

EXCHANGES ANSWER THE MAYOR'S PROPOSITION.

Will Make General Investigation if Screwmen Consent to Arbitration and Abide by Verdict.

Returning to Work Meantime on Two Hundred Bales Basis. Cotton Council to Consider It To-Day.

The Executive Committee of the Joint Conference of the exchanges and the commercial bodies in replying to Mayor Behrman's letter asking that all port charges and alleged abuses be investigated at once, and that the Committee reconsider its former action in taking up only the Screwmen's controversy with the ship agents over a question of how many bales constitute a fair day's work, practically maintained the position at first taken, at least as far as the matter of cotton stowing is concerned, and a special meeting of the Dock and Cotton Council to-day will determine the course the dock workers will pursue, and whether the Levee strike will be continued or settled.

The Executive Committee does not recede from its position; it takes the stand that the Screwmen did not show the proper confidence in it, in failing to abide by its suggestion to stow the 200 bales per gang instead of 160, and offers that if the Screwmen will go to work under the proposition, and promise to abide by the final decision of an arbitration board composed of a committee of two from the ship agents and the men, with Chief Justice Breaux, of the Supreme Court as umpire, it will thoroughly sift the whole business.

As one of the members of the Executive Committee said, after the meeting at which the letter to Mr. Behrman was drawn up, it is practically a case of putting the arbitration question up to the Mayor.

The exchange and commercial bodies joint committees went into session in the rooms of the Board of Trade at 3:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon, with Mr. E. F. Kohnke, Chairman of the Executive Committee, presiding, and Mr. Herring acting as Secretary.

Mr. Kohnke explained that the conference had adjourned Sunday week ago, subject to a call of either the Mayor or the Chairman. The Mayor had written a letter to the Committee, which the Chairman thought should be considered by the whole body and the meeting had been called for that purpose.

Mr. Herring read the letter in which Mayor Behrman requested that all port charges, in other words, influences that work against the interests of the port, be investigated at once, and that the Committee reconsider its action in undertaking only to look into the alleged overcharges of the Screwmen.

The matter was generally discussed behind closed doors, but several of the members, after the meeting, were free in expressing themselves as being dissatisfied with the letter of the Mayor and his attitude in the controversy. Mr. Kohnke had no statement to make regarding the discussion, but after the letter had been dispatched to the Mayor, and delivered to him in person, he furnished copies to the press.

THE LETTER TO THE MAYOR

reads as follows:
JOINT CONFERENCE OF EXCHANGES AND COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS.

New Orleans, Oct. 12, 1907.

Hon. Martin Behrman, Mayor City of New Orleans, City: Dear Sir—Replying to your letter of the 11th inst. relative to the question of investigating all charges and discrimination connected with this port, which was and is the purpose of the Committee, we wish to point out that in order to do this the interested parties must show their willingness to submit their case to our body.

If the Screwmen recognize the fairness of the Committee we might have some grounds to expect other interests to appear before us and abide by our judgment. As the matter now stands, however, the first verdict rendered by our Committee, although accepted in advance by the ship agents, whatever it might be, was not accepted by the Screwmen after it was given.

Now, you ask to set aside our conclusions, thus incapacitating ourselves to act with decision in the future on other subjects that may be brought to our attention. If the Screwmen believe in our fairness and ability to investigate and rectify other abuses, have them to agree to go to work on our previous decision of 200 bales, with the understanding that they remain at work until the whole matter be arbitrated in the broadest sense, and bind themselves to abide by said decision, the steamship agents and stovedores also agreeing to abide by the decision.

Let two parties be selected to represent each side, the fifth party to be the Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Thus your ideas regarding the impediment to the cotton trade will have been removed and the differences adjusted on a basis of fairness to both parties. Yours truly,

E. F. KOHNKE,
Chairman Conference of Exchanges and Commercial Organizations.

Mayor Behrman, after reading the letter, had no statement to make to the reporters. The Mayor, however, said that he would give the matter his consideration, and would perhaps have a statement to make later.

Last evening President James Byrnes, of the Screwmen, and other prominent labor representatives, called on the Mayor and were shown the letter. Mr. Byrnes did not appear to be favorably impressed with the proposition to go to work stow-

ing 200 bales, pending arbitration. The Screwmen had made the offer to go to work under old conditions, that is stowing 160 bales per gang of five at \$5 and \$6 a day, and were acting in good faith in the offer, but it was

NOT LIKELY THAT THEY WOULD CONSENT

to the 200-bale figure.

However, Mr. Byrnes did not want to stand in the way of any adjustment or compromise, nor did he want to let his own opinion stand for the views of all the levee labor unions, so he notified the Mayor that he would call a special meeting of the Dock and Cotton Council to take place in the morning, at which the suggestion of the Commercial Bodies Committee made to the City's Chief Executive would be considered.

Mr. Byrnes had no statement to make to the press. He had his views and opinions, yes, but the matter would be laid before the Dock and Cotton Council, and until official action was taken he did not care to talk for publication.

Opinions as to the power of the Dock and Cotton Council in the premises seem to differ, and while some laboring people contend that the Council has the right to order the men to work, others say that its powers are limited to the extent of referring the subject to the union affiliated most concerned with the recommendation, either to accept or reject.

If the Council decided that the Screwmen should stow 200 bales pending investigation and the Screwmen refused to abide by the decision, the Council could withdraw its support, and the longshoremen, the cotton yardmen, the teamsters, the freight handlers and the other unions involved would go back to work. The screwmen would then be left alone to conduct what would certainly prove a losing battle.

A number of well-known screwmen who were shown the letter last night shook their heads negatively and said that no such proposition would be accepted. One screwman said though that the men would be willing to stow 200 bales at \$5 and \$7 a day.

Another unionist said that whatever President Byrnes agreed to the organization would abide by. This unionist, however, did not think that President Byrnes would advise the men to go to work stowing 200 bales at the old rate of pay, investigation or no investigation.

The general opinion expressed in labor circles last night was that the Dock and Cotton Council would turn down the proposition made to the Mayor by the commercial bodies. It would be a complete victory for the other side, the men contended, and if they yielded in the one point they would be called upon to make further concessions.

But there were those who said that the decision of the Council was altogether a matter of doubt, especially in view of the fact that a few of the unions affiliated were

NOT IN FAVOR OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

In the first place, and that at least a third of the men representing the various unions were anxious to go back to work. No one could say what the morrow would bring forth, but few, indeed, were there who believed that the unions would be back on the river front Monday morning in their working clothes.

The ship agents had nothing new to report yesterday. They claimed that the work on the river front was progressing most satisfactorily and that the strikebreakers were showing steady improvement. Mr. Ross, Chairman of the Steamship Agents and Stovedores Committee, had no opinion to express on the letter of the Executive Committee to the Mayor when spoken to last night.

It was announced that about 200 more strikebreakers would reach the city to-morrow, and that the agents would then probably have enough men to do the work of loading and discharging steamships with the aid of the crew. There were half a dozen or more ships at various points along the wharf being worked by the strikebreakers and the sailors yesterday, but no attempt was made at violence by the strikers. There were a few desertions from the strike-breaker ranks.

The Central Trades and Labor Council, at its meeting Friday night, did not discuss a general strike, as was stated in a morning paper, nor was the meeting a stormy one. The communication from the Dock and Cotton Council setting forth conditions on the levee was read and received, and after addresses by President Robert E. Lee, who upheld the levee workers' end of the controversy, and others, the general strike on the docks was unanimously endorsed and the Central Council pledged its moral and financial support to the Dock Council. The course of Mayor Behrman was also commended by the Council, but there was no such thing as a general strike that would affect the entire city being discussed.

James Welch, of the Carriage Drivers' Union, was elected delegate to the American Federation of Labor convention, which is to be held at Norfolk, Va., next month. Mr. Welch is well known in the general labor movement and has always taken an active part in union organization work in this section. J. E. Schroth, of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union was recommended as organizer for the American Federation of Labor in this district.

TAKE THEM AWAY.

No Law Prevents Deportation of Strikebreakers.

Yesterday Mayor Behrman had a talk with Mr. Byrnes, President, and several members of the labor organizations with reference to conditions on the river front and the presence of strikebreakers in the city, a great many of whom refused to work when brought here. The labor representatives told the Mayor that quite a number of the men who came here to work did not know that they were coming to be strikebreakers and revolted when asked to go to work. A great many of them were idle and thrown upon the community, and the hope was expressed that the Mayor would get them out of the city somehow.

The labor representatives said to the Mayor that if an agreement was reached during the conference of exchanges during the afternoon the men would be ready to go to work on the river front Monday morning under the old conditions.

With reference to the strikebreakers, the Mayor showed the labor representatives a copy of a letter he had sent to G. M. Dunn, Superintendent of the Illinois Central Railroad Company, which reads as follows:

Dear Sir: This is a copy of a telegram I received from Hon. Martin A. Knapp, Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D. C.:

"Washington, D. C., Oct. 12, 1907.
"Hon. Martin Behrman, Mayor, New Orleans, La.: The law does not require and the Commission cannot compel railroads to give free or reduced transportation to indigent persons. Railroads have a right to do so at their option, and it is for them to determine whether in fact the persons carried at free or reduced rates are indigent or destitute.

"This does not conform with your statement to me that your road is prevented by the Interstate Commerce Law to return the men whom your road brought here, to work on the Levee front, but who refuse to work after reaching here. As I stated to you, these men are without homes or money. They have become a public charge and are a men-

ace to the community so long as they remain here. It is optional with your road, under Chairman Knapp's ruling, to rid the community of this drain and danger. I will be greatly pleased to hear from you at the earliest possible moment as to what action you will take in the premises. Respectfully,

MARTIN BEHRMAN, Mayor.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC STRIKE.

Another Barge Added to Quarters for the Workers.

The Morgan Line officials have rented a second barge on which to house the men now taking the place made vacant by the strike of freight handlers. This second boat will be tied up alongside the Endeavor at the Toulouse Street landing, and will be filled as rapidly as the Company is able to secure competent men.

A tender of 200 men from Hattiesburg, Miss., was made yesterday to the Company's officials, but refused on the grounds that the Southern Pacific Company is not looking for strikebreakers, but for men competent to handle freight. The 200 men referred to were from the cotton fields of Mississippi, and would have been of little or no use on the docks.

All men who go to work for the Company now are given a contract for two years, and unless they have had experience in handling freight the Company does not care to tie itself up for such a long period. All strikebreakers are refused employment.

Work building an annex on the barge Endeavor was begun yesterday, and accommodations for eighty more men were completed. This gives the barge a capacity of 580 sleeping compartments with a large dining hall in the middle, capable of seating 200 persons. The other barge will be about the same size and similarly equipped. Men who live in New Orleans but who were afraid to go to work on account of possible attacks by strikers are being housed on this boat and given police protection.

The steamship Comus, for New York, sailed at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon with a full cargo. She cleared from this port a little late, but with every hatch loaded. One gang of the new freight handlers worked all night and made \$7.40 apiece. Since going to work most of them have been averaging from \$25 to \$30 a week.

MEXICAN-AMERICAN SHIPS

Sailing on Time, Despite the Labor Conditions.

The steamship City of Tampico, of the Mexican-American Steamship Company, sailed on time from the Stuyvesant Docks Friday night with a full cargo, despite the unsettled labor conditions along the city's water front. All of the boats on this line have been leaving promptly since the strike began. As the boat left the docks the officers of the line, who are now all in the city, were on hand to see her clear.