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East St. Louis Riot Investigation  
Wednesday Oct 31 - 1917

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1917.

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The Committee met at 10.00 o'clock a.m., Honorable Ben Johnson (Chairman) presiding.

Mr. Johnson: The Committee will come to order.

STATEMENT OF OF HARRY KERR (Continued)

Mr. Baker: Mr. Kerr, what request was made by yourself or any of your committee, the committee of May the 28th, of the Mayor and the City Council?

Mr. Kerr: Well, personally I made no request of the Mayor that night.

Mr. Baker: Or of the Council?

Mr. Kerr: Or of the Council.

Mr. Baker: What did any of your members request of ~~the~~ the Mayor or the City Council that night?

Mr. Kerr: Well they made their object known in being at the meeting of the Council and the Mayor was to bring it to the attention of them, about the terrible conditions existing in East St. Louis at that time.

Mr. Baker: That was your object in being there, but what request did you make of the Mayor or the Council that night?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I believe that was the request, to do something.

Mr. Baker: Who made that request from your committee?

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Mr. Kerr: Well, Mr. Alleger made the first talk.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Alleger was one of your committeemen?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: And he was the representative of the rest of you?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Can you tell just what he requested?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know that they made the direct request, but they brought to the attention of the Mayor and Council that there was an awful condition existing here in East St. Louis <sup>and asking him,</sup> if I remember - that was the intent however, - that they do something to eliminate this chance of something awful terminating.

Mr. Baker: That was the main thing, simply to get to the Mayor and the Council a request that something terrible should not occur?

Mr. Kerr: No, that something be done to - I don't know - to remove any - well, I don't know just how to express myself. The meeting was for the purpose of insisting that the Mayor and Council do something to better the conditions of the citizens of East St. Louis, the general wave of crime - to do away with it and make things peaceable so that the people would be able to go on the streets; and to protest against further immigration of this class of labor into the town.

Mr. Baker: What class?

Mr. Kerr: Colored labor from the South.

Mr. Baker: Was that protest made strong, distinct and specific to the Mayor and the Council that night?

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Mr. Kerr: Well, I think so. That is what we were there for. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Raker, I wasn't in the room all of the time. <sup>Some of</sup> ~~The~~ time I would be up and down and in and out, but I didn't sit right down there like you are sitting here and participate in that meeting. That was the intent.

Mr. Raker: How did this lawyer get in there?

Mr. Kerr: Well, Mr. Raker, I will tell you. There is no public meeting in East St. Louis that Alexander Flannigan is not called upon to make some kind of a talk. He is a joker. He usually winds up by sending the people away in good spirits, and that kind of thing. <sup>Mr.</sup> ~~This~~ Flannigan was called for from the audience, and it is usual at any public gathering where there is any talking to be done, Alexander Flannigan seldom or never is left out.

Mr. Raker: But you folks weren't there for joking purposes.

Mr. Kerr: No, sir; he was called for from the audience.

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Mr. Raker: But how did they break in on your meeting? Why do you allow jokers to be introduced to a meeting called by yourself and others for the purpose of taking up civic conditions and betterment of conditions of the City of East St. Louis, and then allow them to ring in a joker on you.

Mr. Kerr: My understanding was that the meeting was closed, and Alexander Flannigan had no place on our program, none whatever. He was called for from the audience to make a little talk. Just as I have explained, he is a good entertainer and any place or every place where Alexander is they give him the floor to kind of line up

1950

4 the meeting.

Mr. Foss: I know, but didn't you folks deplore and discourage this sort of talk?

Mr. Kerr: Well, we didn't encourage the feeling that it may have engendered, but we had no control over a man who stepped out on the platform and had it for three minutes. You can realize the position of a man that has been given the platform, and you haven't any further control over him. He may not be on your program at all.

Mr. Foss: He was the last speaker?

Mr. Kerr: The very last speaker, called for by the audience.

Mr. Raker: Now what I am trying to get at, you people were summoned there by yourselves, for the purpose of presenting to the Mayor and the City Council, conditions that would better East St. Louis, and do away with the reign of terror. Is that right?

Mr. Kerr: That is it.

Mr. Raker: Then at that very meeting you allowed a man to take the platform and to be heard, who not only didn't join in your idea of civic betterment, but advised mob law. Isn't that right?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir; that is what I have been trying to say, that we stand for no responsibility of Alexander Flannigan's talk to that crowd. Our meeting was over. When our people got through talking our meeting was done. This man was called for, and we felt that our business with the Mayor and Council had adjourned.

Mr. Raker: Well, did you call on the Sheriff at any time for aid and assistance in the betterment of

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conditions?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: You never appealed to him at any time?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Now, what has been his attitude, the sheriff and his deputies of East St. Louis, relative to the suppression of the conditions as they existed, and bettering them.

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know - it appears to me that the Sheriff was called up by the city officials. Of course we have an office here of the sheriff's which is not the general office, however, but it appears to me that the sheriffs do their duty around here - those that we have stationed here - located here. I suppose they do the best they can. There are only four or five of them.

Mr. Baker: How can they be doing it if holdups and stickups, thugs, cutthroats, and loafers are permitted to remain here and violate the laws of the State of Illinois, which cases are handled by the sheriff's office and the district attorney and prosecuted by the State, and are state cases? How can you account for the fact now, that they were doing everything that was all right when you say this thing continued right on just the same?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know that the sheriff's office ever entered into our minds at all. We were appealing to our local citizens.

Mr. Baker: All right. Now, as to the District

1952

6 Attorney, or State's Attorney, why didn't you appeal to him?

Mr. Kerr: Well, for the reason I have just stated, that we were appealing to our own city officials.

Mr. Raker: I know, you stated that, but will you tell the Committee why you and your associates didn't appeal to the State's Attorney or the County Attorney.

Mr. Kerr: I couldn't tell you, sir.

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Mr. Raker: All right. Now this Committee of One Hundred - you say there are no laboring men on that committee?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I didn't say that. There may possibly be labor men picked by the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Raker: Well, Are there on the committee members of the labor men?

Mr. Kerr: I believe there is two.

Mr. Raker: No more?

Mr. Kerr: That is all I know of.

Mr. Raker: Well, are you dissatisfied with the Committee of One Hundred because your idea of the men aren't represented on the Committee?

Mr. Kerr: No, I am dissatisfied with that committee for the very reason that I stated yesterday that in my estimation the committee is a joke; it is not representative; it is not able to carry out the things that a committee of one hundred citizens of East St. Louis ought to be able to do. I think that the influences that work underneath or behind or back of that One Hundred Committee

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is such that the citizens of East St. Louis generally couldn't be given a square deal.

Mr. Raker: Well, now, will you tell the Committee why, during all this time, yourself and associates haven't gotten together, appointed a committee of your own to assist in bettering conditions in East St. Louis?

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Raker, that is what we have been endeavoring to do, to bring upon the Mayor. The influence of the organized labor movement, - which I will agree is not very strong - however, it is a number of citizens here that went to the man who should give us redress or give us at least some satisfaction, at least to let us know that he was going to do something.

Mr. Raker: I know, but what I am asking now is why you haven't done something since this occurrence to bring about better conditions?

Mr. Kerr: I mentioned yesterday, that on the 1st day of July - or June rather - there was a message sent to the Governor and Mr. Insull - here I have a copy of that message.

Mr. Raker: Read it, will you.

Mr. Kerr: This message was delivered into the telegraph office somewhere between eleven and twelve o'clock.

Mr. Johnson: Day or night?

Mr. Kerr: Night, of June 1st: "Honorable Samuel Insull and Governor Lowden:

Springfield, Illinois.

Honorable Samuel Insull,

1954

8 . State Council of Defense,  
120 West Adams Street,  
Chicago, Illinois.

We, the Central Trades and Labor Unions, and citizens of East St. Louis, urgently request that there be instituted at your earliest convenience an investigation into the causes of riots now going on, which necessitate the presence of State Militia, who are now on the ground. There are grave doubts as to where riots will end. Firmly believing there are good and sufficient grounds for immediate investigation.

Respectfully

(Signed) M. J. Whalen,  
President Central Trades.

(Signed) Harry Kerr,  
Secretary and Treasurer."

Mr. Raker: Now can you tell the Committee just what was in your mind when you sent this?

Mr. Kerr; Well, what was in my mind at the time of sending this message - and I believe also brother Whalen's - that the conditions <sup>here</sup> had got out of the control of the administration.

Mr. Raker: Now can you state to the Committee what you wanted this Council of National Defense and the Governor to investigate?

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Mr. Kerr: To find out the causes and place the responsibility where it should be.

Mr. Raker: Well now, can you give the Committee an

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outline of the causes of this riot; what occurred before and what occurred since, and a suggestion as to persons, and things, that would assist in bringing about and relieving the conditions? Now that just opens the whole field to you.

Mr. Kerr: I can go back over it again.

Mr. Raker: You needn't repeat unless you want to. That opens the whole field to you, so you can make any complaint, make any statement that will enlighten the Committee, give you an opportunity to do what you have asked in that telegram. Can you think of anything else than what you have already stated?

Mr. Kerr: Well, there are plenty of things that enter into it, that enter into that thing - well, I guess I have stated the conditions about as clearly as possible, leading up to the riot.

Mr. Raker: There is nothing further that you can think of?

Mr. Kerr: Well, not along those lines directly.

Mr. Raker: Well, are there any lines? I want you to leave so that when you leave the stand you cannot say that you did not have an opportunity to give every *single* iota of evidence that you had, direct or indirect. Now if there is, state it.

Mr. Kerr: Well, I want to go back to the April strike of the Aluminum Ore.

Mr. Raker: That is in addition to what you have stated?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I said some of that yesterday, but last night when thinking this thing over, another

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thought has come to my mind and I was reading the article in the paper here, was the cause of bringing it to my mind. It has been charged here that the labor movements are partly responsible, or altogether responsible for the conditions here, on account of their appeal to race prejudice through the labor movement. I want to state here and now, that the committees from the Aluminum Ore people that were meeting with the labor movement were advised repeatedly that there would be no strike at the Aluminum Ore Company; that if in their desire to organize and become part of the labor movement they must make some arrangement to come to a certain place as their shifts went off - that is quit work, come off the shifts, come over there - we had in mind a picture house out here on 27th and Louisiana Blvd., and organize, and if Mr. Fox objected to the organization of men under the American labor movement, that would be up to him to lock them out, and the responsibility would be his.

Now we had information that the Aluminum Ore Company had Government contracts at that time, and it was suggested by some of this committee when talking the proposition over that we strike at that plant, that the plant be struck. The labor representatives who advised the committee, who were not representing the labor movement, but were members of a rump organization that had no head or no brains, fathered by the officials of the Aluminum Ore Company - those men demanded that there be something done where they would get the right to organize; and the very day the very afternoon or evening of the day of the strike,

1957

11 those men were advised to come out of that plant and organize, and not to strike the plant.

Mr. Raker: That is, the American Federation of Labor's idea was to do it that way?

Mr. Kerr: Not to strike at the plant.

Mr. Raker: But this rump organization struck?

Mr. Kerr: I am going to get to that. Between eight and ten o'clock that very same night there was a meeting of the Aluminum Ore Employee's Protective Association and they ordered a strike. There being ~~or~~ no representatives of organized labor at that meeting, of course there was nothing to restrain them. They walked out there and pulled the plant at ten thirty or eleven o'clock. I knew nothing of it until the next morning. I don't think that there was a man in East St. Louis who was more surprised that there was a strike at the Aluminum Ore than I myself was.

Mr. Raker: The American Federation of Labor, so far as you stand, were opposed to that strike?

Mr. Kerr: Opposed to the strike, absolutely opposed to it.

Mr. Raker: But it was this rump organization formed of the employees of the Aluminum Ore Company, are the one that caused the strike, brought the strike about and brought the trouble as against your better judgment and advice.

Mr. Kerr: That is it, exactly, sir.

Mr. Raker: And these were the men, some of them,

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as you understand, were working with the Aluminum Ore Company?

Mr. Kerr: They were working at the Aluminum Ore Company.

Mr. Raker: Well, do you believe from what you have been advised and informed that they were doing it for the interest of the Aluminum Ore Company, some of the few individuals?

Mr. Kerr: Well, sir, I couldn't for the life of me understand, after the advice given to those men, and the reasons for it - and the one especially - showing them that there was no chance in the world for the Aluminum Ore Company to keep them from organizing if they so desired. If they did, and locked these men out, the responsibility would be absolutely up to the Aluminum Ore officials. No question about that.

Mr. Raker: Now you have heard of Mr. Wolf, haven't you?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: Well, was he connected with the American Federation of Labor in any way?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Raker: Nor the other two men that have been named with him, Simon and Lehman?

Mr. Kerr: Simon was a member of some - I think - no, I am not sure, but I don't believe he was. He was a steamfitter and they had <sup>no</sup> steamfitter's members out there. That is my understanding.

Mr. Raker: Well then, their attitude and their

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have been  
actions, and conduct/ separate and distinct and  
apart from any of the movements of the American  
Federation of Labor?

Mr. Kerr: And absolutely against the advice of  
the American Federation of Labor, yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: Have you folks investigated the  
question of Wolf's trying to get a stipend for his work  
in connection with the matter out there, in the way of  
organizing, etc?

Mr. Kerr: Well, really, I didn't know anything  
about that.

Mr. Raker: That is all right then.

What do you mean by that moving picture place out  
near the plant? Was that an eye sore?

Mr. Kerr: No, no; last October when they had that  
strike before, that is where they held their meetings  
and that is where Mr. Fox had met this committee that  
he referred to the other evening. It is handy, ad-  
561 jacent to the plant - not very far - four or five  
blocks.

Mr. Raker: Conditions for working men here haven't  
been made very agreeable and comfortable, have they?

Mr. Kerr: Not very.

Mr. Raker: Has anything been done to better the  
conditions and to help the men or their families in  
any way?

Mr. Kerr: I don't just get the drift of your -  
from what direction?

Mr. Raker: Well, from any direction outside of

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what these men themselves and their families have done with a great deal of work, expense, toil and trouble? Has the city itself, have the citizens, the merchants, the business men, or have the corporations that are doing business here done anything?

Mr. Kerr: You mean towards making working conditions better?

Mr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know that they have. The business men of the city here are a good deal like the working men. That is what I mean by the business men is our stores and such as that. Everybody here - nearly everybody that has to live in East St. Louis, carries a dinner bucket, or should be carrying them. The other fellow has moved out of town and has left this condition here. We can't get out of town. We haven't got the wherewith to move and we have got to stay here under conditions that those other fellows have made for us. I mean by "other fellows" the large corporations, such as the Aluminum Ore Company, the packing house industries, and the steel plant out here.

Mr. Baker: Well, which crowd combines to elect officials here, to make things as they are. How do they do it?

Mr. Kerr: Well, as I stated yesterday, the labor movement hasn't been taken into the thoughts or plans of those political fellows that are <sup>in</sup> the ring.

Mr. Baker: Tell us about it.

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Mr. Kerr: They are just absolutely ignored. That is all. They are not in it at all. The candidates are chosen for us and we are told to vote for one or the other.

Mr. Raker: That is all.

Mr. Cooper: It has been said here repeatedly before this Committee that Mr. Flannigan's speech at that meeting was in part responsible for this rioting, because he, in fact, told the audience that there was no law under which members of a riot - under which rioters could be convicted. Did he say substantially that?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Can you recall in substance what he said to that effect?

Mr. Kerr: Well, as a kind of wind-up to his talk he said, "gentlemen, there is no law to punish for a mob law." That possibly is not just the very words, but that is what he meant.

Mr. Cooper: Did you know that Alexander Flannigan, in that speech, directly or indirectly, advised the burning of the homes of colored people?

Mr. Kerr: I don't think he did.

Mr. Cooper: Who would move into white neighborhoods?

Mr. Kerr: I can't just remember, but I don't think he did that.

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Mr. Cooper: How long did he talk?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, possibly five or six minutes, four

1962

17 or five minutes.

Mr. Cooper: He is now acting as counsel for the men being tried, or some of them at least, being tried in Belleville?

Mr. Kerr: I have heard that he is.

Mr. Cooper: How old a man is he?

Mr. Kerr: Well, he is a man that don't tell his age, but he says - the way he tells it, he was six years old when the war broke out.

Mr. Cooper: He is over sixty?

Mr. Kerr: He is along in there, yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: About sixty years of age. How long has he lived here, do you know?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, he has been here a long time. He is one of the oldest residents here.

Mr. Cooper: Well, he was called for from the audience that night. Who did you say called that meeting?

Mr. Kerr: The meeting was called by the secretary of the Central Trades and Labor Union. The call was made directly to their delegates only, by letter. I don't think there was printed more than 100. You can find that out from Paul Smith. We have three delegates from each organization, and I think forty eight organizations.

Mr. Cooper: Where did this printed call ask the delegates to assemble?

Mr. Kerr: At the City Hall council chamber.

Mr. Cooper: They were accustomed to meet there?

Mr. Kerr: No, the council was accustomed to meet there. It was the regular meeting of the council.

1963

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Mr. Cooper: Well, how many people came there?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, goodness, - well, it-looked like the whole place turned out. Everybody got up there that could get up there. I ~~xxxx~~ seen all kinds of citizens up there.

Mr. Cooper: Who was first to speak at the meeting?

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Alleger, I think. I am not just sure about that.

Mr. Cooper: Who is he?

Mr. Kerr: He is a newspaper man here, connected with the Illinois Labor press.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know what he talked about?

Mr. Kerr: Well, he opened the meeting. If I remember correctly he went on <sup>and</sup> made a speech to the council and the Mayor.

Mr. Cooper: Do you recall whether he gave any advice or made any requests to or of the council?

Mr. Kerr: Well, the intention of the meeting of that committee was for the purpose of asking the Mayor and the council to devise some ways or means to eliminate almost a certain trouble. You could see it in the air. You could feel it. You could feel it while <sup>you---</sup> I can't express just the feeling.

Mr. Cooper: Who next spoke?

Mr. Kerr: I think Mr. Kane, J. J. Kane.

Mr. Cooper: Well, how long did he talk?

Mr. Kerr: I guess he talked may be twenty minutes.

Mr. Cooper: Was his speech of the same general character as that of Mr. Alleger?

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Mr. Kerr: The same general character.

Mr. Cooper: Did he counsel violence?

Mr. Kerr: No, h no.

Mr. Cooper: Who spoke after him?

Mr. Kerr: Well, it runs in my mind that there was three or four spoke, I don't just recall now, only Allegger and Kane.

Mr. Cooper: Now after your program had been concluded, how long was it before someone called for Flannigan?

Mr. Kerr: I suppose right then. I think the Mayor spoke at the meeting.

Mr. Cooper: What did the Mayor say?

Mr. Kerr: Well the Mayor went on and counseled patience and peace and quiet and harmony and all that stuff.

Mr. Cooper: But did he indicate how he was going to attempt to secure peace and harmony and quiet?

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Cooper, for six months we had been trying to get them. We never could get any expression from him as to what he could do or what he wouldn't do. He just simply evaded. We got nothing <sup>but evasion</sup> ~~from him~~ any time or last  
any place up to the last time, either singly or by committees or colletively or any other way - just passive.

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Mr. Cooper: Do nothing at all.

Mr. Kerr: Do nothing at all. I don't know whether or not he was able to do anything or not. That of course remained with him. But we of course supposed he would be able to do something.

Mr. Cooper: How long did Flannigan talk?

Mr. Kerr: I couldn't say, three or four or five minutes, may be.

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Mr. Cooper: And at the conclusion or towards the conclusion of his speech he advised the people there assembled that there was no law in the State of Illinois, or any law, to punish rioters?

Mr. Kerr: That is, I believe the wind-up of the meeting, and his talk.

Mr. Cooper: Did he say that if a negro rented a house in a white neighborhood it might burn?

Mr. Kerr: Now, I couldn't answer that question.

Mr. Cooper: You don't remember?

Mr. Kerr: I don't remember whether it was said or not.

Mr. Cooper: And that if a negro rented a house in such a neighborhood, and he died before he could enter it then he wouldn't live in that neighborhood? Did he say that?

Mr. Kerr: No, I don't remember that. All that I remember is that it was the nature - the information that you seek is the reference to no punishment for mob violence. That is practically all that I can remember.

Mr. Cooper: Then the only way to interpret Flannigan's speech was that he rose before an audience in this city and openly counseled violence, riots, thereby encouraging riots, didn't he?

Mr. Kerr: Well, Mr. Cooper, it may have had that effect on some, but the fact of the matter is it hadn't been, -the meeting hadn't got out of the hall before personally I forgot all about it. I didn't give it any personal weight. I didn't think it was meant.

1966

21 Mr. Cooper: Of course you didn't contemplate violence you didn't want to see violence, but don't you think that the average mind of other people -

Mr. Kerr: (Interposing) It may have affected the minds of others, but really to me it appeared as just talk.

Mr. Cooper: You made a most important statement here about the attitude of the American Federation of Labor branch in this city towards the trouble at the Aluminum Ore Plant.

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: As I understood your statement, in reply to Judge Baker's question, you said that you and other members of the local branch of the American Federation of Labor, advised against - strongly advised against - any strike at the Aluminum Ore Plant?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They were the best paid employees in the city?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: You urged that they not go out on a strike?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And yet, notwithstanding that advice a strike was called somewhere along at ten o'clock at night?

Mr. Kerr: Well, the strike was - in the *it* meetings they decided upon a strike, and they went from the hall, my information is - the hall was right near, next door - my information is that they went from that hall directly

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to the plant and pulled the plant.

Mr. Cooper: Now what do you mean by "pulled the plant"?

Mr. Kerr: Stopped the men from going in there on their regular watch, and notifying the men as they came out.

Mr. Cooper: That is eleven o'clock, the night watch?

Mr. Kerr: I suppose that would be the watch.

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Mr. Cooper: Now, Mr. Kerr, the manager and the assistant manager - or the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the plant, Mr. Fox and Mr. Rucker, testified here that a committee presented a written communication to them - typewritten - which embodied their requests of the company; that at the bottom of that communication was the word "committee", typewritten but <sup>with</sup> no signatures of the committee; that thereupon the manager, Mr. Fox, asked the workmen who presented that to take it back and have it signed saying that he would sign it if they would bring it back to him signed, that they took that and went away; that he never saw them again, never saw the paper again, and that in a little while that same night the strike was called. Do you know about that?

Mr. Kerr: I know nothing of that. That must have been the arrangement made between eight and ten o'clock that night, after those men left here.

Mr. Cooper: And if that body of workmen in that plant did do what these two witnesses have sworn

1968

23 that they did do, it was directly opposed, you say, to everything that you advised or desired as a member of the American Federation of Labor?

Mr. Kerr: Absolutely; and you can see my position in the thing. The American Federation of Labor or its central bodies, never advise strikes, but they do insist upon the right to organize. Every minute, every hour, every day, every week, every year, organization is on with the American Federation of Labor. Now here is the proposition: Here is a big plant, one plant of the kind only in the United States - and I am informed of Canada - has heretofore objected to organized labor, organizing their plant. They have contracts with our Government to furnish war materials. If those men stand upon their rights to organize; come out of that plant on their shifts where it don't interfere for a moment with that plant; organize on the outside and go home and report back for duty when their hour comes to go to work, it don't interfere with the working of the plant. Now then, here is where there is going to be any responsibility. The organized labor movement of this country wants no responsibility for strikes. They are not willing to shoulder it, they don't want to shoulder it, but they do insist upon organization. Number of these men were advised to come out just as I have stated to you, and give their names in, become members of the several organizations, at this picture house, or some other place to be arranged out there; and if the Aluminum Ore Company felt like accept-

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24 ing the responsibility of locking those men out then the responsibility would be upon the other fellow and not upon the organized labor movement. It is reasonable to suppose; it is reasonable to expect that there would be no other court for the organized labor movement in East St. Louis than to advise to the best interests of both the men and the company, under the war condition that we are now placed under, with Government contracts in that plant.

Mr. Cooper: And in addition to that they were working eight hour shifts?

Mr. Kerr: They had all the conditions out there, just as Rucker and Fox said, yes, sir. They had the best conditions in East St. Louis.

565 Mr. Cooper: I wanted to get that into the record again. That company had the best conditions here in this city, eight hours and the best wages?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: The only possible - I wouldn't say the only possible, but one possible objection that might be raised - ~~that~~ and whether that can be cured or eliminated has not been made quite plain to this committee yet; but that is the fact, that some men worked there seven successive days, that is six days and then the seventh day, Sunday, for two consecutive Sundays. Formerly they worked four Sundays - they worked all the Sundays. They have done away now with two of them, and Mr. Fox didn't seem to be quite certain whether they could yet do away with any Sunday work at that plant. He intimated that if possible it ought to be done. Now the testimony that

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25           you have given, and I think all this Committee will agree to that, that it is most important that you opposed the strike at that plant. In your official capacity you opposed it. Witnesses here have laid to you the blame for this strike - that is, your organization. According to your testimony those charges are entirely unfounded and most unjust.

Now after this trike at the Aluminum Ore Company's plant, did you see any of the leaders, counsel with them?

Mr. Kerr: After the strike?

Mr. Cooper: Yes.

Mr. Kerr: Oh, yes.

Mr. Cooper: Well, what were your interviews with them after they did actually strike? What did you say to them?

Mr. Kerr: Well, of course I expressed my surprise at the strike, but after a day or two why I was instructed by the central body to advise with those men and do everything in my power to ~~assist~~ assist them to both win the strike and to organize them.

Mr. Cooper: And the strike continued how long?

Mr. Kerr: <sup>Well,</sup> From the 18th or 19th. And I was informed here by a man who was in a position to know, yesterday, until the 27th of June.

Mr. Cooper: About two months?

Mr. Kerr: A little over two months.

Mr. Cooper: The Chairman suggests you said the 18th or 19th. You meant ~~the~~ April?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, April, until the 27th of June.

1971

26

Mr. Cooper: That is a little over two months?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Raker: Do I understand now that the strike was settled on the 27th of June?

Mr. Cooper: Was the strike the strike settled on the 27th of June at that plant?

Mr. Kerr: Well, the strike was declared off on the 27th of June.

Mr. Cooper: And the men went back to work?

Mr. Kerr: Those that could get back. Some went back before, and I don't know whether any of them went back since or not.

Mr. Cooper: That was about a week before the riot of July 2nd?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Cooper: Five days before. Were you present when Mr. Joyce submitted that resolution of which you spoke?

Mr. Kerr: No, that was at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cooper: The Chamber of Commerce did nothing at all to prevent this?

Mr. Kerr: Not to my knowledge. Not a thing.

Mr. Raker: A matter came to my attention here, and a question I would like to ask this witness about it. It has been handed to me since I examined you a few moments ago. This is a clipping from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch dated August 23, 1917, entitled: "Mother Jones Talks Attacking Plant Men." How were you at that meeting?

1972

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Mr. Kerr: I wasn't at that meeting.

566

Mr. Raker: Did you or your people have anything to do with it?

Mr. Kerr: Well, the Butcher Workmen are organizing the packing plants and they have been for months, just a campaign of organization.

Mr. Raker: Something was said here yesterday about what Mother Jones is supposed to have said at that meeting. I find this in this article, as published, as above stated:

"The hall was sprinkled with Federal Agents, detectives, and uniformed patrol men, but the speaker's talk was not an incendiary one. She said she believed the packing house employees should organize and added: 'If conditions don't suit you, you should get better ones. It is bad to strike now when the country is at war, but if it takes a strike to win, then strike; and if it takes a riot why then may be you will have to have a riot.'"

So the papers did report, which has been contradicted, that Mother Jones did advise rioting according to this.

Mr. Kerr: My information is that the chief of police was there from East St. Louis. My information is that Major Kavanaugh was there.

Mr. Raker: I will insert this in the record.

Mr. Foster: What is it?

Mr. Raker: It is an article I just read.

Mr. Foster: If it is taken as a newspaper article let us have it so stated; but if it is an authentic article, a report of her speech, and that is after the riot a long time, I don't know about it.

1973

28

Mr. Cooper: That is six weeks after the riot.

Mr. Raker: That is very true.

Mr. Cooper: We are not here to investigate what anybody did six weeks after the riot. We are here to investigate the riot. But still I don't object on that account.

Mr. Raker: It simply clarifies the record.

Mr. Foster: I object to a newspaper article of that kind going into the record. The best evidence, and I think it can be found, is to find her speech as taken down at that time.

Mr. Raker: Was it taken down at that time?

Mr. Foster: I think so. I think there were several stenographers there; and that would be the best evidence of it, I think.

Mr. Raker: Certainly, but here is what purports to be a newspaper article giving her speech.

Mr. Foster: That is six weeks after the riot occurred.

Mr. Raker: But it is supposed to be published right after her speech.

Mr. Foster: What is the date of that?

Mr. Raker: August 23, 1917, St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Mr. Foster: What date was she here?

Mr. Raker: I don't know anything about that.

Mr. Foster: I don't think - if you want her speech, the best thing to do is to get her speech as taken down in shorthand.

Mr. Raker: I am not trying to impute anything to anybody, but here was a newspaper article published. No

1974

29 one has come before this Committee yet and said they were fighting against these riots, or had been working to find the rioters, except what has been drawn out, and I am just putting it in to show there was sort of a feeling that riots might be a good thing in East St. Louis. Now I may be drawing the wrong deduction, and may be doing the people of East St. Louis an injustice, and I would hate to do that to anybody.

567

Mr. Foster: I haven't any objection if it is put down as an unofficial newspaper article.

Mr. Raker: As unofficial?

Mr. Foster: Not as what was said at that time, because I understand there were Federal Agents there who heard this speech.

Mr. Raker: I will ask a few more questions in regard to it.

Who is the city clerk at this time?

Mr. Kerr: Michael J. Whalen.

Mr. Raker: Do you know what attitude Mr. Whalen has taken in regard to the riot of July 2nd?

Mr. Kerr: He is president of the Central body, and any actions that they have taken would necessarily mean his stamp, his position. That is the Central Trades and Labor Union I mean by central body.

Mr. Raker: And Mr. Earl Timerson, who is he?

Mr. Kerr: He is the representative of the meat cutters and butcher workmen.

Mr. Raker: What was his position as to the riots on July 2nd.

1975

30

Mr. Kerr: Well, he is a labor man, representing himself as part of the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Raker: Well, I suppose under that statement there will be no objection to this going in as an unofficial statement?

Mr. Cooper: Unofficial - no statement about it, - just a newspaper report after the speech that took place six weeks after the riot that we are sent here to investigate.

Mr. Raker: That is true.

Mr. Foster: But if you are going to put in all such newspaper articles, we will never get through here.

Mr. Raker: No, that is all I am going to put in.

Mr. Cooper: It wasn't in accord with that speech, that any riots took place in this city. The speech isn't responsible for the riots, was not in connection with the riots, has no connection with it at all. There were not riots after that speech.

Mr. Johnson: We haven't disposed of the question yet whether that goes in or not. Shall I take the sense of the Committee?

Mr. Foster: I don't care. Put it in if you want to.

Mr. Raker: I understood there was no objection.

Mr. Cooper: Let me ask a question or two. Was Mother Jones arrested?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Was anything done to her at all for any speech she made here?

Mr. Kerr: Not that I know of.

1976

31

Mr. Cooper: And the Federal Agents were there in the audience ready to arrest her if she had counseled rioting?

Mr. Kerr: That was my understanding.

Mr. Cooper: Do you believe, or does anybody else believe, that within six weeks after the horrible scenes of July 2nd in this city, if a woman had arisen and advised new riots, that none of those officials would have arrested her or prevented any further utterance?

Mr. Kerr: I believe they would.

Mr. Cooper: You believe they would?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Cooper: And you were not at that meeting?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: That is all.

Mr. Raker: I understand there is no objection to letting that be printed?

Mr. Cooper: What is the object of printing it?

Mr. Raker: I want to show the article as printed here in a paper here in East St. Louis.

Mr. Kerr: In St. Louis.

Mr. Raker: In St. Louis, the Post-Dispatch. Well, that don't make any difference. It circulated over here.

568

Mr. Cooper: Is it your theory, Judge Raker, that that was responsible for the riots of July 2nd?

Mr. Raker: None whatever.

Mr. Cooper: Well, <sup>no</sup> the riots took place after that.

Mr. Raker: That is true.

1977

32

Mr. Foster: Well, are you trying to prove that Mother Jones did advise a riot?

Mr. Raker: No, I am not trying to prove anything about Mother Jones, for or against her, but I am simply putting in an article, so the whole article may go in, of what is charged was said. Now if it wasn't said, if her speech was taken, it can be put in evidence later and will then demonstrate that the people of St. Louis did not permit speeches, even after riots, that if you couldn't win one way that you could win by riots. That is all.

Mr. Cooper: Well, now, right following that statement I want to suggest this: That when you say that the people of St. Louis wouldn't permit counsel like that -

Mr. Raker: (INteposing) East St. Louis, I mean.

Mr. Cooper: Weren't the people of East St. Louis there in large numbers? The working men were there and the Federal Agents and officers, to arrest anyone guilty of incendiary utterances, and no arrest was made, and there has been no subsequent riot. Isn't it fair to suppose that she ~~did~~ didn't counsel violence?

Mr. Raker: I don't know what she said, but if her speech was taken, if this charge was all wrong, then the speech taken will demonstrate exactly what was said, and if I can't get the speech any other way I can get it this way. I am going to try before I get through' if <sup>her</sup> the speech was taken, to have it presented.

Mr. Cooper: It depends upon who took it.

Mr. Foster: Find out who took it before you get it in.

1978

33

Mr. Raker: Certainly, I appreciate that. I am making no distinction so far as I am concerned, with organizations, <sup>it is solely</sup> and entirely that I want to get at the facts.

Mr. Johnson: Shall I take the sense of the Committee relative to the insertion of this? The Committee seems to be divided on its admission, and I believe I will take the sense of the Committee.

Mr. Raker: In order to get my position clearly, so there can be no question as to being eliminated on that score, I will withhold the offer until I get the man on the stand who represents that paper.

Mr. Johnson: I think you had better do that, for the reason that here <sup>are enormous</sup> ~~a number of~~ statements made in this newspaper article without any opportunity whatever to cross examine that man.

Mr. Raker: I think that is a point that is well taken.

Mr. Johnson: And if it comes to taking the sense of the Committee as to its insertion now, I shall vote against its insertion.

Mr. Raker: I appreciate that effect of it, and we will try to get the St. Louis Post-Dispatch representative. It won't take but a moment, and we can see what he knows about it.

Mr. Foster: That will open up the question then of whether we shall hear other witnesses along the same line.

Mr. Raker: Yes. All right.

Now just one other question. Were any women present at the meeting of May 28th?

1979

34

Mr. Kerr: Now, I couldn't say as to that.

Mr. Baker: Didn't women speak at that meeting?

Mr. Kerr: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Baker: That is all.

Mr. Kerr: May I have permission to -

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) Before you get into that, if Judge Baker is through, I would like to ask a question or two myself.

569

There has been much said, particularly since you have been on the witness stand, as to the inability upon the part of good citizens of the town to secure the enforcement of law and order here. The justices of the peace have been referred to as failing to do their duty towards convicting persons charged with rape and highway robbery. Isn't it a matter of fact that the justices of the peace don't try those cases; that the Grand Jury at Bellville indicts, and that there the Circuit Court tries those cases?

Mr. Kerr: Why, that is my understanding.

Mr. Johnson: So, if a justice of the peace don't convict somebody of the offense of rape or highway robbery, he shouldn't be blamed for it, because he has no jurisdiction of those cases?

Mr. Kerr: He would first necessarily be given a preliminary hearing before the justice of the peace, and the justice of the peace would bind him over to the Grand Jury.

Mr. Johnson: That is, if the case is taken <sup>to</sup> through him, but the case does not of necessity have to go <sup>to</sup> through him.

1980

35

It can go direct to the Grand Jury. The sheriff can take it there, or your States Attorney can take it there.

Mr. Kerr: yes.

Mr. Johnson: You have said that seven white women were outraged here by negroes - I don't want to ask for their names unless their names have heretofore been given, because I can see how revolting it is to have a good woman's name associated with a crime of that sort. Now if the names of those seven women, or any part of them have been made public, <sup>then</sup> I ask you to give the Committee their names but not otherwise?

Mr. Kerr: That information I gave you about the 876 holdups -

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) I haven't said a word about that. Wait a minute. Let us talk about these seven women first. Have any of their names been given to the public?

Mr. Kerr: Not to my own personal knowledge.

Mr. Johnson: Have their names been used in print in public print here?

Mr. Kerr: I don't doubt but what they have.

Mr. Johnson: Now let us make sure of it, because I don't want to drag the names of good women into a horrible crime like that, and bring further odium upon them - for publicity at least, about it, unless we know that ~~xxxx~~ their names have been given; but if their names have been given, then I would like to have their names, but not otherwise.

Mr. Kerr: I couldn't call one of their names.

Mr. Johnson: Well, then we could have avoided all that if you had just said so in the beginning.

1981

36

Mr. Kerr: That is what I was trying to get to, and you stopped me.

Mr. Johnson: Has the Grand Jury indicted anybody for any of those outrages?

Mr. Kerr: Well, we have a lot of people up in Bellville now awaiting trial.

Mr. Johnson: For rape?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know about that.

Mr. Johnson: Well, that is all I am talking about.

Mr. Kerr: I don't know anything about it.

Mr. Johnson: I would like to concentrate your mind upon the very thing we are talking about.

Mr. Kerr: I was trying to explain a moment ago that that report was given to me by a newspaper man. I haven't any direct knowledge of it at all.

Mr. Johnson: Well, then, let us dismiss it.

There has been much said tending to incriminate the City Council because it didn't do something to prevent negroes from coming here. Can you tell anything that the City Council could do to prevent the negro from coming to this town if he wanted to come?

570

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Chairman, I don't know what powers they may exercise. In our city government here sometimes we do things that don't just appeal to me as being the right thing to do, however, it is done.

Mr. Johnson: Before the City Council is excoriated to the extent it has been, ought it not to be ascertained whether or not they have the right to pass an ordinance forbidding negroes to come here?

1982

37

Mr. Kerr: My impression of the responsibility of the Council is this: That they are elected by the people to represent the people, and when the people go to them and ask them to do something, if it be in their power they should make some attempt.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, but you have blamed the City Council for not doing something towards preventing the coming in of this large numbers of negroes into East St. Louis.

Mr. Kerr: Evidently somebody is to blame.

Mr. Johnson: Well, is there anybody.

Mr. Kerr: I may be wrong in blaming them.

Mr. Johnson: Is there any power in the United States to prevent their coming to East St. Louis, if they want to come?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know that there is. Still they might come under - well some kind of supervision.

Mr. Johnson: If you want to go over to St. Louis from East St. Louis, do you feel that there is any law which would compel you to go over there under supervision?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Hasn't the negro got the same right in this country to go where he pleases without supervision that the white man has?

Mr. Kerr: Absolutely.

Mr. Johnson: And he has got the right to come to East St. Louis without coming under supervision.

Mr. Kerr: That is true.

Mr. Johnson: Yet you are advocating that he come here only under supervision.

1983

38

Mr. Kerr: Only owing to the amount of crime and the reign of terror in the city of East St. Louis. Something had to be done.

Mr. Johnson: Are you advocating that because one negro committed a crime, that all other negroes should be prevented from coming to East St. Louis?

Mr. Kerr: No, I am advocating that where hundreds of negroes or hundreds of ~~xxx~~ white men commit crime, there should be some action taken to eliminate that element from the city or community.

Mr. Johnson: Now then, can you cite one legal action that can be taken to prevent anybody coming here that wants to come?

Mr. Kerr: Well, Mr. Chairman, I am not a lawyer. Of course I may have thoughts on that thing.

Mr. Johnson: Well, you have been lawyer enough *now* to blame the City Council and the Mayor, and perhaps the whole administration in general because they didn't stop the negro from coming here. Since you are lawyer enough for that, can you not also be lawyer enough to suggest the means by which they could have prevented that?

Mr. Kerr: That is exactly what we were asking them.

Mr. Johnson: No, if I understood you, you didn't ask them if they could do it; but you demanded that they do do it.

Mr. Kerr: Yes, who else could do it.

Mr. Johnson: Can they do it, or anybody else do it? I want to find out.

Mr. Kerr: It is your fault if you don't find out,

1984

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because I am here to tell you if I can.

Mr. Johnson: I ask you whose fault it is, if it is anybody's, that the coming of the negro here wasn't stopped? Now you have got a plain question put to you. Now tell me.

Mr. Kerr: We went to our immediate officials. I couldn't say - perhaps we blamed the Council alone.

Mr. Johnson: I asked you who can stop it?

571

Mr. Kerr: Well, may be I was wrong before. You are taking the contention I wronged the City Council.

Mr. Johnson: No, I am not.

Mr. Kerr: May be I didn't get to the right authority.

Mr. Johnson: No, I am taking the position that you are wrong in blaming the City Council for not stopping negroes from coming here. I say they have no power to prevent it and there is no other power in the United States <sup>to prevent it,</sup> much less in a little city council like this. If Congress were to pass a law forbidding negroes to come to the City of East St. Louis, it would be null and void, not worth the paper it was written upon. If your city council had passed an ordinance forbidding them to come here, it wouldn't have been worth the paper it was written upon. Not one of them could have been punished for coming. Now then the police have been blamed too. You had about sixty policemen here up to the time of the strike?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know. I am not just sure about the number of policemen.

Mr. Johnson: Well, it has been testified by others that you had about sixty policemen here.

1985

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Mr. Kerr: yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Now let's accept that as true. They are divided between day work and night work?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: A number of those, however, are chauffeurs and clerks in the office and things like that, which reduces the number really of active patrolmen to less than sixty. The night policemen go in pairs, do they not?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Now then, if the force was equally divided you would have about thirty policemen for night duty, and if they went in pairs you would really have fifteen policemen doing night service, because they would be in pairs, and what one would <sup>see</sup> ~~be~~ the other would <sup>see</sup> ~~be~~.

Mr. Kerr: That is your officials. Your office force and chauffeurs.

Mr. Johnson: Now I am putting them all in at sixty, dividing it by half for night duty, which would be thirty. Then I cut them up in patrols, two men to each patrol, which makes fifteen patrols.. In your judgment could fifteen patrols cover this widely laid out city of 85,000 or 90,000 inhabitants?

Mr. Kerr: I don't think so. I don't think it is possible.

Mr. Johnson: Then if a policeman fails to be everywhere, ~~xxx~~ in the car yards, and out in the places grown up in weeds, do you blame him for that?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir I don't blame him if a man can't make these things.

1986

41

Mr. Johnson: But you have acquiesced in a criticism of him for not making arrests.

Mr. Kerr: I will state further on that proposition I have had the Mayor say to me and a committee that there were seven men reported one certain morning here for duty at roll call. Now I can't give you the date for that, but I can tell you how you can get it.

Mr. Johnson: What about it if they did report?

Mr. Cooper: You mean only seven?

Mr. Kerr: Only seven <sup>answered</sup> ~~at this~~ roll call. That was the day that the new police and fire board was appointed.

Mr. Johnson: That was the day that a new organization was taking effect in the police force?

Mr. Kerr: yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Where were the others? Did they go out?

Mr. Kerr: That is all that reported. They had either gone out or gone home.

Mr. Johnson: You don't know what reason they had for not reporting?

572

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Johnson: You don't know whether they gave to the Mayor any reasons for not reporting?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Johnson: What day was that?

Mr. Kerr: The day that the police and fire board were appointed.

Mr. Johnson: How long after the riot was that?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I couldn't say. There will

1987

42 some other witnesses here who may have some data on that.

Mr. Johnson: Now I don't know that I am prepared to accept the statement at all that every official here has done his duty, but I don't believe that it is treating them fairly to charge them with not doing things that under the law they had no power to do.

Mr. Kerr: That might be, but you will realize Mr. Johnson, that there was a terrible condition here, and the people felt that the officials of the city were able or should be able, or try to do something to eliminate that thing, to clear it up; and they naturally looked to those people to do things for them that possibly they couldn't do.

Mr. Johnson: I think in that statement you are correct, that you all expected things to be done which were not within the power of the officials to do.

Mr. Kerr: That may be.

Mr. Johnson: Now, looking to the city council to pass an ordinance to prohibit negroes from coming here is beyond the power of the city council. If they had passed it and the negro had come and had been arrested for violating that ordinance because he came, nothing could have been done with him. I am not undertaking at all to defend ~~my~~ local officer for not doing his duty, but I don't think that the statement should go unchallenged that they should have done the things which they had no legal right to do.

Mr. Kerr: Understand, Mr. Johnson, that it was with

1988

43 no bitterness that I am giving you the information that I am giving you, but that is my stand in the affair. I thought personally that under the conditions - under the awful conditions that were here - that our city fathers or the men who are elected to take care of the city, would be the people that would be able to give us some kind of redress or some kind of help.

Mr. Johnson: The principal redress that you were seeking by going to the city council was to stop the negroes from coming here in such numbers?

Mr. Kerr: Well, this wave of crime was here and we couldn't charge it to any other thing that I knew of it. It was possibly charged by 99 people out of a 100 that it was the bad negro that was doing this business here. Nobody ever did charge that it was the old timer in East St. Louis that was doing this work. Nobody ever did charge that, that I ever heard, but it was this new element coming in that were degenerates or bad citizens, and they were coming here with no work and no money in their clothes, and had to get something; they had to get some way of getting it, and they didn't care whether they took thirty five cents off you or thirty five dollars. The chances are they would beat you up or possibly kill you in taking it.

Mr. Johnson: To sum it up, your idea is that the criminals became so numerous here - or became too numerous for the local authorities to cope with?

Mr. Kerr: That is it, exactly.

Mr. Johnson: And you thought something - you thought

1989

44 anything which would have a tendency to lessen crime or to enable the local authorities to cope with the criminals.

Mr. Kerr: That is it exactly. I couldn't draw myself together as well as that.

Mr. Johnson: But I am not willing to let it go unchallenged that the local officials should be blamed for not doing those things which they had no right to do. That is all.

Mr. Cooper: What did you mean when you said you didn't think any of the old timers committed these crimes? What did you mean by "old timers?"

Mr. Kerr: Colored people who have lived here any place from two to forty years; people that we knew every day on the streets.

Mr. Cooper: Now some of the colored people that have lived here for a long time were respectable, law abiding citizens?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Some of them we had upon the stand. Some of them ~~are~~ people of intelligence, <sup>weren't they?</sup> I know.

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Education?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Good citizens in every way?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Some of them had good homes here?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now there were two things, as I under-

1990

45

stand it, - and some of these people were killed in this riot?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, yes, there is no question about that.

Mr. Cooper: Now there were two things that I understand to which you and other law abiding citizens objected, and for which you asked redress, you wanted something done to stop the crime. When you went to the council was it your idea that they might agitate - secure more money and have a larger police force and thus help to secure suppression of crime?

Mr. Kerr: That was what I felt, the council and Mayor would be able to help.

Mr. Cooper: The council could do that, couldn't they? If they couldn't get money immediately they had the means of presenting the subject to the people so the people would consent to larger taxes, or in some way securing larger revenues, and thereby enable them to get a larger police force? They could do that, couldn't they?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Did they do anything of that kind?

Mr. Kerr: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Cooper: Well now, in the night, as a matter of fact, in a city of this kind, even though the most law abiding, they didn't have men enough to run it?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And there wasn't anything to prevent the council from trying to get men enough to patrol these streets at night?

1991

46

Mr. Kerr: I don't know of anything.

Mr. Cooper: That is one thing that they could have done. Now there is another evil that was in your mind, which you sought to have eliminated, that was the constant importation here of great numbers of laborers. That was another evil, wasn't it? You had laborers enough here to supply the market, didn't you?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, yes.

Mr. Cooper: And this influx of labor you thought overstocked the market?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, I feel that way now.

Mr. Cooper: They couldn't get labor; they couldn't earn wages; they couldn't support themselves, could they?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Witnesses have testified, you among the number <sup>believe</sup> that some of them came here with nothing but overalls and a shirt on, just as winter was coming on?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They landed here without a cent of money; poorly clad; shivering <sup>in</sup> the cold, hungry; no jobs. You thought that could be stopped, didn't you?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I thought at least there was some influence at work bringing these people in here.

574

Mr. Cooper: Exactly. And you thought if that influence could be reached, the influence which was bringing about the importation, that this influx of labor would be stopped? You saw one man here with from fifty to one hundred of these unfortunate people in his charge, standing down here <sup>in a group</sup> on the main ~~xxxx~~ street, the corner of

1992

47 Collinsville and Missouri Avenues. This is Missouri Avenue, the street on which this building fronts?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, right straight down here.

Mr. Cooper: And Collinsville is two blocks away?

Mr. Kerr: The next corner down here.

Mr. Cooper: One of the main corners of the city,

Mr. Kerr: The main corner of the city.

Mr. Cooper: You knew - or you had heard - about agents being through the south advising these people to come north, didn't you?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And you thought that possibly there might be some way by which the influences in this city responsible for that influx could be reached and the importation of excess labor stopped?

Mr. Kerr: Maybe through that means.

Mr. Cooper: If the common council had no right to pass an ordinance to prevent the bringing in of those laborers - no right as a matter of law to enact anything of that sort, an ordinance which they did enact would be of no legal efficacy. Nevertheless the Committee of One Hundred, or the Chamber of Commerce rather, before the riot; the Chamber of Commerce, composed largely, almost exclusively of great employers of labor, you thought might be able to reach this secret influence, whatever it was that was importing this excess labor, didn't you?

Mr. Kerr: I thought possibly they could be reached - probably.

Mr. Cooper: But when this petition was presented to the Chamber of Commerce, they ignored it - the

1993

48 Joyce petition?

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Joyce testified on the stand that he had introduced a resolution along the very lines that we were trying to work, and that resolution was tabled.

Mr. Cooper: By the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Kerr: By the Chamber of Commerce. I heard him make that statement before the State Council of Defense.

Mr. Cooper: That is Mr. Maurice Joyce?

Mr. Kerr: My Maurice Joyce.

Mr. Cooper: One of the leading citizens of East St. Louis?

Mr. Kerr: One of the leading citizens of East St. Louis.

Mr. Cooper: That petition asked the Chamber of Commerce, as I understand it, to take some steps, lawfully of course - perhaps only to exercise persuasion, influence - to stop this bringing up by the carload - yes, by the trainload - of unfortunate people who landed here, thousands of them without money and with no way to get a job. That is what that resolution meant?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Going to the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce had no authority to enact an ordinance or pass a law, did it?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: The only thing it could do in the way of prevention of that would have been to have exercised influence upon these agents, or stop the agents from

1994

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working in that line, isn't that so?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know. They may have exercised an influence with the Mayor and council to put on some more police or give us some protection in that matter. They should do both of those things. Their influence in East St. Louis is very great - the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cooper: Now you know the constitution of the United States contains a provision that Congress shall do nothing, or anybody else do anything, ever to prevent the people from peaceably assembling to petition for a redress of grievances. That is in the Constitution of the United States; so that when you and the other citizens here, as you did, went before the council, the common council and before the Chamber of Commerce, you simply tried as best you could to stop what you thought was a grievance, the importation of an excess amount of labor. Isn't that it?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, that was it, to get away from the conditions some way or another.

Mr. Cooper: Now when these colored laborers came here from the south, and these riots broke out, it is in evidence that the authorities, who ought to have enforced the law, the policemen and the soldiery, did absolutely nothing to protect them; but in many instances wantonly killed them. Nobody attempts to justify that, do they?

Mr. Kerr: I shouldn't think anybody would.

Mr. Cooper: That is all.

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Mr. Johnson: Reference has been made to the bunch of negroes brought here, and which congregated down here on the corner of Missouri <sup>(street)</sup> and Collinsville Avenue. I agree that it was a most reprehensible thing to bring them here half blind and poorly fed and deceived with the promise of employment; but after they were here, and while they were down on that corner down there, they were guilty of nothing that warranted their arrest, were they?

Mr. Kerr: Oh, no, no.

Mr. Johnson: And therefore, the police <sup>should not</sup> nor the city council, nor the Mayor, be blamed for their presence here.

Mr. Kerr: No, I didn't attempt to blame them, but I was trying to show there - my point there was that there was agents bringing those colored people up from the south. That was my point there.

Mr. Johnson: But they weren't the agents of the city council or the local police or of your Mayor?

Mr. Kerr: Who wasn't?

Mr. Johnson: Those agents who were bringing them here weren't the agents of the city council.

Mr. Kerr: No, but that is bringing the thing out exactly there. There has been an inducement given to those people from the south. They have either been induced to come on the grounds of better wages and better conditions, and they have been brought up here in bodies and bunches by those agents and dumped here in East St. Louis.

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Mr. Johnson: The committee hoped that you would be able to enlighten us as to who it was that offered these inducements, ~~xxx~~ but you have utterly failed to tell us who sent out these agents. Now we don't know who sent them out and we have been hoping somebody would come along and tell us who did, and we thought that perhaps you would. In fact, we hoped that you would be able to give us that information, but we haven't gotten it yet.

Mr. Kerr: Of course, now, I am placed in a position here where I can't prove what I say. I can't swear that those men have went out and induced laborers to come here.

Mr. Johnson: What men?

Mr. Kerr: The packing house interests, the big interests, and the packing house interests: the Aluminum Ore, the Missouri Malleable, the American Car & Foundry Company out here; the steel plant, the cotton seed oil company - those are the people I charge as responsible for bringing those men in here; not their agents for bringing them in here. They were sent out by those men, but I am in the unfortunate position that I can't swear that they did that, but that is my impression, my own impression.

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Mr. Johnson: And the Committee is in the position of not being able thus far to report who brought them here because we can't get the information. We are in as bad a fix about it as you are.

Mr. Kerr: We know that they came here.

Mr. Johnson: That is one of the things how that

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we would like to get information on. These people deny positively and emphatically that they were instrumental in their coming; and you and others emphatically assert that rumor has it that they brought them here and if you know anybody who has traced down any of those rumors, we would be glad to have the names so that we may call them.

Mr. Kerr: There is sworn testimony by negroes at the investigation made by the State Council of Defense, that that condition did prevail that they were brought here by agents. Now these poor negroes are in no better position to put their finger upon the man who paid those agents down there than I or you or any person else.

Mr. Johnson: But we are trying to get at who is behind those agents, who did that?

Mr. Kerr: That is what I would like to get too. We know that the agent is not doing it for nothing. He must be getting a salary for it, getting something for it, a commission or a salary. But that is as far as we can go.

Mr. Johnson: We know that when some of them are brought here they find their way into the industries, which you have named, but others of them who have come here have been sent farther along; have been sent to Ohio and Baltimore and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The question has arisen in my mind as to whether <sup>or not</sup> this was made a distributing point by which they were induced to go to these other places, so I wish to invite your attention to that, and during the rest of this investigation if you can help the Committee to locate or to

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53 determine just ~~how~~<sup>why</sup> it is that has been bringing them here, we would be obliged to you. But so far we haven't gotten the positive or direct proof.

A communication has just been sent up here - I don't know from whom - it is not signed - asking this question: "Did you hear of the Mayor making a tour of the south persuading men to come here; that there was great opportunity for labor here?" Have you any information on that subject?

Mr. Kerr: I had. I had two interviews by the Mayor in New Orleans - unfortunately I haven't got them. The lawyer for the State Council of Defense has them, Mr. McDonald.

Mr. Johnson: Newspaper interviews?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, along about the 29th of April.

Mr. Johnson: A newspaper published in New Orleans?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, a newspaper published in New Orleans.

Mr. Johnson: Where do you say we can find that?

Mr. Kerr: Mr. McDonald, the lawyer, attorney for the State Counsel of Defense has that in Springfield. He has the two articles, about that long (indicating).

Mr. Johnson: It may not be out of the way at all for you and the others to know that at least I - and I think the rest of the Committee - did not know that here had been any local investigation of these matters at all before we came here. I didn't know anything about the Council of Defense having been here and having made an investigation until this investigation of ours had been conducted several days.

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Mr. Cooper: What about that interview? What was there in the papers? What do you mean?

Mr. Kerr: It was stated in that interview that there was plenty of work.

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Mr. Cooper: Who said this?

Mr. Kerr: Mayor Hollman in his interview with the paper in New Orleans. I can't call the name of the paper. It was cut out and the notation on it was, "Adams" - I am not just sure about that - wherein he stated that there was 2,000 people a week coming to East St. Louis, colored people; that business was good; that the problem with the real estate people was the housing of the people coming in there; that we had some few little strikes on, a strike at the Aluminum Ore and anticipated a street railway strike. That was on, I believe, between the 27th and 29th of April. He made some reference to the Aluminum Ore strike, about it being in the hands of the courts, how an injunction had been issued, and the plant was under control; that there wasn't any trouble - didn't contemplate any serious trouble. I think that those were about the main facts.

Mr. Cooper: Do you remember anything else that the Mayor said in that interview?

Mr. Kerr: Well, those are the main points.

Mr. Cooper: So, according to that statement, we have the Mayor of this city, showing the tendency - the incipiency and actual tendency of these labor troubles, himself down south, giving interviews in newspapers, telling how colored labor coming here; large quantities; telling of the strike then pending - or that there would be strikes - which meant that men would leave their jobs

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55 of course, temporarily at least, and perhaps permanently. Did you gather from that interview ~~that~~ of Mayor Mollman's in New Orleans that if it's contents were communicated generally to negroes through the South it would lead to them coming here?

Mr. Kerr: Now I looked at that interview in New Orleans from two different ways. I have looked at it that it might be the Mayor is boosting his city away from home. I have thought again that it was an invitation to the colored man to come to East St. Louis and partake of the things that were good for the laboring man; and of course I can't read his thoughts on the matter, but I would willingly give Mr. Mollman the credit of being a booster. I don't know that the other thing may be taken. The question with us was whether it was an inducement to the colored people to come here. It may be that way. An interview of that kind may turn out that way, where in the first place it was never intended. Maybe it was intended that way, and of course I can't tell how it was meant.

Mr. Cooper: Well, if a man were to come into this community, - the Mayor of another city, up north say - and tell of the business prosperity in his city; how laborers were going in in considerable number; that strikes were on and more in contemplation - which would mean vacancies - jobs - wouldn't it incline laborers in this community who were out of a job here to go up there?

2001

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Mr. Kerr: Well, that would depend upon the opinion of the man who would leave here. That would be about what they would get north, what they got here, the strikebreakers and scabs you have in mind going to places where there is a strike on and open shop conditions.

Mr. Cooper: Professional strikebreakers?

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Mr. Kerr: Yes. I contend that such a condition may have prevailed in this instance here, that we have been getting those kind of people here, that you say might be gotten through such an interview further north. You wouldn't get the very best.

Mr. Cooper: Speaking of strike breakers, do you know about the strike breaking agency, the Waddell?

Mr. Kerr: I don't know anything of them, any more than I know they go around and endeavor to break strikes, for which I am informed they are well paid.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know anything about the Interstate Detective Association. Mr. Graham is at the head of it, or prominent in it - that breaks strikes, with headquarters in Chicago?

Mr. Kerr: I don't know anything about that. There are dozens of those agencies in Chicago - plenty of them here in St. Louis.

Mr. Cooper: When did you first hear about these interviews of Mayor Hollman in the city of New Orleans?

Mr. Kerr: It was brought to my attention, - well it was placed in my possession after I went for it. I had been told by Mr. Dumhoff out here about having

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those interviews in the paper; that he had received from New Orleans, from some relative of his down there, and I went to him and asked him if I might have those. I wanted to read them. I wanted to see them, and after I saw what they were, I thought I would like to have them to use them with the State Council of Defense, or with my associates, trying to figure out what he meant or what was meant by giving such interviews in the New Orleans papers. However, Mr. Dumhoff let me have them and when the State Council of Defense came here they got them into their possession and I was never able to get them back.

Mr. Johnson: When was it that Mayor Mollman was in New Orleans and gave those interviews?

Mr. Kerr: Between the 27th and 29th of April.

Mr. Johnson: The Aluminum Ore strike was then on here?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: And lasted two months?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Well then, would he not have been justified, so far as the truth of the situation is concerned, in making the statement that there were opportunities for the employment of labor here?

Mr. Kerr: For what reason? Because the Aluminum Ore strike was on?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Kerr: Well, he anticipated a strike of the street car people.

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Mr. Johnson: That would be additional?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, that would be additional.

Mr. Johnson: So that if Mayor Kollman did state that there were opportunities for the employment of negro labor here, he was correct in that, wasn't he?

Mr. Kerr: Well, yes, I suppose he was.

Mr. Johnson: But you don't know whether he said any part of it or not?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I don't know anything about that. I am taking the papers for it.

Mr. Johnson: Yes. I have seen whole columns at a time, purporting to be an interview with me, <sup>which</sup> and I hadn't said a word of it and hadn't seen the reporter who wrote it.

Mr. Kerr: I am very suspicious of the paper, very.

Mr. Johnson: As <sup>a</sup> rule they are reliable, but there are a few exceptions.

Mr. Foster: You were here the day of the riot?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foster: You didn't see any policemen particularly doing anything you say? Did I understand you to say that?

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Mr. Kerr: Well, everything was excitement and everything was run here and run there and run the other place; crowds going this way and crowds going that way. Of course everybody was mixed up.

Mr. Foster: Does the sheriff's office maintain a branch office in East St. Louis?

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Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir, -in the City Hall.

Mr. Foster: Were there any deputy sherriffs here that day that you saw?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I can't recall. I don't know that I saw any.

Mr. Foster: You know who they are?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, some of them.

Mr. Foster: Do you know Chief Deputy Traubel?

Mr. Kerr: No, I don't know him personally.

Mr. Foster: Do you know Mr. O'Brien?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foster: Did you see him doing anything that day?

Mr. Kerr: I don't know that I saw them.

Mr. Foster: Do you know what the powers of the sheriff are in the county?

Mr. Kerr: Well, I know they are over those of police officers.

Mr. Foster: They can summons anyone to assist them?

Mr. Kerr: Yes.

Mr. Foster: And nothing of that kind was done during the riot in East St. Louis?

Mr. Kerr: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. Foster: That is all.

Mr. Johnson: You may stand aside.

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Chairman, I have here an article that appeared in last night's Journal by Lindsay Cooper. The article in the Journal is not by Lindsay Cooper, but it refers to his magazine article written some place in the

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60 United States. I don't know who Lindsay Cooper is, but I expect it is some <sup>the paper</sup> - ~~the writer~~ says a writer of note. This article, with your permission, I would like to bring to the attention of this Committee.

Mr. Johnson: Go ahead.

Mr. Kerr: It says:

"Union men appeal to race prejudice. Lindsay Cooper, a woman writing about Congressional investigation of the East St. Louis outbreaks, says labor leaders apparently tried to maintain their power by stirring up feeling against negroes. Race prejudice was apparently used by labor leaders and union men for the purpose of maintaining the powers of organized labor in East St. Louis, is the conclusion of Miss Lindsay Cooper in a signed article of this week's issue of the Manufacturer's News, a national publication. Miss Lindsay is attending every session of the Congressional inquiry into the race riots of July the 2nd. She is a writer of wide repute down East, and is preparing a series of articles on the riots for eastern publication. In the Manufacturer's news she says that race prejudice was used as a weapon by labor leaders and union men for the purpose of maintaining the power of organized labor in East St. Louis would seem to be apparent from the testimony which has been given by witnesses appearing before the Congressional Committee which is in East St. Louis at this time engaged in conducting an investigation of the July troubles. It has already been definitely established

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that the laws of interstate commerce were flagrantly violated at the time of the rioting, and have been since, inasmuch as certain firms were unable to fill contracts already in hand.

After the preliminary riot of May 28th, numbers of negroes took warning and left East St. Louis. Many of those who left after and during the July rioting, have taken up their abode in St. Louis. Higher wages have been offered them by several manufacturers if they will return to the plants, but in those cases where they have returned they persist in retaining St. Louis as their place of residence and demand that they be released from work an hour earlier than customary, in order that they may be out of East St. Louis before dark.

The prolonged strike at the works of the Aluminum Ore Company seems to have been a directing cause of the difficulty. Injunctions obtained from the courts by the heads of the company were repeatedly disregarded by men who had been out on strike. The business of the Aluminum Ore company has doubled in the past year, making it very necessary that they obtain men. Negroes constituted the largest available body of non-unionized labor, consequently many of the places left vacant by the strike were filled by negroes who in July paid double penalty as strike breakers and as negroes. Prior to that time, on May 28th, a mass meeting had been held at the City Hall of East St. Louis. This mass meeting had been

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planned by the labor unions as a formal call upon the Mayor to demand that he take some action with regard to the enormous influx of negroes into East St. Louis, acquired an inflammatory pitch when a lawyer after listening to Mayor Hollman pacifying speech, arose and made a speech in which he stated: 'No law exists that can curb mob violence.' It was at the close of this meeting that the rioting of May 28th took place, when the crowd of over a thousand descending from the meeting room, the word went around that a negro had committed a holdup at a certain place. A mob formed instantly, rushing down Collinsville Avenue, a main street of East St. Louis. It assaulted a negro who was committing no crime other than the crime of living."

Now, Mr. Chairman, this - I don't know whether or not the reporter is responsible for that. If the reporter is in the room I would like to know it - whether or not they are responsible for such an article being written in the Manufacturer's Magazine.

Mr. Johnson: Miss Lindsay Cooper is in the room.

Mr. Kerr: I would like to ask the Chairman of the Committee if Miss Lindsay Cooper will state whether or not this is true.

Mr. Johnson: I don't think that the Committee can go into that.

Miss Lindsay Cooper: I would be very glad to, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: I don't think, however, that that is within the purview of conducting this investigation.

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I don't think that the Committee should permit any two outside persons to get into a controversy between themselves relative to a newspaper or a magazine article. The inquiry is long ~~en~~ enough drawn out as it is. It would be interminable if that were gone into.

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Mr. Kerr: If I may be permitted, Mr. Chairman, I want to state here and now that such unfounded stuff as this, through the press of the city of St. Louis and East St. Louis, and other cities, is directly responsible for this damnable condition that we have here; and it is done for no other purpose than to work up a feeling that up until the last year never existed in this city or this town, to my knowledge, and I have been a resident here for twenty years, with the exception of five years I was out of here at one time. Those are the kind of article that we cannot refute. The papers refuse the right to refute an article of that kind.

Mr. Cooper: You mean charges against union labor?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir; I mean charges against union labor. We have been refused the press in East St. Louis here, time after time - repeatedly in the last six or seven or eight months. I want to say further in connection with this riot proposition - not this riot but this Aluminum Ore strike - we have tried every way in the world to bring about a meeting between the representatives of that company - this I forgot before, - of that company, and even a committee of their own men

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who were employed in that plant, who called a strike, or a committee or representatives of organized labor. We have begged and pleaded with almost everybody we solicited aid from the Department of Labor, and we were successful <sup>in bringing</sup> two representatives from the Department of Labor to try and affect a meeting between the men and that company. We did everything in our power to try and get Mayor Mollman to arrange a committee. We had a committee meeting with him with one of our prominent citizens here, to try and get him to make a move to bring these committees together - to bring the committee and the company together - that they might arrive at some decision; if he didn't want to meet a committee from his men who had gone out on a strike, would he meet a representative of the organized labor movement? To which he said, "I have no troubles with organized labor, none at all. Those men were unorganized when they went out; they may be organized now, but I have no troubles or no arguments with organized labor." We couldn't get to Mr. Fox; we couldn't get to anybody, and this stuff was printed in the papers, that he had no labor troubles out there. We couldn't get anybody to act as a mediator. He wouldn't receive the mediator from the Department of Justice; he wouldn't consent to the meeting requested for a meeting either between his men who represented a committee of the men who went out on the strike, or a representative of the bona fide labor movement.

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Mr. Cooper: You mean the Department of Justice or the Department of Labor?

Mr. Kerr: The Department of Labor. Mr. Gill was here.

Mr. Cooper: State or national?

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Mr. Kerr: National. Congressman Gill was here and spent a month or six weeks around here trying to get this thing straightened out. Mr. Meyers, was here and stayed here some little time. I think Mr. Meyers came here the second time.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Meyers was from Washington?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir; both of them were from Washington. Those are the things that we have done but we can't get before the public because the press denies - the press is denied to us. That is all there is to it, and it has always been that way. It has been that way all through this whole controversy. It seems to be an effort of somebody to jam labor, to drive it down, bury it in the dust or grind it in the dust. Those are the kind of things that keep up this foment. Talk about the things that have brought about this riot here, that stuff, that thing there, is enough to put men to thinking and figuring what kind of stuff is going on. They don't know; people don't know - they don't know the other side. There is no organized common labor in East St. Louis. I don't know why they should charge the craft labor with fomenting trouble between negroes, or negro laborers or *their* white common laborers. We have

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repeatedly tried to get the colored man together. I have tried two or three times in the past two or three years to get the janitors and waiters of this town together. I am trying now to organize a bunch of men who are composed of a great many negroes, this very minute. We had meetings with Mr. Bundy, who was a prominent leader in the negro colony down here. We had a meeting with him ~~soon~~ <sup>shortly</sup> after the first riot, the president of the central body and myself, to see if we couldn't interest him in organizing the negro. We followed it up by three or four other meetings, at which Mr. Lille, was present, Mr. Bundy was present, Mr. Wheat was present, and Dr. Bluit was present.

Mr. Cooper: Those are all colored? —

Mr. Kerr: All of those people know that we endeavored to better the conditions of the negroes. You may say it is a selfish one if you wish; you may say that it is an effort in behalf of humanity, but this thing does stick out in any labor community, where there is very cheap, low wages, there is always the danger of the man who is higher paid going down to that plane. So as a result of that, ~~exists~~ from a selfish standpoint, if from no other - if not from a humanitarian one - we must bring that fellow down there up to our own standard of wages and living conditions, or give them money enough to bring those things about.

I don't think, and it is knowledge, that is all these

there is to it - there is no thinking about it - organized labor in this city of East St. Louis has not got a square deal, and I do hope and trust, and I do believe that we will get a square deal from this Committee.

Mr. Johnson: What you are emphasizing is your denial of any statement that organized labor undertook to - that organized labor has at any time undertaken to use or to employ race prejudice to drive out the negro?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, sir; emphatically. I deny that, absolutely deny it, and deny any responsibility for these race riots in East St. Louis, or any other community. The first principle of organized labor is there shall be no discrimination or distinction between class, color, creed or nationality. That is the doctrine that we have taught; that is the doctrine we have taught in the meeting with those colored men here. We have told them that time and again. We have tried to do induce them to organize but we apparently can't get to organize the negro for some reason or other that I can't explain.

Miss Lindsay Cooper: In justice to myself, may I say to Mr. Kerr that I am here -

Mr. Johnson: Wait one minute now. I don't believe that the Committee can afford to permit any unlimited debate to go on between you and any witness that may come on the stand. If you will take it up with the Committee at some recess of the Committee, we would be very glad indeed to hear you, but just simply to turn

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the two of you loose in this room now, with what you may say, and no limit on your time; to be taken down and printed at public expense, I don't think it is right. But the labor organization has been charged with using race prejudice to further its own end, and I think that the witness as the representative of organized labor has the right to treat of it in his testimony; but to turn him loose with anybody else than the Committee to discuss that at libitum, at the expense of the Government, I don't think is right.

Mr. Cooper: May I just say a word right here. In view of the way that rumors are sometimes originated and published without any foundation in fact, and being apprehensive because of some things that have been said to me that an unfounded rumor of importance affecting me personally <sup>may</sup> be published, I want to say <sup>understood that it</sup> this and this only - and I want it, is in no sense of the word to be construed as any comment upon what Miss Lindsay Cooper wrote, in any way affecting its reliability, its truth or accuracy or anything of the sort - I am not expressing an opinion one way or the other as to this controversy which has arisen here between the witness and the person who wrote the article, but because of some things that have been said to me, I think in justice to herself, the writer, and to myself, I ought to say that as I am informed, Miss Cooper comes from Tennessee - and from a very well known family in Tennessee, and I know that I come from Wisconsin, and we are not in any way

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related in so far as she knows or as I know. I have spoken to her and I wish it to be understood, lest these unfounded rumors gain circulation, that no member of the committee has any ~~and~~ relatives or representatives who is a correspondent in attendance upon this hearing. I say that in justice to the lady herself, who is a writer of prominence, and I feel also that I ought to say it in justice to myself. That is all, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson: I can say that while Miss Cooper and Representative Cooper have the same name, that it is <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ certainty <sup>has</sup> ~~did~~ not know of Miss Cooper until this investigation was on.

Mr. Cooper: Nor she of me.

Mr. Johnson: Well, I am not so sure of that. (Laughter); because you have been in public life too long for her not to have known of you. But if anybody has undertaken to improperly associate Representative Cooper with a writer of the same name, and thereby with whatever may have come from her pen, there is no sort of foundation for it. Representative Cooper did not know the young lady until she got here.

Mr. Kerr: I don't think there was any thought of that in the mind of anybody at all. It was the article itself. It appears to me as being something ~~xx~~ that just would create such feelings as that. Here is the labor movement here that has never had a hearing when this article - according to that article - ~~was~~ written; had never been on the stand; had never had an opportunity of defending itself; found guilty of

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charges - with no chance to prove for themselves, the position was taken for them that they were guilty in advance without ever being given a hearing. This article must have been written three or four or five or six days ago to ~~have~~ get into the magazine, and yesterday was the first day anybody got on the stand here as a representative of labor in any shape or form. At the same time they stand out convicted of race prejudice, and that is a sample of what we have been getting in East St. Louis, and other cities as well. We have had some few articles placed in the papers here - that is we would give it to them and when it would come back we wouldn't recognize it as the same article at all.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if that is all, you may stand aside.

The Committee will take a recess until half past one this afternoon.

(Whereupon, at 12.15 o'clock p.m. the Committee recessed.)

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Committee reassembled at 1:45 o'clock p.m., pursuant to recess.

Mr. Johnson. The Committee will please come to order. Mr. Kerr, I wish to suggest to you, or to anybody else who may be here representing organized labor, that the Committee now will hear whomever you may suggest.

Mr. Kerr: Mr. Jimerson.

Mr. Johnson: Will you come to the stand, Mr. Jimerson?

STATEMENT OF EARL N. JIMERSON, 1140 Katy Avenue,  
East St. Louis, Mo.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Jimerson, you are coming on the witness stand voluntarily, are you not?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; absolutely. I have nothing to hide.

Mr. Johnson: Well, it becomes my duty to admonish you that you can testify to such extent as you may desire, and not go any further than that.

Mr. Jimerson: I will tell you anything you want to know.

Mr. Johnson: And if the Committee asks you any question that you don't prefer to answer, because it might tend to incriminate yourself, you may decline to answer it.

Mr. Jimerson: I don't think that will happen.

Mr. Johnson: I will swear you now.

(The witness was here sworn by Mr. Johnson.)

Mr. Jimerson, give to the stenographer your full name.

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Mr. Jimerson: Earl F. Jimerson, 1140 Gaty Avenue,  
East St. Louis.

Mr. Johnson: What is your occupation?

Mr. Jimerson: I have been financial secretary and  
business agent of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher  
workmen of North America.

Mr. Johnson: What is your occupation now?

Mr. Jimerson: I am business agent of that organiza-  
tion; also a member of the county board of supervisors.

Mr. Johnson: Now, Mr. Jimerson, in your own way,  
make such statement to the Committee as you may desire to  
make relative to the pending investigation.

Mr. Jimerson: Well, about-- it was on July--

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) First, how long have  
you lived in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: About 23 years and three or four  
months-- probably two months-- all my life. I was born and  
raised here.

Mr. Foster: What was your business before you  
took up your present occupation?

Mr. Jimerson: I worked for about ten years in the  
retail grocery and meat business. For the last four years  
I have been in business with my organization.

Mr. Foss: Have you ever been employed in these pack-  
ing houses?

Mr. Jimerson: No; no chance of my getting employed  
there, neither-- never have, never will.

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Mr. Johnson: Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Jimerson: I believe it was on the morning of July 21st or 22nd, I was called on the telephone.

Mr. Johnson: What year?

Mr. Jimerson: 1916. These are the facts, in my opinion, leading up to this riot. These existed and caused the riot. I was notified that there was going to be a meeting of the employes of the packing-house interests located in National City at Bohemian Hall, at Eleventh and Exchange Avenue, and I was invited to attend. I went up there. I believe I notified Brother Ferr, and he also attended the meeting, I believe.

We found out at that meeting that there were 37 men-- or they formed an organization, rather, of about 700 men, and 36 or 37 of the labor agitators had been discharged.

Mr. Johnson: Discharged by whom?

Mr. Jimerson: By the packing house interests, Morris, Armour and Swift.

Mr. Johnson: In East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: No, in National City, National Stockyards, Illinois.

Mr. Johnson: I mean at this place here.

Mr. Jimerson: Oh, yes. And the sense of the meeting was that the employes wasn't going back to work the following morning unless the 37 men were reinstated or put back on the job. They asked at the meeting how many men would

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go back to work. I should say there were about something like eighteen or nineteen hundred men on the inside of the rail, and probably about thirteen hundred on the outside of the hall that couldn't get in, and the entire audience that were there raised their hands and said they wouldn't go back unless the 35 or 37 men-- I think it was 37-- were put back to work. The following morning they went up to their place of employment the same as usual; the Committee waited on the employment <sup>agent</sup> at the gate and told him what their mission was; told him the men wouldn't go back to work unless the 35 or 37 men were put back to work. They absolutely refused to do that, and they pulled the plant, and didn't leave enough men there to pull the whistle. That was July 16.

Mr. Johnson: 1916?

Mr. Jimeron: Yes, sir. The following day I was called by telephone by a party named Smith-- I later found out his name was Smith, a paperhanger. He asked me-- I come home to dinner about 12 o'clock, and he asked me to come out to his house, as he had something very important to tell me. I jumped into the Ford machine and drove out to his house, and he conveyed the information to me that a clerk employed at the M. & O. Railroad-- that is a company doing interstate business through the South--

Mr. Cooper (interposing:) That does the "M. & O." stand for?

Mr. Jimeron: Mobile & Ohio. He told me an M. & O. clerk had called him up and said they had information down

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there that a trainload of negroes were coming through there at six o'clock in the evening, and he said that they were booked to the National Stockyards, Illinois. He suggested to me that I take some fellows and go down there and have it stopped. I told them that I had enough brains not to fool with interstate shipments of any kind, and I was not carrying that kind of orders<sup>out</sup> or doing that kind of business. About the same afternoon, I believe, or the following afternoon--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) What was Mr. Smith's full name?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it was J. J. Smith.

Mr. Johnson: Does he live here?

Mr. Jimerson: He lives here in town. He has a family here-- a paperhanger.

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That same afternoon, or the following afternoon, a report was printed in the East St. Louis Daily Journal, telling about a carload of cots and guns going into the packing houses. I met the reporter next day and asked him how he got the information, and he said they got rumors and shoved it into the paper late in the afternoon, about 3 o'clock.

Mr. Johnson: What was the reporter's name?

Mr. Jimerson: I am pretty sure it was Mr. Popkess, with the Daily Journal at that time. He told me that the packing house interests had called his paper up and told his paper there would be no more advertisements from their companies put in their paper on account of printing this

statement, and I believe the case to be a fact, because I take the paper every night, and I haven't found any ads run in the paper since that time, to my notice. I read the paper and kind of scrutinize the ads.

The men were out about one week, I believe.

Mr. Cooper: What was that particular statement? They said because the paper printed a particular statement. Now what was the statement that the paper printed, exactly, about?

Mr. Jimerson: Why, I don't remember exactly the headlines of the report, but it said that a packing house company, I believe, had imported or brought in a carload of cots and guns.

The strike lasted for, I believe, six or seven days. Mr. Hunter says about two days, but Mr. Hunter's memory is very short. It was six or seven days, and we finally advised the men to go back to work. They got what they demanded. They promised to reinstate the men; they promised not to discriminate against a man because he belonged to the union or did not belong to the union. The men kind of stood out strongly for signing an agreement to that effect, but we knew it was impossible to get it, so we advised the men to go back to work, and we told them if the bosses carried out that intention there would be no more trouble, and they could have all their grievances settled in the very easiest manner, if they had any. They also gave the men the right to have a committee of three men on each

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floor of the packing house.

They went back to work, and they had it over very shortly after that that there were grumbings of another strike. The newspaper reporters came to me on many occasions-- I know them all-- and asked me if there was a rumor there was going to be a strike at the packing houses, "what do you know about it?" I said "I don't know anything about it."

Mr. Johnson: The other strike was July 22, 1916?

Mr. Jimerson: They used the old tactics; they started to bring in the colored men and <sup>employed men and</sup> employing them in place of employing the usual number of white men as they did in the past. Usually they fired the white man-- not the white man, but the labor agitator. They fired him or the man that attended union meetings, and put a negro in his place.

588 Well, that condition went along and it is still in power right now at the present time at the packing house. They are doing the same thing right now that they done right after the strike: Our organization was about a thousand men-- probably 1500 men-- at that time. It has dwindled <sup>til</sup> now to we have about 30 in the packing houses in National City.

In November-- or in October-- 1916, I believe, there was a strike of the Aluminum Ore Company. The men were dissatisfied out there-- something in regard to pay day-- and they demanded an eight-hour day and an increase in wages

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in wages, which they walked out, and the company was handicapped and couldn't have no readiness to take care of their plant, and they had to agree with the men that they would give them everything they wanted. They would have got the plant if they had asked for it. They went back to work and they formed what is known as the Aluminum Ore Employees' Protective Association, I think it was at the time, and they were holding their meetings right along; and I believe the report came to me from that strike that 57 of the committeemen that were representing the men, all of them were fired except seven. The report came to me that all of them were fired except seven.

Mr. Johnson: You say they were "fired". You mean dismissed?

Mr. Jimerson: Discharged because they were agitators for labor unions. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Cooper: You mean that this committee that waited on the company was discharged?

Mr. Jimerson: This 57 men they spoke about Mr. Fox meeting in the Empress Theatre out there when they called him and got him out of bed. That is the understanding I got out of it.

Mr. Cooper: Those men were all discharged, you think, except seven?

Mr. Jimerson: seven or eight. I believe that is part of the cause for the walk-out last time. That is my information.

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Along about that time I was a very active member in the Wilson-Marshall Club. We had numerous reports come there about the negroes being brought here for political purposes but we couldn't find that out. We traced the rumors down, run down rumors, run down everything we could, and investigated conditions, and we found something like 847 colored people that had registered and had only been here a short time. We demanded that those be taken off the registration books, and I believe they took off about 200 of them. The balance stayed on. We had our attorney down there for the Wilson-Marshall Club, and demanded that they be stricken off the list <sup>because</sup> ~~and~~ they had not been in town long enough to be legal voters.

Mr. Johnson: What election was that?

Mr. Jimerson: November, 1916, the general election.

Things traveled on like that. There were a great number of crimes committed. I don't know the exact number. The newspaper reporters gave me an itemized list, and I gave it to Brother Kerr. There were 876 stick-ups and houses burglarized, 22 murders and seven rapes.

Mr. Johnson: In what length of time?

Mr. Jimerson: Between September 1st, 1916, and June 1st, 1917, I believe, those conditions were existing. I am right around town and knew the conditions of the town that existed during that time, and finally it got so bad that I myself was one of the first men in the delegates

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in the central body from our organization that demanded that the central body go down and see the Mayor and see what could be done to bring about better conditions. The situation here was that there were two men here for every laboring man's job in town. There were men loafing on the streets, white and black. There were idlers, and I don't know what source they came from. I don't believe they were residents here, and I don't know everybody in town, but I know the big part of the people in town, and we made several calls on the Mayor without any response or any betterment.

Conditions kept the same, people being shot on the streets, police officers being shot down. I am not referring to the last one; I am referring to officers before that time.

Finally the committee reported back to the central body, and I was the delegate who made the motion that the central body appear in a body at the council meeting on that Monday night and demand and show the Council the real seriousness of the conditions in East St. Louis. I was the man that made that motion on the floor.

Mr. Cooper: What Monday night?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it was May 28th.

Mr. Johnson: 1917?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir. That condition existed just the same as it was right before the riot. So letters

were printed and sent to each delegate. There were about eighty or ninety delegates, I believe, belonged to the central body. Probably 65 or 70 attended. Probably two-thirds attends out of the number of delegates supposed to be there. The meeting was called solely for the delegates to the central trades and labor union, to confer with the Mayor and City Council. The East St. Louis Daily Journal a night or two previous to the meeting got wind of this meeting, and they advertised it as a mass-meeting of the citizens of East St. Louis. They advertised it as a mass meeting of the citizens of East St. Louis going to take place at the City Hall. Our delegates met at 137-A Collinsville Avenue. A good many labor organizations met there at that, and they, about 80 or 90 in number, went over into the City Hall, and when they got over to the City Hall they saw streams of people going upstairs into the auditorium.

Mr. Cooper: Did you authorize the newspapers to print that?

Mr. Jimerson: No.

Mr. Cooper: That notice of the mass meeting?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir. The Journal got wind of it probably through seeing the letter wrapped up in a letter on top of the original package at the Call Printing Company, and come out with that statement. The files will show they printed that statement of a mass-meeting to be held by the white citizens to protest against the influx of colored people from the South.

We met at 137-A Collinsville Avenue and selected

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Mr. Jerry Kane as our spokesman for our party, about 80 in number. We proceeded over to the City Hall and found this vast multitude of people over there at the City Hall Auditorium. They were coming <sup>in</sup> in droves there. It looked like a political campaign was on, or may be Bryan was in town.

The Council was holding a caucus downstairs in the chamber, and we had the intention of going into the City Council chamber, which is a small place and will probably

seat as many as this place here will. That is where we proposed to meet the City Council. Mr. Kane or Mr. Kerr arranged the meeting, but they found the crowd was upstairs and they were clamoring for the Mayor and the City Council to come up there. The crowd filled the City Hall auditorium up there, and there were lots of people standing. I judge there were 1500 people there. Mr. Allegher, who was chairman of the meeting, opened the meeting by telling-- addressing the Mayor and City Council; telling the Mayor and City Council what their purpose was there. He told them the seriousness of the situation; that the delegates of the central body came down there for the sole purpose of trying to see if they couldn't suggest or help get together and remedy conditions.

Mr. Allegher opened the meeting, and I believe Mr. Curtis, A. C. Curtis, who was at one time business agent of the carpenters' union, addressed the meeting in a very few remarks. Mr. Jerry Kane followed him with a few remarks, and about that time our old stand by, our old speaker around Main Street, came trotting down the middle of the aisle, Mr. Alexander Flannagan, and went up on the stage, and the crowd started to hollering, "Flannagan; let's hear from Flannagan!"

Mr. Johnson: Was that before or after he started down the aisle?

Mr. Jimerson: When he was coming down through the aisle. The crowd see him come in, and naturally, he is

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a humorist anyway-- just a bunch of wit anyway--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) Did Mr. Flannagan start for the stage before or after the cries for Flannagan commenced?

Mr. Jimerson: I think he walked up to the stage before they commenced hollering for Flannagan, or somebody sent him up there from the back: I don't know. He opens his address, I believe, by telling some kind of funny story, which he generally does, and he went along and was getting along very nice until he got kind of sarcastic in his remarks-- I thought so-- and I got up and left the meeting hall. I went down the back way, or the stairs where they bring people up on the stage, and went down and sat in the Council Chamber, and I made the remark, I believe, to Bob Johns, business agent of the carpenters, that if they were going to make a joke out of this meeting I was going to leave.

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Mr. Johnson: What sort of sarcasm was he indulging in?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, just what you have heard here.

Mr. Johnson: We haven't heard before that he indulged in sarcasm.

Mr. Jimerson: Well, somebody said "Flannagan, we've got your row of flats rented to niggers". He hollered back "You're a damn liar." That was the remarks I referred to.

Mr. Johnson: A very polite meeting (laughter)?

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Mr. Jimerson: Well, it was very polite, you bet it was, in some sense. I went down to the Council Chamber and sat down there waiting for the Council to come down, and the Council five or ten minutes <sup>if the</sup> came down and was just in session five minutes-- had just opened the Council meeting--

Mr. Cooper (interposing:): Who was the man you spoke to when you went downstairs?

Mr. Jimerson: I think Mr. Robert Johns, sitting right back there (pointing). I sat down in the Council Chamber there a few minutes. The Mayor had just opened the meeting, and I heard a crowd yell, and I run to the side window of the City Hall and seen a crowd coming up Main Street. I hurried out of the City Hall building, and by that time they had got to the police station. The officers were bringing in some negroes in a machine, or the police automobile, and some other officers brought in another negro from Collinsville and Illinois Avenue, I learned after-wards. I took the steps and pleaded with the crowd to go on home. I says "If there is any men in this crowd that carry union cards, if you think anything of that card; if you think anything of organized labor, for God's sake go on home. Don't let the public press come out in big headlines in the morning and say this meeting was called by organized labor and caused a riot." Those are the exact words I used on the steps of the police station. Mr. Thalen, the City Clerk, also talked to the crowd, as did Mr. Dave Walsh, ex-City Clerk, both of them members of

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organized labor. About that time the Mayor came up, and the Mayor begged the crowd to go home in the name of the City. The crowd started to hissing him and asking him from the back of the crowd who elected him, and he seen his attempts were useless.

Mr. Johnson: What did they mean by that question, who elected him?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, the Mayor got a good many colored votes during the spring. He got my vote also, I will say, and he got a good many colored votes during the spring election.

There was two soldiers, I learned afterwards they belonged to the National Guard in St. Louis, started out with the crowd, calling "Come on", and waving their hands, and the crowd surged on down Main street.

Mr. Johnson: What date was that?

Mr. Jimerson: That was May 28th. They surged on down Main Street, and every time you would hear them hit a nigger or knock down a nigger they would yell, like a rabbit hound would when he jumped a rabbit, or some kind of an animal in the woods. Mr. Smith, a police commissioner, who is a member of organized labor-- William Smith-- and I walked into the police building, and he says to me, "Let's go over on Collinsville Avenue; probably we will see somebody we know and can talk to them." We walked over to Division and Collinsville Avenue, and Billy took one side

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of the street and I took the other, and we went up the street to see if we knew anybody, but we didn't run across anybody we knew in the mob. I talked to one fellow there, and he says "You fellows ought not to do that", and I got slapped in the face for it.

Mr. Johnson: Who slapped you?

Mr. Emerson: I don't know who it was. I said to Billy, "I am going to get out of here before I get my block taken off", and I walked back to the police station, *I got over to the police station* and I could see that they had beaten niggers up, and I said to the night lieutenant, "Hickey, if you want me to, I'll go to Collinsville and St. Louis Avenue and tell the colored people, if there are any on the cars, to get off the cars and go back the other way, as they are beating them up down here." He said "That's a good idea; you go down there and do that." I went on down there to Collinsville and St. Louis Avenue, and I stayed there until 1 o'clock, stopping cars.

Mr. Johnson: One o'clock in the day?

Mr. Emerson: No, one o'clock in the morning. It was about half past eleven when I suggested about going down there, when I come back to the police station.

Mr. Johnson: This was still the night of May 28th?

Mr. Emerson: Well, it was getting into the morning of May 28th. I guess there must have been 25 or 30 colored people coming on the cars, and I stopped the cars and told the conductors to leave them off; not to send them

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down there, because he was just sending them where they would get beat up very badly, or probably killed.

I came back to the police station about half past one that night. Sergeant Kelly asked me if I would take the police Ford and take some lunch out in the Ford to the officers at the Deaconess Hospital. I went to ~~Fatkin's~~ Baxter's restaurant-- John McGlynn and Dave Walsh, ex-city clerk, and myself-- they were going on home, and I drove them out in the machine, and stopped at Baxter's lunch room and got a dozen sandwiches and some coffee and took it out to the officers at the Deaconess Hospital, who had charge of 15 or 16 wounded colored men out there. We drove from there to the soldiers' tent at 19th and Illinois Avenue, probably a distance of three blocks from the Deaconess Hospital to the tents where the soldiers were camped. Mr. McGlynn went in there. He knew Major Wavanaugh-- had met him some place-- and when he came back out he said Major Wavanaugh said he couldn't render any service until he had orders from this General Barry at Chicago. I believe that is what he said; and that if he came out there wouldn't be any pink tea up there about it; they would have a real card game when they came.

I goes on back to the police station then about three o'clock. I called my wife up about 12 o'clock, and she had told me-- she wanted to know if I had heard about the shooting out near our house. She was returning home from her Uncle's, who was sick, and where two hold-ups occurred in probably fifteen minutes out there, and five

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shots was fired just as she was around the corner going down to her home.

Mr. Johnson: By whom were the shots fired?

Mr. Jimerson: Well now, I don't know. It is rumored they were fired by a colored man, and they hit a white man. I believe they shot him in the thigh or leg or some place.

Mr. Johnson: Do you remember the name of the white man who was shot?

Mr. Jimerson: No, but I think the police records will show it. I told her everything was all right and I would be home; that I was going out to the Henrietta Hospital and would be home just as soon as I got back to the station again. She seemed to be satisfied. Now of course she was a little nervous.

Mr. Cooper: Is the Henrietta Hospital the same as the Deaconess Hospital?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir. We come back to the station, and Roy Albertson drove me out home in the Ford. That is the reporter for the Republic at that time, now with the Journal. He drove me home in the Ford about 3 o'clock.

I came down next day, and conditions was pretty serious. There was crowds forming, and the rumors were afloat that they were going to "get" the negroes, and were going to get even, and they were going to stop this crime, and all this stuff was rumored around-- all kinds of rumors.

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I went to the chief of police and told him "If I can be of any assistance to you, Ransome, I will work on the books at the station and let one of the officers go out and I will take his place inside of the station, or I will run the Ford for you; I will do what I can to help you." He thanked me and asked me if I would bring my Ford down. I brought my Ford down and I drove my Ford, I believe, two or three nights hauling officers to places where the ~~gangs~~ <sup>calls</sup> would come in that there were crowds gathering, or somebody had been assaulted, or something of that kind. I am not telling this to elaborate on what I done myself, but I am telling it to show that it is not true, as charged, that we caused the riot or tried to incite the riot, or help the riot in any way. That is the reason I am telling these things; not because I want to elaborate on what I done, because I just figure I done what any citizen ought to do.

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That condition grew quiet then for probably five or six or seven or eight days, and Mr. Werr and Mr. Whalen-- Brother Werr and Brother Whalen-- got the State Council of Defense to come down here. They sent telegrams-- you have seen the telegrams here-- statements that they have made. I worked with the State Council of Defense; worked with Dr. Eundy and Dr. Blumitt, H. D. Woods, Mr. Sam Wheat, and I believe--

Mr. Cooper (interposing:) Three or four you have named are colored men?

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Mr. JImerson: All colored. We had a committee of five colored men and a committee of five union labor men trying to find out who was the mysterious influence to bring about conditions which existed here, which caused riots. We had several meetings with them, but didn't have much effect.

Mr. Johnson: You don't think there was any mysterious influence, or any influence at all, which urged the commission of crime by the negroes to whom you have referred, do you; or do you mean that there was some sort of influence that brought them here?

Mr. JImerson: Why, the influence I have referred to was the influence that brought in the large influx up here of negroes.

Mr. Johnson: You don't mean that anybody was behind them urging them to commit these crimes?

Mr. JImerson: Oh no; I don't think that.

Mr. Johnson: Well, I wanted your statement to be perfectly clear upon that point, and it was not quite clear.

Mr. JImerson: No, the real condition of the town at that time wasn't anything of the kind. I worked with the State Council of Defense and with the committee. I was a member of the committee, and the suggestion was that we try to find some way to remedy the condition here and to find out who was bringing the colored men up here in such great numbers that they would be a menace to themselves

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and also to the city and its people. It worked all right, the first two meetings we had with them, but finally it flared out that they took-- instead of taking our side and trying to help us, they took the other side of the question. When Dr. Bundy took the stand I must say that Dr. Bundy absolutely didn't tell us-- or didn't tell the State Council of Defense what he told us he thought he knew or had heard, but he told just the reverse. The testimony will show he told just the reverse of what he told us, that the conditions were. After that time--

Mr. Johnson (interposing): After what time?

Mr. Jimeson: After the State Council of Defense investigations everything went all right.

Mr. Johnson: You mean the one that met here June 17, 1917?

Mr. Jimeson: I think that was the time. The crime was continued just the same. There was hold-up after hold-up. If the Committee will take the daily paper here and take the file of it, it will show you where the paper has printed five or six hold-ups and stick-ups every night, and every once in a while a murder, and once in a while a rape. The papers will show that, that there was comment among the reporters that if there wasn't somebody stuck-up or held up by nine or ten o'clock in the evening they said things was

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going to be quiet that night. That was the comment among the reporters. They will testify themselves if they are asked about it. They said it was just common comment that things was going to be very quiet in East St. Louis tonight if there wasn't four or five stick-ups.

Things went on that led up to this other riot. I know nothing about the riot. I was home in bed. I was sick that night-- that is, the Sunday night that the officers were shot. I went to bed about 7 o'clock in the evening and didn't know anything about it until next morning. Sergeant Coppedge was a very personal friend of mine, and a lady that was acquainted with my wife's uncle-- who was a member of the police department and she was sick in bed for six months previous to the trouble-- from Thanksgiving night, 1918-- he died in April, some time, and I got to knowing Sergeant Coppedge pretty well through him-- a woman who lived in the south end of town called at my house about half past four in the morning, and said "Did you hear about Sam being shot last night?" I said "What?" "Yes", Coppedge was shot by a mob of niggers last night." "Where at?" "Tenth and Bond." "Was that so?" I thanked her for conveying the information to me, or calling me up, and went downstairs and picked up the newspaper, the Republic, which I take at home, and the Republic had big head-lines on the assault by 150 or 200 armed niggers, by their special representative or chief of the bureau of reporters on this side, Roy Albertson. The paper goes on and tells about the niggers being shot down there at <sup>Tenth</sup> and Bond Avenue.

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I came dn down town a little early that morning. I generally don't leave the house until 9 o'clock, answer the telephone calls and then go on about the daily routine of business. I left the house about 8 o'clock and came on downtown and walked over to the police station. I seen the Police Ford standing in front of the police station. It looked then like a flour sieve, all punctured full of holes. I stood around talking a little while, and seen fellows come out there and look at the machine and go away, and were muttering to themselves. And so finally, after I stood there about half an hour, I walked in and told the Chief-- Payne and the Mayor was in the office at the time-- "if I was you fellows, I would move that Ford away from in front of the police station. Take it some place where people can't see it." And I understand they took it to a garage and had the holes puttied up or painted up in some way.

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I came back over to this cigar store-- the crowds was forming then-- I came over to the cigar store in the Ilmo Hotel building, with the intention of getting a shave, and Herb., a porter in there-- a very nice little colored boy-- got a family-- and I said to him "Herb, if I was you I would take my family and go across the river. It looks like trouble here." He says "Mr. Jimerson, I haven't got any money to go across the river, and no place to take them when I get over there." "Well", I says, "take them across the river and put them under a tree over there. They'll

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be safe over there anyway." And finally he seen the crowd go along as I was sitting in the barber-chair-- he seen the crowd go along the street and finally he ducks out of there and I never seen him any more until Friday the following week. That was on Monday, and he came back on Friday.

Mr. Johnson: He went to St. Louis?

Mr. J'merson: I don't know. He said afterwards he went to St. Louis. I told him to go over there and camp underneath a tree if he couldn't find any other place to camp.

After I got shaved, I went out to 27th and Bellevue Avenue, out in that neighborhood, and had a call or two to make out there, and I went out there and came back on downtown again, I guess about 11 or half past 11, and the crowds were gathering, and the soldiers were here by that time. I went to the cigar store and bought a cigar and came out and went home for dinner, and as I was going home for dinner an ambulance came running up Missouri Avenue and drove into St. Mary's Hospital, and I just for curiosity goes up where the ambulance was standing and looked into the ambulance, and I see a couple of dead colored men in there. They were dead and laying there stiff, and there was some colored woman sitting on top of the bodies-- not on top of the bodies, but there is kind a seat on the side of the automobile, and she was sitting on that, and she looked like she was beaten up pretty bad: I learned later that that

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was the Beard woman, just in the trial here in Belleville.

Mr. Cooper: You mean the woman whose husband and boy were killed?

Mr. Jimerson: That is my understanding; yes, sir. I came back on downtown and went back home and had dinner.

Mr. Johnson: Where was she sitting, on the dead bodies?

Mr. Jimerson: No; there is kind of a little seat, probably about that square, that sits on the side of the ambulance, kind of a folding seat on the inside of the running board or body of the ambulance.

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Mr. Johnson: You first made the statement that she was sitting on the bodies?

Mr. Jimerson: No; she was sitting on the seat, a little square seat like you put in an automobile. It is folded down like and flops up again.

I went home and told my wife "It looks like trouble here, the way conditions are here, and I think you had better get ready to go to St. Louis." She said "where are you going to?" I said "I will stay here and protect the property." "Well", she says "if you stay, I'll stay also." I says "All right", and so I let it go at that?

I came on back downtown. I don't know what I done during the time. I might have been over to the police station once or twice, and back to the City Hall, and probably over to the cigar store. There was no use doing anything, be-

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cause nobody was working that day. They were generally downtown, everybody watching what was going on. I was standing in front of the police station about half past five in the evening, and I said-- the police station and the fire department are right together-- and I said to Captain Johnson, "Sid, I wonder we haven't had any fire-calls." I hadn't any more than gotten it out of my mouth when the alarm came, and we could see a blaze at the back of the International Harvester Company at Main and Brady Avenue. I said to Coyne Smith, "Coyne, let's go down there," and Coyne said "Well, we aren't going to bother anything; we got a right to go down there." So Coyne and I walked down there.

Mr. Johnson: How did it happen that you were looking for a fire?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I just kind of formed an opinion, the way the mobs was going on, that there was going to be trouble, and I thought they would light into these segregated prostitute districts, and set the places on fire. I looked for that. I looked for it a long time ago, not only here lately, but I looked for it a long time ago. The segregated district being filled with women of ill fame, and I looked like there might be a body of citizens go and burn those places out any time and get rid of that class of people.

We goes on down to this fire at Main and Brady Avenue, and we walked up along the railroad track, and just as we did that, 25 or 30 shots come over there, and I took to a

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telegraph post and got behind it. Coyne says "Where are you going?" I said "Never mind where I am going; I am going to get behind a telegraph post till the shots get past." The shots stopped, and we were standing at Third and Railroad Avenue when the St. Louis Fire Department came over, and they drove down that way and drove down a short street where they couldn't get through, and I told the firemen "You can't get through that way; you've got to go around and come down Broadway and Main Street to the fireplug. Do you know how to get down there?" He says "No", and I says "Do you want me to show you the way?" He says "Yes, jump on and tell me how to get down there", and I got on and rode with the St. Louis Fire Department down there and helped to connect the hose to the plug and got the line of hose stretched to the fire back of the International Harvester Company.

I come on back to the police station after that, after those houses, which was practically frame shacks, was burned down, and I thought to myself that if conditions was going to be this way I had better go home and take care of my own house. My mother was out there and my sister and my wife, and I thought I had better go home, so I caught a car and goes home. I got home, I guess, about six o'clock, probably a little after six, and my wife and three or four of the neighbors was standing on the back porch watching the fire burning down here on Fourth and Railroad Avenue, and she said there was a couple of shots fired out there and they heard the bullets whizzing by. They thought it was a

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big bug at first, but they found <sup>the place</sup> where the bullet had chipped off the wood at the edge of the house. Of course I don't know where those bullets come from. They might have been fired two miles away from these strong powered rifles.

I stayed at home all night long, and I came down about the last part of the riot that I know of. I didn't see any more. I watched the burning of the places from my house. I could see them distinctly from the back porch on the second floor. You could see the burning of the houses distinctly. We walked down to the corner of the block where lots of the people in the neighborhood had gathered, and watched the Broadway Opera House burn. We saw the roof burn first and then the building came in. We stood and watched that, but the bullets started to flying so strong around there that we hiked on back home. The bullets were coming from every place, whizzing by. We were at the school-house building at Tenth and Gay Avenue, and we made up our minds that we had better go home, and the crowd dispersed there, the men and women of the neighborhood, and walked on back to their houses, and I sat up all night. I didn't go to bed till about four or half past four, because there was rumors that the niggers was going to come over on us. I never thought much of the rumors myself, but thought I had better stay up anyway and see that our place wasn't set on fire. I stayed up till four o'clock and went to bed and didn't know anything more about it till next morning.

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During the spring of 1917 there was a <sup>great</sup> epidemic of small-pox broke out in East St. Louis, and all the appropriation that they had made for the city health department was used up in two or three months at the first of the year, the first two or three months of the year, and the condition was such that it broke out in the packing houses, I believe they took three or four cases out of the packing houses up there, and those general conditions were what led up to the riot-- the conditions I have stated, the lawlessness going on here, crimes being committed and the various other-- small-pox and everything-- had this tendency to inflame the people. The selling of houses by real estate men to colored people in white neighborhood, and all such stuff as that; the moving of white people out of houses that they had lived in for years and probably paid ten a twelve dollars a month for, and the real estate men would rent them to colored people for \$14 or \$15 or \$16 a month. Those conditions led up to it, in my opinion, and I believe it is the true opinion, to the cause of the riots. Nigger after nigger came in-- kept coming in. I have stood at the depot here and seen them come in on Sunday morning, 300 at a time, barefooted, without much clothes. One family that came in I specially recall because I talked to them. They had six little children. There wasn't more than two and a half to three and four years old; no shoes on their feet; the man had a straw hat on, and the woman was very poorly clad and was carrying some kind of a bundle with some of their few

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nigger belongings that they owned. I said to them "where do you people want to go at?" That was after the State Council of Defense had been here. They said that they come up here to go to work. They said some white man had took 20 or 25 of those colored people down there and told them if they could get \$5 apiece together they would bring them up here, and he got off the train some place, they didn't know where at-- that he was going to send a telegram-- and they never seen him any more. Those are the facts, as I know them, about these things-- and rumors.

Mr. Johnson: You have testified, Mr. Jimerson, to the effect that Dr. Fundy didn't testify before the Committee-- do you know what committee that was?

Mr. Jimerson: The State Council of Defense.

Mr. Johnson: Didn't testify before the State Council of Defense as you had expected him to testify: Had you had a conversation with him previous to his appearance upon the witness stand, wherein it was discussed as to what he would testify?

Mr. Jimerson: Not what he was going to testify; no, sir. We talked over the general conditions. This committee of five I spoke to you about talked over the general conditions, the organization of the colored man and the conditions that existed, and then fellows coming in here. He told us there was no doubt in his opinion that there was some influence or some agents in the South that was bringing these colored fellows up here. He

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testified, I believe, before the State Council of Defense, that 15,000 negroes came in inside of a year's time.

Mr. Johnson: 15,000?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; inside of a year's time.

Mr. Johnson: That was on the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, was it not, that Dr. Bundy testified, June 1917?

Mr. Jimerson: When the State Council of Defense was here. I don't remember exactly. It might have been the first or second or third day.

Mr. Johnson: They met on the 7th. Do you recall on what day they adjourned finally?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: About how long were they in session?

Mr. Jimerson: I guess they must have been in session at least four or five days. That is my recollection. I was called to Belleville on some business of the county board, and I didn't get to attend but about a day and a half of the session. I don't know what transpired then.

Mr. Johnson: On Thursday, the 11th day of June, did you meet some men in the office of the business agent in the Labor Temple room for the purpose of discussing labor conditions here?

Mr. Jimerson: I met this committee of five that Dr. Bundy had suggested.

Mr. Johnson: What committee of five were there?

Mr. Jimerson: There was a committee of five.

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Mr. Johnson: What committeemen were there?

Mr. Jimerson: I think Mr. Kerr was there, Mr. Whitten, Mr. Kirk, and Mr. Allegor. I think that was the committee of five.

Mr. Cooper: Those were white men?

Mr. Jimerson: Those were the five white men.

Mr. Johnson: On the 14th day of June were you present-- and you don't have to answer it unless you want to-- were you present at the place that I have indicated, or a man by the name of Cross, and another by the name of Leak, another by the name of Smith, another by the name of Gill, another by the name of Conway, and another by the name of Paul, were present?

Mr. Jimerson: I remember of being in several, not only one, but I was in several meetings with those fellows that came there. Mr. Leake and Mr. Paul and Mr. Cross were members, I believe, or organizers for the Western Federation of Miners, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Johnson: Well, the day I am asking you about was the 14th day of June, and the place was the office of the business agent in the Labor Temple, and those whom I have named were reported to have been present, and also that Dr. Bundy was present. Do you recall any meeting of that kind?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir; I was never there when Dr. Bundy was there; no, sir. I was not.

Mr. Johnson: So you were not present at the meeting

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that I have indicated?

Mr. Jimerson: Absolutely not; no, sir. I was not there. The only meetings I was ever at with reference to committee meetings with organized labor men was meetings held at 137-A Collinsville Avenue. That is where Dr. Bundy was present, those meetings right there. Other meetings I didn't know anything about-- that is, where Dr. Bundy was present.

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Mr. Johnson: On July 2nd, 1917, did you observe the conduct of the soldiers who had been brought here to restore order, or to preserve order?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes; I seen what they did.

Mr. Johnson: Tell us what they did, please, towards preserving order.

Mr. Jimerson: To make it very short, I don't think they done anything, from what I seen.

Mr. Johnson: If they did nothing-- you say they did nothing to stop the riot; did they do anything to further it? Did they participate in the riot?

Mr. Jimerson: Not that I seen; no, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Well, would not their failure to do something towards stopping it be action towards encouraging it?

Mr. Jimerson: Oh, yes; no doubt about that. When they knew the soldiers weren't going to do anything, they went right to it.

Mr. Johnson: You mean when the mob knew that

the soldiers wouldn't interfere with them, the mob went to it?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: By "going to it", you mean they continued in their attacks upon negroes?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I never seen any negroes attacked when soldiers were around. I seen the soldiers on the Illinois side of the Illinois State Bank. Some detective had a white man trying to take him down to the crowd jail, and I seen the whiteman take the white man away from the policeman, or detective rather.

Mr. Johnson: Do you remember the name of that detective?

Mr. Jimerson: Roy Aldrich, I think his name is.

Mr. Johnson: He is on your city police force here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And he had arrested the white man?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Do you know what the white man had been doing?

Mr. Jimerson: No; I was half a block away. I could see a stir up there and Aldrich with the fellos in tow, and between them the soldiers stood around and didn't interfere.

Mr. Johnson: And the mob took the man away from the police officer?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

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Mr. Johnson: And the soldiers stood there and didn't undertake to assist the officer in the performance of his duty?

Mr. Jimerson: That is the truth.

Mr. Johnson: Did you see any other instance of the soldiers failing to help preserve order here on that day?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I don't think I did; no, sir. I can't say I did. I have heard the rumors about the same thing, sitting in the room here, but I can't say I seen anything.

Mr. Johnson: Did you see Colonel Tripp on that day?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe I seen him once or twice that day in the City Hall.

Mr. Johnson: Did you see him any place except in the City Hall?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I can't say I did.

Mr. Johnson: Where on that day did you see any soldiers?

Mr. Jimerson: My best knowledge is that when they came in they went to the City Hall, and I was just getting out of the barbershop, coming out of the barber shop behind the cigar store there when they came up to Collinsville and Missouri Avenue. That is the first time I seen them.

Mr. Johnson: Then during the remainder of the day, state at what place in the city you saw one or more

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of those soldiers?

Mr. Jimerson: My best recollection is they had been kind of detailed <sup>in</sup> ~~two~~ or three in each block, probably for four or five blocks, probably, going this way and that way (indicating); two or three in each block, walking with guns and bayonets on their shoulders.

Mr. Johnson: You saw them in those positions?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Rioting going on their presence?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I don't say there was any rioting going on. I don't know, except what I seen at the Illinois State Bank, when they took that man away from the officer.

Mr. Johnson: At any place where you saw those soldiers during that day did you see Colonel Tripp?

Mr. Jimerson: No; it looked like he was down in the Mayor's office, down in the City Hall, when I seen him.

Mr. Johnson: The only place you saw him was in the City Hall?

Mr. Jimerson: The only place I seen him he was up around the Mayor's office there.

Mr. Cooper: What did Colonel Tripp seem to be doing in the Mayor's office, sitting down or walking around, or what was he doing?

Mr. Jimerson: My special attention was called to that because I remember that Mr. Beebe, of the Beebe

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Grocery Company, and Mr. Mike Walsh, the undertaker down here, tried to get to see Tripp and couldn't get to see him, and they interceded with me. They are located at Illinois and Collinsville Avenue, and there are some colored people living in some old frame shack back of that place, and they were afraid they were going to burn those shacks down, and they tried to get to see him, and finally they didn't get to see him, and they come to me, and all the men employed by Mr. Beebe are employed through me, and I am acquainted with him-- very well acquainted with him-- and he said to me "Can't you get hold of somebody in there and see if you can't get some soldiers to go up there and get that property protected and keep us from being burned up?" I said "Go and see Colonel Tripp." He said "We can't get to him." So I took Mr. Beebe and Mr. Walsh both into the Mayor's office, and they got to talking to somebody in there-- I don't believe it was Colonel Tripp though-- and they seemed to be satisfied when they came out. They had been around there an hour at that time, though.

Mr. Cooper: Did you see Colonel Tripp in that room or in that building in consultation with anybody on that day?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, there were eight or nine men around there in uniform. I couldn't say who they were. He was talking to them, and they were making out reports-- typewriters and stuff like that.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know what the attitude of your

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branch of the American Federation of Labor-- the branch in this city-- was towards the Aluminum Ore Company strike?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know any details of the Aluminum Ore Company strike, outside of attending one of their meetings--that is, the first meeting. The first I knew there was a strike-- I live at 11th and Gaty Avenue, and I can see Broadway-- that is two blocks over-- from my back porch, and I heard some men hollering, yelling, screaming, and I seen a bunch of men walking down, two in a file, carrying American flags in their hands, going down Broadway.

Mr. Cooper: What time of day was that?

Mr. Jimerson: I suppose that was about nine o'clock in the morning, I guess.

Mr. Cooper: Do you remember what day that was? About what day or what month?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it was April 18th.

Mr. Cooper: This year?

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Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir. And I said to my wife "They must be having a parade or some foreigners going down to this meeting or something, or getting ready to form some sort of an organization of some kind"; and then it dawned upon me that it was the Aluminum Ore Company men, because they had done that same thing previous, and in the previous strike they walked over the same ground and came down in this body that come down to the City Hall and held a meeting in the city auditorium. It dawned on me it was their men, and I got my Ford machine and drove downtown, and I met them at Broadway and Collinsville

Avenue. They were marching down Main Street to hold a meeting in the City Hall auditorium. I went up there and I stayed for part of the meeting, and then left. They said they were out on strike, and that is about all I know of the conditions.

Mr. Cooper: were you consulted by those men before they went out on strike?

Mr. Jimerson: No. Mr. Kerr generally handles all of that.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Kerr testified here that he knew nothing about this strike until after it had taken place, and that he never was more surprised in his life, because he had counselled against the strike.

Mr. Jimerson: He had told me that he advised those men not to strike, that they could organize without striking, but by just bringing the entire shift off and meeting some place and organizing there, and then if the company wouldn't stand for it, they would have to lock the men out.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Kerr gave as one of the reasons why he had proffered that advice, that the men were receiving the best wages of any workmen in town, and that they were working in eight-hour shifts, and that they ought to see if they couldn't settle it in some other way than to all go out, inasmuch as that plant had some war contracts.

Did your organization, the American Federation of Labor, in this city, advise rioting?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir; never thought about it.

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Mr. Cooper: Just tell what your attitude was.

Mr. Jimerson: Well, we done everything in the world to try to stop it. We seen it coming. I went to the Mayor as early as last August and told him--

Mr. Cooper (interposing:): A year ago?

Mr. Jimerson: 1916-- and told him I was afraid there would be trouble here. He wanted to know the reason why, and I told him that the packing house employers were employing negroes in place of white men, discharging the men that they had in their employ-- had been there for years-- because they belonged to the union or wanted to join the union and went to union meetings, and throwing these people right amongst these foreigners, and I says "You know what a foreigner is; he will fight at the drop of the hat, and if you go to take his job he'll kill you if he gets the opportunity to do it." The Mayor said he didn't think it was as serious as that. I cited to him the case of 16 or 18 niggers living in one house, a shack, a good barn for some horses.

Mr. Cooper: You told the Mayor about 16 or 18 negroes being quartered in a shack fit only for horses. What did the Mayor say to that?

Mr. Jimerson: He didn't say anything.

Mr. Cooper: Did you ever hear about an interview that the Mayor is reported to have given to a newspaper in

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604 New Orleans?

Mr. Jimerson: I heard some rumors to that effect, but I never seen the clippings.

Mr. Cooper: In your judgment, how many negroes came into this city in the last year and a half, prior to the July riot?

Mr. Jimerson: Anywhere from sixteen to eighteen thousand; I have went to the chief of police-- I think it was the chief-- it might have been the night chief-- and asked him why he didn't send his officers out and pick up every black man or white man who couldn't give an account for himself and didn't have a job in this town, and he said he didn't have police force large enough to handle the city now and couldn't do anything like that-- couldn't begin to attempt it.

Mr. Cooper: Now of those sixteen thousand or more who came to this city, how many remained and how many went on? How many returned? How many stayed here, in your judgment?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, it is pretty hard to say, Mr. Cooper. They was thick here just like bees. They were living six or seven or eight or nine in a house, and lots of them didn't have homes. It is pretty hard to say how many stayed here. The conditions here was to that effect.

Mr. Cooper: Did you ever see them come into the station in trainloads or carloads?

Mr. Jimerson: One Sunday morning I seen-- well,

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I wouldn't judge the exact amount-- it might have been 100 or 150, come in at one time, and every evening if you was downtown you could see ten or fifteen of them coming along with their suitcases from the Relay depot, and they continued to arrive all the time.

Mr. Cooper: Did you have any conversation with any of these people? Did you ask them how they came here?

Mr. ~~Cooper~~ <sup>Jimerson</sup>: No; I took it up with Officer Kubank's, the colored detective, and he said that the negroes that had been here a long time was opposed to those negroes coming here. They didn't want them here; they said they had no places for them. He had told me in one instance, he told me where some fellow told a nigger who was in the shoe-making business down there, if he would give him ten dollars he would tell him where he could come to get a good job at good wages, and the nigger sold out his shoe business and gave the man ten dollars and came up here. There were other cases where ten or fifteen would get together in a bunch and get excursion rates for five dollars or six dollars apiece from the South.

Mr. Cooper: Did you hear of any one of those negroes who came up here in large numbers being well equipped with money?

Mr. Jimerson: They must have gotten it after they came here.

Mr. Cooper: What was the appearance of those you

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saw in such numbers?

Mr. Jimerson: Absolutely clotheless. They had no clothes or had no baggage to amount to anything.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know whether they had any money?

605 Mr. Jimerson: I wouldn't judge they had money, and be in the condition they was in. I know instances where they come to the police station, where they had to send out and get food for them. One instance is called to my mind. I was on the committee of the detention home, the county board-- the detention home we have had organized here-- a poor place, only got seven rooms, had just been organized probably a year and a half or two years-- there was one colored family with six small children that took sick. I believe the mother died and the wife was-- her husband was sick, I believe, with pneumonia, and Dr. Bundy called me up and wanted me to take them out to the white home. I told Dr. Bundy I would take them out there for the time being, and would take them on to Belleville to the home there, which was originated for white people and black people, but the accommodations were not so that we could handle colored people at the present time. I told them we would take them out there, and then the father could take them on to Belleville and keep them at the county farm until we could make arrangements for them. In talking with the officer of the poor, of the county board of supervisors, he told me a good deal about the conditions that existed there.

Mr. Cooper: Dr. Bundy was a colored dentist here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Dr. Bundy was one of the five colored men who met your committee of five white men?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Who were the other colored men?

Mr. Jimerson: Dr. Blumatt, A. E. Woods, Sam Wheat, and I think Attorney Lilla. I think that was the committee.

Mr. Cooper: What did you discuss at that meeting? What were the propositions made? First, what was the date and where was it held?

Mr. Jimerson: Tell now, the exact date, Mr. Cooper, I can't give you; but it was held at 137-A Collinsville Avenue, shortly after the first skirmish, May 28th, when there were some colored fellows beaten up.

Mr. Cooper: Then it was probably about the first week in June?

Mr. Jimerson: It might have been, yes.

Mr. Cooper: Somewhere along there?

Mr. Jimerson: Right in before this State Council of Defense came down here; probably four or five or six days before they came down here.

Mr. Cooper: Was it before Mr. Kerr sent the telegram, or don't you know, to the State Council of Defense?

Mr. Jimerson: I couldn't say that.

Mr. Cooper: Well, what did you discuss?

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Mr. Jimerson: We talked about organizing the packing houses and the various other lines of industries where the colored men were working-- organizing the colored men into local unions of their own; and we also discussed trying to get evidence for the State Council of Defense, trying to find out who was the cause of this influx of niggers here from the South.

Mr. Cooper: What was the general understanding in this city, what was the general rumor as to the influences which brought up so many colored people from the south?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, there was all kinds of rumors. There was a rumor of a meeting held out there at the Aluminum Ore Company, attended by all the heads of all the large industries, and Mr. Albertson, Mr. Roy Albertson, a reporter for the Republic, at that time told me that evening they was going to bring 15,000 colored fellows here. I asked him where he got the information, and he said they got it through-- Fox made the statement-- he didn't say Fox made the statement, but said that was the rumor he got from talking to Mr. Fox, that they were going to bring 15,000 colored people here. I immediately told Brother Varr the first time I met him after that-- I told him the conditions, and it looked to me as plain as the nose on a man's face. Mr. Joyce hears this, and Mr. Joyce goes in and introduces a resolution to the Chamber of Commerce and demands that the Chamber of Commerce investigate that their name was being used to bring niggers here. The resolution was tabled,

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and immediately, the following day, Mr. Fox resigns as president of the Chamber of Commerce. He resigns his position on account of business purposes, he says; and Mr. Sorrells, who was then secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, resigns also.

Mr. Cooper: Now let me get those events in consecutive order and see what they suggest. There was a meeting at the Aluminum Ore Company's plant of prominent employers in this city?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Shortly after that, the next day or immediately after it, you talked with the reporter of a newspaper, a St. Louis paper?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it was that night.

Mr. Cooper: You asked him what it was about and he said that from the conversation with Mr. Fox he gathered that they were going to bring in 15,000 negroes here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: That rumor went through the town?

Mr. Jimerson: No doubt about it.

Mr. Cooper: And Mr. Maurice Joyce, a prominent citizen of this town-- and a highly respected man too, isn't he?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, he is, a great property owner.

Mr. Cooper: He introduced a resolution, presented it to the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of this City, which consists, we have been informed by witnesses on the

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stand, of prominent leaders-- or managers-- of these great packing plants?

Mr. Jimerson: And their attorneys?

Mr. Cooper: And their attorneys; and of the other great industries, including the Aluminum Ore Company and the street car company; that is so, isn't it?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: He introduced a resolution calling for an investigation of this rumor that they were--

Mr. Jimerson (interposing:) That their name was being used.

Mr. Cooper: Their name was being used, and it was being charged that these great business interests were going to cause an influx of colored labor into this city from the South?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And that resolution was tabled by that body?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Did you hear discussion after that among the people of this city about the tabling of that important resolution?

Mr. Jimerson: In a general comment after it got out to be known among the people. That resolution never came out until the state Council of Defense came here, you know. That was the first time we ever got hold of the resolution.

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Mr. Cooper: And when the Council of Defense had their investigation here, then Mr. Joyce was put on the stand as a witness and told about his having introduced that resolution and about it having been tabled?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And that was the first time that the people of this town knew anything about it?

Mr. Jimerson: That they knew anything about the resolution, yes, sir, except members of that Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cooper: So the fact had been kept a secret that a member of the Chamber of Commerce, seeing the importance of the resolution and the vast importance of the subject to which it related, introduced a resolution and it had been tabled. That was kept absolutely secret from the people of this town until brought out after the July 2nd riot after the investigation by the State Council of Defense?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: What do the people of this city generally believe was the reason for the tabling of that resolution?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, it looks kind of funny, you know. The resolution was tabled, and immediately after that Mr. Fox resigned as president of the Chamber of Commerce, as also the secretary, and it looks like from the circumstances evidently something was wrong there or they wouldn't have gotten out so quick.

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Mr. Cooper: Did it look to you as though Mr. Fox thought that thing ought to have been stopped-- the influx of negroes ought not to have been permitted?

Mr. Jimerson: No.

Mr. Cooper: What do you think was his reason?

Mr. Jimerson: I think Mr. Joyce's strength in that Chamber of Commerce was so great that it absolutely pushed him out. That is my opinion of it.

Mr. Cooper: Did you hear reports in this city that agents were at work in the South to get negroes up here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes; there were rumors of that kind floating all around.

Mr. Cooper: How long had you heard those before these riots?

Mr. Jimerson: That condition existed for six months, I guess-- seven months.

Mr. Cooper: At the meeting of May 28th at the City Hall, which you attended, were there women in attendance?

Mr. Jimerson: I think-- I wouldn't say this-- I know there were two women there. There were two delegates from the laundry workers' organization, who are delegates to the central body, and they were there.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know who those delegates from the laundry women were?

Mr. Jimerson: I can find out in a short time. The minutes of the central body will give their names.

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Mr. Cooper: The laundry women are organized?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; to a certain extent.

Mr. Cooper: And this laundry women organization had selected two delegates who attended. Do you know whether they marked from the office of the Metropolitan Laundry?

Mr. Jimerson: No, there were just two women working in the laundry as delegates to the central body. They had been delegates ever since the union was organized, and they came down to where the central body met, 137-A Collinsville Avenue-- two women by themselves-- and those two are the only two I know of being in the audience. There may have been others in the audience and I didn't see them, but those <sup>two</sup> were the only ones from the Central Trades.

Mr. Cooper: Did they say anything during the meeting?

Mr. Jimerson: Absolutely not. I didn't hear a woman say a word, unless they said it after the meeting broke up.

Mr. Cooper: Have you ever learned just how many men, or approximately how many men, women and children, colored or white, were wounded during that riot?

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Mr. Jimerson: No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. Cooper: Your statement, then, means this: That there were secret and powerful influences in this city, causing an influx of colored <sup>labor</sup> ~~here~~ <sub>here</sub>.

Mr. Jimerson: No doubt about that.

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Mr. Cooper: And not only to this city, but that there were secret influences at work having colored labor come up prepared to go not only to this city but to others?

Mr. Jimerson: I think so.

Mr. Cooper: You think that?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Were some of them shipped on from here to northern cities?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, I believe there was. Mr. Roach of the free employment bureau has stated that.

Mr. Cooper: You have heard testimony telling about their coming here a year ago now, when the weather was as cold as it was yesterday?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And colored people were seen on the street here with nothing on but a pair of overalls and a shirt, without money, hungry. Can you conceive of colored people coming up here from the South, clothed in that way, destitute of means, unless they had been influenced to come here by promises of some kind?

Mr. Jimerson: No, absolutely not. I believe they came up here through solicitation of someone down there-- who went down there.

Mr. Cooper: They arrived here without money, showing that they had either had just exactly enough money to land in this town destitute, or that somebody else paid their fares?

2068

Mr. Jimerson: That is true.

Mr. Cooper: That is the demonstration, isn't it?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They got here without a cent, hungry and shivering. Now that is a demonstration that they got here-- that when they started they had exactly enough money to get them here and not a cent more, the exact fare; or else that somebody paid it? That is the demonstration, isn't it?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Well, is it conceivable that anybody or any great number of people would come up here with just exactly enough money to bring them here and not a cent when they had arrived; winter coming on; without any clothes and hungry, unless influences had been steadily at work to bring them here?

Mr. Jimerson: It don't look possible. There are numerous ways they could do that, you know. The packing houses have car routes, what they call car routes through the South. They take a car of meat and they will go down South with it and peddle it right out from the car, and I believe, in my opinion, from what I have heard and seen, that these fellows go down there and they tell these colored people down there "Why, we pay 30 cents an hour in the packing houses", but they don't tell them how many hours a week they work.

Mr. Cooper: How many hours a week do they work?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, up to the time of the strike

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609 they worked averaging about forty hours a week and paying 17-1/2 cents an hour for their labor-- forty or forty-five hours.

Mr. Cooper: Well, that is about seven dollars a week.

Mr. Jimeron: Well, they got it. They have got a ten per cent increase since that time-- four ten per cent increases. The last one they got when Mother Jones talked here. They got a 10 per cent increase the next day.

Mr. Cooper: When they are paying people by the hour, in order to know just what the wages are, you must know the number of hours they work? That is a fact, isn't it?

Mr. Jimeron: Yes, sure.

Mr. Cooper: Now one of the witnesses testified early in this hearing that three or four months in the year, before the war, in normal times, there was a let-up in business at the packing plants. They didn't run, or something of that kind.

Mr. Jimeron: A shortage of cattle.

Mr. Cooper: A shortage of cattle, yes, and then he said some of the employes were discharged. Do you remember about what proportion were discharged in the spring?

Mr. Jimeron: Well, I don't know if they discharged any of them, or any of them at all, but they cut down their hours.

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Mr. Cooper: They cut down their hours?

Mr. Jimerson: That has been the general condition. They might have changed since these war contracts came.

Mr. Cooper: At these big packing plants what do common laborers earn a year, in normal times? How much would be the total of it in a year?

Mr. Jimerson: \$500 at the highest.

Mr. Cooper: \$500 a year at the highest? Less than \$2 a day considerably. Those packing plants of which you speak are the Armour, the Morris, the Swift, and-- are there three?

Mr. Jimerson: There are three in National City, and there is a small packing plant that employs about 200 men in East St. Louis, the East Side Packing Company, an organized house.

Mr. Cooper: Well, the three first named constitute the greatest association of packers in the world, don't they? So-called?

Mr. Jimerson: They belong to the American Packers' Association. That is the entire meat trust, the three names.

Mr. Cooper: They are the American Meat Trust, the American Meat Packers' Association-- the Meat Trust, if you want it. Now with people getting \$500 a year-- and some less than that-- was it possible for any man, white or black, to live in this city of East St. Louis during the

2071

period of high prices of these necessities of life which preceded the breaking out of the European war, in such a way as an American citizen ought to be expected to live?

Mr. Jimeron: They don't live; they just exist.

Mr. Cooper: White and black?

Mr. Jimeron: Absolutely, both kinds. I have been up on Goose Hill, where the foreigners lived up there previous to the 1916 strike-- that previous winter-- and I have went to the houses up there where the children was barefooted; didn't have any shoes on their feet, and eating molasses, bread and coffee for their meals. That is the conditions on Goose Hill, and you will probably find the same conditions up there now.

Mr. Cooper: That was in 1916, last year?

Mr. Jimeron: The winter of 1915.

Mr. Cooper: The winter of 1915 and 1916?

Mr. Jimeron: No; 1915.

610 Mr. Cooper: 1914 and '15?

Mr. Jimeron: Well, it might have been in 1914 too, but I seen it in 1915.

Mr. Cooper: What time in 1915?

Mr. Jimeron: The coldest part of the winter, right about Christmas time.

Mr. Cooper: At Christmas time, 1915, and that was a year after the war began, when the boom in business set up in this country such a demand for the product of the Packing Trust abroad. That is so, is it?

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Mr. Jimerson: I guess it was. They were kept pretty busy.

Mr. Cooper: Along about Christmas-time in this city barefooted-- or practically barefooted children, white people, were living on molasses and bread, and what else?

Mr. Jimerson: Coffee. They had it for dinner.

Mr. Cooper: Have you ever known of any inquiries to be made by the managers of these great plants, or by the great financial people who control them, who don't live in this city, as to how their workmen, white or black, in this city, were living?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now, if the white people had protested against living as they were compelled to live, or receiving wages which forced them to live in that way, and sent their protests to these managers, or to the financial men that controlled them and don't live here, those financial men who don't live here and control these plants, wouldn't know whether those protests were well-founded or not, would they?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir..

Mr. Cooper: They couldn't know anything about how their employes were living?

Mr. Jimerson: They wouldn't, unless they investigated it.

Mr. Cooper: That's all. Doctor Fundy, Dr. Britt, and these other men of whom you spoke, colored men, were law-abiding, industrious people, were they not?

2073

Mr. Jimerson: Oh, the best citizens.

Mr. Cooper: Among the best citizens of the town?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir, good citizens.

Mr. Cooper: They had good homes?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I have never been to any of their homes. I couldn't say.

Mr. Cooper: Well, they are good citizens?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; law-abiding citizens, so far as I know.

Mr. Cooper: You say you have heard some of these law-abiding, respectable colored people, old residents of this city, deplore the fact that these people were coming in here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, Mr. Rubanks there. He is a very intelligent man, in my estimation.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Rubanks, a colored policeman, told you it was too bad these men and women were imported in here?

Mr. Jimerson: He said they weren't in favor of it and didn't like to see it.

Mr. Cooper: There was no work for them?

Mr. Jimerson: They were loafing.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Jimerson, you were on the street <sup>on the night</sup> of

of May 28th?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foster: Did you, when that riot occurred-- you know where the sheriff's office is?

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Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Foster: Where is it?

Mr. Jimerson: It is in the basement of the City Hall. It sets in the northwest corner of the building.

Mr. Foster: How many deputy sheriffs are there?

Mr. Jimerson: I think they have five in East St. Louis.

Mr. Foster: Who is the the chief?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, Traubel at the present time.

Mr. Foster: Did you see him there that night?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I didn't. I wasn't in the  
611 basement of the City Hall that night.

Mr. Foster: You didn't see him around there?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: Did you see any of the deputies?

Mr. Jimerson: Not that night; no, sir.

Mr. Foster: Did you see any of the deputies on July 2nd, when this riot occurred?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't believe I run across many in my travels. I didn't see them any place.

Mr. Foster: You didn't see any of them?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: There were none of them doing anything that would stop the riot?

Mr. Jimerson: Not on July 2nd. They were very active after that, though, running around in machines here and there.

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Mr. Foster: After July 2nd?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; a night or two afterwards.

Mr. Foster: You didn't see any of them on July 2nd?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: Doing anything?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: To stop the riot?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: They didn't summons any men to get out and assist in stopping the disturbance?

Mr. Jimerson: Not to my knowledge they didn't.

Mr. Foster: Did you see them around there on that day at all?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I never did, not on July 2nd. I didn't pay any attention. I might have run across them.

Mr. Foster: But they were doing nothing so far as you know?

Mr. Jimerson: Not on that day; no, sir; not as I noticed.

Mr. Foster: Either on the 28th of May or the 2nd of July?

Mr. Jimerson: Not to my recollection.

Mr. Foster: You know they have power to summons? They are the highest peace officers in the County?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; outside of the Coroner. The Coroner is over them.

2076

Mr. Foster: The Coroner can arrest the sheriff, of course, but he wouldn't be expected to take charge if the sheriff or deputies were about, would he?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't think so.

Mr. Foster: Do you know a man by the name of Harry Stanisic?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Foster: Who worked at the packing house <sup>at</sup> one time, and now has a store, a little general store in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: I can't recall him by those names. They have funny names, peculiar names, I can't recall them. I know them by their faces.

Mr. Foster: You don't know him at all?

Mr. Jimerson: I think I might have got him down to that State Council of Defense, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Foster: He testified, but if you don't know him, I will not ask you about him.

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know him by that name.

Mr. Foster: I thought maybe you knew something about him. His testimony seemed to indicate that he lost his job at the packing-house.

Mr. Jimerson: He wanted to be a union labor man and they wouldn't let him. They fired him.

Mr. Foster: That's all.

Mr. Foss: You say you met committees of colored men to discuss the conditions here in the city?

2077

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: The labor conditions?

Mr. Jimerson: That partly, and bringing about better conditions in general about the city. That is, finding out who was bringing this large influx here, and trying to find any way to prevent it.

Mr. Foss: Did you try to unionize the colored labor?

Mr. Jimerson: I have tried ever since I took hold of the packing houses here in 1916. I had Dr. Bundy out there talking to these colored men. We held a meeting in Brooklyn, and we were ordered out of Brooklyn, not allowed to hold a meeting there-- by the chief of police out there-- and ordered back to East St. Louis. I talked to them. I believe we have got several colored men now in the organization, and the doors are open for more of them if they want to come.

Mr. Foss: But you met with poor success?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, very poor.

Mr. Foss: Did you ever state that you didn't believe the trouble would have happened if colored labor had been unionized? Did you ever state that?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't think if we had every colored man organized in addition to the way this crime was going here, and other things going, you could have stopped it.

Mr. Foss: You don't believe it could have had any effect, then?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir, I do not. Of course the importation of so many negroes taking the white men's places, no doubt agitated the white men. But in a majority of cases those fellows that agitated weren't organized. They don't belong to the union. Common labor is very poorly organized here. If there are two or three hundred common laborers organized in town it is a large amount.

Mr. Foss: Well, do you know whether it is a fact or not that there has been a large immigration of laborers to the Northern cities during the last year or two?

Mr. Jimerson: From rumors I got.

Mr. Foss: Colored people from the South?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it is a scheme by the Manufacturers' Association to flood these towns with labor, to break up the unions.

Mr. Foss: Well, do you think there has been a demand for labor?

Mr. Jimerson: Not that great, Mr. Foss.

Mr. Foss: Well, isn't it a fact that since the war broke out, that a great many foreigners have gone back to the old country?

Mr. Jimerson: Well no, the only thing I can speak of there is our own situation here, and I can tell you candidly there has not been a very large per cent went away from here. Lots of them went away because they couldn't get employment in the packing houses here in National City; because they have got educated to belong to the labor unions

2079

and better their conditions. Those are facts.

Mr. Foss: Well, before the war broke out there was immigration into this country, about a million men every year, wasn't there? Did you ever look up the statistics on that?

Mr. Jimerson: I can't say I did.

Mr. Foss: And that has practically stopped since the war broke out, two or three years ago?

Mr. Jimerson: I suppose so.

Mr. Foss: Well, hasn't <sup>that necessarily</sup> ~~there been thereby~~ created a demand for labor of all kinds in this country?

Mr. Jimerson: Of course it has created some demand. No doubt about that.

Mr. Foss: And especially in these large manufacturing districts?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, it would create demand for some more labor than we had previous. No doubt about that.

Mr. Foss: Now you saw a great many groups of colored men passing through the city, did you?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, coming into the Relay depot.

Mr. Foss: Going north? Did they go out of the city-- were they here just temporarily, a short time, a few hours, and then pass on?

Mr. Jimerson: The way I know the situation of things, I go over East St. Louis every day from one end of town to the other, and I don't think there were very many left that

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came here, from the way the conditions of the town looked, and the way they were housed together.

Mr. Foss: You mean when?

Mr. Jimerson: When they came in, I think the majority of them stayed here.

Mr. Foss: The majority of them stayed here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir. Of course they might have shipped some out to the various places at that, without my knowing it.

613

Mr. Foss: They left soon after the riots, didn't they, a large number of them, at the time of the riot?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, the poor fellows had to leave.

Mr. Foss: Have they come back?

Mr. Jimerson: Not in large numbers. They are coming back right along, and what I can see, some of the houses filling up, they are coming back to some extent.

Mr. Foss: Great numbers of them fled to St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they were going. There they went I don't know, and I suppose they went to St. Louis. I have heard people say in the neighborhood of the Free Bridge that the bridge was simply covered with people going across there, with baggage and everything else.

Mr. Foss: Now you spoke of the Charter of Commerce of this city.

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: And its membership. Do you know the number of its membership; how many compose it?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't. They might have a good many members, but there are very few of them attend the meetings.

Mr. Foss: Did you ever hear anyone say how many members there were?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe I heard one witness say here, but I don't remember what it was-- in this chair here.

Mr. Foss: You don't know whether it is 50 or 100 or 150 or 200 or more?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I couldn't say.

Mr. Foss: It is made up of the heads or representatives of these large manufacturing industries here?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: And you state their attorneys?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: Are some of the merchants here in the city members of it, do you know?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I don't know, Mr. Foss.

Mr. Foss: You don't know?

Mr. Jimerson: They have a meeting hall down there, probably about a third as big as this place here, where they hold all their meetings. You never see anybody else who goes there except 25 or 30 men that go there. That is the largest number I have seen.

Mr. Foss: You have never been at any of their meetings?

Mr. Jimerson: No; I never have a chance.

2087

Mr. Foss: Well, are the laboring men represented at all in the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir, never; none of them.

Mr. Foss: Are the foremen in any of these establishments here, that you know of, that are members of it?

Mr. Jimerson: Not that I know of. They might be.

Mr. Foss: You don't mean to say that a half dozen heads of the big business interests of this city and their attorneys compose entirely the Chamber of Commerce, do you?

Mr. Jimerson: Those are the men that holds the meetings. That is where I get my conclusion from.

Mr. Foss: That is what you get by hearsay?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I see the fellows go up to the meetings. I have seen them go up to the meetings. I have stood and watched them go up there.

Mr. Foss: You have stood and watched them. Well, what was the largest number you ever saw go up there?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe the largest number I ever seen at one time was on the evening of the riot. They used to meet at 4 o'clock, and I believe they had about sixty up there at those times. At other times they have meetings up there you will see ten or fifteen or twenty fellows up in the meeting hall.

Mr. Baker: That was immediately after the riot?

Mr. Jimerson: That followed after July 2nd. They held a meeting every afternoon at 4 o'clock.

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Mr. Foss: Do you know what the object of the Chamber of Commerce is-- its purpose?

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Mr. Jimerson: Well, they have been very material in bringing factories here.

Mr. Foss: They are out for more business and more factories for the town, for the city?

Mr. Jimerson: They have brought several factories here. I know that, because I know of some of the factories brought here by the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Foss: Are they in favor of improving the conditions of labor?

Mr. Jimerson: Of labor? Well, I have got that yet to learn.

Mr. Foss: Now you stated that Mr. Joyce offered a resolution before a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, and you were of the opinion that his influence was so great that that caused the resignation of the President and the Secretary?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: His resolution was defeated?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, it was tabled.

Mr. Foss: Well now, would that indicate that his influence was very great, if the resolution was defeated?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they had this meeting, and the way the testimony came out, I believe, at the State Council of Defense, the executive board had the meeting, and the executive board was the one that tabled the resolution.

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Mr. Foss: The executive board of the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: Consisting of how many, do you know?

Mr. Jimerson: I couldn't say. I suppose probably most any executive board would be the general officers of the organization; probably its trustees, or something like that.

Mr. Foss: Was it by unanimous vote, or do you know?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know. I don't think Mr. Joyce voted for it.

Mr. Foss: But the resolution never came up before the general meeting of the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Jimerson: I have never known them to have a general meeting. I am pretty well aware of the fact of all meetings that go on.

Mr. Foss: Well, your information as to this is purely hearsay, as I understand it?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, that is in regard to it.

Mr. Foss: Of the Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. Jimerson: No, it is what Mr. Joyce testified to in regard to the resolution, as being tabled by the executive committee.

Mr. Foss: Oh, he testified?

Mr. Jimerson: Before the State Council of Defense. That is the first - ever knew of the resolution.

2085

Mr. Foss: How do you think that the saloons have anything to do with the condition here in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, there are some saloons that night, Mr. Foss, to be fair.

Mr. Foss: Well, how many have you here at the present time? Do you know?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know. I know of the barrel houses being on Broadway, but they have been gone, I believe, since the first of the year.

Mr. Foss: What is the largest number of saloons you have ever had here in East St. Louis, at any time?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe 376.

Mr. Foss: Some of them have been closed up, haven't they?

Mr. Jimerson: Since the first of the year there has been quite a few closed up, when the Mayor put the lid on.

Mr. Foss: Well, when was it that they had three hundred and seventy-six?

Mr. Jimerson: That was the year previous to when the lid went on, I believe. Probably the records will show that, in the City Clerk's office.

Mr. Foss: Well, did you notice at the time of these riots, either the first riot or the second riot, that men who participated ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> at all <sup>mere</sup> in an intoxicated condition? Do you think drinking had anything to do with it?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't. I don't drink any

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myself. I don't think drinking had anything to do with it at all.

615 Mr. Foss: You don't think whiskey stimulated or incited them in any way to act so violently?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't think so, Mr. Foss-- not what I seen. It could have been possible, but not what I seen. I never seen a drunken man in the time I was downtown.

Mr. Foss: Well, you think that 376 saloons-- that a man has plenty of opportunity to get all the drinks he wants?

Mr. Jimerson: Oh, you can get all you want all right if you have the money to pay for it.

Mr. Baker: How long do you say you have been in your present employment?

Mr. Jimerson: About four years. I think four years the 1st of January.

Mr. Baker: To make your story connected, what was your business before?

Mr. Jimerson: I was a grocery clerk for ten years for Louis Rieckmann, and I worked for my uncle across the river two or three months.

Mr. Baker: You worked here in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: What is your age?

Mr. Jimerson: 29 years and about two months.

Mr. Baker: What other position do you occupy except

2087

the one stated to the Committee in your direct examination?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I belong to the county board, sometimes called the "Wooden-headed Congress" of the County.

Mr. Baker: How many constitute that board?

Mr. Jimerson: 51, I believe.

Mr. Baker: 51 members of the County Board?

Mr. Jimerson: I think so; yes.

Mr. Baker: How many are there from East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: 23.

Mr. Baker: East St. Louis has 23 of the 51 of the county?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: And how many does National City have?

Mr. Jimerson: National City has one, I believe.

Mr. Baker: And Brooklyn has how many?

Mr. Jimerson: One.

Mr. Baker: And this other little town out here-- there is another little town?

Mr. Jimerson: Fairmont, one.

Mr. Baker: And what is the town adjoining south here?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, there is Sugar Loaf, one; Venterville, 1.

Mr. Baker: That gives you a majority vote in East St. Louis, with these little adjoining towns?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, we never get those, though.

Mr. Baker: These adjoining municipalities give you a majority vote?

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Mr. Jimerson: They would if they would vote with us.

Mr. Baker: Well, you take up this board of supervisors-- you take up all the county affairs and deal with them, the finances of the county?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; just the same as the council would with the city.

Mr. Baker: The same as the council would in the city, or as in other places. You call them the board of supervisors?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You supervise the accounts of the various county officials?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You also have the power to examine into and see whether or not they perform their official duties?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: That is one of your functions?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Did your board at any time ever take up the conditions prevailing in East St. Louis, the county board of supervisors?

616

Mr. Jimerson: It was brought to the attention of the board on a good many occasions, especially at the organization of the board, <sup>at</sup> ~~then~~ the new supervisors were elected-- eleven or twelve elected this last April. You see

2089

there is twelve elected one year and eleven the next year, then 12 and then 11 again. At that organization meeting we held a caucus down here in the City Hall with reference to some resolutions coming up. We wanted to talk about the resolutions, and anything for the city that we could develop. Dr. Bundy introduced a resolution raising the second assistant county physician's salary from, I believe, \$600 a year to \$1,000 a year. There a great many people here, and they couldn't get a doctor to do the work for \$50 a month. That was approximately the monthly salary, and he wanted to raise it to \$83.33. So they said they couldn't get another candidate to select for the job, so they selected Dr. Rivitt. I was back of the proposition, because I didn't think we could get much of a doctor to take care of anybody for less than \$50 a month, and I was in favor of the \$83.33 raise. At the meeting of that board I will say that Reverend Wallace had the statement to the board in presenting this resolution that there would be thousands of more negroes come here.

Mr. Baker: Doctor who made that?

Mr. Jimerson: Reverend Wallace, a very prominent man among the colored people in this city: I am surprised he is not here.

Mr. Baker: What do you mean by "surprised he is not here"?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I have heard rumors to the

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effect that he was one of the men that was through the south. In fact, Mr. Bundy told me out of his own mouth that Wallace was in the south.

Mr. Baker: Where is Wallace?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know. I haven't seen him since the investigation has been on.

Mr. Baker: Does he live here in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: What is his first name?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it is Reverend T. W. Wallace, if I am not mistaken. I am not sure. He is a Reverend here of some church, I understand.

Mr. Baker: You felt a little bit disappointed that Reverend Wallace hasn't been subpoenaed to be in attendance?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, or hasn't been up here voluntarily testifying. It was rumored around that he had an annual pass to go through these plants any time he has seen fit.

Mr. Baker: Before I pass that subject, I want to follow that up. Is there anybody else that you are surprised is not here?

Mr. Jimerson: No; he was one of the men that makes me think that.

Mr. Baker: No. I want to put it so you will not be able to say after you leave the stand that there was any human being in and about St. Louis that knew anything about these conditions that you didn't have a chance to give the Committee his name. Now is there anybody else

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that you know of, that you are surprised hasn't been subpoenaed or is not here?

617

Mr. Jimerson: No; but I have a slip of paper that I would like to give the names to the Committee-- some information conveyed to me last night. It said there was a carload of colored fellows that came here to take jobs at the Aluminum Ore Company, and said that-- that was the way the information was conveyed to me-- and said that when they found out the strike was on they wouldn't take the job, and they are working out somewhere on the I. C., right here in the city some place, and said they kind of had it in for the Aluminum Ore Company because they didn't feed them. That is the information conveyed to me, and they give me a fellow's name and I have it in my pocket some place-- a fellow that gave the information.

Mr. Baker: These were colored men sent here?

Mr. Jimerson: Sent to go to the Aluminum Ore Company.

Mr. Baker: Brought here, and when they got here they found that conditions weren't as represented, and that the Aluminum Ore Company were not treating its men properly, and they wouldn't go to work?

Mr. Jimerson: They wouldn't go to work. Here is the man's name and address, where he works at (handing paper to Mr. Baker).

Mr. Baker: Charles Fortner, plans hard at Elliott Frog and Switch Company. Anybody else?

2097

Mr. Jimerson: No; that is all I know at the present time.

Mr. Baker: Now getting back to the board of supervisors, have you any negroes on the board of supervisors?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: How many?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, we had seven on there at the organization of the board May 1st, the first Saturday of May this year.

Mr. Baker: Where do they come from?

Mr. Jimerson: All of them from East St. Louis, excepting one from Brooklyn.

Mr. Baker: Then it is a kind of a necessity to look after the negro vote, to get members of the board of supervisors here, isn't there?

Mr. Jimerson: It looks that way.

Mr. Baker: Well, is it a fact?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, it is a fact.

Mr. Baker: And an effort is made not only to get these negro votes in the *city* election, but to elect two or three so as to make them *feel* very much interested in the conditions?

Mr. Jimerson: That is a fact. The negro vote here, Mr. Baker, is an important factor in elections, and whichever way the large majority of the negro vote goes, the election goes-- this, the city elections, and the man with the most money or handle them. Those are facts.

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It has been that way not only lately, but for years.

Mr. Baker: Well, from your observation, what crowd has the most money?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they used to get along with Eddie Miller pretty well at first, and finally they must have flopped from Eddie over to Locke Carlton. One handled them one time and the other handled them the other time.

Mr. Baker: Was it understood that Locke is handling them now-- has been during the last election?

Mr. Jimerson: I can't say that he handled them, but for his ticket.

Mr. Baker: They were for his ticket?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Well, when the board of supervisors met, did anybody from East St. Louis, the city of East St. Louis, ever present to the board of supervisors of St. Clair County, in session, to a regular session or an adjourned session, a statement of the conditions prevalent in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Not officially.

Mr. Baker: At any time?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: All those offenses-- for instance, a stick-up is a county case?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: The county has to pay the expense?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

2094

Mr. Baker: And murder and rape?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Arson?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: All those offenses committed in East St. Louis, originating in East St. Louis, although under the eye, as it were-- not literally speaking-- of the police-- the county eventually, through its machinery, attended to these men, so far as the prosecution or want of prosecution is concerned; is that right?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, that is right; yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Now, did the city attorney-- I don't mean the city attorney-- did the State's Attorney ever present to the board of supervisors any of the conditions existing in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Not since I have been on the board.

Mr. Baker: Now, let me ask you, you know the County Attorney?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir-- wait now, I want to tell this one thing while you have brought that out. He did come to-- he asked us not to repeat this, but I am coming here to tell the truth-- he came and called in Mr. Drury and myself, Martin Drury, Jr., who is also a member of the board, and Mr. Drury and myself and Mr. Elliott of the salaries report committee of the county board. We examine all the reports, and have done so since May. We adjust salaries or raise salaries, or make recommendations to that effect. Mr. Schenklauff called us in and

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told us he wanted to abolish the office of second assistant State's Attorney, who then was a colored man by the name of N. W. Pardon. The reason, he stated, was that he told the committee-- Mr. Drury, I believe, might be in the house-- he was here-- he told the committee that Mr. Pardon was taking the negro cases, where men were arrested for carrying concealed weapons, and made a charge of disorderly conduct and got them out on the small coats and fine. He didn't know if he got the balance of the money or not, or whether any money was turned to him for doing that, but that was the condition, and he asked us to abolish the office for that purpose.

Mr. Baker: Did you do it?

Mr. Jenson: Absolutely, at the first meeting. He recommended the abolishment of the office, and it carried.

Mr. Baker: You had this colored assistant county attorney?

Mr. Jenson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: How many assistants does the State's Attorney have in this County?

Mr. Jenson: He has two in Belleville, I believe, and now one in East St. Louis. He had two in East St.

213 Louis. ~~He had one in East St. Louis.~~

Mr. Baker: He had a white man and a colored man?

Mr. Jenson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Who was the white man?

Mr. Jimerson: Mr. Wolcott.

Mr. Baker: : what is his first name?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it is L. B. Wolcott.

Mr. Baker: Your board, as a board, having 23 members from East St. Louis, and with the five members from these little towns, know the conditions in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Oh yes, I know I knew that, and I guess the balance of the members did too.

Mr. Baker: Did the sheriff and his deputies know the same conditions?

Mr. Jimerson: If they read the papers they did.

Mr. Baker: It was generally discussed?

Mr. Jimerson: It was generally known by everybody. It was discussed on every street corner.

Mr. Baker: These conditions were prevalent and generally known?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: They knew, did they, of the May riot, the county officials?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: The attorney and also the board of supervisors?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: And that is the governing body of the county. Your district attorney and his assistants are the prosecuting officials of the county, and the sheriff

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is the man that executes the law and does the arresting, and comes to these various police courts and assistants?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Does the District Attorney appear before these justices of the peace in East St. Louis, and the magistrate here, the police magistrate, to prosecute these various charges that are made against the various violators of crime against the State law?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: If it is a crime punishable under the State law, the District Attorney's office takes charge of it?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: If it is a crime solely punishable under the municipal ordinance, then the city attorney takes charge?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Was there any act ever done by the board of supervisors, the governing power of this ~~the~~ county, to ameliorate the conditions in East St. Louis, or to suppress this seeming reign of terror and lawlessness?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't think it was ever brought to the attention of the board. They knew themselves, but it was not officially before the board.

Mr. Baker: No, did the sheriff's office, or the deputies, ever take any action, to your knowledge, of these conditions?

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Mr. Jimerson: Not previous to the riot, I don't think.

Mr. Baker: I am talking about previous to the riot of July 2nd, which I will include the 3rd.

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they done some work. I believe it was on the 3rd. I am pretty sure on the 3rd.

Mr. Baker: Nothing before that time?

Mr. Jimerson: No, not more than they generally do otherwise.

Mr. Baker: And the same question applied to the sheriff's office and his deputies would receive the same answer, that nothing was done?

Mr. Jimerson: No, probably they got busy. I guess they got busy, so far as I know.

Mr. Baker: Now to make it complete, was there anything done by the justice courts during the period from the 1st of January this year until the 3rd of July, to prevent this reign of lawlessness?

Mr. Jimerson: You mean the justices of the peace going out and enforcing the law, or do you mean--

Mr. Baker (interposing:): No, I mean sitting on the bench, and after he heard a lot of testimony against a fellow, and believed he was guilty, that he gave him what the law said he should have, or did he sort of let him slide through easily?

Mr. Jimerson: Mr. Baker, the judges on the bench are just on since May 1st of this year. They are new men.

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Mr. Baker: All three of them?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, there is six of them now. Judge Brady is a new man; Judge Ware is a new man, and Judge Eggman is a new man; and I believe Briscoil served before, and Townsend served before.

Mr. Baker: Now what are the oldest in service, the names?

Mr. Jimerson: Russell Townsend, J. F. Briscoil. Those are the two oldest ones. All these other three men are new men since May 1st, elected in the April election, Brady and Mr. Eggman.

Mr. Baker: Where does Clark come in?

Mr. Jimerson: Clark is a new man too.

Mr. Baker: All since May 1st?

Mr. Jimerson: Four of them are new men, Clark, Brady, Ware and Eggman took office May 1st. The other two men are old men that have been there before.

Mr. Baker: Well then, with that information I will put this question: What was done by the justice courts, as the people construed it and understood, relative to the enforcement of law from the 1st of January this year to the 3rd of July?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I never heard no comment on it, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker: No comment?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

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Mr. Baker: Well, did you ever hear any comment something similar to this, or in words and substance to this: That the justice court would give a vag-- well, a tough-- an advantage, give him the benefit, a chance to get away, whereas the ordinary good citizen generally was soaked if he could get at him?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I know of one case, especially called to my attention. I don't know of any other, but this was called to my attention by the business agent of the painters' union. They had a painter who was ninety days on the rock pile and a colored man was fined five dollars and turned loose.

Mr. Baker: For what?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe for carrying a gun.

Mr. Baker: Then so far as you are concerned, the general statement as you have said it was reported to have been made-- you don't know anything about it?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir; I don't.

Mr. Baker: Now getting down to the constable, you only have one constable; is that right?

Mr. Jimerson: We have a constable in each justice of the peace office, is my understanding. I think there are five constables elected this last year.

Mr. Baker: Where were those fellows during this time?

Mr. Jimerson: I never seen them. They were elected to office May 1st.

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Mr. Baker: Where were they during the riots, hid?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know. I never seen them. The constables here never in the past took any active part in the police power of the city, so far as I know, and I have been around town and seen things. I understand that they are there for the purpose of subpoenaing juries, the same as a bailiff would be in a court of record.

Mr. Baker: These constables are State officers?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

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Mr. Baker: And have the same power, police power, as the sheriff has?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You can call to their command the citizens as a committed militia, and order them into the service to any number, can't they?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; sure.

Mr. Baker: So they have a very important power and a very important function to perform in a community like this, or any other community?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: But you heard of them doing nothing?

Mr. Jimerson: No, they never have in the past. They never used any police power in the past.

Mr. Baker: Do they get any pay?

Mr. Jimerson: Not straight pay; no, sir.

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Mr. Baker: Do they get any crooked pay?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I meant by that they get the commissions for serving papers. I don't think they get any direct salary or straight salary from any source.

Mr. Baker: Now as to the policemen, had there been any charge during the time preceding the riot, that is, say, six months or nine months or ten months-- I will go back ten months-- as to their not giving proper attention to the enforcement of the law by arresting offenders and those that ought to be arrested?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I have never known the fact that they have done those things. Every time I have ever known them-- I have seen them bring lots of people into the station.

Mr. Baker: What is your law in this city now about a man that apparently hasn't any occupation on earth; he is ragged and he is hanging around the saloons and around on the streets, and he is a quarter to three-quarters drunk? What is the law as to him? What do you do with him?

Mr. Jimerson: Vag him.

Mr. Baker: Well, they are still in existence right here in this city, aren't they, right today?

Mr. Jimerson: I think so.

Mr. Baker: Don't you know so?

Mr. Jimerson: I know so, to a certain extent.

Mr. Baker: Well, isn't that the duty of all

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these officers, to pick up these fellows?

Mr. Jirerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: Why, you can go right down the street-- we went down the street today, three of us, and we hadn't been down but a block here till they accosted one of the members for something to get some whiskey with, not only ragged, but dirty and drunk.

Mr. Jirerson: Moochers.

Mr. Baker: Now why don't your officers arrest those men and clean up your city?

Mr. Jirerson: Well, they are supposed to do that. They appointed the Committee of One Hundred, changed the police force, changed the chief, and we are supposed to have a clean city now, in my estimation.

Mr. Baker: Aren't you firmly convinced that if that class of fellows were taken up and taken off the streets and put to work, good results would come to this city in ten days' time that would astonish the oldest inhabitants?

Mr. Jirerson: No doubt of it.

Mr. Baker: Have you ever appealed to the constables to do this?

Mr. Jirerson: Not the constables; no, sir.

Mr. Baker: Have you ever appealed to the deputy sheriffs to do it?

Mr. Jirerson: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Have you ever appealed to the Marshal to do it?

Mr. Jimerson: To the chief of police, I have tried.

Mr. Baker: I don't want to get but one at a time.

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know who is the Marshal-- the United States Marshal?

Mr. Baker: The City Marshal.

Mr. Jimerson: The Chief of Police is the City Marshal.

Mr. Baker: Have you ever appealed to the Chief of Police or any of his assistants to enforce the law in that regard?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; I suggested to the chief of police at one time that he pick up all the whites and blacks, regardless of who they may be, and get rid of this element of people that were committing this crime around here.

Mr. Baker: You are interested in the building up of this city?

Mr. Jimerson: Absolutely.

Mr. Baker: You are interested in making it better?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You are interesting in making conditions of the laboring man better?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You are interested so that your wife

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may come down the street without <sup>the</sup> danger of being insulted or pushed off the street?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: And the same way with your daughter and son?

Mr. Jimerson: I haven't got those.

Mr. Baker: Well, your neighbor's son.

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: I didn't know whether you had any children, but I used it figuratively.

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: No, why haven't you gone to those men and insisted since this riot that that feature in this town be cleaned up?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, just as I said before, the Committee of One Hundred is handling that. We are not considered at all. We have never been put on the Committee of One Hundred or anything at all.

Mr. Baker: Well now, Mr. Jimerson, I have watched you here today and your testimony, and you are a man of a good deal of force, and a pretty bright fellow, and understand your rights. There are many laboring men in this town-- I mean by that, men working with their hands and making their living from the sweat of their brow. They are in every store and in every factory and in every grocery store and in every bank in this town. You don't pretend to tell me that these people are absolutely ignored,

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this class of people, by the officers of this town, do you?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, Mr. Baker, the best way I can tell that, you ought to be here and live in the conditions and find out for yourself.

Mr. Baker: Why, it seems to me the first thing you would do, if you would go down to the chief of police and say, "Here is a lot of drunks and toughs and loafers that don't belong on our streets; they are a nuisance and a source of crime, a source of danger; we have had two riots; I want you to go up and arrest that man." Suppose he fails to do it, don't you know inside of a week you could have him out of office?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: Certainly. Did you ever try to do it?

Mr. Jimerson: No.

Mr. Baker: Why don't you do it?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I have took the initiative in some things around here, and I got the worst of it, so I think I'll keep my mouth shut from now on and let things take their own course.

Mr. Baker: No, you're not built that way.

Mr. Jimerson: I got punched in the jaw last night for arresting a pickpocket six months ago. You can see my lip is swollen right now.

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Mr. Baker: Well now, that is a remarkable statement, and I want you to explain it. Some man hit you last night?

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Mr. Jimerson: He certainly did. (laughter)

Mr. Baker: I don't like that laughing. It is very improper. There is nothing funny about that. Here is a good, respectable citizen hit in the face on the street. Do you know who hit you?

Mr. Jimerson: I would prefer to tell the Committee in private. He is arrested.

Mr. Baker: All right; if he is arrested. This trouble and this private business is the thing that has caused all this trouble.

Mr. Jimerson: I don't do anything private outside of that, and there is a great reason for that.

Mr. Baker: All right. Is that one of the citizens that lives here?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know if he lives here or not. I don't think he does.

Mr. Baker: Well, do you think he is one of the fellows, the kind of men that have been causing trouble here in East St. Louis?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, that-- ask your question in private, Mr. Baker, and I will tell you, and tell you the reason for it.

Mr. Baker: All right. About how many men are working in East St. Louis who are earning their living by their daily work? I mean not clerks in the stores, stenographers, typewriters, telephone workers, men working

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on the streets and in the factories; men that are earning their living by what we call manual labor, clerical labor?

Mr. Foss: By salaries and wages. Just give a rough guess.

Mr. Jimeron: Practically all the people in town do.

Mr. Baker: Practically all the people of the town?

Mr. Jimeron: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: And still they are thwarted in practically all their efforts to bring about a better condition?

Mr. Jimeron: That has been the case in the past.

Mr. Baker: You were over at the City Hall during part of July 2nd. Did you call on the Mayor that day at all?

Mr. Jimeron: I seen the Mayor only during the time he was in the office there, and I heard him make the remark to Colonel Tripp, talking about conditions, you know, and they were figuring out, I suppose, how to place these soldiers. They were busy talking together, three or four of them, Mr. Fayette and some other officer there in uniform, and the Mayor and Colonel Tripp. I don't know what they were talking about. I didn't get to him. I seen him earlier in the morning. He was conversing with the chief of police then.

Mr. Baker: Well, did there seem to be any effort there that day at all on the part of the chief of police and the department to bring about order and decorum, that you could see?

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Mr. Jimerson: Well, when I got down there the majority of the police had gone home to breakfast, I guess. I understood they called out all the night men, or the few men they did have they called out that morning of the shooting, and practically all of those fellows that had been called out went on home, and the police force wasn't any too large anyway.

Mr. Baker: So they practically sent the police force to their homes? That is about what it meant?

Mr. Jimerson: Just what I seen; and I just surmised to myself. I didn't ask anybody.

Mr. Baker: Do you know this man Wolf personally?

Mr. Jimerson: I never was acquainted with him till the Aluminum Ore Company strike. I met him then.

Mr. Baker: His efforts and work, so far as you know, are entirely separate and distinct from yours?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes.

Mr. Baker: Were there any women who spoke at that night meeting on May 28th?

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Mr. Jimerson: I don't think so, no sir. I am sure of it. That is, up to the time I left the hall, when Mr. Flennagen took the platform.

Mr. Baker: Now what is your general deduction from all that has occurred as to the cause of the July riot?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, it is a complication, in my opinion. It is lack of enough police officers to pro-

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properly police the city and take care of the city. The city is spread out over a large territory, and they never did have enough officers in the last five years here to cover this city, and properly cover it. The men-- they work 13 or 14 hours a day. My wife's uncle was on the police force, and I know what time he went to work and what time he got home in the evening. And that, connected with the crime that went on, and the rumors afloat that the corporations were bringing in more negroes all the time, and the conditions-- I wouldn't be a bit surprised to ~~see~~<sup>say</sup> that the fact that the large corporations discriminated against the white man and put the negro in his place.

Mr. Baker: Do you think that that really--

Mr. Jimerson (interposing:) I know it. I have seen it myself. I don't have to think anything at all. I drove to the packing houses in my Ford and watched them early in the morning where two or three or four hundred men were at the gate waiting for jobs during these good jobs we have had here.

Mr. Baker: White men?

Mr. Jimerson: White and colored men. They would come out and pick up a big husky colored man, and the white man would stay there and go on back and look for a job the next day ag'n.

Mr. Baker: You believe that that condition is such that the feeling was discussed and talked over by the

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people over the town in general: "We have got to drive these negroes out to maintain the jobs for the white men?"

Mr. Jimerson: That had a whole lot of bearing on it, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker: What do you think about the conditions now? Are they better in that regard?

Mr. Jimerson: I think they are some better; yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: ~~You think they are some~~ <sup>what makes them</sup> better?

Mr. Jimerson: Why, the fact is that there is no crime since this riot occurred-- very small amount of crime, with reference to what it was in the past? We have probably three or four crimes a week now where we used to have four or five or six a night.

Mr. Baker: And the reduction of the immigration of the colored people as well?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I think that has some bearing on it. We had colored people here for many years, and of course there were some bad people among them, but there never was any race feeling like there has been in the past or accumulated in the last year or two.

Mr. Baker: Well now, from your observation and your acquaintance here in East St. Louis, which gives you an opportunity to meet all classes of people and see what is going on and get acquainted with them, lay in and day out; observe their workings and their work and their

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talk, and hear these conversations, what is your theory now as to the remedy to prevent such recurrences as that of May and July of this year?

625 Mr. Jimerson: Well, Mr. Baker, in my opinion you can have good conditions and no crime when you have got an efficient police force-- that is, not so efficient, but a police force large enough to handle it. I have always maintained that this city, with the ground it covers, ought to have at least 300 police officers to cover it properly, and they ought to be out on nine hour shifts. A man can't stay out in the weather and do his duty and go to work at six o'clock in the morning and get home at eight at night, and stand in the cold and walk in the cold and winter snow and ice-- you can't get a man to do it. It is impossible. But they take the jobs, but they are not doing their duty, though, and that is the remedy for it, just tax your various corporations who are located here to pay those men.

Mr. Cooper: May I ask just one question? Your idea is that the policeman is entitled to-- ought not to be required to work 12 hours a day on a beat?

Mr. Jimerson: He can't do it and give good service.

Mr. Cooper: Yet witness after witness testified that they did do that, that they walked their beats 12 hours a day, several policemen. They ought not to be required to do it, ought they?

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Mr. Jimerson: I don't think so.

Mr. Cooper: That will take them fourteen to sixteen hours a day, don't it, that they will have to be away, going here, coming back, little delays in getting started for home-- everything of that sort?

Mr. Jimerson: I would judge about 14 hours, 14 or 15.

Mr. Cooper: If they walked the beats 12 hours, that only gives them an hour to get home, get washed up and go to bed.

Mr. Jimerson: That is a short time, too.

Mr. Cooper: If they live any distance it is a short time?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: So your conclusions are that a strict observance and enforcement of the law here will bring about conditions that will make it almost improbable that these riots will recur?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes. There is another cause for it too, the lack of finances. That is the cause, not only in the city but in the county, lack of finances to properly put an efficient-- a large enough police force in the city. There is the primary cause, Mr. Baker, the lack of finances.

Mr. Baker: Can't you tax these concerns sufficiently to get your finances?

Mr. Jimerson: If we get an assessment to tax

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then, the County Judge lowers their assessment. That is the difference. We have got a County Judge up here that has been in political office all his life. The assessor raised, I believe, the City Water Company's assessment \$600,000. The City Water Company appeared before the board of review, and after the meeting of the board of review, they go down to the County Judge's office, and the next morning the assessment is down again where it started. I am telling facts, and I don't fear anybody now. They all look alive to me.

Mr. Baker: That is just the kind of a man I like to meet and hear talk. Then you are really in a deplorable condition, aren't you?

Mr. Jimerson: Why, the County is \$100,000 in debt right now-- not saying how much in debt the city is, and that is the cause of it.

Mr. Baker: Isn't there any way you can relieve yourselves?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes; if we can get the state Board of Equalization to give us a raise in taxes.

Mr. Baker: Well, I can't understand, though, why this great body of fine looking men and women in a city like East St. Louis, that are doing this business here-- you see them on the streets and in the stores-- aren't sufficient in number to really control their own affairs and drive out these marauders and looters and put in office men who will enforce the law in all the places and get a

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sufficient amount of taxes. I can't understand why it can't be done.

Mr. Jimerson: Those are facts.

Mr. Baker: Who controls this? Your idea is that the big concerns get in and spend the money?

Mr. Jimerson: I can state one instance to you. Just right in my memory, right at this time, Mr. Fox ran his master mechanic, Mr. Rudisell, for a member of the levy board. I won't say he ran him, but Mr. Rudisell ran, and it was charged at that time by the opposite party that they wanted to use the levy board's money to build trestles from their barges-- or the railroad track going into the tract-- to haul that mineral up. That was charged by the opposing party. Those are the conditions. The river front is bottled up here. It all belongs to the corporations.

Mr. Baker: Nobody was ever convicted for malfeasance or misfeasance in office?

Mr. Jimerson: No, we have got a man here who embezzled forty or fifty thousand dollars of the school kids' money, and he is still running at large, nothing done to him.

Mr. Baker: Well then, that would be a specific instance. Have there been any prosecutions or convictions for malfeasance or misfeasance in office of the various officials of St. Clair County?

Mr. Jimerson: Not to my knowledge.

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Mr. Baker: Neither city nor county?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Johnson: When did this embezzlement of the school funds take place?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I suppose it covered a period of ten or twelve years, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson: Has anybody been indicted for it?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they have been indicted several times, and the indictment declared null and void, and I understand they were indicted again, or going to be indicted.

Mr. Johnson: How long ago was the first indictment returned?

Mr. Jimerson: I judge it has been probably a year--two years ago, or a year and a half.

Mr. Johnson: And the court has held that the indictments were not good, and referred the matter to the Grand Jury again, and the Grand Jury has brought in other indictments. Is that the situation?

Mr. Jimerson: I think so-- something on that order.

Mr. Johnson: Are these indictments against one or more persons?

Mr. Jimerson: One man.

Mr. Johnson: Did he hold an official position?

Mr. Jimerson: He was the school treasurer.

Mr. Johnson: What was his name?

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Mr. Jimerson: Stephen Le Page.

Mr. Johnson: Is he now on bail?

Mr. Jimerson: I think he is.

Mr. Baker: How do you know anything about the arresting of about 200 men by the militia here on the 2nd of July, on Collinsville Avenue and Missouri, and taking them to jail?

Mr. Jimerson: I heard they spread a dragnet and took them to jail. In fact, I seen them next morning.

Mr. Baker: You weren't there present?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir; I was home.

Mr. Baker: Is there anybody who can tell the Committee who knows about that dragnet, if there is a citizen here, and who knows why certain individuals were turned loose before they got to jail by the pleading of others?

Mr. Jimerson: I know of only one man who was turned loose, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker: Who was it?

Mr. Jimerson: A business agent of the mad-cutters organization in St. Louis. We were supposed to have a meeting over here--

Mr. Baker (interposing:): What was his name?

Mr. Jimerson: Fred Smith. We were supposed to have a meeting over here, and I was instructed by the International Secretary-Treasurer, to notify the various

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members within a radius of 25 miles around that we were organizing what is known as the Packing Trades Council. That is different units of the different locals of the various meat-cutters' organizations; also packing houses. We had a meeting booked for that night, and he came over and he got in this dragnet. He drove his machine down there and stopped there, and they picked him up and sent him over to the station. He showed them a letter with my name signed to it saying we were going to have a meeting here, and he was on his way to the meeting and happened to see the crowd there and stopped in his machine, and they turned him loose. I don't know who turned him loose. I don't know anything about that at all. That is what he told me.

Mr. Johnson: In your judgment it was proper that he should be turned loose?

Mr. Jimerson: Oh, yes; no doubt about it. He wouldn't harm anything, especially in East St. Louis. He had no dealings in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Do you know anything about the turning loose of ninety-some odd men who had been arrested the day before in the way I have suggested, held in jail that night at the City Prison, and then turned loose in a sort of a body the next day by the justice of the peace without any examination or any evidence?

Mr. Jimerson: No, I don't. I knew there was a bunch of men there, crowded in the basement of the jail

there like pigs, and I waited in there and one fellow wanted a glass of water and he said, "We haven't had anything to eat or drink since seven o'clock that night", or something like that, and I went to see the chief about it and he said he couldn't do anything; they were in charge of Colonel Tripp. I went over to see Tripp, and Tripp couldn't give me any satisfaction, and finally I went to the humane officer and finally got some sandwiches, and something to eat and something to drink for them.

Mr. Baker: You didn't say anything to the justices or anyone else about ~~xxxx~~ turning <sup>any of</sup> those men loose, did you?

Mr. Jimsen: No, Colonel Tripp had them in charge and he was going to take care of them.

Mr. Baker: Do you know how they got out?

Mr. Jimsen: No, I don't.

Mr. Baker: That's all.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know Mr. Sorrells of this town?

Mr. Jimsen: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And Mr. Weinel.

Mr. Jimsen: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Sorrells is the man that supplied the rifles to the Alucinum Company at the time of their strike, it was reported-1/

Mr. Jimsen: I believe they are Government rifles.

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Mr. Cooper: Mr. Fox testified that they came through Mr. Sorrells.

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Sorrells was secretary, or some officer, in the rifle club here?

Mr. Jimerson: He was an officer, also, of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cooper: And Mr. Weinel was the President of the shooting club that got the rifles?

Mr. Jimerson: He also was an employe of the Aluminum Ore Company at the present.

Mr. Cooper: He was at that time president of the shooting club, at the time these rifles were supplied?

Mr. Jimerson: I knew he belonged to it, but I didn't know whether he held any office.

Mr. Cooper: He was president, I believe. Well, after these rifles had been sent over there, and after the strike, do you know that both of those men went into the employ of the Aluminum Company?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; I know both of them are in the employ, and they both went in there after the rifles were sent in. Mr. Weinel was given charge of their barge or dock down at their river front at a salary of \$200 a month.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know where they obtained these rifles which they supplied to that Aluminum Ore Company?

Mr. Jimerson: My understanding is, Mr. Cooper,

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that there is some kind of a government law passed giving them a right to organize what are known as rifle clubs, and that they bought the rifles, but the rifles were under the supervision of the Government. That is my understanding, and there is quite a number of the boys here in town that have bought rifles and belong to the club, and I think they generally kept the rifles in the library building, and I believe they had a range there, as they called it, and they had target practice there in the library building. That is my understanding. I never was in there, never belonged to the club. I think that is probably where the rifles come from.

Mr. Cooper: They were procured from the government for the purposes of this club?

Mr. Jiverson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Then the club turned them over to the Aluminus Ore Company?

Mr. Jiverson: I don't know if the club did it, or the officers of the club did.

Mr. Cooper: Well, Mr. Sorrells did. Did the Aluminus Ore Company purchase the rifles, or the other men?

Mr. Jiverson: They bought them personally. They asked me to go into the club, but I didn't have much time to fool around with shooting irons, and I declined to join it. I believe they paid six or twelve dollars apiece for the rifles.

Mr. Cooper: About when was it?

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Mr. Jiranson: This club was organized in-- oh, fully a year.

Mr. Cooper: A year ago?

Mr. Jiranson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: How long after that and after the purchase of these rifles by this club, or by Mr. Scorralls and Mr. Weinel for the club, were they turned over by Mr. Scorralls and Mr. Weinel to the Aluminum Ore Company?

Mr. Jiranson: Well, I couldn't say that, Mr. Cooper. I believe that they kept the rifles down at this range, I believe, and they were taken from the library building to the Aluminum Ore Company. I know it was charged there were some cots and rifles went in there. I wanted to tell the Committee that these cots and guns were shipped into the packing-house during the packing house troubles up there, and that I seen the cots, and it was rumored around that the guns were given promiscuously among the strike-breakers and the men brought in there.

Mr. Cooper: Which strike was that?

Mr. Jiranson: The packing-house strike. I took the committees, hauled them from the office, the headquarters, a little from building they had, up to each one of the individual plants. I took the committees from each plant up there in my Ford, and I seen the cots stretched out all over the ground, and fellows laying around there sleeping, and empty beer bottles spread

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around the cots where they had been drinking during the night or off working hours; and I believe lots of these guns that have been taken up by the police department, caught on colored fellows, were guns sent into the packing houses. That is my personal opinion and rumors I have heard from the fellows that worked there, that guns were promiscuously given to colored men or strike breakers, whoever they may have been. Those rumors are pretty strong and come from a good many sources, from men that worked there and went back to work there.

Mr. Cooper: When did you first hear about this arbozalement of \$45,000 from the school fund of this city?

Mr. Jimenez: I don't know the exact date, Mr. Cooper. It was the time they elected a new treasurer, and he wouldn't take over the office and wouldn't accept the accounts of the other treasurer.

Mr. Cooper: When did you first hear of the arrest and indictment of the defaulter?

Mr. Jimenez: It must have been a couple of months afterward.

Mr. Cooper: How long ago would that be?

Mr. Jimenez: I judge about fourteen or fifteen months. I think it was about a year and a half ago it occurred.

Mr. Cooper: Up to this time there has been no trial?

Mr. Jimenez: No, sir.

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Mr. Cooper: And the indictment was found defective by the court?

Mr. Jimserson: That is my understanding.

Mr. Cooper: Was another indictment presented against him?

Mr. Jimserson: I can't say. I have got nothing personally against this one man, but that is the general condition. It has been a fact here and rumored here and known that every County Treasurer we ever had never give his office up clean. Those are facts that ought to be known.

Mr. Cooper: A community can't be protected <sup>anywhere</sup> against crimes of that kind unless there is a prompt prosecution, reasonably prompt. That racketeer, you say, was discovered 14 months ago?

Mr. Jimserson: I think about that time.

Mr. Cooper: Up to this time there has been no trial?

Mr. Jimserson: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: It is all a matter of book-keeping; the addresses are right here in this city, aren't they?

Mr. Jimserson: Yes, sir; in this city and Belleville.

Mr. Cooper: How far is Belleville from here?

Mr. Jimserson: Fourteen miles.

Mr. Cooper: That is the county seat?

Mr. Jimserson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Can you imagine of any reason why a thoroughly competent prosecuting officer, prosecuting official, wouldn't have done something towards prosecution of that kind before this?

Mr. Jirneron: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Do you know what the school taxes of this city are in a year?

Mr. Jirneron: I don't know the approximate amount. I think the general rate was 9.20 altogether this year.

Mr. Johnson: \$9.20 tax on \$100?

Mr. Jirneron: I think that was it; yes, sir. The record will show that.

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Mr. Cooper: 2.66, according to this.

Mr. Jirneron: The school tax?

Mr. Cooper: Yes, 1917. \$3.25 it is marked here. That may be a special tax. That is marked "school" here. The total tax rate was 6.75 in 1916, and 9.20 in 1917.

Mr. Baker: I want to get back a little further.

Mr. Johnson: In answer to a question from me you said that the indictment which had been held to be defective was resubmitted to the Grand Jury, and they again had indicted this man, and that he was not out on bail. In answer to a question from Mr. Cooper on the same point you said you didn't know whether he had been reindicted or not.

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Mr. Jiranson: I told you, Mr. Johnson, that I understood he was indicted or was going to be indicted. I never heard the report on it.

Mr. Johnson: It is not your understanding at all that the prosecution of him has been dropped?

Mr. Jiranson: Oh no; they don't drop it. They let it lag along four or five years and then it is forgotten about.

Mr. Johnson: They haven't done that yet?

Mr. Jiranson: No; they have done it in every other case here.

Mr. Johnson: What other cases?

Mr. Jiranson: Why, when the city was plundered under the Lambert administration, no convictions. They carried everything away except the City Hall, and they couldn't get that or they would have carried that along too. I am telling these facts because I don't believe publicity will hurt anybody. I believe in bringing them out and it will bring good results.

Mr. Johnson: Was anybody indicted on that occasion?

Mr. Jiranson: Yes, and sentenced to the penitentiary by the judge.

Mr. Johnson: Did they go to the penitentiary?

Mr. Jiranson: Not yet.

Mr. Johnson: How long ago has that been?

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Mr. Jimerson: Three or four or five years.

Mr. Johnson: Where is the case now?

Mr. Jimerson: I believe the State's Attorney dropped the case.

Mr. Johnson: What was the name of the State's Attorney?

Mr. Jimerson: Charles Tebb at that time.

Mr. Johnson: Who was the Judge of the Court?

Mr. Jimerson: The judge who tried the case was, I believe, Judge Waddox. I think he came from Madison County. I have got nothing against this man, but I am just telling you the facts. The Judge found him guilty, or the jury found him guilty, and the Judge sentenced him. They took an arrest of judgment and appealed to the Supreme Court, and the Supreme Court reversed it and sent it back for trial, and I don't believe it has ever been tried again.

Mr. Cooper: Who drew these defective indictments? The District Attorney himself, didn't he?

Mr. Jimerson: I couldn't tell you that. I don't know.

Mr. Cooper: It is customary for a grand jury indictment to be drawn by the prosecuting officer, and they usually being men/not skilled in the drawing of indictments, the prosecuting officer draws the indictment and presents it to the grand jury, as expressing their views?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

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Mr. Cooper: The Grand Jury signs it and returns it to the Court, so the responsibility for the defective indictment rests upon the prosecuting officer himself?

Mr. Jimerson: That might be so. I am not sure about that.

Mr. Cooper: How long has the officer now-- the present State's Attorney in this county-- been in office?

Mr. Jimerson: Since December 1st, 1916.

Mr. Cooper: Was this embezzlement took place under the administration of his predecessor?

Mr. Jimerson: I think it did.

Mr. Cooper: And it was his predecessor that drew that first defective indictment, then. What was his name?

Mr. Jimerson: I am not sure about that, Mr. Cooper. His name was Charles M. Webb, I think-- Charles W. Webb or Charles B. Webb.

Mr. Cooper: You say the city has been plundered in previous cases. What was the plundering which you had in mind?

Mr. Jimerson: They stole the money and stole the books. They couldn't find anything out.

Mr. Cooper: What money was it from the county treasurer's office, the school funds?

Mr. Jimerson: The city Treasury. The same gang now is backing the administrative work of government for us fellows.

Mr. Cooper: How much was embezzled that time in

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the city treasurer's office?

Mr. Jirneron: I don't know as to the exact amount, Mr. Cooper. The records will show it if anyone wants to go that deep.

Mr. Cooper: Up into the thousands?

Mr. Jirneron: Oh yes, they took everything. They left the City Hall there. He was lucky to get it back.

Mr. Cooper: It is a remarkable example of government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Mr. Baker: I want to go on with this now. We have been here for two weeks; most of the time has been-- at least my questions have been to the city officials. I have said little about the county officials. I thought that I would make a mistake in doing so, but I felt it my duty from what I have heard here in the last two or three days-- I feel that I ought to inquire of somebody that knew, and when you took the stand as a county commissioner I felt you would know; so I have done it, and I am going a little farther.

How long does your county official hold office?

Mr. Jirneron: Four years.

Mr. Baker: Do you have any law of recall in this state?

Mr. Jirneron: I don't think so.

Mr. Baker: Have you a law whereby you can discharge the man from his office for malfeasance or misfeasance in office?

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Mr. Jimerson: If you can find him guilty to that effect.

Mr. Baker: Have any charges ever been filed against the district attorney or his deputies for malfeasance or misfeasance in office?

Mr. Jimerson: Not that I know of.

Mr. Baker: Or the sheriff or his deputies?

Mr. Jimerson: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Now I ought to know, but that isn't my business to know, the law of Illinois, but I will ask you-- you know-- if the district attorney's duty is to prosecute all these cases that come up in the police and justice courts?

Mr. Jimerson: All cases that the State arrests.

Mr. Baker: Has there been any complaint made as to laxity or the whitewashing of these cases by that official and his deputies?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't think so, Mr. Baker, except the one instance I told you about, where Mr. Schumieffel asked us to abolish the office of second assistant attorney.

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Mr. Baker: I mean as to crimes alleged to have been committed, and committed here in East St. Louis, that were state cases?

Mr. Jimerson: That is the instance that I told you about.

Mr. Baker: How can all these fellows get off, if the District Attorney's office, the State's Attorney's office is right on the job? How do they get out?

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Mr. Jimerson: Better find a police force that goes and gets them and brings them in. There hasn't been three persons convicted of all the crimes that the papers published in the last ten months. They haven't got caught, none of these murderers.

Mr. Baker: They haven't even caught them?

Mr. Jimerson: I don't know of ~~any~~ a murdered being caught. I know of two or three fellows being murdered, but I don't know of anybody being caught.

Mr. Baker: 800 and some odd crimes committed?

Mr. Jimerson: That is the way it was given to me.

Mr. Baker: How many convictions secured?

Mr. Jimerson: Very few. I can't tell you how many.

Mr. Baker: I know, but you can't lay it all to the police that there haven't been convictions. If a man <sup>has been</sup> ~~is~~ arrested, the District Attorney has detectives to assist him?

Mr. Jimerson: I say, Mr. Baker, that the police force never made ~~it~~ the arrests. They were unable to catch the criminals. There is the trouble.

Mr. Baker: There has been only a few, or a small per cent, of these 840 and some odd crimes actually committed, where the party has ever been arrested?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; that is the fact. They never find them. They can't find them. Not that they don't want to, but they haven't got the amount of men to do the work. I can get from here to Belleville-- I can

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go fifty miles from here while they are getting the police together any place in this town, unless they have got them right in the station to have them right out. It is the inability, the smallness of the force. There is the biggest cause of it all.

Mr. Baker: Well, the people are just practically unprotected, according to that?

Mr. Jenson: The present administration is trying to live within its appropriation, within the income of its money. It is trying to be economical. It has been economical in practically all departments to my knowledge. I am not trying to shield anybody; I don't try to shield anybody. They are trying to be economical in every department. I should say it has been; it has been economical in the police department to our loss.

Mr. Baker: You cannot be economical in letting crime go unpunished, if it takes every dollar of the city's property.

Mr. Jenson: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Of course in doing this they can't exceed the appropriation?

Mr. Jenson: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: But there has been no voluntary organization or effort to assist in the prosecution of this crime?

Mr. Jenson: No, not to my knowledge.

Mr. Baker: Well, what is your reason now that the citizens have such a light feeling upon this matter and don't take an active part?

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Mr. Jimerson: Well, sir, that is more than I can tell you.

Mr. Baker: Does it seem to be general?

Mr. Jimerson: It does. They hold council meeting after council meeting, and you won't find a citizen down there, unless one or two occasionally might come in.

Mr. Baker: Have you a city ordinance here against carrying concealed weapons?

633 Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir; also a state ordinance.

Mr. Baker: What do these men do for protection? Do they carry them anyhow?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they did before the riot. Everybody was armed, even down to myself. Those are really the conditions. I am telling you what the conditions were.

Mr. Baker: I am not doubting your word for a moment. You think it was a general arming of the people of this town?

Mr. Jimerson: Everybody was armed; black and white. Those are the conditions.

Mr. Baker: And that was because they felt they had no protection?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir, and the rumors going around that the blacks were going to get the whites and the whites were going to get the blacks, and that kept things in a turmoil, and the publications in the papers in regard to crimes committed night after night. I'll tell you the beetle of Tlanders had nothing on this place, any night during the time.

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Mr. Baker: You heard the statement of the witness-- I think it was Mr. Ferr-- about a sign being down here in the window "Buy a gun. It is the duty of every citizen to be prepared to protect himself?" Or words to that effect?

Mr. Jenson: Yes, sir; Uncle Charlie's pawnshop.

Mr. Baker: What was that there for? What did that mean, as you understood it?

Mr. Jenson: I thought it was an inducement to sell guns.

Mr. Baker: Did that apply to the negro or the white man?

Mr. Jenson: I thought it applied to the negro, from my experience.

Mr. Baker: Why do you draw that conclusion?

Mr. Jenson: Because the white man very seldom buys a gun, as your pawnshop records will show, in St. Louis or East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: You mean he very seldom buys a gun in a pawnshop?

Mr. Jenson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: The white people bought guns at the regular places of sale, and bought good ones?

Mr. Jenson: I suppose they did. When I bought my gun it has been eight or ten years ago-- I bought a good gun.

Mr. Baker: Well, these people carried good guns, didn't they? They didn't carry worthless, obsolete guns that wouldn't shoot? They carried weapons that would be effective?

Mr. Jimerson: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: But the negroes, the negro population buy cheap guns, rather than to buy more expensive ones? And you think Uncle Charlie had this sign out to dispose of his wares to the negroes?

Mr. Jimerson: Mr. Baker, in answer to what I know about the negro guns, I have seen them have revolvers of the very best and very highest price. Now I don't know anything about what they buy in the pawnshops, what they charge for them. I never go into the pawnshops.

Mr. Baker: I was referring to this sign and its effect.

Mr. Jimerson: They have nothing cheap there.

Mr. Baker: They don't?

Mr. Jimerson: Not to my knowledge. Four or five or six dollar/ guns. You can see the signs on them in the windows. I suppose there are some down there now-- a window for them.

Mr. Baker: Did the women have to carry guns too, or did they have escorts when they went out?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, I wouldn't allow my wife to go out by herself, unless she ran right over to her uncle's just across the street, right across through the neighbor's yard, in the next yard. That was the condition of the town, just telling live that all the time, as Mr. Kerr said, and the shooting of these two officers made it hell over. There is your real condition, and not organized labor.

Mr. Baker: Then the maintaining of that automobile in front of the police station was sufficient to keep it

flaming that day until it was removed?

Mr. Jimerson: It was removed about half past ten o'clock.

Mr. Baker: By your orders?

Mr. Jimerson: No; my suggestion. I gave no orders.

Mr. Baker: Well, was the talk generally that something must be done to remedy these conditions?

Mr. Jimerson: The air was full of it, on every street corner, whether you talked to business men or whom, they all talked alike.

Mr. Baker: What was the character of those remarks?

Mr. Jimerson: Well, they thought that the town was being overrun by criminals and by people that couldn't find jobs.

Mr. Baker: That's all.

Mr. Johnson: If there are no other questions, you may be excused.

Mr. Wolf, will you come forward?

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STATEMENT OF PHILIP WOLF, 2703 Bellevue  
Avenue, East St. Louis, Ill.

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Wolf, is your name <sup>Philip</sup> ~~Rick~~ Wolf?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: You come of your own volition to make a statement, entirely voluntary upon your part?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: With that understanding, I will swear

you.

(The witness was here sworn by Mr. Johnson.)

Mr. Cooper, will you interrogate the witness?

Mr. Cooper: Your name is Philip Wolf?

Mr. Wolf: Philip Wolf; yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Where do you live?

Mr. Wolf: 2903 Bellevue Avenue, East St. Louis, Illinois.

Mr. Cooper: How long have you lived there, or in this city?

Mr. Wolf: About seven years.

Mr. Cooper: What is your present business?

Mr. Wolf: I am working for the Valley Steel Plant.

Mr. Cooper: How long have you been in their employ?

Mr. Wolf: About two months and a half.

Mr. Cooper: Where were you employed before that?

Mr. Wolf: At the Aluminum Ore Company.

Mr. Cooper: When did you leave the Aluminum Company?

Mr. Wolf: The 15th of April last.

Mr. Cooper: How long had you been in the employ of the Aluminum Ore Company?

Mr. Wolf: About six years.

Mr. Cooper: You left there, then, at the time of the strike at that plant?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Was that the first or second day of the strike?

Mr. Wolf: That was the first day of the strike.

Mr. Cooper: The strike took place the night before, along about eight or nine or ten o'clock?

Mr. Wolf: That is the time I left.

Mr. Cooper: And you left on the night of the 27th or 28th?

Mr. Wolf: Well, my last shift was worked on the 17th of April.

Mr. Cooper: I would say 17th.

Mr. Wolf: And I didn't go back any more.

Mr. Cooper: You quit on the 17th?

Mr. Wolf: I stayed away from there after that.

635 The strike was called when I was to go to work. It was my turn to go on at 11 o'clock, and the strike was called between 10 and 11.

Mr. Cooper: Were you connected with the Employees' Protective Association?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Consisting of some of the employes of that plant?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: How many members were there in that association?

Mr. Wolf: About 1000 at one time.

Mr. Cooper: That was your relation to that association?

Mr. Wolf: Chairman of the trustees.

Mr. Cooper: How many trustees were there?

Mr. Wolf: Seven.

Mr. Cooper: Employees of the plant?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: How long did you act as chairman of the trustees of that association?

Mr. Wolf: From the time it was organized up to the present time.

Mr. Cooper: How long was it organized? How long before that strike?

Mr. Wolf: Shortly after the first strike.

Mr. Cooper: When was the first strike?

Mr. Wolf: The first strike was in October, last year.

Mr. Cooper: 1916?

Mr. Wolf: 1916; yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And you organized the protective association?

Mr. Wolf: Shortly after that.

Mr. Cooper: That was the first strike about?

Mr. Wolf: The company was paying <sup>the</sup> in cash on the regular pay-day. To start the story out as it should be, when this man, Mr. Rucker, came there as assistant superintendent they were paying on a bonus system at that time. I will say that the general feeling of the employes in the plant at that time was very good. Everybody seemed to be fairly well satisfied with conditions, and up to that time I can't recall of any later troubles or any strikes or any troubles where men were dissatisfied with their positions or

pages. After Mr. Rucker came there it appeared as though he was more of an efficiency man than anything else. Men were cautioned about ringing their clocks at just the point the whistle would blow on-- that is to say, they were supposed to ring from five to fifteen minutes before whistling time, so that they could be on their jobs. And they regulated the rate of pay.

Mr. Cooper: You mean-- did he request that?

Mr. Wolf: He sure did.

Mr. Cooper: Then you say they were supposed to. You mean Mr. Rucker requested when he came there that you ring from five to fifteen minutes before starting time?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir. And as the old custom had been that men came in there when the whistle blew, sometimes if they were late nothing was said about it.

Then after that, the rate of pay, the way they paid there it seemed like <sup>we</sup> the men worked on a bonus system and they were increasing the capacity of the plant, and they rated you at a regular rate of pay, and they paid you on a bonus system. Say, for instance, I was rated at \$75 a month, and my pay would run for two or three months, run up to \$80 or \$90 a month. Then they would come along with a cut, and they would cut me down to about \$60 a month, and of course that in itself began to disgust the employees.

Mr. Cooper: You wait a minute. Just explain what you mean by the "bonus system" and how they came to make these cuts, or the reason they assigned for the cuts. Just explain what you mean so it will go into the record.

Mr. Wolf: Well, so far as I can-- as I could understand it.

636 Mr. Cooper: You say yours was \$75 a month?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now start there.

Mr. Wolf: For instance, I was rated at \$75 a month, and I would run along within that \$75 <sup>a month</sup> a few months, and as the plant increased in capacity, increasing capacity of the plant run along, and my pay would probably then run to \$80 or \$90 for a couple of months. Then they would come along and set a new rating, and they would rate my pay lower, so that it would equalize up in, say, six months or a year's time, equalize up so that my rate would be about \$75 a month. And of course that in itself kind of disgusted some of the employes. Lots of them didn't understand it at first, and after several cuts there was more disgusted, and Mr. Rucker when he first came to the plant, he went around to the men and spoke very nice to them and got all the information he could-- seemed to be a regular little God, you know, and after he become more acquainted he become more strict-- more strict than Mr. Fox was himself before Mr. Rucker came there, and conditions all through the plant seemed to get more strict in every way, shape and form.

Finally they cut out paying the men cash money, and paid them in checks. Well, a lot of the men picked about that; and when the last straw was broken was when Mr. Rucker had notices posted that the men wouldn't receive their pay on the company's time any more; they would receive it on

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their own time after 5 o'clock.

Mr. Cooper: Well now, just explain that-- on the company's time or on their own time? What do you mean? Just explain it.

Mr. Wolf: Well, on the regular pay-days, on the 6th and 27th of <sup>each</sup> ~~the~~ month, after the noon-hour for lunch, the 12:30 whistle would blow and they paid the men off on the company's time. The men took their lunch from 12 to 12:30 and then worked from 12:30 to 5:30 or 5 o'clock.

Mr. Cooper: And they paid them after 12:30?

Mr. Wolf: They paid them after 12:30, on the company's time. They posted notices that there would be no more pay on the company's time; that the men would be paid on their own time. The 7 o'clock shift that went off watch in the morning would be paid after 7 o'clock, and the shift that worked from seven to three in the afternoon would be paid off after 3 o'clock, and the shift that worked from 3 in the morning till five at night would be paid after 5 o'clock. And of course that would let some of the men get home probably at seven or eight o'clock at night, because there was quite a number of men to be paid off there, that worked that shift. I would judge there was at least eight or nine hundred men to be paid off after 5 o'clock, and as it was in October, 5 o'clock begins to get pretty dark. So the men in the machine shop protested against that in the morning. They sent a committee to the office to inform the management that no pay after 12 o'clock, no work-- after 12:30, I

637 should say-- and when 12:30 came the men, the mechanics from all over the plant-- of course the news spread out, you know-- it spreads out awful quick in a plant of that kind. They all come to the machine shop while they were eating dinner and had this meeting. The machine shop is about 400 feet long and 250 or 350 feet wide, and the mechanics voted to stand by what-- by their committee, that they would not work after 12 o'clock if they didn't pay after 12:30. So after 12:30 when the whistle blew the men sat on the benches around, some on the floor, and when they didn't receive their pay they didn't work, and they continued to stay there the balance of the afternoon. That was on Saturday. The next morning was Sunday morning. There was a number of mechanics ordered out to work, some for the purpose of taking care of the maintenance of the plant and break down and such as that there.

On Saturday night the men had a meeting downtown in the Eagle Building, and they concluded down there that no man should work till he got his pay. I will say the night bunch out there did no work, the mechanical line, and the next day when the day force came out there that was ordered out on Sunday, they went out and sat down on the benches again, as they did Saturday afternoon, and a great number of them were sent home. I had a brother amongst them that was a pipefitter, and he was sent out there and sat on a bench, and his foreman told him "Well, Wolf, I don't like to do it, but it has to be done. I have got orders if you ain't work, to send you home." So he went home.

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On Monday morning, when these men all returned to work, their cards were taken out of the rack in the check office. They had no jobs. What I mean by the "check office", for the benefit of the Commission here, they have a check system where they keep the time. When a man goes in ~~the~~<sup>he</sup> takes his card from the rack on one side of the clock, and his number is on the card, and he puts it into that clock and rings the clock, and on that card it prints the time that you ring in, the day and date and year, and then you take and lay it on the other side of the clock in the other rack, where your number is. Then you leave the plant in the evening after your day's work is over, you ring your card and put it on the other side. So when this body of men came out there, I would judge about six or eight hundred mechanics, to the operating department, and went on about their business and received their pay. I was working in the power-house at the time, classed under the operating department. I worked on and was working at night.

Monday morning when I came out there I found that this six or eight hundred men were standing on the outside of the check office, and I learned immediately that ~~since~~ their cards weren't on the rack, and went back and looked and saw that they weren't there, and the racks were almost empty, with the exception of a few.

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I rang out my card and stood around there a little while and talked to some of the boys and went home. After I got home I had a trip over the river. I went over the

river, and on coming back an hour or so later I saw a parade here in town-- that is, workmen. I could see that, and as I neared up closer to them I found out it was the Aluminum Ore force that had been locked out there. They had marched, I learned later, to the City Hall, and had a meeting.

I went on home and went to work that night at the usual time. I started at 7 o'clock, and the next morning when I came out I was handed a bill from the boys. It said "Strike on for an eight-hour day and better working conditions." Of course I stood around and talked to the boys for a while.

Mr. Cooper: You had an eight-hour day before that?

Mr. Wolf: Some of the departments there did. The operating ~~plant~~ departments, some of them, had an eight-hour day.

Mr. Cooper: The others did not?

Mr. Wolf: The mechanical department was working, I think, at that time nine hours and a half, and I will say for myself, at that time I was working 12 hours. There had been an eight-hour shift in the engine room, and one of the boys happened to be off sick, and the other two filled in the extra four hours a piece to make the eight hours.

Mr. Cooper: How long had you worked 12 hours a day there?

Mr. Wolf: Well, I worked there about three years 12 hours a day, before the eight-hour day was in existence. Then at this time there was a young fellow working there who was bothered with rheumatism. He could work probably

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a couple of months and would be off a couple of weeks, and just at this time of course when he was off it was a pretty hard proposition to break a new man in on a job like that for just a couple of weeks in <sup>an</sup> ~~the~~ engine room of that kind, and they didn't bother with breaking a man in. They just let the other two men fill in. They did that all through the power-house. Whenever one man was off, the other two men filled in to make up the eight hours for that man who was off.

This Monday night I went to work as usual at 7 o'clock, and worked all night, and at 7 o'clock Tuesday night when I came out I was handed this slip, this bill, this poster. The men were out on strike then for better working conditions, and they succeeded in getting a greater part of the day shift to stay out.

Mr. Corbett: You say you had been working for three years from 7 o'clock at night until 7 o'clock in the morning?

Mr. Wolf: At that time I was working from six at night till six in the morning. That was a 12-hour day, and throughout the plant, with the exception of the mechanics. They worked ten hours, two shifts. In the operating department they had one shift from six p.m. to six a.m., and six a.m. to six p.m., 12 hour shifts. The mechanics worked ten hours, from 7 till 5:30 with 30 minutes for dinner.

When I was handed this slip I stated that there was <sup>or</sup> ~~no~~ objection of all the day shifts stayed out, come out on ~~strike~~ strike with the boys, with the mechanical department that had been out-- had been locked out. Then I

went home, took my usual sleep, and about 5 o'clock I got up and went out in the front yard, and the chief engineer, the man I was working under, met me at the front yard, and he says "I will expect you to be over to work tonight." "Well", I said "does it look like there is going to be any trouble getting in over there? If there is, I am not going over, because there is a big coal pile over there, and it is hard to climb." "No", he says "we got everything arranged now. The committee will wait on you when you come out there. They've got the plant practically crippled, but the engine room and the boiler room will run for fire protection, and I will expect you to be out there." "Well, <sup>I said</sup> I'll go out there, and if the Committee instructs me to go in, I'll go in; but if you expect me to scab, you might as well get another man." "Well now", he says, "Well, it's all right; everything is fixed. You don't have to scab. You go out and report to the committee. They'll tell you to go in."

Mr. Cooper: Is committee of your association of employees?

Mr. Wolf: No, there was no association at that time. This is the first time. There was no association.

Now the committee, when I went out there-- I went out and reported to the committee, and they told me to go ahead and go in to work, and if I felt like joining them, they would let me know when I came out that there would be nothing on me on account of my working, and that they had these preparations made for the master mechanic and a man

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to come in and run the engine room and the boiler room until they seen they couldn't get a settlement, and then they probably would pull that.

We worked on then until Thursday morning. I want to say at that time that the company furnished-- while in the plant I didn't carry any more supper at night. I ate supper over there. We had a nice spread; a big aluminum coffee pot for making coffee, and all kinds of stuff of all kinds, plenty of cigars. Previous to that strike we were not allowed to smoke in the plant at all. If a man was caught smoking he was discharged, but as soon as that strike was called we could walk around the engine room with a pipe in our mouths or a cigar. In fact, I went down to the lavatory where they had all of this stuff here and carried armloads of it up to the engine room to the boys there. We had plenty of cigars and plenty of eats and cigarettes as well. But as far as beer and whiskey was concerned at that time, I didn't see any.

On Thursday morning when I came out, the boys told me that they had decided to pull the engine room.

Mr. Cooper: You seen strike in the engine room?

Mr. Wolf: Yes, sir. So I didn't go back any more. And some of the men, I guess, that went in on the day shift had already arrangements made, but they finally come back out of <sup>again</sup> there.



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at the adjournment of the meeting whether they would accept it or not, and if I can remember right, the committee went out and telephoned to Mr. Fox about 11 o'clock, or 11:30 at night, and Mr. Fox asked if the committee was still in session or if the committee would wait for him if he would come over where we were, and the committee said we would, and he said "I'll be right over just as fast as my little Ford will bring me."

It was only a short time until Mr. Fox came, and he was escorted to the front there, and after he was informed that the body of men had rejected his proposition, he said "well, I don't know what else to do", and everything was quiet, I guess, for two minutes, and finally he said "well, boys, what do you want?" So every department had their schedule out, as the engine room did, and one at a time-- there was about, I guess, 24 or 25 different departments-- and as they were handed to Mr. Fox he read them over and he said "There is nothing in there that the Aluminum Company can't pay", and he laid it down and says "I'll approve it and pay it." He granted every demand, all demands, and gave us some things that we didn't ask for, and when the question of pay-day came up he says "Boys, I believe you <sup>all</sup> will be satisfied if I would bring the pay right around to your work, and you wouldn't have to worry about it while you are working." He granted all demands, and some things we didn't ask for, and I think the increase amounted to about 30 per cent. So it was just a verbal

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agreement, this was, no signatures subscribed or anything else. We took Mr. Fox on his word of honor as a good citizen. We always believed in him before-- never caught him in a lie, and he himself had always treated us pretty nice and we thought pretty well of Mr. Fox.

Everything was well, and the men back to work the next morning-- in fact, some of the men left the hall that night ~~at~~ 2:30 and went over to the plant. Some of the engineers volunteered to go in and help start up the engines and did do it. I went over next morning myself and worked a little while, and everything went on for a little while, and finally the boys decided they had better organize, and they organized into the Aluminum Ore Protective Association. About 1600 men joined it.

Things went on for a short while, and finally a big lay-off came. The company laid off quite a number of men that had been there for years, old men. They laid off probably 200 men, and Mr. Fox had agreed that the oldest man should always be kept on the job and the newest men let out first, so at a meeting of the association the men appointed their committees and went to see Mr. Fox about that, and I was one of the committee.

At first we saw Mr. Rucker: Mr. Fox wasn't in town, and I pointed out to Mr. Rucker that these men lived in West St. Louis and they were old men and ought to be given their jobs back, and some of the newer men ought to be left out; and he said, well, he said, they had

completed their construction work and they didn't have any use for the men. So I put the proposition up to him. I told him I worked in the coal mines one time and when business got slack in the coal mines the men generally doubled up. That is, if there was three men in a room, one would take two days off a week, and the next two days one of the other men would take off, and that would give the three men each four days a week, and I told him, "Couldn't you lay a bunch of men off this week and put some of those men on, and then change the thing around? I would be willing myself to give a week to help keep these men employed, because I believe that by spring-time men will be scarce and you will be glad to have these men."

"Oh yes", he said, "we'll be glad to have them, but that system won't work at all." And I tried for two hours to induce Mr. Rucker to take back the old men, or to make some arrangements of some kind to keep these men employed.

Mr. Cooper: You mean old men or former employes?

Mr. Wolf: Former employes. Then I say "old men" I mean men who have been employed there for a number of years, five or ten years-- two or three years. Last summer they employed whole lots of men because they had lots of construction work and it took lots of new men, and I thought the old men should be left out first. That is in accordance with the treatment that Mr. Fox had agreed to do.

So after we talked it over with Mr. Rucker, while we finally, the next day, saw Mr. Fox. We couldn't do anything with him. Then a week or so later there was another

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batch of men laid off. They laid off, I guess, fifty or sixty men, and a day or two later they hired a number of men.

Mr. Cooper: About when was this--

Mr. Wolf: This was-- I can't remember the exact date, but it was after the strike, a couple of months after the strike-- around about close to Christmas. And they hired new men in these men's places. They were laying men off, you know, that had worked there for years and had taken an active part in this association, and they would hire new men in their places. They would probably come along in the pipefitters' gang and lay off ten or twelve pipefitters, and a day ~~xxxxxx~~ after tomorrow they would hire ten or twelve. Then they would go into the machinists. They laid off one machinist there, then they laid three off, and when the committee, the grievance committee, went up there and asked the reason for laying off these men, "Well", they said "we have to make a cut in the gang." "Well now, Mr. Hoke was one of the machinists you laid off. He is an old man and don't deserve being laid off. He is a good mechanic, a good worker, steady on the job." The answer that Mr. Rucker gave us was that the reason they laid Mr. Hoke off was because he had taken an active part in politics in East St. Louis.

Then there was another man laid off in the sheet metal department named Herrin. Herrin was treasurer of our association. He lay before Herrin was laid off--

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the day he was laid off-- he ruptured himself, and when he got so that he could get out again he went out to see the superintendent or assistant superintendent, Mr. Rucker, about it, and asked him what he intended to do about it. He says "Well, of course, ~~you~~ you are ruptured, he will have to take care of you. You go to the hospital and you will be all fixed up. Get operated on, and just as soon as you are able to work again, come back on your old job." So Herring did that, and when he got ready to come back to work he reported to Mr. Rucker, and Mr. Rucker told him "Yes, you can come back to work, but understand me, Herring, what was you getting when you left here?" "\$4 a day as a mechanic." "Well", he says "we aren't hiring any more mechanics now. You will have to come back here as a handy man." The company had made up their minds they wouldn't hire any more mechanics, but would hire all "handy men" and the handy men would receive about \$3 a day. The mechanics got \$4.25. It appeared from what I could get that the company wanted to bring the \$4.25 back down to about \$3.50, or \$3; and instead of hiring a mechanic outright they would hire him as a handy man and let him work his way up, and he had just about as much chance of working his way up as a louse has of sniffing up a greased pole. He had no chance in the world. When you get at a place you forget there on the price question.

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That is the way the thing continued on, to lay off old men and put the wages in several departments, and they

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discriminated against men, and on one occasion--

Mr. Cooper (interposing): What did they discriminate against them for?

Mr. Blair: Well, the only reason that I could see, or anybody else-- the rumor that was among the men was because they took active part in the association.

Mr. Cooper: You started to say "on one occasion".

Mr. Blair: I want to say-- I will bring that part in later.

This association dwindled down till there were just a few hundred left. These men was laid off as they belonged to the association. It appeared as though they were trying to get the outside men first, and then after the leaders had no followers they could easily kick the leaders out, and it appeared in the plant as though every man's job was going to be gotten that was in that strike. They started to clean the men out, so the association-- it didn't appear to me very strong, and I didn't think it was strong enough to hold up as a labor proposition, nor a labor organization-- in fact it was not a bona fide labor organization; it was just a protective association, and in reality it wasn't known for a labor organization; but it was organized to kind of keep the men together.

Well, I conferred with some of the labor leaders in this town-- some of the business agents. I thought it would be a good idea to organize that plant-- that is, under the American Federation of Labor-- if it could be done.

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I conferred with some of the labor leaders, and they advised me to get the committees together, so I finally got a committee together from the Aluminum Ore employes, some of the men from the engine room. I tried to get some men from every department, from every craft, you know, live pipefitters, machinists, millwrights, carpenters, some from the operating department; and we did get together and meet some of the business agents from the local unions in West St. Louis. We met then in the Eagle Hall, and we discussed ways of organizing that plant under the American Federation of Labor, and of course I told them to a number of the employes out there, and it got around among the plant, and everybody seemed to think that was what was necessary out there, that we might be able to organize that place and hold our jobs, and if we didn't do that we wouldn't have a job very long, because the greater number of those men who had worked there at that time were already listed out, gone away from here. Lots of them couldn't even get jobs in town. They had to go out of town to get jobs, and I can't say at the time that the company had them barred from other jobs, but <sup>just</sup> it appeared that they couldn't get any work unless they went out of town, and when the Aluminum Company would put on men these men would come there and make out an application, <sup>would</sup> and they ~~would~~ either be rejected by the inspector or they were never called. And I noticed at that time, too, that there were negroes coming into the plant, a

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greater number of niggers were coming in there. It appeared (as though where they left one white man out they hired a nigger in his place where they could, with the exception of mechanics. I noticed, too, at the employment office every morning, that there were plenty of white men there, and I know that men told me that had been left out there, had been laid off, that they went out there for weeks at a time and stood in front of that <sup>employment</sup> office, and had made two or three different applications for employment, and had never been called; but that a colored man could walk right up there in the crowd, and when they come out there they were just hiring colored men right and left, and the white men stood by and looked on. Of course they couldn't get employment there, and I guess the same thing prevailed at the packing houses and all the other big industries. Naturally they had to go some place to work, and some left town. That is why so many white men have left this town. That is why they are not here to work, because when they went to these places they couldn't hire them, and they had to live. Conditions aren't so that a man can live a whole year without working. If he can't get work here he has got to go some place, and the white man, in my estimation, was practically pushed out of East St. Louis.

So then we met in the Eagle Hall here, and of course the company found out that-- I presume it found out-- that we were trying to organize the place under the American Federation of Labor. So Mr. Rucker came down into the

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engine room one day, and he wanted to have a talk with me. He met me-- I was eating my dinner, and he come up and says "How do you do, Wolf? How are you? How is everything running?" "Pretty good, Mr. Rucker." "Well, how's everything with the association?" "Well, pretty fair, Mr. Rucker." And as I blowed the whistle there at the Aluminum plant, it was time to blow the whistle, and I had to walk away from him, and the whistle was about fifty feet from where I was at-- for the 12 o'clock whistle hour-- so I walked over there to blow the whistle, and Mr. Rucker followed me over there. He says "Wolf", he says "how about the association?" "Well", I said "I told you over there I guess it's all right." He says "There is a whole lot of noise in this engine room here. This big engine makes a lot of noise, and then pumps back there-- I can't hardly hear you talk. Why don't you come up to the office some time?" "Well", I said, "Mr. Rucker, the last time I was up to the office you didn't give me any satisfaction. You disgusted me and everything else." "Well", he says, "you come up to the office", he said "when you get done working. I want to have a talk with you. I would like to have a little conversation with you", he said. "Well", I said "if I am called on the carpet for some reason or other, I will have to go up and take my medicine", I guess. So he said "All right; I'll await you after three o'clock". So after 3 o'clock that day I went to Mr. Rucker's office. I went up ~~to~~ <sup>there</sup> to his office

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and the office boy up there informed me that he was in another building, in Mr. Sauder's office, and had left word for me to come there. So I went down there and Mr. Sauders and Mr. Rucker was in the office, and when I came up to the window Mr. Rucker beckoned me to come on in, and I went in, and immediately Mr. Sauder, after saying "How do you do" to me, and shaking hands, walked out of the door and left Mr. Rucker and I in the room. Mr. Rucker started out by talking about family affairs, about how many children I had-- wanted to know if I had property; wanted to know how long I had been here-- just a general nice conversation, and finally asked me what the American Federation of Labor was doing at the present time. "Well", I said "Mr. Rucker, I don't know much about it." I didn't think at that time that it was any of his business. He hadn't asked him for anything. So he finally told me, he said, "Well, I see that that association is going to push through. I think you will make it go and I want you to try and install the sick fund in that there, and I want you to do all that you can to keep that thing a moving, because", he says "you know we don't get the American Federation of Labor to light in this plant, and I want that association to go on", and he says "I think that you are the man in the plant here that has got the control over these men, and you appear to be able to lead them around by the nose." Those are the words he expressed it in, and he says "This plant

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here has done away with their permanent employment funds that they had there a year or so before, where they paid a man two per cent on the amount of money that he earned," and he said, "we were figuring on putting in some kind of a pension system, and they are slow in getting it figured out in Pittsburgh", and he says "a pension system for all of our plants wouldn't work right, because conditions are different here than they are inauxite, Arkansas, and in Baltimore, and these different plants, and so", he says "we are going to try to establish something here to benefit our employees. Now", he says "you can go ahead and arrange some kind of a sick benefit where, if a man is off sick a week or two weeks, he will get \$5 or \$6 or \$7, and that will help tide him over his hardships, help pay his doctor bills and such as that there." He says "Now I want you to get busy", and, he says, "I will help you all that I can; I'll use all my energy, and I'll do everything in the world I can to help <sup>you</sup> get that started, but remember, above all things, nobody must know that I am implicated in it, or that the company is implicated in this, but you and me. I don't want you even to tell your own wife that I told you to go ahead with this thing and I will back you up." He says "I know it will take time; I know it will take money, but that will be all right", he says, "I will take care of all that for you." "Now", I said "Mr. Rucker", I said "I didn't come up here

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for anything like that. I didn't know what you wanted to speak to me about." I said "I'll go on with my mission in the association, and whatever I am interested in just the same. This takes no bearing on me." But he urged me, he says "Well now, Wolf, you study this matter over and", he says, "don't get on the wrong road now. You want to go up the hill, and not go down." And of course I didn't want to go on any further with that conversation.

I picked up my hat and says "Well, Mr. Rucker, I guess I'll have to go for the day. It's getting time, and I don't want to take up any more of your valuable time, and want to get home. It's getting late." So he got up again and put his hand on my shoulder and told me, "Now, Wolf, remember, it will take time, I know it will, and it will take a little money, but that will be all right, I'll take care of that."

So I left, and I think that very night, or the next night, we had another meeting scheduled with the representatives of organized labor/<sup>in</sup> here, the business agent and our committee, which he will call the Federation committee, that I had picked at the plant to meet with these labor leaders and discuss a way of organizing the men at the Aluminum Ore Company. We had a meeting the next night, and the man that was the chief of the Burns Protective Agency out there-- they had some Burns men out there-- I understood they were-- plain clothes men. My understanding

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was that they were there to keep an eye open on the plant and see that the place wasn't blown up, or tried to catch pro-Serrans and such as that there.

Mr. Cooper: The William J. Burns Detective Agency?

Mr. Wolf: Yes. They had men there, and there was men there in the engine room there all the time-- two men in the engine room <sup>stationed</sup> there day and night, and throughout the plant, all over. I don't know just how many they had, but they had quite a number of them, and the man that was chief of those fellows, that acted as their chief-- the young fellow-- came to me one evening after we had this meeting and told me, "Now, Wolf", he says-- he came to me first and asked me if my name was Wolf. I said "Yes." He says "Would you come into the engine room?" I says "Yes." He says "Wolf, I want to put you on your guard. There is two fellows in this plant trying to get your job. Now", he says "Watch yourself." "Well", I said "Will you tell me who they are?" "Well", he says "they are officials." "Well", I said "tell me who they are. I don't know who to watch. I am not doing anything, but I'd like to know who they are just for curiosity's sake. I don't know as I am going to give them any chance to fire me. They might lay me off." He says "They want to get rid of you, and they've got to have a reasonable excuse, because they fear you. They are afraid that you might be able to pull the men with you. They don't know <sup>you</sup> as you can, but ~~they~~ might be able to pull the men with

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you, and if they fired you you might be able to create a strike." "Now", I said, "that you told that, if you don't tell me who told you, I'll make it known that you have told me, and the officials, whoever they are, will know you have told me; and now unless you tell me the names I am going to make it public; I'm going to turn you up." "Well", he said, "protect me, if you can", he says, "Rudisell is one, the master mechanic, and Rucker is another, the assistant superintendent." All right; that's the end of that.

So I said nothing to no one about it. Then a few days later Mr. Rudisell came into the engine room one day about one o'clock--

Mr. Cooper (interposing:) Who is he?

Mr. Wolf: The master mechanic of the Aluminum Ore Company. He passed me two or three times, and finally called me outside-- called me and took me outside, pulled his gloves off and threw them on a barrel and says "Wolf, what's the matter with you?" "Why, Rudy"-- as he always called him-- "Rudy, I never felt better in my life. I don't know as there is anything wrong with me. Why?" "Well", he says, "you appear to want to start trouble around here." He says "You went and told the men down here-- or made the assertion-- that every man's pay check would have to come through the commissary within six months in this plant." Now they have a commissary out there, just started, where they intended to sell to the men working there-- sell groceries-- I guess anything from a needle

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to a threshing machine, if you ordered it, at cost price, and from what I could take from expressions that meant what the miners used to do some years back in the mining camps. The men would live in houses owned by the Mining Company; buy their groceries from the mining company's store, and their clothing, and everything would all be deducted off their pay. I understand that was what they did in these mining camps before there was any organization, any union in the camp. I understand that that has all been done away with now, and my understanding is that that is what he meant. I told him, I said "Mr. Ruderhill, I am sorry to say but I didn't make any expression of that kind. I didn't tell anybody about your commissary. In fact, I've bought things there myself and bought them reasonable." "Well", he said, "you said it now, and that's the end of it." "Well", I said "I didn't say it. Now, Rudy, you tell me who told you, and unless you tell me who told you, I'll consider you a damn liar." "Well", he says "the fact of the matter is I want to get rid of you anyway, and now", he says "Now is just about as good a time as any. I think I'll just grab you by the neck and kick you completely out of the plant." And I stood there, reached up and got my hat, and I threw it on the floor and said "Rudy, you've done that two or three different times to some of the men around here, but you can't do it to me without a fight. We let's have it out. If you think you're just big enough to kick me out

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of this plant, I'm big enough to take you on any way you want to come. If you get on, I'll try to unload you. I'll give you a fight any way, shape or form you want it. Now start in, if you want to get rid of me." He says "You're creating too much labor trouble around here." I says "I haven't done anything." "Yes, you have", he says "I'm going to kick you completely out of the plant." "Well", I says "here I am, start in. If you kick me out of the plant, all right. If you don't kick me out of the plant it will be all wrong with you if you start anything." Well, he finally quieted down. "Well", he says, "from now on you tend to your business and I'll let you go." "You ain't letting me go, because you ain't started yet. You ain't got hold of me. I have attended to my business and am going to continue to do as I have." So a couple of mornings after that Mr. Rudisell came into the plant again, on a Sunday morning. He says "Good morning, Wolf." "Good morning, Rudy." He asked me about a new pump that had been installed in there, what was the trouble with it, and I answered him that if he didn't know as a master mechanic, I surely as a dub mechanic didn't know either, and that was a fact. Finally he got to talking about where Rudisell lived, and he told me that he hadn't slept well the night before, there was a great big hammer, steam hammer, a forge, working over there where he was at, and that hammer, he says "works all the time and keeps me awake." And finally he told me that they were build-

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ing a plant in Baltimore, and he said that it was a nice big place, a fine place to live, and that he was going there pretty soon. He was going to ask for a transfer there, and that he was going to take a whole lot of men from this plant up there just as soon as that plant was completed, and he says "There will be a fine chance for you up there, Wolf." I said "Buddy, East St. Louis is good enough for me. I don't want to go up there." He says "I'll take you along when I go." I says "I won't go with you. I'm all right here. I think if you get me up there in Baltimore I'll be away from the bunch down here. I'll be up with you, and I may wake up some morning and have to walk home, so I think I'd better stay here."

So the company laid off a man by the name of John Simon, after Mr. Herrin had not accepted this proposition from Mr. Fisher to come back to the plant to work for \$3, where he was getting \$4.25 before.

Mr. Johnson: The Committee will adjourn now until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. You will come back, Mr. Wolf.

(Thereupon, at 5:30 o'clock p.m., the Committee adjourned until 10 o'clock a.m., Thursday, November 1, 1917.)