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DEPORTATIONS FROM BISBEE

AND A RESUME OF OTHER TROUBLES IN ARIZONA

American Mining Congress, Arizona Chapter



In view of the recent notable and far reaching action of Sheriff Harry C. Wheeler of Cochise county, Arizona, assisted by citizens of the Warren district, Bisbee, in removing 1192 enemies of the government, disloyal citizens, from the state, a proceeding probably without precedent in the history of the country in point of the number of men handled, and the celerity and thoroughness with which the work was accomplished, but certain of occasioning National interest and comment together with much exaggeration and perversion of facts from some quarters, the attending statement has been issued by the Arizona Chapter of the American Mining Congress after careful investigation.

I. W. W. ORGANIZATION.

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The Bisbee strike was the culmination of several months of I. W. W. organization, in the course of which its membership gained control of the Western Federation local. Two weeks of intensive agitation with public meetings held daily and the utmost endeavor made in speeches to align workers against capital and to make resentment against the war, preceded the calling of a general strike in the district by the I. W. W. organization, effective on June 27. The strike order was made without the formality of a ballot or even a meeting of the men, by a committee of five, appointed at a meeting of about 200 I. W. W. on the 23rd. This meeting delegated power to act as it saw fit to the committee. Many of the men of the district knew nothing of the strike call until they were turned back by pickets on the morning of the 27th. More than half of the underground forces of the mines left their employment.

STRIKE CALL DISAVOWED.

The strike call was irregular and illegal under all rules and laws governing recognized union labor organizations and was subsequently denounced and disavowed by the Western Federation of Miners, the American Federation of Labor and other organizations of recognized Union standing.

PRELIMINARY TERRORISM.

During several weeks prior to the strike call, many new men came into the district and affiliated with the I. W. W. These men were particularly active in spreading I. W. W. doctrines and stories of alleged violence. Many of them had criminal records and were pointed fellows to employees of the mining companies, with attendance of open declaration that when these men got into action in the Warren district no mine would be safe to work in and no home or business house free from the possibilities of dynamite, and worse. A high state of intimidation was brought about well in advance of issue of the strike call, women and children having been reached as well as the men and the entire district put in terror.

LAW AND ORDER STEPS.

Picketing during the first two days of the strike was conducted with much braggadocio and heightened the general terror felt in the homes of the workingmen of the district, to many of which I. W. W. delegates, particularly Austrians and Finns, went with their threats. Sheriff Wheeler at this time took personal command of the situation, on the second day of the strike, and on the third swore in 250 deputies, many of whom were Union miners, but with no sympathy for I. W. W. These deputies reduced disorder and threats by their mere presence with authority of law and arms. A Protective Association formed by the business men further assisted the situation by assuring all residents that the business men would meet daily and take every step possible to assure full protection for all who opposed the I. W. W.

AUSTRIAN INFLUENCE.

On the 2nd of July it became known that the I. W. W. proposed interference with the Fourth of July parade and celebration which had been planned in the district before the strike call. The Austrian element in the I. W. W. organization, comprising probably 80 per cent of the total, exclusive of the Mexicans and the imported professional pickets and strike hangers-on, were known to have received the news of proposed interference with the Fourth of July celebration with particular enthusiasm, as they also did attacks which were made in public I. W. W. addresses upon the Liberty bond issue and other war measures of the government.

PATRIOTIC MEN TAKE STAND.

In this situation, many patriotic men of the district expressed the declaration that under no circumstances should

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the district be cowed into abandoning observation of the Nation's birthday, with result that on the night of the 3rd over 1,000 mine workers who had remained at work, forming a Loyalty League, met and decided to participate in the 4th of July parade in a body. The parade contained more than 3,000 men, all of these opposed to the strike, and was of such strength that the I. W. W. attempted no interference and as much as possible prevented their men from going on the streets where the large assemblage of antagonistic citizens might discourage them in conduct of the strike. During the next four days, the discouraging effect of the parade was nevertheless much in evidence among the strikers, whose picket lines fell off while daily some of the rank and file returned to work despite the threats which continued to be circulated.

SITUATION GETTING OUT OF HAND.

On Sunday, July 8, the I. W. W. leaders started a sharp campaign to stir their membership into new life. Six hundred men, 90 per cent Austrians and Mexicans, were turned out that day to attend a funeral. Monday and Tuesday the work continued with a climax attempted on Wednesday, when all members were called to attend another funeral, over 1100 responding. In the interim, public places were crowded by the alleged strikers, citizens jostled, threats passed and increased defiance displayed. In this extremity Mayor Jacob Erickson of Bisbee ordered the city park closed to further public meetings and on the night of the 11th the I. W. W. speakers who had been using the park daily for weeks were refused further privilege. During the evening I. W. W. pickets publicly leveled threats at the mayor. The situation was plainly passing out of hand rapidly.

EMERGENCY STEPS.

In a conference of city and county officers two days before, the city authorities had expressed their entire willingness that Sheriff Wheeler should command the situation both in Bisbee and the Warren district. In consequence, Sheriff Wheeler on Wednesday night formulated a proclamation and decided upon taking the final steps which he believed would break the trouble, and which he had held in reserve for use only in the last extremity. These steps included the calling to his aid in deputyship capacities of every member of the Loyalty League and the Citizen's Protective Association. All members had been advised days in advance by the sheriff that should he need their services they would be called by telephone and should immediately report to designated assemblage places, armed, provided they had weapons. Men with telephones were designated to call neighbors personally who might not have telephones but belonged to one or the other of the organizations..

RESPONSE TO THE SHERIFF.

Phone calls were started at 4 a. m. of the 12th. Twelve hundred men surrounded the I. W. W. pickets at 5:30, taking them completely by surprise. The sheriff was in direct command and remained so throughout the day. His proclamation, published in the Bisbee Review the morning of the call and issued on the streets at 6 o'clock, set forth the entire cause of movement, embraced briefly in the fact that throughout the district from the beginning, the alleged strike had been recognized as in reality and solely a part of the confessed anti-war, government opposition, pro-German propaganda of the I. W. W. The proclamation follows:

THE SHERIFF'S CALL.

Bisbee, July 12, 1917.

I have formed a Sheriff's Posse of 1,200 men in Bisbee and 1,000 in Douglas, all loyal Americans, for the purpose of arresting, on charges of vagrancy, treason and of being disturbers of the peace of Cochise County, all those strange men who have congregated here from other parts and sections for the purpose of harassing and intimidating all men who desire to pursue their daily toil. I am continually told of threats and insults heaped upon the working men of this

district by so-called strikers, who are strange to these parts, yet who presume to dictate the manner of life of the people of this district.

Appeals to patriotism do not move them, nor do appeals to reason. At a time when our country needs her every resource, these strangers persist in keeping from her the precious metal production of this entire district.

Today I heard threats to the effect that homes would be destroyed because the heads of families insisted upon their rights as Americans to work for themselves, their families and their country.

Other threats have and are being made. Men have been assaulted and brutally beaten, and only today I heard the Mayor of Bisbee threatened and his requests ignored.

We cannot longer stand or tolerate such conditions! This is no labor trouble—we are sure of that—but a direct attempt to embarrass and injure the government of the United States.

I therefore call upon all loyal Americans to aid me in peaceably arresting these disturbers of our national and local peace. Let no shot be fired throughout the day unless in necessary self defense, and I hereby give warning that each and every labor leader of the so-called strikers will be held personally responsible for any injury inflicted upon any of my deputies while in the performance of their duties as deputies of my posse, for whose acts I, in turn, assume full responsibility as Sheriff of this County.

All arrested persons will be treated humanely and their cases examined with justice and care. I hope no resistance will be made, for I desire no bloodshed. However, I am determined, if resistance is made, it shall be quickly and effectively overcome.

HARRY C. WHEELER,
Sheriff of Cochise County, Ariz.

THE SPIRIT OF RESPONSE.

The men answering the call of the sheriff had been imposed upon to the last degree. They felt with him that the hour had arrived in which they must remove this menace from the district or be removed, for in their loyalty to country they could not accede to the strike demands of the I. W. W. which the speakers of the latter openly admitted to be mere subterfuge, for the concealment of the real object of the movement, the crippling of the government, and the granting of which would not terminate the trouble but simply make way for the presentation of further demands under which the so-called strike would continue.

SELF RESTRAINT; ONE TRAGEDY.

Notwithstanding all of this, the deputies went about their business under entire self restraint. No abuse of any character was practiced at any time during the day. No ribald jests passed. No taunting occurred. Commands were in few words, stern and to the point. As the several groups of deputies came to the converging point they picked up all men they met on the way who were not at work and these were ordered among the pickets as the latter were gathered in a circle of armed guards. Later, details of deputies went about the streets and roads of the city and district and picked up other men, known I. W. W., known sympathizers, and all men who could not give clean account of themselves. Other squads were detailed to rooming houses and gathered from these a number of men. It was upon one such expedition that the only tragedy of the day occurred, James Brew firing through a door upon a group of five deputies and killing Orson P. McRae. The latter was unarmed. As Brew continued to shoot, one of the deputies lifted his gun and instantly killed him. Brew's mind is believed to have become unbalanced through brooding over the situation in the district. He was an I. W. W. but had not been among the strikers. He fired before the deputies knew of his presence in the house.

BURIED AS PATRIOT.

On Sunday, July 15, the people of Bisbee and the War-

ren district turned out enmasse to pay last respects to Patriot Orson P. McRae, whose remains lay in state in the public square. Attorney Cleon T. Knapp pronounced over the body that it was a sacrifice to the country as noble and courageous as any ever given upon battle field and that it marked Arizona's first extension of life in the conduct of the present war. Ten thousand people of the district, more than 7,000 of these being men on foot, marched three miles with the body to the cemetery. Popular subscription to raise a monument in the public square to the fallen patriot followed on Monday.

EVERY MAN OFFERED LIBERTY.

From time to time during the morning and early afternoon of July 12, groups of detained men were marched by guards over the four miles of road between Bisbee and the Warren ball park, wherein the men were held. Armed guards kept watch over the park. Entrance to the latter was accorded all citizens who made request for the purpose of going among the crowd and finding men who could be responsibly vouched for as innocent of I. W. W. participation or sympathy, and who desired to be released to go to work. Every man held within the park was accorded the privilege of calling for any person who could clear his name. Later the opportunity of release was broadened, every man announcing that he wished to return to work and that he would account for himself reliably, being privileged to leave the ranks of the detained.

THE DEPORTATION.

At 11:30 o'clock in the morning the ball park gates were opened and the men still inside were ordered to march out and into box and cattle cars which had been placed on a siding. Of total detentions during the day to the number of nearly 2,000, there were 1,112 who went aboard the cars. These were pulled out as soon as loaded at 12:30 and started for Columbus, N. M., where it was the intention of turning the men over to the federal army commandant at that point for detention as enemies of the country. Water, bread and some meat were in each car. Where sidings were taken by the train to permit other traffic to pass the detained men were permitted to leave the cars by the guards mounted on each, but promptly put back in when the train was ready to go on. At Columbus the officer in command declined to receive the men until he had specific orders from Washington. The train was taken back to Hermavas, 23 miles, remaining there until the morning of the 14th when Sheriff Simpson, of Luna county, N. M., who took charge of the men on the 13th, when the Bisbee guards returned home, conducted the train to Columbus and turned the men over to the Federal army camp, which, through the efforts of Governor Lindsay, of New Mexico, had received instructions to take charge of them, the governor having successfully taken the position that the problem raised by the I. W. W. was a National and not a state issue.

REFUSED OFFERS OF RELEASE.

The detained men from the time of being taken into custody in Bisbee were urged by the I. W. W. leaders to resist all efforts to get them to leave the ranks of the radical crowd, whether by members of their families, if they had such, by friends, acquaintances or entirely unprejudiced persons. Many women, wives and relatives of detained men, went to the ball park. These were worked upon by women radicals of the I. W. W. outside of the park and a condition of hysteria created in which many of the women in violent language urged the men to go on the train and denounced friends who offered to intercede and get men out. The effort of the I. W. W. women radicals outside the park were in concert with those of the men inside and culminated in the men banking themselves against a wall of the park with declaration that they would refuse to be marched upon the deportation train. This attitude was maintained until

a few minutes before the train was ready to receive them, when they gave up the pretense of resistance before the determined guards who notified them to get ready to march out.

WOMEN NOT DEPORTED.

Three women who had been on the picket lines and most violent in their language while so engaged, and who for days had been busy spreading threats and intimidation among women and children in the various neighborhoods of the district, were among the detained in the morning, but were not placed aboard the deportation train. They were under surveillance after departure of the train and continue to be watched, along with all about whom there is any doubt. A number more men were gathered in after the train left and others continue to be picked up, many deputy sheriffs being assigned to keep watch and investigate all reports sent in to the Protective Association, Workmen's League or the sheriff's headquarters direct, as to suspicious characters or threats heard. The spirit dominating the movement in the beginning is none abated and is expressed in determination that the city and district shall be restored to entire freedom from intimidation and of all disloyalty to country, by word of mouth or in any other way.

PROOF OF TERRORISM.

That no grievance existed among the employees of the mining companies of the Warren district, who have always paid the highest wages in Arizona, and during the last two years the highest wages paid to miners in large bodies in any mining division of the world, and who have provided improved working conditions and facilities regardless of expense as fast as science has shown the way to these, appears to be amply proven by the fact that the moment intimidation was removed in the district hundreds of men who had not been working during the alleged strike period, and who had not been taken in custody, rushed to the mines to put in their applications for re-employment. These men were not out in sympathy with any of the demands made upon the companies by the I. W. W., which were as follows:

ALLEGED STRIKE DEMANDS.

First: Abolition of the physical examination. Second: Two men to work on machines. Third: Two men to work together in all raises. Fourth: To discontinue all blasting during the shifts. Fifth: The abolition of all bonus and contract work. Sixth: To abolish the sliding scale. All men underground a minimum flat rate of \$6 the shift. Top men \$5.50 per shift. Seventh: No discrimination against members of any organization.

NO AGREEMENT BINDING.

As previously stated, I. W. W. public speakers in advance of the strike call and thereafter made no concealment of the fact that they did not intend to abide by any settlement of the strike that might be made, even should all of the demands be granted, but to immediately follow any settlement that might occur with another strike call, to be enforced under continued intimidation, carried to any extent possible. That this attitude was earnest, finds proof in the course followed at Jerome, where settlement of strike secured on June 3 was followed less than a month later by another I. W. W. strike call. The first settlement was brought about through the mediation of Judge John McBride, acting for the Federal government. Its terms were of positive character in provision that the settlement should have life during the balance of the war period. Its violation was accepted throughout Arizona as proof positive that no agreement negotiated by the Federal government would be binding upon the I. W. W., as, indeed, it had itself proclaimed. The second strike call at Jerome was settled by deportation of the I. W. W. ring-leaders by aroused and indignant authorities and citizens, many of the latter miners, who refused to longer tolerate intimidation at the expense of National and community welfare. The same spirit prevailed

that later actuated the Bisbee movement, which, in fact, received much encouragement from the Jerome action.

THE I. W. W. CAMPAIGN IN ARIZONA.

The effort for state-wide paralysis of the copper industry in Arizona which reached its climax in results with so-called labor strikes prevalent in June in Jerome, Bisbee, Globe, Miami, Clifton and Morenci, was started in November last with a strike under a snap call at Ajo of the same kind as practiced by the I. W. W. in Bisbee, Jerome, Miami and Globe. In Clifton and Morenci there was a vote, but an answer that had been made by the mining companies and that might have been satisfactory to the men in settlement of the demands they had made, was withheld from them by the agitators and strike organizers. The Ajo strike was continued for 60 days with the attendance of I. W. W. intimidation practices. This effort was so thoroughly broken in the end that attempts in June to get another strike were utterly unavailing. From Ajo the professional I. W. W. strike makers were moved to Jerome. They worked there as they did in Ajo and as they have in other districts as abettors of Western Federation and Arizona Federation of Labor agitators. In between the Ajo strike and the strike ultimately obtained at Jerome they attempted to break up the cotton industry, another war essential, in the Salt River valley. Immediately they had the first Jerome strike going they turned attention actively to Bisbee, where the strike head of the I. W. W. went from Jerome and was soon joined by his first lieutenant from the Globe-Miami district. When they had the Bisbee campaign started they turned attention to Clifton and Morenci, where they gave assistance to the State Federation head who had been handling those districts and who had also been prominent in the Jerome strike organization and in Miami. Subsequently they went to Miami and Globe and in the week previous to calling of the strike there they were foremost in bringing preliminary steps to conclusion. Following this they made endeavors to reach the districts of Ray and Superior and to gain entry to Douglas with view of tying up the smelters. In these efforts they were frustrated by indignant authorities and citizens who declared that any interference with the copper industry during time of war meant interference with the Nation to the point of treason. This attitude has been taken by loyal citizens throughout the state, they finding substantiation for it in the fact that in none of the mining districts attacked by the agitators have there been conditions of wages or employment which were not the best in their several classes existing anywhere and with which the men had no fault until the I. W. W. among them became active with intimidation.

FINANCED BY GERMAN MONEY.

Briefly, thoroughly careful investigation and analysis of the situation in Arizona determines that a group of agitators who have been active for several years in association with several labor organizations have secretly co-operated under the general direction and influence of the I. W. W. in Arizona since last November; that their only attainment has been embarrassment of the production of a war essential; that they have resorted to deception and treachery, among the rank and file of their organizations and to all manner of intimidation and false pretenses before the general public, even to the length of attempted intimidation of the governor of the state and false representations to the president and departments at Washington; that their continued efforts have not been possible without large money resources which must have come from outside and which no one would have interest in furnishing under existing conditions of National stress except a foreign foe; that their continued freedom to plot and execute steps interfering with an essential war metal is distinctly menacing and justifies many letters and telegrams which departments at Washington will find in their files declaring the need of Federal investigation and protective actions in Arizona, embracing

the detention of these ring leaders, one of whom is now the spokesman among the men deported from the Warren district, and justifying a large amount of newspaper comment in Arizona, which during more than three months has represented a constant appeal for Federal help in the state in order that munitions crippling strikes and such culminations as those of Jerome and Bisbee might be forestalled and averted.

EDITOR'S NOTE—There has been criticism of the fact that until the evening of July 12 a strict censorship prevailed over the telegraph offices in Bisbee and Douglas, news of the proceedings underway in the Warren district during that day being refused transmission. Editors and all others conversant with the general situation in Arizona mining districts on that day will fully justify the censorship in the light of the fact that the necessity for action in Bisbee came about so abruptly that there was no time to give advance warning to the authorities in other counties where I. W. W. were assembled and ready to precipitate desperate actions. Had the word got to them before the authorities were well advised there is no doubt but much blood would have been spilled.