

### Employers Complain of Scarcity of Printers

Are These Complaints Justified, And If So, What Are The Reasons?

Numerous complaints have been received from employing printers who claim the local unions in their various jurisdictions are unable to furnish them with sufficient men to properly do their work.

Are these complaints justified? If so, what are the reasons for such conditions?

We are satisfied that in many jurisdictions there is an apparent shortage of printers. This being true, we seek for the causes and determine there are but two.

First, At the present time there is an exceptionally large amount of printing to be done. It is not likely that this condition will change, and it is probable that the volume of printing that must be executed will continue very large for a considerable period of time.

The second and most potent reason for the apparent shortage of printers lies in the fact that printing office proprietors have neglected or refused to recognize the changed conditions of the labor market as compared with those existing previous to the war.

For years before the recent war started the printing trade was looked upon as one of the most desirable and best-paid of any of the craft industries. This condition has now been reversed and the printing trade in most jurisdictions is at present one of the least desirable and its followers the poorest paid of the artisans in any craft.

It may be possible that the typographical union is in a measure responsible for this great change because of the very conservative policy which it followed during the war. Whether or not this be true, the fact remains that many organizations in other industries have passed it in the amount of compensation received by its members and also in the number of hours that constitute a week's work. Because of this many members of the International Typographical Union have left the printing business and entered upon other occupations in which the work is not so strenuous and the recompense greater.

While employers in other lines of business have recognized the changed conditions that have been established by the war, most of them have taken steps to protect their various industries by meeting these conditions with increased wages somewhere near commensurate with the increased cost of living, at the same time establishing shorter hours of labor and in other ways making it desirable not only for their previous employes to remain in the industry, but for others to enter it.

Until employing printers meet the situation in the same way the question of securing sufficient help to take care of the increasing volume of business as it should be going to be increasingly serious.

In order to prevent this question becoming really menacing to the industry it will be necessary that wages at once be increased, at least to the point where they will purchase an equal amount of the necessities of life as could be purchased with the wages earned previous to the war. In fact, to secure assured stability they should be now increased in a much greater degree than that because of the fact that the people who have continued at the printing industry during this period have to date been much the losers as compared with people who have left the industry and taken other employment.

The six-day-week situation has recently been established in the morning newspaper composing room. Nevertheless, because of the present conditions men are frequently compelled to put in the seven days per week. In many instances the employers maintain that this seventh day should be worked at the regular scale of wages. This position is most untenable. We maintain that these employers are responsible for the shortage of men which makes it necessary that this seventh day be worked by many who have already labored six days, and for that reason work upon this seventh day should be paid for at the overtime scale in all instances.

#### STRIKES ARE DECLARED UNLAWFUL IN PROPOSED RAILROAD SOLUTION.

Washington, Sept. 9.—Senator Cummings, chairman of the senate interstate commerce committee, has introduced a railroad-solution bill which would outlaw strikes of railroad employes. A railroad worker can quit his employment as an individual but where "two or more persons enter into any combination or agreement with the intent substan-

tially to hinder, restrain or prevent the movement of commodities or persons in interstate commerce," they shall be deemed guilty of a conspiracy and fined not exceeding \$500 or jailed for not exceeding six months, or both.

In presenting his bill Mr. Cummings stated that one of his reasons was to have it referred to the senate interstate commerce committee as a whole that it might "furnish the basis of the further work of that committee."

The senator said the bill was the work of a sub-committee of the interstate commerce committee, and consisted of Senators Pomerene, Robinson, Poindexter, KeNogg and himself. He said that this sub-committee differed on some points, and while he agreed that the labor portion of the bill was "a somewhat delicate subject," the members of the sub-committee were unanimous on the provisions relating to labor.

Other features of this bill, which is favored by several members of the committee that will pass upon it, are: Return the roads to private ownership, and divide these properties into not less than 20 and not more than 25 "separate, distinct, competitive systems."

Permit the interstate commerce commission to place a value on the railroads, for the purpose of determining necessary dividends.

Create a railway transportation board to arrange for the grouping of the roads into competitive systems and to have authority over the physical operation of these private-owned properties. This means an enlargement of the present functions of the interstate commerce commission, the latter body to be confined mainly to rate making, valuation and accounting.

Create a committee of wages and working conditions to adjust disputes between railroads and their employes that can not be adjusted

under existing law. This committee shall consist of four representatives of the railroads and four representatives of the workers, the latter to be nominated by the organized railroad workers. The members of this committee shall each be paid \$4,000 a year. A majority shall decide any question before it, but where the committee is evenly divided the railway transportation board shall make final decision. If a railroad official refuses to accept that decision he shall be fined or jailed, or both, and if employes strike, the same penalty shall be applied.

A percentage of surplus earnings shall be placed in a fund for the benefit of employes, and shall be expended to promote better working conditions through invention and research to improve hospital relief, to extend insurance and pension systems, to develop technical education of employes and to establish a system of profit sharing by employes.

This fund shall be administered by an employes' advisory council consisting of one representative from each organized body of railroad employes.

In supporting the bill Senator Robinson, a member of the sub-committee that drafted the proposal, said:

"The right to strike has heretofore been recognized in our laws, particularly in certain sections of the Clayton act. Those laws should be modified and strikes of employes on railroads engaged in interstate commerce should be forbidden."

#### SUGGESTION IN A MISSOURI INCIDENT.


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