

The Labor War.

Awful conditions in the hop fields of California, responsible for the fatal riots at Wheatland last August, are disclosed in a report by Dr. Carleton H. Parker, secretary of the State Immigration Commission and investigator for the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations. The report was published on February 13 and deals with affairs on the hop ranch of Ralph Durst, where the trouble occurred. According to the report Durst had advertised extensively for help, bringing to his ranch many more workers than were needed. These workers, of twenty-seven different nationalities, with their families, numbering 2,800 persons, had to encamp on a low unshaded hill. Tents were rented to them by Durst for seventy-five cents per night. The resulting sanitary conditions were appalling. The report in its details on this phase of the matter shows how the camp inevitably became in a few days unspeakably filthy. In addition the water supply was insufficient and the campers had to go long distances to get water. An important part of the hop field was more than a mile from the well, but no water was transported to the pickers in spite of the great heat. Work began about four o'clock in the morning and 200 or 300 children were taken to the fields with the women. "By noon," says the report, "under the hot sun beating down on the still air held between the rows of vines, the children, many of whom were very small, were in a pitiable condition because of the lack of water." The report says further that no explanation was given for the failure to provide water, but immediately after this it tells that Durst had let a concession to a relative to sell lemonade in the fields, and also that a concession to sell stew had been sold, and to each one who purchased stew a glass of water was given. During the first week 90 cents a hundred pounds was paid for picking to which was added a bonus of 10 cents a hundred if the picker stayed through the season. If he quit before the last day he lost this bonus. When finally a riot occurred, Durst made the rate \$1.00 a hundred straight. The earnings of pickers previous to the outbreak ranged from 78 cents to \$1.90 a day.



A meeting of pickers was called on August 3 to protest against this state of affairs. It was being addressed by "Blackie" Ford, an orator of the Industrial Workers of the World, when a sheriff's posse appeared. Ford had taken a sick baby from its mother's arms and holding it up had cried: "It's for the kids we are doing this." The sheriff started to arrest Ford, and a deputy fired in the air "to sober the crowd," so he afterwards explained. This infuriated the men who had previously been peaceful. The sheriff was knocked senseless, and in the resulting riot four men, including the district attorney and a deputy

sheriff, were killed. The posse was driven away, but the next day the militia arrived. Ford and another man named Suhr were arrested, and although no evidence was presented to show they had taken part in the violence, they have been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for life.

Dr. Parker points out "that the conviction of the agitators Ford and Suhr for murder is not a solution, but is only the punishment or revenge inflicted by organized society for a past deed. The remedy lies in prevention." To accomplish this he urges enforcement of existing laws for sanitation of labor camps, and a state-wide campaign of education among employers and workers. The employers "must come to realize that their own laxity in allowing the existence of unsanitary and filthy conditions gives a much-desired foothold to the very agitators of the revolutionary I. W. W. doctrines whom they so dread. They must learn that unbearable aggravating living conditions inoculate the minds of otherwise peaceful workers with the germs of bitterness and violence, as was so well exemplified at the Wheatfield riot, giving the agitator a fruitful field wherein to sow the seeds of revolt, preach the doctrines of direct action and sabotage." The laborers, he holds, must be shown that revolts, accompanied by force, lead to crime, and accomplish no lasting result for their cause. [See vol. xvi, p. 1043.]



Testimony regarding the deportation of Charles H. Moyer was given on February 25 to the Congressional Committee at Hancock, Michigan. Charles H. Tanner of the Western Federation of Miners testified. He said that on December 26 a crowd of twenty or thirty men entered the room occupied by Moyer and himself at Hancock, saying "Where is Moyer?" Moyer answered, "I am here." Several men seized him and one struck him on the head with a revolver which accidentally went off, wounding Moyer in the back. They were then forced out of the hotel and across the bridge to Houghton, where they were placed on a train for Chicago, in charge of two deputies, one named Hensley, and threatened with hanging if they returned. On March 3 James McNaughton, manager of the Calumet and Hecla Company, testified. He said that the mines are now half worked out in the Michigan upper district. A system of payment by tonnage instead of lineal foot had been adopted on complaint of the men against the latter system, but the new system made it difficult for the captains and men to agree on measurement which accounted for complaints of under-payment heard by the committee. The men had the right to appeal for redress to him, when they were dissatisfied, and many had done so. His company, he said, was complying with all state laws. The one man drill, to which strikers objected, was necessary because all competitors are using it.

To the Congressional investigating committee at Trinidad, Colorado, Gustav Yeskensi, aged eleven, testified on February 25 that on February 10, while his parents were absent, two militia men visited the house, searching for arms, beat him and his younger sisters and brother and inflicted damage on the household goods. Complaint was made to General Chase, who promised to investigate. Attorneys for the United Mine Workers have decided not to call Mother Jones as a witness, at present, for fear that it might jeopardize her appeal from the decision of the Colorado court denying a writ of habeas corpus. [See current volume, page 204.]



A statement has been issued by the Women's Trade Union League of Chicago, concerning a strike of bakers, cooks and waitresses. Their demands are as follows: The bakers ask for a six day week of nine hours a day, with a weekly wage of \$22 for the foreman, \$20 for the second hand and \$17 for the third hand. The cooks ask for a six day week of ten hours a day or less and wages of not less than \$14.50 per week. The waitresses demand a six day week of ten hours a day or less, wage of \$8 a week and that the employer furnish and launder the working linen of the employes. On account of the refusal of some concerns to sign the agreement to this effect, a vigorous boycott has been conducted against them for several weeks. The grievances of waitresses are that wages are but seven dollars a week of seven days' work. Out of this five cents a day is said to be taken for laundering aprons and an average of 30 cents a day is paid by each waitress to a "bus" boy to remove the dishes. In addition complaints are made of heavy fines for real or alleged mistakes, and of requirement to do heavy work which should be done by porters. Union pickets posted since the strike in front of the restaurant of the Philip Henrici Company have been subjected to much brutal treatment by the police, which the Women's Trade Union League describes as follows:

Peaceful picketing is allowed by the laws of the State of Illinois, and the Waitresses' Union has delegated some of its members to pass up and down in front of Henrici's to call attention of his customers to the fact that the strike and lock-out is on. No one of these pickets has at any time violated any law or been guilty of doing anything that she has not a perfect right under the law to do. In spite of this, thirty-nine arrests have been made by these private detectives and subservient police. In twelve cases a trumped up charge of conspiracy was made. This charge is utterly without foundation. Besides these unlawful arrests the conduct of the private detectives and police has been brutal in the extreme. These men have used foul and profane language in addressing the girls, have tramped on their feet as they were passing along the street and when arresting them have used the same methods that they would use on a strong man who is resisting arrest. Jerry Laughlin, notorious for such practices, jerked,

pulled and twisted the arm of Dora Duree until it was dislocated and is now in such condition that it is doubtful whether she will ever have the full use of it again. There is no excuse for this violence or brutality. The girls have made not the slightest resistance to arrest, but each one has gone along quietly with the officer. The statements made that some of the girls resisted and even went so far as to sit down on the sidewalk in the slush and snow are untrue.

As the result of a protest against this treatment by a committee of women representing various organizations, the assignment of policewomen to strike duty, as demanded by the Women's Trade Union League, was ordered on February 25 by Chief Gleason. The cases of the arrested pickets were all postponed in the municipal court at the request of the Restaurant Owners' Association and against the protest of the defendants.



Mexico and the United States.

The Benton affair, the killing of William S. Benton, a British citizen residing in Mexico, by General Villa, continues to be the chief point of interest. Villa's statement to the American government was that Benton attempted his life, for which he was tried by court martial and executed. A request that Benton's body be delivered to his wife was refused; but permission was given Mrs. Benton and representatives of England and America to view it at the cemetery. As the body had been removed from Juarez, where the execution took place, to Chihuahua, General Villa promised to place a special train at the disposal of the family and the representatives. [See current volume, page 203.]



While the case of Benton, which the English government placed entirely in the hands of the United States, was progressing smoothly, reports were received of the hanging of Clemento Vergara by Federals near Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Vergara, a Texas ranchman, was decoyed to an island in the Rio Grande, where he was captured by the Mexicans. Federal officials deny his execution, saying that he escaped, and joined the Constitutionalists.



General Carranza on the 1st injected a new element by denying the American government's right to inquire into the death of a British subject, and rebuking the Secretary of State for addressing its communications to General Villa instead of to himself. Following this stand of the Constitutionalist head, General Villa withdrew permission for the American and British representatives to examine Benton's body.



This unexpected stand of General Carranza