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TOPICS OF THE WEEK

Give the Devil His Due—The Strikers' Side of the Railroad Controversy.

Diogenes Laertius ascribes to Pythagoras the wise assertion that "there are two sides to every question, exactly opposite to each other." For twenty-three hundred years none has made bold to question this obvious truth in theory, and yet nothing is more rare than the charity of thought essential to its application in practice to the subject-matters of everyday contention.

Instance the so-called outlaw railroad strike. The public says it is an outrage; the government says it is a crime; organized labor itself says it is a violation of contract and a breach of discipline. The "Fighting Quaker" Attorney General, the Honorable A. Mitchell Palmer, goes them all one better. He says it is Bolshevism and "Red" revolution. Hear him: "The strike is the largest and latest manifestation of the working out of the program of the International Communist Party, whose purpose is to capture the political and economic power, to overthrow the Government and to establish a dictatorship on the part of what they call the proletariat, and transport to this country the exact chaotic condition that exists in Russia."

True some very able and conservative organs of public opinion—such Democratic newspapers as the New York World and the Baltimore Sun—belittle the Attorney General's jeremiad as a palpable attempt to boost his presidential candidacy by magnifying the alleged "red" peril and playing up the widespread suspicions of the political aims of labor.

If it is politics the Attorney General is playing, it must be admitted that his game is a shrewd one; provided, of course, his campaign proceeds upon the assumption that the nomination is the ultimate goal and that the party prospect in the election is not to be taken into account. An unstructured convention, in which the conservative elements will overwhelmingly preponderate, is now a practical certainty. The rapidly weakening control of the President is the only hope left for anything like a forward-looking programme of domestic policy. The great danger is that Mr. Wilson will limit his direction to the treaty issue, leaving the convention to its own devices on other issues. In that case it may be expected to take very kindly to the Palmer flubdub of a "red" peril as a handy screen for the programme of reaction.

And this brings me back to my text, the outlaw strike and the strikers' side of that question. While the writer adheres strongly to his position that strikes in the railroad service are inadmissible from every point of view and should be effectually prohibited by law (but only in connection with laws assuring full justice to the workers), he is obliged to concede that it is only a few weeks since Congress, by the clearest implication, recognized the legitimacy of such action. The only suggestion of illegality in the present strike is founded upon emergency war legislation whose applicability to this situation is none too well fortified in good morals.

With this preliminary statement, I invite the reader's attention to the strikers' side of the controversy, as presented by them. It has convinced me, and I believe it will convince most persons of open mind, that, whatever its mistakes and wrongs, the strike has no such character as the Attorney General ascribes to it. It is worthy of remark in this connection that, with the single exception of the New York Times, the conservative press of the great eastern cities appears to have studiously ignored this authoritative statement of the contention of the strikers, at the same time that they have given almost unlimited space to the other side of the controversy. Believing, as this paper does, in giving the devil his due, we publish the strikers' statement in full, as follows:

"At a meeting of the United Railway Workers of America, held at Grand View Hall, Jersey City, the following statement of the railroad situation was made:

"In retiring from work the railroad men for whom we speak are seeking to uphold an American standard of living. We are American citizens. We are not revolutionists. One thousand five hundred trainmen were soldiers in the army which fought for American principles against the German autocracy, and in the months since the

armistice our love for America has not grown less. As American citizens we are exercising our historic rights to appeal to our Government for the redress of intolerable grievances.

"Our wages are inadequate to support our families. These facts are certified by the statement of the Railroad Administration of the Department of Labor and of other national Governmental bodies. Many classes of employes are paid from \$500 to \$700 less than the least sum at which Governmental authorities have reckoned that it is possible for a man to support his wife and children at the minimum of comfort and health.

"Every possible means of remedying this situation was exhausted before we individuals stopped work. Last August our appeal for relief was carried to the President. We were asked to wait on the assurance that if the cost of living did not reduce our wages would be adjusted. The cost of living rose, but we have neither relief nor the assurance of relief. So burdensome and hopeless have been these delays that railroad employes despaired of obtaining any consideration of their grievances through their own representatives or from the Government. They hoped that something would come from the National Industrial Conference, which met at the call of the President last October.

"Railroad trainmen all over the country telegraphed their brotherhood officials demanding that consideration be given this situation. Nothing happened except mere delay. Director General Hines said he was unwilling to embarrass the railroads by granting a wage increase during the last months of the Railroad Administration. The President upheld Mr. Hines. Finally the period of Federal operation came to an end.

"The railroad companies were guaranteed a substantial rate of return, while the railroad workers were given ambiguous assurances. Furthermore, the railroads were able to go directly to the Interstate Commerce Commission, while the delay in setting up the Railroad Board left the railway employes without any possible court of appeal. These delays led the railway men to despair of obtaining relief. When no other way of bringing their case to the attention of the Government existed, they stopped work.

"Now that the Railroad Labor Board has been appointed, we desire to avail ourselves of the opportunity provided by it for a consideration of our grievances in accordance with the provisions of the Transportation act."

Y. M. C. A. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE FOR DEMOBILIZED MEN

Free scholarships, help in choosing occupations and securing employment, practical talks and citizenship courses are offered to ex-service men by the Y. M. C. A. Educational Service.

Any ex-serviceman who desires to improve his education by means of a Y. M. C. A. scholarship will submit his application to the Local Educational Committee. Each man must have an honorable discharge from the service. He must be qualified to enter the course desired, and should have sufficient ambition and purpose to finish the course of study he wishes to undertake.

Scholarships will be awarded in grade schools or elementary courses as well as in commercial, academic, agricultural and technical courses.

All applications must be in the hands of the committee on or before the first day of June. These should be sent to the Chairman, and if further information is desired write him at Hunting Creek, N. C.

C. C. WRIGHT, Chm.
C. C. Faw,
W. A. STROUD,
Committee.

April 20, 1920.

JOHNSON CONTINUES LEAD IN NEBRASKA; BRYAN IS GAINING

Omaha, April 21.—Senator Hiram Johnson continued in the lead for the Republican presidential preference as votes of the Tuesday primary were slowly received today by newspapers tabulating the returns. William J. Bryan had gained enough votes in the day's count to place him among the first four candidates for delegates at large to the San Francisco convention.

Mr. W. F. Miller spent Tuesday in Winston-Salem.

HEAVY TOLL TAKEN BY TORNADO IN THREE STATES

Birmingham, Ala., April 20.—A death list which tonight stood at more than 140 and a property loss of many millions of dollars was the toll exacted by a series of tornadoes which today swept a score of towns, villages and isolated farms in eastern Mississippi, northwestern Alabama and the southern counties of Tennessee.

Communication with many of the stricken districts was difficult but fragmentary reports agreed that the tornadoes swept down with deadly suddenness, obliterating everything that lay in their path. In at least one case—that of Rose Hill, Miss., practically the entire town is believed to have been destroyed in several instances all members of a family were reported to have been caught in the debris of their home.

Birmingham, Ala., April 21.—A death list of 160, scores injured and much crop and property damage, was the estimated toll today of the tornado which yesterday afternoon swept thru a score of towns in eastern Mississippi, northwestern Alabama and southern Tennessee.

SCHOOL NOTES

The Rev. Stanford, of Gastonia, who is holding a revival meeting at the Methodist church, gave a very interesting talk in chapel Wednesday morning.

The high school pupils are standing their monthly tests this week.

Beginning the 24th of April a half day session of school will be held on Saturday until the end of the term.

The high school baseball team was defeated on its own grounds last Saturday by a fast aggregation from Ronda, N. C.

Beware! ye pupils who can not control the unruly member of thy anatomy, namely, thy mouth, lest ye get some memory work.

GEORGIA VOTE FAVORS MITCH PALMER FOR PRESIDENT

Alabama, April 20.—With 131 counties out of the 155 in the state heard from at midnight, Attorney A. Mitchell Palmer on unofficial returns had a lead of 23 county-unit votes over his next opponent, Thomas E. Watson, and 44 votes over United States Senator Hoke Smith in the contest for the democratic presidential nomination in Georgia.

GUARD KILLS PRISONER.

Burlington, April 17.—Richard Gilbert, a young white prisoner at the road camp near Elon College, under the management of the contractors for the construction of the Bankhead highway in Alamance county, was shot and killed while attempting to obtain his freedom.

The young man and several others had refused to work, claiming that they were sick and unable to work, and that the guards were preparing to whip them, when young Gilbert ran from the camp. He was called to halt; but he halted not, and the guard was told to fire.

He fired twice over the fleeing man, but he would not stop and the guard took aim and the result was a ball passed through Gilbert's head coming out through his mouth, knocking out several teeth.

This prisoner was serving a sentence of two years and half of the time had gone.

JUSTICE G. H. BROWN DECIDES TO RETIRE TO PRIVATE LIFE

Raleigh, April 17.—After serving 16 years as associate justice of the supreme court of North Carolina, Justice George H. Brown, yesterday authorized the statement that he will not seek re-nomination for another term, and that with the expiration of his present term next January, he will retire to private life. Justice Brown intimated that he might withdraw before the end of his term. His health which has not shown the expected improvement since his illness with influenza is given as the reason for his determination not to seek further tenure of the office.

Group County Commencements.

The dates for the Group County Commencements at Ronda has been fixed for Saturday, May 15th.

For the colored county commencement the date has been fixed for May 8th.

C. C. WRIGHT, County Supt. of Schools. Hunting Creek, N. C., April 22.

HON. FRANK PAGE PRESIDES OVER JOINT ROAD MEETING

More than two hundred citizens of Wilkes, Ashe and Alleghany counties, here to attend the joint good roads meeting held Tuesday afternoon, heard Hon. Frank Page, chairman of the State Highway Commission, make the solemn statement that he felt sure the state highway commission would do all in their power to aid the western counties in the construction of roads, provided the respective counties would pledge themselves to assist in said construction work in a concerted manner, but that wherever a diversity was found the commission was powerless to act.

Division and lack of proper co-operation among the three counties above mentioned instituted the call of the road meeting. Mr. Page was asked to preside over the meeting, while Mr. H. C. Landon, secretary of the Wilkes Commercial Club, was named as secretary.

The first and almost the only matter brought up before the meeting was the hearing of contentions of the delegations present, these contentions arising over the location of a proposed road from North Wilkesboro to Jefferson. Two routes were outlined, as follows:

The Alleghanians were present fortified with oratory, more or less, to advocate the construction of a state highway by Mulberry Gap to Laurelsprings, where it would connect with a proposed road leading from Sparta to Jefferson. They contended that this road would connect two county seats with Wilkes and that a vast area of eastern Ashe and Western and central Alleghany would be delivered, commercially speaking, and would then be in a position to place products on southern markets. They further contended that eastern Alleghany was served by the Elkin and Alleghany Railway leading from Doughton to Elkin, and that the people of central and Western Alleghany had no southern outlet at all and were enduring industrial despair. They argued that the road by Laurelsprings to Jefferson could be constructed at less cost and was the most practical route. They also argued that there would be only a few miles difference between this route and a direct route to Jefferson.

The Ashetonians were present galore and attended the meeting for the one purpose of obtaining a direct road from this city to Jefferson over the route of the old turnpike or any other route that might be found to be most practical and that could be constructed at the minimum cost. They were no less represented with speakers possessing oratory than their neighbors, the Alleghanians, (both argued well.) The Ashetonians contended that they were tired and weary of trade relations with the State of Virginia, that the time had come to pass when they wanted to trade with North Carolina cities and become Tar Heels in a better sense of the word. During their expatriation they stated that only about two miles of the old turnpike had been washed away by the freshet of 1916; that from the top of the mountain at Glendale Springs to Jefferson a road had already been graded, and by reason of these facts the road could be constructed at less cost over this route. As stated before the Ashetonians came with the fixed purpose of obtaining a direct route from Jefferson to North Wilkesboro.

Every citizen of each of the three counties is obviously aware of the fact that roads leading from this place to Jefferson, and to Laurelsprings, are badly needed. As chairman Page stated the state highway commission is powerless to aid in constructing roads wherever diversity of opinion is found. It is indeed time that Ashe and Alleghany Counties are getting away from Virginia. It behooves the county road commissions to get together and in one united effort place their appeals before the state highway commission.

The following resolution was offered and passed by the assembly: "The road commissions of Ashe, Alleghany and Wilkes counties request the State highway commission to send an impartial engineer to make surveys of all proposed routes with best estimates without going into the cost of construction, the survey to cover direct route from North Wilkesboro to Jefferson and the route by way of Laurelsprings."

Mr. Norfleet, also a member of the State Highway Commission, was present at the meeting.

Mrs. J. G. Hackett went to Raleigh Monday to spend some time with her mother.

WALNUT COVE IS SCENE OF A DESPERATE BATTLE

Winston-Salem, April 18.—Ex-Sheriff Lee Joyce was killed, Jim Matthews, special deputy, was shot thru the neck probably fatally wounded, and two negroes were killed in a fight between officers and negroes at Walnut Cove, N. C., 15 miles from this city, this evening.

According to reports received here the officers attempted to break up a card game said to have been in progress in a restaurant operated by Nick Hairston, a negro.

When the officers entered the restaurant the negroes, according to the report received here by the police, began shooting. Ex-Sheriff Joyce is said to have been killed immediately and in addition to the neck wound Matthews was badly beaten. A race riot is thought to be impending.

While the excitement is intense and all roads leading out of Walnut Cove are closely guarded further trouble is not expected. Matthews is not expected to live through the night, physicians say after a second examination.

One negro, badly wounded, was brought to Winston-Salem for treatment.

Winston-Salem, April 1.—"Bunk" Hairston, who Sheriff's deputies say fired the shot which killed Ex-Sheriff Reed Joyce in a revolver battle at Walnut Cove, Sunday night in which besides Joyce, two negroes were killed and Special Deputy James Matthews and a third negro were seriously wounded, was arrested late tonight by a posse.

"Bunk" Hairston, brother of Nick Hairston, in whose place the shooting took place, escaped immediately after the shooting.

All night he was trailed through the mountains and was found late this evening 20 miles from Walnut Cove.

UPSHAW IN OVERALLS STARTLES THE CONGRESS

Washington, April 17.—The overall movement reached Congress today when Representative Upshaw, democrat, of Atlanta, Ga., appeared in the house wearing the blue denims, and announced that he was a member of the "overall and old clothes club" to be formed among members of the house.

Later Mr. Upshaw made a speech in the house in which he urged all members of Congress to join in combatting the high cost of living. He told the house that the overalls cost \$4.

"Do you think other members have \$4 to spend for overalls?" Representative Gallivan, democrat, Massachusetts, asked. "If you haven't \$4 I will go on your note," Upshaw retorted.

REVOLUTION IN MEXICO IS GAINING MUCH GROUND

Agua Prieta, Sonora, April 19.—The revolutionary movement of Sonora against President Carranza is gaining ground rapidly the military headquarters here reports.

General J. M. Pima, commander of the Sonora troops in this district, announced Gen. Francisco Urbalejo, with his Carranza forces at Santa Rosalia, Chihuahua, had revolted and would take the field for the Sonora movement.

Urbalejo was reported to have 400 Yaqui Indians under his command. Unconfirmed reports of the revolts by other Carranza troops in Chihuahua also were received, it was said. Military headquarters at Hermosillo also sent out a report today that the troops of Gen. Angel Flores were continuing their march toward Mazatlan, an important west coast port of Mexico.

From Nogales, Sonora, came the report that the independent state government of Sonora, through its secretary of state, had issued a statement guaranteeing protection to all commercial interests in Sonora.

Sonora's chief force to oppose President Carranza on the Chihuahua frontier will be the Yaqui and Mayo Indians, it was said. Heavy concentration of the Indians is being made here to attack the forces of the Mexican president, according to the announcement of General Pima.

Statesville's Population Is 7,895.

Washington, D. C., April 17.—The Census Bureau announces the population of Statesville 7,895; increases three thousand two hundred ninety-six, or seventy-one and seven tenths per cent.

The census of 1910 credited Statesville with a population of 4,599.

COUNTY COMMENCEMENT AT MOUNTAIN VIEW SATURDAY

On Saturday, April 17th, the first in a series of Group County Commencements for the season was held at Mountain View Institute.

The exercises began at 10:30 in the auditorium of the administration building with a song by the school followed with the devotional exercises by Rev. A. B. Hays. Then came the class exercises by the high school department. The contestants all rendered their pieces remarkably well. The medal was awarded to Miss Ola Kilby, whose recitation was "Assisting Uncle Joe."

This contest was followed by another one by pupils from the grammar grades. This was spirited from the very beginning and the committee of award was long in deciding who was the successful one. The medal was awarded to Master Billie Martin, whose declamation was "The Genius of North Carolina Interpreted." This contest was followed with a duet, "When I'm Gone You'll Soon Forget Me" by Misses Freda Hendren and Ola Kilby. After a song by the entire school "The North Carolina Hills" in which a large part of the audience heartily joined the people were dismissed for the noon hour.

In the afternoon came the spelling contests by the high school and the grammar grade departments. In the latter, which was first held, there were thirteen contestants, the line completely filling the entire front of the long platform. The battle of words began and for awhile it seemed that the entire class—not an unlucky number in this respect save for those who pronounced the words to be spelled by the class—would spell for the remainder of the afternoon. Gradually the battle of words waxed warmer and warmer while they fell on the right and on the left until only two were left standing. Then came the tug of war, back and forth, forth and back came the long difficult words and as rapidly as they came just so rapidly were they spelled until from sheer exhaustion a halt was called.

Then came the award of diplomas to the class of 1920, those who had successfully passed the final examination in the seventh grade. This class was composed of sixteen boys and girls coming from the townships of North Wilkesboro, Rock Creek, Trap-hill, Walnut Grove and Mulberry. These were given to those who were present by Supt. Joseph H. Hurst of the North Wilkesboro Graded Schools. Then came the presentation of the Certificates or Merit to those pupils who had been perfect in attendance for the term. It was announced by Superintendent Wright that 126 boys and girls in the schools of this division had met the requirements of the board of education and were entitled to receive these certificates. Prof. E. R. Settle delivered these to the pupils who were present, and it was pleasing to see the expression of delight on the faces of the boys and girls as they came down the aisles when their names were called to receive these tokens of duty well performed.

Then came the distribution of the Awards of Honor to those who had been perfect in spelling for the term. These were presented to thirteen pupils who had qualified themselves in this group to receive them. The presentation was made by Prof. James M. Hayes.

This was followed by the award of gold medals to those boys and girls who had been perfect in attendance for seven years. These pupils were present to receive these, Clara and Gilmer Caudill and Buel Shepherd. These were awarded by Prof. S. B. Smithey.

Then came the presentation of the medals to the winners in the recitation and declamation contests of the morning. That to the winner in the high school class by Rev. S. S. Jennings, and to the grammar grade class by Mr. A. G. Hendren. Then after a song by the audience, "In the Sweet Bye and Bye," the two spellers from the graduating class, Miss Ruth Shatley and Miss Nora Warren were recalled to the stage and the battle of words was resumed with the result that after another siege it was suggested by Mr. J. S. Kilby that each be awarded a medal which suggestion was approved by the entire house and these medals were awarded by Mr. W. L. Brewer.

Then came the contest in spelling by the high school department. After a long drawn out war of words Miss Louisa Phillips was left standing alone, "Monarch of all she surveyed." This

(Continued on page Eight)