

Veterans Call On Premier Norris to Bring Strike to End

Two Thousand ex-Soldiers, Marshaled by Jack Moore, Invade Parliament Buildings and Lay Their Case Before Head of Manitoba Government—Demand Right of Collective Bargaining

(World's Special Service)

NOYES, Minn., May 31.—The Winnipeg strike has entered upon a crisis. Returned soldiers are taking a hand and feeling has become much more tense. Anything may happen at any time, and the authorities recognize they should be careful about forcing matters. They have power and to spare, and can afford to exercise restraint.

Yesterday while the city council was in Premier Norris' office listening to a request that the province make collective bargaining compulsory while the Dominion made sympathetic strikes on public services criminal, two thousand veterans, under the leadership of Jack Moore, marched into the parliament buildings and occupied the legislative chamber, having assembled in the market square, behind the city hall.

The soldiers crowded even into the speaker's chair and all around the dais, but later vacated chair without request. Bedlam prevailed until the premier appeared and sat down at a table below the dais. Meanwhile the other members of the cabinet continued their conference with the council.

"I want you boys in the galleries to behave while I am speaking and the premier replying," said Jack Moore, and the applause was general.

The speakers, however, were interrupted by cheering from hundreds of veterans on the outside who could not get into the chamber and who were harangued by orators, including a woman.

Will Protect the State

The veterans' spokesman pointed out that they had offered their lives for their country, and were ready to protect the state and constituted authority.

"I suppose no one has nerve to say that we are Bolsheviki," he observed and his comrades thundered their approval. "The citizens' committee has been talking about English and Scotch anarchists, and they've got to be stopped. You can do it, Mr. Premier. All we want is living conditions. Some of our comrades are working 74 hours a week for \$50 and \$55 a month."

"Shame," "Disgrace," shouted the men in the galleries.

"We want collective bargaining as they have it on the railways," continued Jack Moore. "I have had experience in labor negotiations and know that there can be no objection to collective bargaining in metal trades contract shops. That is all we want. The strike can be settled at once on that basis. It has gone on long enough, and it's up to the government to take a hand to bring the parties together and force a settlement."

Collective Bargaining.

Premier Norris replied that his government realized the importance of the question and needed no assurance that the veterans were not untrue to constituted authority. He said the government was doing all it could to bring a settlement, but there was difference of opinion as to what was collective bargaining, and offhand he could not venture a definition. The cabinet at that moment was conferring with the council and he would promise prompt and generous consideration. He thanked them for the trouble they had gone to in making their views known.

"May I ask the premier a question?" shouted a veteran in the gallery.

"Sit down." "Shut up," and "Hist," replied the veterans.

"Will you answer a question, Mr. Premier?" persisted the soldier, "Are you with capital or labor?" Immediately the questioner was howled down, and the premier saved the necessity of answering. The leaders of the veterans then consulted with one another, apparently not knowing whether to be satisfied with the premier's answer.

(Continued on Page 22.)

Finally Mr. Moore announced that a comrade, W. P. Speare, would thank the premier for his statement. "In thanking the premier for his words," said this speaker, "I want him to understand that time is pressing. We will be back here tomorrow at eleven for his answer as to collective bargaining." This announcement was rapturously received. Mr. Norris said it would not be possible for him to be present at that time.

These stories might be wild, but there was enough in them to cause unrest. If people were to live together at all, bread, milk, water and light should be guaranteed all.

A few assaults are reported today. Teams are being booed. One veteran is reported attacked by men in his rig, and the strikers are made desperate by reports, somewhat exaggerated, about the return of civic strikers and government employees. The permanent new staff at the postoffice is said to number 275.

Joseph Cohen, who had been nineteen months in France and wounded twice, called out that he had been a postal employee and went on strike. When Postmaster Macintyre saw him

outside the building he called him an alien and a foreigner. "Am I a foreigner?" he asked, and back came a chorus of "No's," and a two-minute ovation for Cohen. W. H. Speare again returned thanks to President Harris and urged that when the strike is over the question of the return of dismissed civic employees be taken up. The policemen who would not sign the pledge not to go on sympathetic strike had been given only until noon, and only four had responded. They should be given time.

"I tell you boys right here," replied the premier, "that I will use my strongest influence to get the city council to meet your wishes."

The gathering then broke up with singing of the National Anthem and tremendous cheers for the premier. It was noticeable that Premier Norris wore the Union Jack emblem adopted by citizens' committees during the interview.

Veterans had intended going from Premier Norris to the city council and warning it that settlement brooked no delay, but the council still was conferring with the cabinet, so, after marching back to Market Square the parade broke up.

Dissatisfied With Government.

In the premier's office Mayor Gray and Ald. Sparling urged that the government should make it criminal to strike on public utilities, and that collective bargaining should be made compulsory. Ald. Sparling said he

had worked hard for union government, but he had an uneasy feeling that it had not made good. He had heard of a bootmaker who went to Montreal and was offered at \$14 a pair of boots that had cost him \$6 in his own factory. He had been told that storage plants had made \$79,000,000 and that Toronto had ninety new millionaires as a result of the war.

The Free Press yesterday says: "At 11 o'clock today Winnipeg's big sympathetic strike was just two weeks old. At that hour on May 5 public utilities, such as the telephone, street-cars, fire department and various other civic departments were forced to close down or were badly crippled at the order of the central strike committee, and just twenty-four hours later the tie-up was made complete when the daily papers were forced to close down when the stereotypers and web pressmen went on strike at the call of the strike committee.

Practically Normal.

"For a few days the situation was somewhat grave, although many of the stores were able to keep open, providing a source of food supply. Milk and bread were somewhat scarce over the first week, but on Monday, May 19, deliveries were resumed, and in a short while the situation in this respect was practically normal. On Wednesday, May 21, the Free Press resumed publication "without permission of strike committee," and has continued to do so every day since. Seven days ago the grip of the strike leaders started to slip, and since then the situation has steadily improved, until today Winnipeg has daily newspapers, a fairly satisfactory post-office service, efficient volunteer fire-fighting service no longer handicapped by low pressure, all telephone exchanges in operation, and prospects of many of its civil servants returning to work. If like progress continues for the next seven days there will be little for "strike committee to do."