

STRIKE STILL UNSETTLED, ARBITRATION THE HITCH.

Conference of the Exchanges Insists on a Verdict That Will Give the Port Parity,

While Screwmen Want Concession in Bales Limit to Settle Mat- ter—Stevadores Seek to Hasten Peace.

There is likelihood of a break in the hitherto solid front of the steamship agents and stevedores, it being learned from an authoritative source last night that the stevedores, in secret session last evening, had decided that the proposition of the screwmen to go to work on the 180-bale basis, pending investigation of all port charges, was a fair one, and that the stevedores would to-day demand a meeting with the ship agents and urge that the business be settled up on the terms the men offer. A settlement of the controversy hinged on

ARBITRATION OR INVESTIGATION at the close of yesterday, the ship agents, backed by the commercial bodies, holding out for arbitration and the men standing for investigation.

One hundred and eighty bales, with arbitration of the differences as to the amount of work to be done by the screwmen, existing between the ship agents and the screwmen, is the proposition of the Commercial Exchanges Conference, agreed to by the ship agents; 180 bales, with immediate investigation of all port charges, is the proposition of the screwmen, and between the terms conveyed in the two propositions there was not room enough for peace to wedge in and end the controversy.

But the action of the stevedores, which is practically a breaking away from the ship agents, several thought last night, would be felt in the scale to-day and bring the balance down on the screwmen's side of the house. However, the ship agents seem determined, and what to-day will bring forth remains yet to be seen.

The Joint Conference of Exchanges and Commercial Organizations met yesterday forenoon in the directors' room at the Board of Trade Building, Mr. E. F. Kohnke, the Chairman, presiding. The Conference was called to consider the offer of the screwmen to go to work stowing 180 bales as a final settlement under the old scale of wages—\$26 a gang.

Mr. Kohnke, in a brief opening address, reviewed the situation thoroughly and submitted the letter from Mr. W. P. Ross, Chairman of the Steamship Agents' Committee, which was read by Mr. H. S. Herring, the Secretary.

After some discussion it was decided to suggest that the screwmen go to work stowing 180 bales and that the differences be submitted to arbitration, as

SUGGESTED BY THE CONFERENCE at the meeting of Oct. 12. The suggestion was conveyed in the following letter to Mr. Ross and the members of the Steamship Agents and Stevedores' Committee:

Joint Conference of Exchanges and Commercial Organizations,

New Orleans, Oct. 18, 1907.

W. P. Ross, Esq., Chairman Executive Committee Steamship Agents and Stevedores, City: Dear Sir—Replying to your letter of the 17th inst., the full Conference Committee, representing the various exchanges and commercial organizations, beg to say that, while we do not recede from our previous findings, we feel that the best means to bring about a definite settlement is arbitration, and, therefore, if we can be assured by the Screwmen's Association and yourselves that an arbitration, such as outlined in our letter of the 12th inst. to Mayor Behrman, can be arranged at once to give a decision based on the broadest views, we would recommend that the screwmen go back to work, basing their day's work on 180 bales at \$26 per day per gang, pending the final decision of the arbitrators. Respectfully,

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

Mr. Ross, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Hendron, Mr. Nathan and others of the steamship agents were in conference in Mr. Ross' office in the Cotton Exchange building, when the letter from the commercial conference was received. With the steamship agents in their conference was Colonel William C. Dufour, their attorney, and after mature consideration and some discussion the gentlemen drew up the following resolution and agreed to it, Mr. Ross first obtaining the approval of Chairman Kohnke of the Commercial Conference:

Whereas the screwmen's present demand is to handtow 180 bales of cotton as a final settlement, which demand cannot be considered; and

Whereas, the Conference of Exchanges, as well as the press, have strongly urged arbitration for the settlement of the present differences with the screwmen; and

Whereas, present conditions are most seriously injuring the commerce of the port and other interests; be it

Resolved, That the ship agents of the port of New Orleans, in a desire to relieve the situation as far as is consistent, and in the interest of all, do hereby express their willingness to agree to an impartial judgment as provided hereunder of the differences between them and the screwmen in the question of putting New Orleans on a parity with Galveston in the hand-piling of cotton on board.

Therefore, they make the following proposition for agreement:

It is hereby agreed by and between a committee representing the steamship agents and stevedores of New Orleans, as party of the first part, and the Screwmen's Association, as party of the second part, as follows:

An arbitration committee, consisting of five members two of whom to be selected by the party of the first part, two by the party of the second part, and the fifth the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, shall be appointed to determine the proper number of bales of cotton which shall be hand-shown per day per gang of five men at the existing wages, viz., \$26 per gang per day, in order to put New Orleans on a parity with Galveston in respect to the hand-stowing of cotton. The

FINDING OF THIS COMMITTEE shall be accepted as final by both parties hereto, and they shall be governed by same from and after the date such finding is made, such date to be not later than November 10, 1907. Upon receipt of such decision by the aforesaid committee the party of the first part will immediately begin payment of its men on such a basis. The party of the second part agrees to accept the finding of the said committee as final, and to forthwith continue the handling of cotton on the basis of such finding. The Dock and Cotton Council agreeing in advance to enforce the finding of said committee, whenever it may be, insofar as its members are concerned. Whatever basis shall be determined upon by said committee, such basis shall remain in effect until Aug. 31, 1910.

It is also further agreed that, pending the report of the aforesaid committee, and commencing at 7 a.m., Oct. ... the work shall be resumed by members of the Cotton Screwmen's Associations, and all members of the Dock and Cotton Council, and that the cotton screwmen shall handle and hand-stow not less than 180 bales of cotton per day at existing wages, \$26 per gang per day, and will continue so to do until advised of the findings of the afore-

said committee, after which they will be governed by such findings.

WILLIAM P. ROSS,
Chairman Executive Committee Ship Agents and Stevedores' Association.

New Orleans, Oct. 18, 1907.
Approved by Executive Committee, Conference of Exchanges and Commercial Organizations.

E. F. KOHNKE, Chairman,
The resolution, together with the following letter, was sent to Mayor Behrman:

New Orleans, Oct. 18, 1907.
Hon. Martin Behrman, Mayor, City of New Orleans: Dear Sir—As stated in my communication of yesterday, the proposition of the Screwmen was referred to the Conference of Exchanges and Commercial Organizations, and I herewith inclose copy of their reply. I also inclose a counter proposition to the effect that the Steamship interests are prepared to enter into an agreement with the Screwmen, based on their returning to work at the basis of 180 bales per day for hand-stowed cotton, at the wages of \$26 per day per gang, provided they will enter into an agreement for final settlement, as stated in inclosed counter proposition. Very respectfully,
W. P. ROSS,
Chairman Executive Committee.

Later the communication from the Mayor, stating the offer of the men to go to work stowing 180 bales, pending an investigation of all port charges, was received and read by Mr. Ross to the agents. The communication is as follows:

W. P. ROSS, Esq., Chairman and Member of Ship Agents' Committee; Gentlemen—I have just been waited upon by a delegation of the Dock and Cotton Council, which informed me that the

SCREWMEN ARE WILLING

to return to work at once on a basis of 180 bales per day at the old rate of wages pending full investigation of all port charges and final settlement thereof.

MARTIN BEHRMAN, Mayor.

The reply of Mr. Ross, as Chairman of the Steamship Agents, to the Mayor, sent last night, is as follows:

New Orleans, Oct. 18, 1907.

Hon. Martin Behrman, Mayor of the City of New Orleans: Dear Sir—I am in receipt of your favor of even date, in which you state that you have been waited upon by a delegation of the Dock and Cotton Council, who inform you that the Screwmen were willing to return to work at once on the basis of 180 bales per day at the old rate of wages, pending full investigation of all port charges and final settlement thereof.

I have just sent you a counter proposition to the communication received from you yesterday with the indorsement and approval of the Conference of Commercial Exchanges.

It is impossible to take any other stand in the matter of settlement with the Screwmen other than contained therein.

The matter between the ships and the Screwmen is one question which has reached an acute stage. The question at issue are clearly defined, and it is these, and these alone, calling for immediate settlement. In reference to the matter of investigation of all port charges, the Ship Agents are on record in no uncertain tone from the first of this agitation in demanding the fullest examination and investigation possible. They pledged themselves to this, but decline to have the present issue clouded by investigation of other matters, some of which will take all winter and some longer.

We are loading our vessels with other labor, but have agreed to leave the matter in dispute between the Screwmen and ourselves to a fair and impartial arbitration. Very respectfully,
W. P. ROSS,
Chairman Executive Committee.

While the agents were holding their conferences, and letters were being sent back and forth between the City and the Cotton Exchange buildings, the stevedores were howling wood and saying things behind closed doors.

The stevedores had heard of the proposition of the men; in fact, they gained the information early, and a few of the prominent ones, who have not of late been invited to the conferences of the ship agents, got together, held a whispered consultation in Carondelet Street, and then got busy.

They gathered silently in their meeting-room, on the third floor of the Cosmopolitan Bank building, and in the absence of Mr. Willie Kearney, the president, who has charge of the general work on the levee, one of the most prominent members took the chair.

The object of the meeting was stated as being the considering not only of the screwmen's proposition, but the looking over of the general situation. The proposition of the screwmen to go to work stowing 180 bales pending an investigation, the

STEVEDORES WERE UNANIMOUS

in agreeing was eminently fair, and greater concessions could hardly be expected. One stevedore stated, after the meeting, that it was generally thought that there was a scheme on foot to destroy organized labor on the river front, and that the arbitration business proposed was the first step in that direction. The stevedores determined to stand in support of the screwmen's proposition, and to demand a meeting with the ship agents to-day, at which they will make known their attitude. One prominent stevedore stated, late last night, that the ship agents had taken the stevedores in on the fight at the beginning, and the stevedores signed up the agreement to hold together, but in few of the subsequent conferences were the stevedores invited to participate, and it looked like the agents were taking the whole business of conducting the fight upon themselves.

The meeting was kept very secret, and no one outside the stevedore circle knew of it until late last night.

President James Byrnes of the Screwmen, was seen last night and asked about the ship agents' counter-proposition to arbitrate differences. Mr. Byrnes said that the screwmen would never submit to arbitration; that they had acted very fairly in conceding twenty bales, and leaving the whole matter of port charges open to investigation.

"We have been conciliatory all through this trouble," remarked Mr. Byrnes, "and the proposition we submitted to-day any fair-minded man will say is a just one. A thorough investigation of all port charges, including the charges of labor exactions, would cover everything, and I can't see how the agents could object to it, in view of statements they have previously made."

In regard to the meeting the screwmen held Thursday to consider the suggestion of Mayor Behrman, the papers generally published that had it not been for the eloquence of one of the prominent leaders the Mayor's full proposition would have been accepted. Every one took the prominent leader to stand for Secretary Thomas, one of the labor movement, but it is stated on the authority of President Byrnes and other well-known screwmen that Mr. Harrison did not oppose the adoption of the Mayor's suggestion, but advocated it, with zeal and earnestness. Mr. Harrison, it is stated, talked for three-quarters of an hour during all the argument, urging the men to accept the proposition, and had it not been for his efforts the screwmen would have rejected it.

While the Conference of exchanges and Commercial Bodies held forth in the Directors' room at the Board of Trade yesterday forenoon a prominent gentleman, member of the Governor's staff, was known to knock for admission at the closed door. The gentleman explained the object of

his visit in a whisper, and was at once admitted, and the door closed upon him.

The presence of a

MEMBER OF THE GOVERNOR'S

MILITARY FAMILY

in the conference caused much speculation, and all sorts of guesses were hazarded. It was later hinted that the aid-de-camp had come as a representative of the Governor, and probably a rather sensational and prurientous claim that had leaked out at the headquarters.

It appears that two prominent labor leaders had been in a measure responsible for keeping the strikers' courage up by telling them that the Governor had given them the assurance that he was with the unionists heart and soul, and that as they should keep up the fight, as they were bound to win.

The aid-de-camp came to discredit the statement that the Governor had taken any such stand, but the denial was hardly necessary, as the gentlemen of the conference did not for a moment believe that Mr. Blanchard would assume any such attitude.

Mr. French, General Manager for the Western Division of Thiel's Private Detective Agency, who has been in the city for the past fortnight looking after the shipments of men to take the place of the Levee strikers, stated yesterday that forty-two men had arrived from St. Louis to be put to work in the cotton presses.

Twenty of the men tried to do some of the work in the Orleans and Columbia presses, but despite their thorough and scientific instruction given them, their attempts were not productive of results. Seven young white men were sent out driving seven floats, and some cotton was moved from the levee to the presses. Each float carried five bales, whereas their usual load is fifteen bales. The Dacla, a coffee-boat, consigned to Mr. Hendren, worked her crew yesterday, and the sailors struck a splendid clip and held it for hours. One gang of twenty, working one ship, unloaded 3,200 sacks. A gang usually numbers thirty, and the work amounts to 5,000 sacks.

More strikebreakers were received for the ship agents yesterday, and there were now about five hundred of the men quartered on the bark Algodon. Mr. French said yesterday that the bark was now entirely rid of sickness, and the only ailment could be termed an ailment—was large appetites.

President E. S. Swan, of the Colorado Longshoremen, issued the following statement last night:

"I wish to deny that there is any danger of the Levee strikers breaking away from the Screwmen and going back to work. The whites and negroes were never before so strongly cemented in a common bond and in my thirty-nine years of experience on the Levee, I never saw such solidarity."

"In all the previous strikes the negro was used against the white man, but that condition is now past, and both races are standing together for their common interests. New Orleans cannot be compared to Galveston, as Galveston on a condition of slavery exists because the races are at variance. If the two would combine there as they have combined here, they would get better conditions."

Mr. Bobet and other

PROMINENT STAVE MERCHANTS yesterday afternoon called at the City Hall and presented the following resolution to the Mayor:

New Orleans, La., Oct. 18, 1907.

"We, the undersigned, slave merchants and exporters of New Orleans, at a meeting held to-day, unanimously indorse the action of the Mayor and the various commercial exchanges, steamship agents and stevedores in their endeavor to place the cost of handling export commodities at this port on a parity with other competing ports."

"We also indorse the proposal of the steamship agents, later suggested by the Mayor of this city, for a thorough investigation of all usages and charges now existing which tend directly or indirectly to hamper the growth of the shipping commerce of this port, and which places export trade coming through this city at a disadvantage with that of other near-by ports; and inasmuch as the stave cutlers, pilers and carters have refused to work, but have gone out on a sympathetic strike, notwithstanding the fact that they have no grievance, but have, during the past twelve months, demanded and obtained an increase in wages amounting to 100 per cent of per cent, without any increase in services performed, we, the stave merchants and exporters, as a body, will welcome and do demand a full investigation into all matters affecting the stave export trade of this city as compared with that of near-by ports in an endeavor to retain this important trade here, much of which has already been lost to Galveston, Mobile and other competing ports."

"Robert Bros., Ramoneda Bros., Rees-Scott Company, Limited, Lucas & Moore, Stave Company, Geo. C. Gragard Company, Limited, C. J. Hay, E. J. Sutherland Company, John J. Patjo and Xiques-LaMore Company, Limited."

President Byrnes stated last night that whatever contract the screwmen signed with the bosses would not be for three years, but for only one year.

EXPORTS SUFFER.

Custom-House Figures Show Effect on Commerce.

One of the unfortunate accompaniments of the strike on the river front is the harm done the export trade. Immense quantities of freight have been held back in warehouses and on the wharves and in stores because of the impossibility of loading on board ship, and if this state of affairs should continue much longer the month of October will show a tremendous decrease in the total value of exports, and will make a record of the poorest month, comparatively, in the history of the United States customs department. September, 1907, was bad enough, compared with the corresponding month of 1906, by having been three million dollars below, but the month of October is already far behind any, even the dullest period in years past.

The result of this congestion of goods intended for export will be that trade will be diverted to other cities, as, for instance, Mobile, Galveston or Savannah, and once the opening is made it will be difficult for New Orleans to retrieve or to regain its lost business.

Mr. Bentley, the Special Deputy Collector of Customs, said yesterday that he had received numbers of letters asking him about the prospects of a settlement of the strike, and in case no agreement is struck, what arrangements could be made to have shipments go by way of Mobile or Galveston.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC STRIKE.

Only Complaint Was For Too Much Food.

An inspection of the barge Endeavor, at which the Morgan Line is quartering its freight handlers during the strike, was made yesterday by City Health Inspector Thomas. It developed at this examination that there were three negroes dangerously ill from overeating, and Dr. J. Hope Lamb, in charge of the medical department on the barge, issued instructions to equalize the food supply in future. Agent E. E. Lamberton said yesterday that the next case of sickness reported from the barge would undoubtedly be gout.

Under the direction of Dr. Lamb, who was formerly Assistant Quarantine Officer at this port, the barge is flushed out and thoroughly disinfected daily, and up to date there has not been one case of sickness other than above mentioned.

There are now 833 men working on the Morgan Line Docks. The additional ninety-three were put to work yesterday. All ships are being handled speedily, as is shown by the fact that the line is not only keeping up its passenger, but its freight schedule as well. The big passenger ship Momus will sail for New York to-day with a full cargo, while at 3 o'clock this morning the E. Monte, a freighter, will clear for Baltimore.