the teamsters' joint council. The indorsement was unanimous. Nothing now remains to make the strike legal but the sanction of the executive board of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters at Indianapolis, Ind.

Boston.—Nineteen cigar manufacturers locked out their union men to enforce the ultimatum given to the union to the effect that they must take off the ban against a shop in which men had struck following a disagreement with a foreman over a shop rule. The union men in 33 other shops are working.

Washington.—In the April number of the Federationist President Samuel Gompers of the Federation of Labor, again declared "that there is no law nor court decision compelling union men or the friends of labor to buy any of the things upon which labor has placed the stamp of disapproval."

Boston.—At a conference representatives of 8,000 employees on the system informed officials of the road that a change from day work to the piece work and bonus system would result in a strike.

Columbus, O.—Strong pressure has been exerted by manufacturers on Gov. Harris to veto the Reynolds child labor bill, now passed by both houses. Arguments have been used both from the factory and the children's point of view, and delegations who have visited the governor have expressed a belief that he would veto the measure with a view of having one less drastic passed by the legislature.

Pottsville, Pa.—Orders were issued by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal & Iron company for the resumption of the 55 collieries and washeries of the company, after having been on half time for the last two months. This will affect about 25,000 men and boys.

Harrisburg, Pa.—About 1,000 men in the shops of the Pennsylvania railroad in and about this city were suspended indefinitely, and an order was issued to put the men still on the rolls on increased time.

Seattle, Wash.—Only nine of the salmon canneries will be operated this season, and Chinese labor contracts are being let on a basis of less than half of the pack of an average season.

New York.—The relations between the Erie Railroad company and its employees took an abrupt turn for the better when it was learned that the company will not attempt to enforce the proposed ten per cent. reduction in the wages of its operating forces. Rather than face the disastrous conditions of Des Moines, Ia.—A home for aged and needy Iowa coal miners probably will be established here this year. The sentiment in favor of this project appears to have grown rapidly, and when the question is resubmitted it probably will be carried by a large majority.

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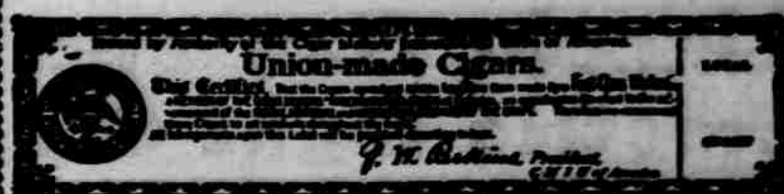
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