

THE TIMES-UNION LOCKOUT

Causes That Led Up to the Trouble, Statements by Both Sides, and Their Future Actions § § §

Owing to disagreement between the management of the Times-Union and the employees of the composing room, the entire force of printers on that paper refused to work last Monday night.

The paper appeared next morning in abbreviated form on account of lack of help to get out the usual size edition.

Conferences between the management of the paper and the executive committee of the Typographical Union were held Tuesday, but satisfactory adjustment of the grievances could not be made, and the trouble continues, the paper appearing each morning, however, in limited form.

According to statements made by members of the union trouble with the foreman of the office has been brewing for some time, finally coming to a head last Sunday morning, when three men were discharged, and, it is alleged, were unjustly deprived of their situations, the claim being made that they were not discharged for incompetence or neglect, but solely because they had protested against certain actions of the foreman.

At a meeting of the union held on Monday afternoon, charges of conduct unbecoming a union man were preferred against the foreman, and after a formal trial he was adjudged guilty and expelled from the union.

A committee from the union then informed the management of the Times-Union of the action taken, requested the discharge of the foreman, and stating that if he be retained no member of the union could work in the office.

This the management refused to do, with the result that no union printers worked that night nor since.

Several non-union printers were secured and the paper issued, but up to Thursday night a full force had not been acquired.

The announcement that the Times-Union would be made an "open shop," in which preference would be given to union printers, does not change the situation as far as the union is concerned, as under the laws of that organization its members are forbidden to work in an office of that character.

The ranks of the union printers remain unbroken, and it is evident that if no concessions are made a long and bitter struggle will result.

Both sides are well equipped financially for such a fight. The Times-Union, which is reputed to be owned by three large railway companies, has unlimited capital to aid it. The local union is backed by the International Typographical Union, which has a fund of more than \$90,000 flowing into its treasury each week.

Beginning from the moment they were out of employment the former printers of the Times-Union were put on the benefit roll, which insures them ample provision for maintenance.

Mr. Wardlaw of Atlanta, organizer of the International Typographical Union, arrived in the city Wednesday, coming here to settle the difficulty if possible. With a committee from the local union, composed of R. L. Harper and F. H. Davis, Mr. Wardlaw conferred with Mr. Wilson Thursday afternoon, but no agreement could be reached.

Mr. Wilson declined to recede from his position. He stated, though, that if he had been seen earlier the trouble might have been settled. Now it was too late, and a full force of employees would arrive in the city Thursday night or Friday morning last, and be put to work.

Mr. Charles Leidy, one of the oldest employees of the Times-Union, and ex-president of Jacksonville Typographical Union, and authorized by the union to present its side of the case, made the following statement to THE SUN:

"Until quite recently conditions in the office of the Times-Union were always amicable as far as the compositors were concerned. There was always friction between the foreman and the business office, and several high-class men have resigned on that account. This, however, in no way affected the men, and in

such differences no question of unionism was involved. All our relations with the editorial force of the paper were pleasant.

"For the past six weeks, however—since the installation of the present foreman—the conduct of affairs in the office under his direction has been very unpleasant and irritating.

"Under his supervision no holder of a situation in the composing room could tell how long he would be retained, or what underhanded methods would be used to oust him. Two men were discharged and given false pretext for such action, petty tyrannies were inaugurated by the foreman, producing discord and inharmony among the force, and finally three men were discharged last Sunday morning for no cause whatever, simply because they had protested against the unjust methods of the foreman.

"The Typographical Union was organized in 1814, and has in its membership 90 per cent of the most skilled and competent workmen in the craft. Its members are men of intelligence far above the average of those of the working class, and equal in character and worth to any set of men.

"The book of laws adopted by the Typographical Union is a compilation of fair and equitable rules, and is the result of nearly a hundred years of study by some of the brightest minds vouchsafed to men who have made the betterment of the conditions surrounding those who earn their bread by their toil a life work.

"The Times-Union foreman was a member of the Typographical Union at the time he discharged his brothers without cause. He was familiar with the laws governing the union, and was under a solemn oath to observe them. These laws provide four causes for the discharge of men: (1) incompetency, (2) neglect of duty, (3) violation of office rules, (4) to decrease the force. None of these four causes were given for the discharge of the three men by the foreman last Sunday morning.

"The men had no quarrel with the management of the paper, nor did they believe that there would be trouble. The sole dispute was with the foreman for his violation of union laws. All else was satisfactory.

"Because of his action in discharging these three men the foreman was summoned before the bar of the union for trial last Monday afternoon. After a formal and impartial hearing, in which he was charged with violation of union laws and flagrant disregard of his obligations to that organization, he was expelled from membership.

"The business management of the Times-Union was informed of the action taken by the union, and notice was also served that this person be given his discharge from the position of foreman, failing which members of the Typographical Union, under its laws, would not be allowed to work in the Times-Union office.

"To this statement of the committee, Mr. Stockton replied: 'I intend to stand by the foreman. I will run an "open shop," and the president of the company concurs in my view. This is my final answer.'

"The committee then waited on Mr. Wilson, editor-in-chief and president of the company. He asked the committee to see him on the following day, remarking that he did not want non-union labor in the office, adding that his relations with the printers had always been agreeable.

"The committee called on Mr. Wilson the next day, but received no satisfaction from the interview, he declaring his intention of conducting an 'open shop.'

"There the matter rests. We feel that we have asked nothing more than simple justice, and we also feel that we have been accorded slight consideration for the faithful service rendered to our employers.

"I desire to call attention to the misleading statements of this affair as published by the Times-Union—statements calculated to prejudice people against labor unionism. I wish to characterize as

false the announcement made that the union has dictated arbitrary and unjust rules to the management of its business; the union is not seeking to 'run the business of the paper as applied to the mechanical department; the union does not dictate a policy nor undertake to interfere in any manner with the conduct of a newspaper. The union demands nothing but just treatment for its members.

"We have made no unjust demands of any nature. We have no dispute with the management, except on the one question of the discharge of the foreman—a man who was given a fair trial and was proven to be unfit to hold membership in the union.

"It is for the retention of this man that the management of the Times-Union is making the fight. And, in upholding this man who has been here for a few weeks, the Times-Union has placed itself in opposition to men, the majority of whom have, for many years been faithful to its interests, and many of whom have grown gray in its service, giving to it the best years of their lives. These men are not itinerant printers. Some of them are property-owners in this city, and all of them are men of good character, leading sober, honest and industrious lives. No question of wages, hours of work or other subject is embraced in the affair.

"Yet, in spite of these facts, the Times-Union falsely tells the public that the union has forced the management to declare an 'open shop' because of arbitrary demands. Neither did the union make unjust demand when it insisted upon discharge of a man proven unworthy of association with his fellow-workmen, because there were men in the office competent to hold the foremanship, among the number being one who had held the position and had offered his resignation three times before it had been accepted.

"In the matter of injustice and arbitrary treatment, the boot is on the wrong leg. It is the former employees who have been harshly treated by the Times-Union, and which is seeking to gain approval of its act by making false statements to the public. Many of the men are citizens of Jacksonville, owners of homes, and having all their interests in this city, yet for asserting their manhood they are deprived of their source of livelihood, and if they fail to gain their contention will be obliged to leave the city in a search for employment."

Mr. George W. Wilson, editor-in-chief of the Times-Union, when interviewed by a SUN reporter on the subject of the trouble, said that it was not his intention to fight the Typographical Union, and would employ none but union printers if possible, but that the management would reserve the right to hire or discharge any person without dictation from the union.

Holding this belief, the management had declared its intention of running an "open shop," paying the union scale of wages and making no discrimination against union men seeking employment in the office.

Mr. Wilson said the future policy of the management would be governed by the announcement published in Thursday morning's paper, which is as follows:

"Who Shall Dictate the Policy of a Business—The Proprietors or the Employees? Let it be clearly understood that the Times-Union is not fighting the Typographical Union—the union is fighting the Times-Union.

"The paper claims and has advocated for many years, the right of men to organize in their mutual interests for the maintenance of their rights, justly and equitably administered, but has as vigorously denied, the right of any organization to inaugurate unjust rules and manipulate them for wrong.

"The issue forced upon the Times-Union is, who shall run the business of the paper as applied to the mechanical department, whether the union shall dictate arbitrary and unjust rules as to the method and the fashion of conducting this business, or whether the management shall assume its inherent privilege and right of doing so.

"The management, while requiring nothing unreasonable, has decided firmly upon the latter course, and this decision shall be maintained at all hazards to the end, without amendment or concession."

Mr. Wilson spoke regretfully of the severance of pleasant relations with his former employees, but asserted that no other course had been left open. He said that he considered the union had acted hastily in the matter, and should have conferred with him about the alleged grievances before making demand for discharge of the foreman.