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XII

Cont. St. Louis Riots Investigation
Friday November 2 - 1917

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Friday, November 2, 1917.

The Committee met at 10:30 o'clock a.m., Hon. Ben. Johnson (Chairman) presiding.

STATEMENT OF ALOIS TOWERS (continued.)

Mr. Johnson: Mr. Towers, resume your testimony where you concluded yesterday.

Mr. Towers: Mr. Chairman, yesterday I made the statement that the great influx of negroes was responsible for the riot. I want to try and show some of the feelings that developed after this great influx of negroes. It was a terrible feeling in the air. Everyone felt that something terrible was going to happen. On the street corners, wherever you went, you heard expressions against the negro. You heard that the negro was driving the white man out of the locality.

Mr. Johnson: In what way?

Mr. Towers: "By moving into the white neighborhoods. That the whites were being forced out of their localities. Stories were afloat on the streets and on the street cars of the worst kind of stories that would inflame the feelings. For instance, I heard one story so persistently that I commenced to think later on there might be some truth to it. First I thought it was just originated by some who might want to inflame the feelings of the people. I heard stories of this kind and I heard it no less than a dozen times on the streets of East St. Louis, that negroes had made the boast that they were invited to East

St. Louis; that great numbers of white people were taken away for war purposes, and that there would be lots of white women for the negroes in East St. Louis. When I first heard that story it made me feel bad, for I felt that someone had possibly invented that story to inflame feeling. "

Mr. Johnson: From what source did you hear that story?

Mr. Towers: I heard it on street corners, in conversations, back ends of street cars. I heard it so persistently that I even approached a very intelligent man and started a conversation with him.

Mr. Johnson: Who?

Mr. Towers: I don't know. A stranger on the back of the car.

Mr. Johnson: Can you give the name of anybody from whom you heard that?

Mr. Towers: No, I cannot.

Mr. Johnson: Do you live here?

Mr. Towers: No, in Belleville. I had been here daily for a month nearly before the riot. I asked an intelligent ^{citizen} on the back of the car if he didn't think that story was just originated to develop feeling. He said he had heard it so persistently that he was beginning to believe there must be some truth to it.

Mr. Johnson: You didn't ask him his name?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Johnson: Or where he lived?

Mr. Towers: No, sir. That was one of the general statements, I believe, that helped to inflame feeling. Others were that the whites were being driven out of their neighborhoods; the negro neighborhood was growing and expanding.

Other statements I heard were that people feared an epidemic of small-pox; that the County Hospital had been burdened for months with an average of thirty cases of small-pox.

Mr. Johnson: A daily average?

Mr. Towers: A daily average of thirty cases of small-pox. The whole county became fearful. You could hear the same discussions away from East St. Louis. People were inflamed, and their feelings were directed against the big employers of East St. Louis, feeling that they were responsible for the great influx of negroes.

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Other statements were that rent was being rapidly forced up. That created a feeling in the community, and wherever you would go you would hear stories that you realized that something was going to happen. Everyone seemed to realize that something fearful was going to take place.

Now I want to say, Mr. Chairman, with reference to the meeting referred to as the meeting that should have started the May riot--

Mr. Johnson (Interposing:) That meeting is that, now?

Mr. Towers: That was the meeting of the labor boys, protesting-- that were sent to the City Hall to protest to the City Council and Mayor because of the great influx of

negroes, expecting or hoping that they would take some action to overcome the great influx or incoming of negroes. I am a member of the East St. Louis Central Body and have some pride in that labor body. I know positively, being a member, that there was nothing ever done or said from that body other than to the best interests of the city, that should be a reflection on that body. In fact, the night of that meeting that they appointed this big committee, I acted as chairman of that body, the East St. Louis Central Body. The chairman was away that night, and I was selected to act as chairman of the body.

Mr. Foss: What big meeting?

Mr. Towers: The meeting of the Central Body, not the big meeting. That will follow. I will explain that later.

Mr. Foss: When was that meeting?

Mr. Towers: That has been referred to, and that is the meeting that the press referred to as labor being responsible for this riot.

Mr. Johnson: We haven't seen the press, and would like for you to fix the date of the meeting, and the place of it.

Mr. Towers: You have heard statements of testimony here, Mr. Chairman, to that effect, regarding that meeting.

Mr. Johnson: But now instead of saying "that meeting", just simply state where the meeting was held, and what time of the day and what day of the month. Then we will know.

Mr. Towers: I don't remember the particular date. I think the date has been given in the testimony.

Mr. Johnson: Can you approximate the date?

Mr. Towers: I think it was the first or the third Tuesday in May.

Mr. Johnson: Was it the meeting to which letters were sent out inviting the delegates to come in?

Mr. Towers: It was either the first Tuesday or the third Tuesday in May. I don't remember the dates of the meeting, but I know their meetings are on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. Prior to that time a committee of seven or nine, I don't remember which--

Mr. Johnson (Interposing:) Representing whom?

Mr. Towers: Representing the East St. Louis Central Body or the official labor movement of East St. Louis-- were sent to the Mayor from that body to protest against the great influx of negroes. They reported they had made no impression on the authorities, and didn't think--

Mr. Johnson: Right there, can you tell us what opinion you entertained-- or now entertain-- as to the Mayor's authority to prevent negroes from coming here?

Mr. Towers: Why, I don't know, Mr. Chairman, that he would have had any legal authority, but I believed that the city officials--

Mr. Johnson (Interposing:) Did you want him to exceed his legal authority?

Mr. Towers: We did not. I believe that the boys felt that he could make some public statement or some public

announcement in this community or in southern communities that would stop the influx of negroes; that he could just make a public announcement discouraging the negroes from coming in. I believe that would have had some weight, and I believe it would have stopped some of the feeling that was developing in the community.

Mr. Raker: Just before you pass that, is there any way to get into the record so that we can understand what meeting you refer to?

Mr. Towers: I refer to the meeting of the East St. Louis Central Trades and Labor Union. I think it was either the first Tuesday or the third Tuesday in May.

Mr. Johnson: Held in what building?

Mr. Towers: In what is known as the Music Hall.

Mr. Raker: That was before the--

Mr. Towers (Interposing:) Before the riot of May 28th.

Mr. Raker: Before the meeting of May 28th in the City Hall?

Mr. Towers: Exactly.

Mr. Raker: About a week before, you think?

Mr. Towers: Well, I would judge about a week before. I think the third Tuesday, about a week before the date of May 28th.

Mr. Raker: Now how many were present at this meeting about a week before, the May meeting?

Mr. Towers: About the regular attendance of the

body. I judge they have some fifty affiliations-- forty-five or fifty affiliations. Each organization is entitled to a representation of two delegates, or three, I forget which.

Mr. Baker: Have you any means before you get through, by which you can get the name of the men who attended that meeting?

Mr. Towers: I think the Secretary could give you the names.

Mr. Baker: And who is he?

Mr. Towers: Edward F. Mason.

Mr. Baker: And was he present at that meeting?

Mr. Towers: He was present at that meeting.

Mr. Baker: And they have a record of the men who were present at that meeting?

Mr. Towers: I think so.

Mr. Baker: Where is Mr. Mason now?

Mr. Towers: He is employed in Granite City, in one of the steel plants.

Mr. Baker: You can't remember their names offhand?

Mr. Towers: No. I know most of the faces there, but I don't know all the names of the boys.

Mr. Baker: Do you know any of them personally?

Mr. Towers: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Do you have any hesitancy in giving the names of those you remember?

Mr. Towers: No, sir.

Mr. Baker: Just give the names.

Mr. Towers: I really would hesitate to give the names of the delegates there that night. I would have in mind, in trying to give the names of delegates, boys that are generally in regular attendance, and I might name someone that possibly wasn't there that night. If you want the names, I can name a few of the boys.

Mr. Baker: All right.

Mr. Towers: The carpenters' delegates-- at least one-- was there that night, Mr. Johns, Mr. Ferr, Mr. Mason was present.

Mr. Johnson: Was Mr. Wolf there?

Mr. Towers: No. He has never been a delegate to our central body.

Mr. Johnson: Was he present, whether a delegate or not?

Mr. Towers: Not to my knowledge, unless he was in there as a visitor, and I don't think he was. Mr. Alleger, I think, was present that night.

Mr. Johnson: Was Mr. Jimerson present?

Mr. Towers: I think that Mr. Jimerson was there. He is a regular attendant at the meetings.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Alleger is here in town now, isn't he?

Mr. Towers: I think he is. He is a printer, represents one of the printers' locals in St. Louis. He is a delegate from the printers' local union to the East St. Louis Central Body.

Mr. Baker: Is there any one else you can remember

that was there? But may be we could expedite the matter by you getting hold of this secretary and getting the names and getting it to us that way.

Mr. Towers: Yes, you can get every one, I think, from the Secretary, that was there at this meeting--

Mr. Cooper: (Interposing) Have you a copy of that notice?

Mr. Towers: No, I have not.

Mr. Johnson: Did you have one?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Johnson: Did you see one?

Mr. Towers: No; I never saw one.

Mr. Cooper: Mr. Chairman, can I read what purports to be a copy of that notice?

Mr. Baker: Just a moment. I asked Mr. Verr to get the notice. He is in the court-room now.

Mr. Towers: Now, at that meeting, Mr. Chairman, as I told you, the committee of seven or nine, I forget the number, reported-- they had been appointed at a former meeting, either one or two or three meetings before this meeting-- they reported that they had not been given much satisfaction in their protest against the influx of negroes. It was then decided by motion that a larger committee appear before the regular council meeting, and there was some discussion as to how large this committee would be, and finally a motion prevailed that a delegation from each local union in the city, representing each local union, or in other words the delegates to the central body, would practically represent the entire

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labor movement in this city in protesting to the Mayor and Council against the influx of negroes.

Mr. Baker: Right there, before you attempted to get this large committee, did a smaller committee--had they already waited on the Mayor and reported to the committee, the body as a whole, as you have designated?

Mr. Towers: Exactly.

Mr. Baker: Do you have a list of those who attended in the small committee and waited on the Mayor?

Mr. Towers: No; I haven't any list. I believe the secretary could give you that list.

Mr. Baker: How many were there?

Mr. Towers: Either seven or nine. I couldn't make it positive, but the committee I think was either seven or nine.

Mr. Baker: Did they make a written report?

Mr. Towers: No; they made a verbal report that they had waited on the Mayor and hadn't been able to get any results from their protestations against the influx of negroes.

The meeting then decided to ask the delegation as a whole to appear before the Council in a body and demand that something be done to stop the influx of negroes; that it was putting the town on the bum. I can remember two statements made that night. One was some delegate said that there is apt to be an epidemic of small-pox; that the county hospital had been overflowed with hospital cases since this great influx of negroes. Another delegate ^{made} the statement that

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it is not safe to take your wife on the street after dark any more, and that something should be done to stop the influx of negroes. The Secretary was instructed to send either the delegates--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) Do you remember who it was that made that statement about it not being safe for a man to take his wife on the street after dark?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't remember the individual's name.

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I was going to say, Mr. Chairman, that there was a motion prevailed-- I don't remember the wording, but to the effect that the Secretary should either notify the delegates by this circular letter, or notify the local unions, but I think notify all the delegates to be present at this Council meeting. Now that went along nicely. I heard later-- I don't get to see the St. Louis Journal very often, but I heard later that the East St. Louis Journal got hold of this proposed meeting-- got the news of it-- and advertised it as a mass-meeting. The consequences were, the night that they appeared to make their protestations, a great number of people packed the City Hall.

Mr. Baker: Right there, it would show in the paper of May 28th, the evening paper, which was the Journal, this notice, whatever was given, wouldn't it?

Mr. Towers: The Journal-- I don't know what date the Journal made that particular-- gave that particular announcement that there would be a mass-meeting. But it

gave the date of the meeting, which was of course May 28th, the date of the Council meeting.

Mr. Baker: Did it contain a copy of the notice sent out?

Mr. Towers: I have never seen the article. I had never seen it till that day. I know this, that the East St. Louis Journal has done everything possible in the way of misrepresentation of the labor movement of East St. Louis. In fact, ^{I feel} that was the mouthpiece of the enemies of labor, and lost no efforts to poison the minds of the public, to confuse the citizens of East St. Louis relative to the labor movement.

Mr. Baker: Your view was that when they published that in the Journal that day, whether it was on the 26th, 27th or 28th-- but anyhow to give the notice of that meeting, it was done to injure what you men were trying to do to get honest, fair, proper relief?

Mr. Towers: My honest opinion is, Mr. Baker, that there was no other object in mind but to try to get the organized labor movement in bad, to try to do something, or make it appear publicly that the organized labor movement efforts were in a direction other than that which they were directed in. That is my honest opinion. There was hardly a meeting that someone for months ahead of this time-- that some one didn't bring out some statement, read some clipping or something from the Journal in which the labor movement was deliberately-- in which there was deliberate misrepresenta-

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tion. The secretary on a number of occasions was instructed to write articles to refute the statement. He would report that he had sent one to the ~~man~~ editor, and he got little if any consideration, or he would publish it if he could blue pencil it. And that was the condition that existed. Now, the Journal, I don't think, could hardly exist on subscriptions from laboring men in East St. Louis who know conditions in East St. Louis. I don't think the workmen who understand East St. Louis would subscribe for that paper. I think most of them read the St. Louis papers. I don't think it could exist in East St. Louis-- that is my personal opinion-- if it wasn't supported by some unseen power.

Mr. Baker: You felt from what you saw in the paper, as you have described now, that the Journal was going out of the way, not only once, but at all times, to try and injure union labor, misrepresent it in their effort to get better conditions and better wages and shorter hours, and, in other words, to better the men and their families?

Mr. Towers: They deliberately, I believe, ~~mis~~ misrepresented labor on all occasions in all its efforts.

Mr. Baker: Now what is this man's name that runs this paper?

Mr. Towers: I have heard this morning it was ~~James~~ J. O. Kirk. I don't know him. I don't think I have ever met him.

Mr. Baker: Is he the editor, now, or the proprietor?

Mr. Towers: I think he is the proprietor and editor.

Mr. Baker: In other words, he is two in one?

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Mr. Towers: I think so, but I am not positive.

Mr. Baker: And who is the reporter?

Mr. Towers: I have heard this morning one of the reporters' name is Reed. I don't know whether they have one or more.

Mr. Baker: You don't know what Reed's name is?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Baker: Who did they have at this time? Was Reed the reporter at this time?

A Voice: No, Reed was the advertising man at that. Popless was the reporter.

Mr. Towers: And from the statements I have heard, Mr. Chairman, relative to the Journal, I believe that their deliberate object-- and I can't help but feel that some unseen power was behind them in trying to continuously confuse the efforts of labor in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Just tell the Committee-- just explain to the Committee now what you believe this unseen power was.

Mr. Towers: I couldn't make this as positive. That is my personal opinion. My personal opinion is it is the big interests, the employing interests of East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: How were they unseen? How could they manipulate the editor? That is what you mean? How would the big interests get behind the editor?

Mr. Towers: I don't know how they would do it, Mr. Baker, but I believe that is generally known among most intelligent people in this country that many of the powerful interests control the bigger part of our press.

Mr. Raker: Well, this particular press now, how did they control this man and his paper?

Mr. Towers: I don't know, possibly through their influences.

Mr. Raker: Well, how? I am rather dense on just what you mean?

Mr. Towers: Well, not having any positive information or positive fact--

Mr. Raker (Interposing:) Well, what is your belief on how they did it? How did they do it?

Mr. Towers: Because I couldn't see where there would be any gain to the Journal to deliberately and continuously misrepresent labor, its efforts, if something wasn't behind it. It went out of its way, apparently, to confuse the efforts of labor, poison the minds of the general public against the laboring men of East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker: What I can't get yet is, the laboring men were attending to their own business and trying to do what they thought was right, to benefit their conditions or better their conditions. The big interests were running their plants. Now just why should a paper or the men connected with it take the big interests as against labor?

Mr. Towers: Well, there is a statement that I wanted to make, that I believe would bring that out later. I had reserved ^{that} but I can make it now.

Mr. Raker: No, don't interfere with your statement.

Mr. Towers: Because it would be quite a long story, while I want to be brief.

Mr. Baker: Don't change your method of giving your statement, and you can give that later. Go ahead with your statement.

Mr. Towers: Now, Mr. Chairman, before I forget it, there is another statement I would like to make with reference to testimony that has been given here. I have heard employers-- one was a representative of the American Steel Company, testify--

Mr. Johnson(interposing:) What was his name?

767 Mr. Towers: I forget his name-- Mr. Roach, I believe. I am not sure. One was Mr. Nulsen of the Malleable Iron works. I remember him. I remember him from years ago, when I was a much younger man. The committee asked those two employers what they did for their employes. I think both of them made the statement that they furnished them washing facilities, hot and cold water, change places, to change clothes. Now I just wanted to get this in the record, that that is not done with any credit to any of those employers. That is the State law in the State of Illinois, and I want to further state that one of the American Steel plants, I don't know whether it is the one in East St. Louis or one in Granite City, had to be prosecuted by the Department of Factory Inspection of the State of Illinois to enforce that wash house law. I merely wanted to mention that to show that they did that with no credit to themselves. It was

compulsory. I don't know the nature of their wash houses. I know there are many complaints still in this industrial community that they have only made a bluff in carrying out the law. The gentleman from the Missouri Malleable Iron Works says he has had no labor troubles--

Mr. Cooper (Interposing:) Who was that?

Mr. Towers: Mr. Nulsen. I want to try and point out that some of the reasons why there has been no labor troubles there-- I told you I worked there 21 years ago. Mr. Nulsen was then in some official capacity there. I think he is in the same capacity. I want to point out to you that even then he could point out that he had some high-priced labor. The condition existed at that time ^{with} ~~in~~ reference to yard labor in which a big powerful negro with some ability to control men was given the general contract for unloading of cars. He was paid so much a ton. I have no idea what it was. He then hired negroes to help him unload the cars. He paid them whatever he could get them to work for, but he got a stipulated price from the firm. I heard it stated even at that time that he made seven or eight dollars a day, and he was a laborer. There was a condition that prevailed out there at that time, and I am told that it prevails at this time, that a man that even intimated joining a labor organization was discharged immediately. I am told that on one occasion this man that I mentioned yesterday, Mr. Tigert, deliberately assaulted an employe of that plant, I think about 17 years ago, shortly after I left there-- for even discussing and planning a meeting of the employes to organize a union.

After assaulting the man he went to the boy's sister-- or the young man's sister-- that worked in the core room-- he was making cores-- he went to her and told her that the boy, her brother, had been discharged, and that ^{if} he would not swear out a warrant, would not prosecute him for the assault, that he could come back to the job; but that if he did, that she also would lose her job. That is one of the things to show the powers used to keep down organization.

768 I want to point out that only last winter-- I don't know whether it was December, January or February-- that a young man-- or not a young man; a middle-aged man, who is now the moulders' representative-- was called to that plant. He worked there about the time I did, and later, years ago. He knew some of the older employes. He was called there by the moulders, who desired to organize. He told them that in building an organization in our organization it was necessary to be sincere about it. He held several meetings with them, and they showed their sincerity, they kept quiet, and I think some 25 or 30 joined the organization. No demands were made upon the company. It seems the company had someone at the meeting who brought back the story of the efforts of the organization, and the under foremen went to these men the next day and told them that if they wanted to work there they would have to bring their cards and their due books and throw them in the hot ladle and burn them up. Otherwise they would have no jobs. They told him they preferred to keep their cards and ^{due} books, and left the plant.

His last report on that shop was that he had initiated some 54 men, and that 47 had been discharged up to his report at that time, and told plainly that they were discharged because of the fact that they had joined an organization. Some of them wanted to strike.

Mr. Cooper: 47 out of 54?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; 47 out of 54, and it is generally assumed that the others have since been discharged. They never suffered any, because he was able to secure them better jobs, more money, in fair shops. So there was no loss to those men. The company was really the loser, as these men who joined were their best mechanics. Some of them wanted to strike the plant. He advised against it, because these fellows ^{could} immediately get jobs, and it was doubtful whether the other boys would want to join the organization, and the policy of the Moulders' Organization was to have a more complete organization before they would attempt to go into a strike, especially after they had already discharged that number of men.

That is one of the reasons why you can't organize in East St. Louis.

I will tell you another instance that I personally make as a sworn statement, to my knowledge. At the time I worked there a man wasn't paid the full day's wages. For instance, he made so many castings. He may give in eighty castings for his day's work, his day's product. The timekeeper will take down the eighty castings. Three days later he would make a report on that day's work. He would make a report

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something like this-- they varied daily, and they would vary according to the number of castings the men had. On the day's work ^{in which} ~~on this~~ he had given in eighty castings, he would report 73 good, three broke. That would be all that would be accounted for. That would be the castings that you would be paid for. You would ask what became of the other castings. He didn't know. They were possibly lost and would turn up later. Occasionally one or two would turn up. Some other report may bring out a fraction more than had been reported in the day's work three days before, but the great preponderance of loss as against the gain was always in favor of the company. Most of the workmen at that time believed it was a deliberate plan to deliberately take some of their earnings. They had no recognized method of setting prices. It was piece-work. They had no regular set price for a given job. If one man would work at a job for a given price, and would leave the shop and some other man started to work on the job, if he showed dissatisfaction he would be given a little more price. You never knew what was going to be your price for a day's work. In that day, just as soon as a man became dissatisfied, if they couldn't satisfy them by paying them a little more, they either left of their own volition or were discharged. I am told through our organizer that these same 54 men, whom he initiated into the organization last winter, told him that that same condition prevails. They don't even, up to this day, receive their full pay. They have no system in which a man can

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feel satisfied that he is being paid for all that is coming to him. Now that is the condition with reference to skilled workers. That is the moulding department.

Now the American Steel, I heard him say-- the representative of the American Steel-- in answer to Mr. Cooper's question with reference to the 12-hour day, as to why there shouldn't be a shorter hour, he stated it was the desire of the employes for a longer working day. We have members, moulders, employed at the American Steel. Last spring they discussed a short hour work day. They took it up in their meeting and presented through their committee-- or asked through their committee-- for a conference with the representatives of the company, to discuss a shorter work day. The officials told them plainly they would ^{not} tolerate any consideration or any discussion of a shorter working day. They told them frankly there would be a conflict if they wanted a shorter working day, but they would consider an increase in wages. The national organization advised no conflict, and to accept at that time the increase in wages in lieu of the shorter working day. A competing plant in Granite City, of the American Steel, known as the Commonwealth Steel, in which nearly every department is organized, met their employes, discussed the eight-hour day, and actually put it into effect in most of the departments. In the one department, the moulding department, they found it was impracticable to work it out. They would have to revolutionize their shops. Their train service couldn't be worked out to make the eight-hour day work on three shifts in the moulding department. They had

were paid 20 cents an hour in the Steel Plant. It is now, I think, 25 cents an hour, common labor.

Mr. Cooper: What company is that?

Mr. Towers: The American Steel-- that reported to this committee that their common labor was paid \$8 a day. I merely mention that to bring out the fact of lower wages.

Mr. Raker: He admitted that was only 12 men, and even that the skilled laborers were getting from \$4 to \$6 a day; but these twelve men were of a peculiar type, men required because of the heavy job.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. He said there were 1400 men there. He didn't give the wages of any except the twelve laborers and the mechanics, and there is a great number of other workers besides those twelve and the mechanics; and those are the ones I refer to. I don't think the Committee at that time asked him about any of those men.

Mr. Cooper: That was an oversight, if that is so. What did you say they were getting?

Mr. Towers: It was reported-- I never worked there. I have never been in the plant-- it has been reported that the wages prior to 1916 were 17-1/2 to 20 cents an hour. I think about 20 cents an hour. Since then I think they have gone up to 25 cents an hour for common labor.

Now, Mr. Raker, I would like to tell of the efforts of common labor to better itself, and I want to be distinctly away from organized labor for a time.

Mr. Raker: You want to draw the distinction?

Mr. Towers: Yes, for a time only.

Mr. Raker: First, for common labor to better itself, having no relation to organization?

Mr. Towers: For a time; I will get to that gradually.

Mr. Raker: Then to organized labor?

Mr. Towers: Yes. Now organized labor in East St. Louis was well able to take care of itself, because it was only-- with few exceptions, it was only the mechanics that were organized. They have their conditions, and were able to take care of them. Very few negroes interfered with their labor. Few negroes were put in their line of work, so there couldn't have been a great feeling of organized labor against the negro as to how he may affect organized labor. Organized labor no doubt disliked to see their town overridden with negroes. There is no doubt that every man felt that he would hate to see that condition. I believe 90 per cent of all the people in East St. Louis felt strongly on that question.

I told you yesterday of the cruel conditions that existed here in the depressed period where hundreds of men stood at the gates; and since this great influx of negroes ~~that is a condition that~~ that is a condition that has existed with this negro labor all over. The few greedy employers in East St. Louis have desired in this scarce time-- I will call it scarce time-- of labor, that there should be hundreds waiting at their gates, and they succeeded in keeping that condition. Their wages were small. In the fall of

1915 conditions began to pick up gradually throughout the nation, and in the spring of 1916 there was a considerable shifting of men from one job to another, and seeking out the higher paid jobs. That is, the unorganized labor.

The first effort made to increase wages was made by the track workers for the East St. Louis and Suburban and related companies of East St. Louis. The reason I say "related companies" is because it is hard to follow them all. There are seven companies with one head in and about this community.

The track workers went out on an unorganized strike. It was quite a serious proposition. They were in a way forced out. It seemed that the few constituted themselves a committee of three or five, I forget which; visited the owners and asked for an increase from 17-1/2 cents to 20 cents an hour for their labor. They were then working ten hours a day. The company immediately discharged them. They asked other workmen on the job to take their places, to fill the places of the discharged men. They refused. They were discharged. These discharged men immediately went over the system and succeeded in inaugurating a complete tie-up, the most complete tie-up in the way of a strike that has ever been pulled off in this community. It reached from Alton to East St. Louis, and from Belleville to East St. Louis; up into O'Fallon and the surrounding towns, or wherever the street car company's tracks reached. There they were on the street unorganized for the tie-up. They came,

some forty of them came to Belleville looking for somebody to assist them in organizing. They called on me. We arranged a meeting immediately, and I told them that one of the hardest things in the world would be to take unorganized men on the street and build an organization and make a success of it; that what they should have done-- they should have organized before they made any demands. Nevertheless I told them if they were sincere, that we would make the effort, and I believed that the entire community would be with them.

We built an organization that day-- started to build an organization-- and selected a committee to reach the firm in an effort to negotiate for a settlement. The firm refused to meet them. They refused, I think, for over a month, to meet them. They refused to meet myself or Brother Kerr in East St. Louis, or anyone that represented the American Federation of Labor. These boys were given a charter direct from the American Federation of Labor. The strike went on for some six weeks. The streets in East St. Louis were torn up and a big job torn up in Belleville. The Mayor in Belleville called me and asked me if Belleville had to suffer this tie-up all summer. I says "I don't know." He says "well, from the attitude of the street car company we are going to be tied up all summer on this job, because they claim they are not going to make any effort to deliver any material; they are just going to sit down until these men get ready to come back." I said "Mr. Mayor, what do you expect me to do? Do you expect me to tell these boys to

give up their organization and return to work?" He says "I can hardly expect that."

The Mayor in East St. Louis called me. He said that the merchants were pushing him because of the torn up condition of the streets here in East St. Louis, and he wanted to know what could be done. I told him I believed that if he would use his influence, and the mayor of Belleville would use his influence with the company officials in arranging a conference, that possibly we could work out a solution of this matter and get the men to return to work. Mind you, every community was strongly in sympathy with these underpaid workers, and were glad to see them make the effort to better their conditions.

The Mayors visited the street car company, who had snobbishly refused to treat with committees of their own men, or any one representing these men. A conference was reached and it was agreed that the men would return to work pending arbitration. That was all carried out then orderly. There never was a fight during that strike; there never was a black eye.

The men returned to work, and the arbitration didn't bring them very much. It brought them what they formerly asked for, 20 cents an hour, and an agreement for eighteen months, which expired December 31 of 1917. They succeeded in recognizing the union. They promised to meet their committees; they recognized them either through a committee or through any written grievance that they may present.

Mr. Foss: How long did that strike last?

Mr. Towers: About six weeks, from the latter part of May, I think it was, the 29th or 30th of May, till about the middle of July, to the best of my memory. Anyway, the settlement was brought about by the men, at my advice, returning to work pending arbitration. When they returned to work, then of course the matter was worked out. Their agreement expires next month, at the end of this year.

The company showed bitterness at the start. They felt that it was beneath their dignity-- they showed it plainly-- to meet the committee and to meet myself. They promised the Mayor of Belleville that they would allow me in the conference. The committees had made kind requests for days and days to admit either myself or Mr. Ferr or some representative into the conference. They persistently refused, and the first day I went there some official in the company office, or some under official, asked if it was understood that I was to be in the conference. I says "That is the understanding I got from the Mayor in Belleville." I says "Now if it is going to be obnoxious to the officials of the company, I am not going to intrude upon them. I hope, though, they will let me stay in the conference," and it was finally agreed that they would allow me in the conference.

Anyway that trouble was settled successfully without any trouble, without any fights, and an agreement brought about in which the company agreed to recognize their committee,

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and agreed that they would not discriminate against any member for his or their activity in this or that organization.

The boys built quite an organization. They had some 300 men, and they put a representative to go on the job and collect their dues. They paid him a weekly salary. He was an active, a very bright lad, and very diplomatic. He knew how to keep out of trouble; he knew how to get men into the organization without trouble.

Mr. Baker: Who was this young man, now?

Mr. Towers: Leroy Wetcalf, one of the track workers who was chosen from their number to act as their representative or business agent, to go on the job and initiate, collect dues, and ~~arrange~~ collect initiation fees from new men starting to work.

Mr. Baker: where was this settlement had?

Mr. Towers: This settlement was in the office of the East St. Louis and Suburban and related companies, in their offices on Collinsville Avenue, in July, 1916. That was the first effort of underpaid labor as it pertains to organized labor to better labor conditions. I believe every laboring man--

Mr. Baker (interposing:) You didn't mean that, did you? You mean that was the condition of unorganized labor?

Mr. Towers: Prior to that time, and that was the first effort of unorganized labor to better its condition as it pertained to organized labor. That was an organized effort-- that is, after they had been on the street. Their

first effort was an unorganized effort. Anyway, they were successful in building quite an organization.

Mr. Raker: In other words, it was started by unorganized men?

Mr. Towers: Exactly.

Mr. Raker: On strike, and then by peaceable, honest, proper methods, business methods, to better their condition they did organize; they went to the company and succeeded in getting some better conditions?

Mr. Towers: They got better conditions, and a promise-- the agreement provided for a shorter working day starting with January, 1916, from ten down to 9-1/2 hours.

It was evident that the company was dissatisfied, though, that those men should have an organization, and I am going to point out why it was evident and why I believe, in spite of their agreement, their vain desire was to disrupt that organization in a rather diplomatic method.

The manager told me, in the settlement of this trouble, that it was taking the last drop of blood out of him to meet that small increase. He said it rather bitterly in a way you would almost be inclined to believe it. Immediately after this small increase in wages, which meant \$2 a day instead of \$1.75, the company sub-let its work in East St. Louis to a contractor. This contractor paid the same kind of labor, unorganized, \$2.25 a day for the same kind of work. It was evident the object of the company was to show the unorganized workers that they could get more by

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being unorganized.

Mr. Baker: Who was this man that almost had tears in his voice when he said this?

Mr. Towers: Mr. W. C. Meyers, superintendent of the East St. Louis & Suburban Railway Company, and related companies.

Mr. Baker: You didn't believe that his tears were really genuine?

Mr. Towers: I couldn't believe he was sincere, and later developments--

Mr. Baker (Interposing:): Is he superintendent now?

Mr. Towers: I think he is. Later developments-- now what I say I don't say with malice against this man.

Mr. Baker: No, I appreciate that.

Mr. Towers: Later developments convinced me he wasn't sincere. When his company, through a contractor, paid \$2.25 a day for the same work that the company was paying \$2 for, that convinced me that he was insincere, and that the contractor-- besides the extra quarter that those men got, that the contractor was also getting something at least for doing this work.

Mr. Foster: Would you mind my asking a question there? The railroad company does do some work themselves on track work, don't they?

Mr. Towers: They did work to the extent of 300 men, or thereabouts.

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Mr. Foster: Do you know anything about this statement that this company paid so much per day, so many hours' work, and that in working on a track where cars were passing back and forth, they docked these men one hour because they had to get out of the way of the street cars?

Mr. Towers: There was a threatened strike at one time. Now during this agreement I was called on many times to prevent these boys from violating their agreement, and I believe that there was under hand methods used to try to get these boys to violate their agreement, which says *that* in case of grievance there shall be no strike or lock-out, but the grievance shall be taken up and an effort made to adjust it while the men are on the job. The company was obligated not to lock the men out, and the men in the agreement were obligated not to strike pending negotiations. Of course if it got to the end of the negotiations, either side was free under the agreement to act. There seemed to be a threatened strike, and I feared they might be successful in getting the men to violate their agreement and strike. I heard and seen in the press before it reached me from any of the boys that the company had paid off a great number of their men at nine hours instead of ten hours, and when they asked what was the reason for the small wages, they were told there was practically an hour out of the ten-hour day lost in getting out of the way of the cars. Some of the workers told me that. Later one of the officials of the company told me-- Mr. Parsons or Mr. Meyers, I forget which-- that it was an oversight;

that it was a clerical error in the office and he didn't know who started that story; and I think he made public announcement through the press to that effect. But anyway that was the story that floated at the time and influenced not only the track workers but every other workman in the community.

Mr. Foster: But they corrected that afterwards?

Mr. Tazers: I don't know whether he corrected it by a written statement, or whether the reporters quoted him as making

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making the statement that it was a clerical error. It seems to me, though, that the press later did make the statement, quoting the officials, that it was a clerical error, or made in the office.

Mr. Foster: They stopped that then?

Mr. Tazers: They stopped it immediately and paid them back the money that was coming to them, and saved the strike.

Mr. Foster: Rather strange, wasn't it, that an error of that kind would be made, of taking an hour out for lost time, and the man getting out of the way of the car, the company's own car?

Mr. Tazers: It seemed to me rather a peculiar mistake, that the mistake should be a clerical mistake and be made with so many men as to this one hour. If the mistake had been made and ^{verified} ~~based~~, you might be inclined to believe it. Of course I couldn't say it wasn't true.

However, as I told you, this same company paid a similar class of labor \$2.25 a day through a contractor-- who were unorganized. That showed the sin insincerity of their statement that they couldn't pay more than \$2, and it was a sting to the organized force, quite a sting to common labor in the community, and I think the only reason they did it was to discourage this organization.

Mr. Foss: How long after the formation of this organization was that done?

Mr. Towers: I think that very fall, early that fall, in 1916. The organization had completed itself and returned to work about July, and I think that same fall or late that summer these conditions existed.

Mr. Baker: Was this white labor or colored?

Mr. Towers: White and colored.

Mr. Baker: They were both paid the same price?

Mr. Towers: Both paid the same price.

Mr. Baker: \$2.25?

Mr. Towers: \$2.25 a day.

Mr. Baker: Colored unorganized labor and white unorganized labor; and those that had been organized only got \$2?

Mr. Towers: Those that were organized only got \$2.

Mr. Baker: Working practically on the same car system?

Mr. Towers: The same car system, and doing exactly the same work, with the exception that in the team street

work there was concrete put down by a machine, shoveled in by the material being shoveled into the machine by the men. That was the only difference in that line of work from the work that was done by the employes of the organization.

Mr. Baker: They worked the same number of hours?

Mr. Towers: The same number of hours, ten hours prevailed. Every one remarked that. The business men remarked it to me.

Mr. Fess: How many men were there receiving this increased wage of \$2.25 from the contractor?

Mr. Towers: Well, I would judge that this contractor must have had anywhere from sixty to one hundred men employed in East St. Louis on different streets here. They worked even at night on some of it. At first, in the early part of the organization, the members of this organization were doing that very work. After that it was given out to a contractor, of course, to escape these men being placed in the organization.

Mr. Fess: Well, how many men were working under this other arrangement, that settlement?

Mr. Towers: At the time of the settlement, some 300
776 over the entire system. And their members at the early settlement were doing this very work that was later then given to a contractor, and the only way in which you could reach the contractor with an agreement would be to negotiate with him, as the company's agreement had nothing to do with the contractor.

Mr. Baker: Did you call this to the attention of the men in charge of the system?

Mr. Towers: To the company officials?

Mr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. Towers: I never did. I never had occasion to.

Mr. Baker: Did the organization?

Mr. Towers: They never took that up in any way with the company. I did appear at the company's office on two or three occasions in behalf of this track workers' union, both at the solicitation of the men and the company. I will get to that. Now as I told you, there was an agreement-- part of the agreement provided that there should be no discrimination against activities of the men in the interest of their organization. Mr. Meyers, the company official, seemed to figure that I had placed the representative of the workers on the job, and he called me up one time and made a complaint that this business agent was running men off the job. I told him I would investigate it. I came down the next day and met Mr. Metcalf, and he told an entirely different story. He says that the men had taken the position that they wouldn't work with these men unless they would take out their cards. However, Mr. Meyers-- we asked for a conference and I told him if his foremen would just act the least bit diplomatic with the business agent and the workers, that there would be harmony on the job, and there would be no grievance reach the office; and the only trouble that did exist was where these petty fore-

men stood between the representative of the organization and the workers whom he was trying to get into the organization. Mr. Meyers told me over the telephone that his reason-- I say I have the direct evidence-- that he had got to have labor, and he could get all kinds of negro labor. He told this representative later that he was going to bring in negroes and put them on the job, and asked if their organization would take in negroes. They hadn't up to that time had any negroes in the organization.

Mr. Raker: This is Mr. Meyers, superintendent of the street railway company?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: When was that conversation had?

Mr. Towers: Well, I think-- I just can't give the time. I think it was in the fall of 1916.

Mr. Raker: About how late?

Mr. Towers: Well, in the early fall, I think.

Mr. Raker: Some time in November, you think?

Mr. Towers: No, it was earlier than that.

Mr. Raker: October?

Mr. Towers: It may have been in the early spring.

Mr. Raker: And where was this?

Mr. Towers: That he told Mr. Metcalf?

Mr. Raker: Yes.

Mr. Towers: In the office, I think, of the company.

Mr. Metcalf went up to see him.

Mr. Raker: That they could get in cheap negro labor?

Mr. Towers: He didn't say "cheap negro labor"; that he could get all the negroes he wanted. I told him in spite of the agreement I thought one of the reasons why he couldn't get labor was because of the cheapness of the job. He had called me in and asked me to supply him with labor. I told him I couldn't consistently ask a man to go on a job for \$2 a day if he could get work elsewhere, and I wouldn't promise him, even though he had organized conditions, to help him secure labor on that cheap job. I wanted to point out also that the boys asked, through a communication to the office, if the company wouldn't reopen the agreement because of the increased living conditions, and negotiate for some little better increase for the track workers, the members of that organization. ^{They} I told him in the letter that they realized they were tied up in the agreement through their organization.

Mr. Cooper: You said "increased living conditions". You mean increased cost of living?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir. The company never replied to that letter, so I have been told, but did put into effect a bonus proposition that never has been, so far as I can understand, satisfactory to those particular men. I believe they increased their wages three dollars a month, provided they worked every day in the month. If a man was tired and seen fit to rest a day, he wouldn't get his bonus, or so

many days. I wouldn't attempt to say just how the bonus was arranged, other than to say it was \$3 a month increase, providing he worked steady. That was the way they met the communication asking for a conference to negotiate for a little more money. They went about it in the best way they could, and they were entitled to more consideration.

Now it seemed about that time that labor-- or even a little prior to that-- that common labor all over was becoming dissatisfied, and justly so. Their wages were horrible. I think very few white workers in this country worked as cheap as they did in East St. Louis-- or negroes either. The packing house employes had a big strike about three months following, I think, the street car track workers' strike in 1916. That was just before the accusation of the press of the negroes being brought in here for political purposes last fall.

Time went on, and in the spring some of the workers in other little plants made unorganized demands for wages. The Aluminum Ore boys last fall, 1916-- October, I think it was stated here-- went on strike, unorganized. Mr. Fox was gone. He returned after three or four days and conceded, as has been stated here, all of the conditions that the workers asked for at that time, which was a reduction of hours from nine and a half and twelve to eight hours; and an increased wage from, I think, \$2.50 for common labor to \$2.75; and mechanics from \$3.50 up to \$4.25. At least that was the public announcement as to wage conditions that followed that strike.

It was after that that this here association of employees was built. I met the gentleman, Mr. Wolf, the day he came to Belleville seeking the attorney to get a State charter for the employees' organization. He told me what he was going to do, and I asked him if it was to be a labor organization for the protection of employees. He said yes. I asked him if he didn't think that would be a poor substitute for a real labor organization. He told me he thought they would get along well; that they had made a success of their strike and believed they would be able to protect themselves through this organization.

A few months later I heard that the company was not carrying out its promise to the workers. I heard that from boys in Belleville whom I knew their faces, riding back and forth.

Mr. Raker: This was the Aluminum Company?

Mr. Towers: This was the Aluminum Company-- that instead of paying \$4.25 to mechanics they were paying \$3.75, \$3.90, and had inaugurated different methods of pay so as to reduce the wages and get away from their former promise, while the public, mind you, still felt that that condition prevailed out there, that the Aluminum Ore was a good paying institution. However, statements began to float that their wages had been reduced and their committees who had negotiated the former settlement were being discriminated against; and so within six weeks after the strike I was satisfied that there was going to be further trouble at the Aluminum

Ore, from the stories I could hear on the street.

Mr. Baker: Before you reach that, did you discuss with Mr. Wolf at the time he came over to Felleville to get this Aluminum Ore Protective Association formed, that it would be better to join the real labor organization; that he would get better results?

Mr. Tevers: That was the first time I ever met Mr. Wolf. His brother introduced me to him that day, and I told him that I felt that would be a poor substitute for a labor organization, a real labor organization. I felt that sooner or later it would go to the wall. I told him I thought if the company could control it they would disrupt it. I told him that to me it appeared to be copied after the Rockefeller plan in Colorado, and that it wouldn't work out; that it had no force behind it; that the organized labor movement would not recognize it; they would get no moral assistance even from the organized labor men, and I believed that his lack of knowledge of the general movement left him feeling that I was mistaken; that they could make a success of that institution. I told him I didn't want to discourage him, but I felt sure that the time would come sooner or later in which the company would either disrupt that or it would have to evolve into a real labor organization. That was the conversation between Mr. Wolf and I. He didn't agree with me. He didn't express me bitterly. We were strangers; just met that day, and it was just a general conversation, and his theory was based upon the theory that if all employees in a plant belonged to one organization, that it would be mere

effective than the A. F. L. policy of the different crafts in the different organizations. He didn't oppose me strongly. He just felt that they had been so successful in securing this settlement, that there was a good feeling between the men and the company; that they would retain their organization and be able to negotiate with the company and be able to take care of their interests. However, what has been stated here, without my being the Committee with going over that, shows that when the company couldn't foster the organization it was essential to them that it be disrupted, and which eventually brought about the strike.

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Now that, I believe, nearly covers the labor troubles, with the exception, I believe, of a spurt in the American Steel. I think the men went out unorganized.

Mr. Foss: When was that?

Mr. Towers: I don't remember the date. That is the strikes of unorganized labor from the spring of 1916.

Now to get back to why I believe the company and this East St. Louis Journal-- the big companies-- labor, untrained, unorganized labor, untrained as to how to proceed to better their conditions, possibly fearful of trying to organize before they went out, or not understanding how to go about it, went out in unorganized strikes. They think that the big employers of East St. Louis realize that organized labor stood ready and were willing and would go out of their place. Every conscientious union man in the community was ready to sacrifice his time whenever called upon to assist those unorganized workers to get out of the horrors that existed in East St. Louis.

I think that the influx of negroes was the challenge to the unorganized to keep quiet and stay on their jobs; that there was no hope that they would better their conditions, and they succeeded in flooding the town to the extent that there were three men to one job, I believe, even to meet that poor wage condition. Of course wages did come up. They jumped from about 17-1/2 cents in about a year to 22, 25 and 27.

Now to show you the unnatural wage condition that existed, *East St. Louis* all around these little towns, small employers that one would really believe couldn't meet a wage condition nearly so well as big employers, were paying for the same labor, the same kind of labor, 34 cents an hour-- or 30 cents an hour-- when East St. Louis was getting the same labor for 22 cents an hour, and we have been told in conference in small towns by employers, public service corporations, water companies, for instance, that they couldn't afford to meet the new increase in the smaller towns which they asked for, which was 35 cents an hour, an eight-hour day. They had the eight-hour day, 35 cents an hour. They said "We can get all the men we want in East St. Louis for 22 cents an hour doing the same work." That showed the unnatural condition that existed in East St. Louis as to labor. A most horrible condition existed. To me I don't see how the poor unfortunate devils could be as patient as they were. To me I could criticize them for going out unorganized. They must have been desperate. I believe even today they are desperate. I believe that from now on, though, that their wages are going to come up. I believe the publicity that this committee has brought in this community

is going to raise the wages of the poor unfortunate, underpaid common labor of East St. Louis. I believe this Committee's influence is going to do that, if nothing else, the publicity of this entire matter as to the underpaid and exploited workers of East St. Louis with their long hours. I have heard continuously the statements of good wages up here to attract the negro from the South. To me it has been the poorest wage that I could imagine north of the Ohio River, right in this community. Labor was severely exploited here. There was no incentive for anything so far as labor is concerned. They wouldn't give them any consideration except a challenge from the employers to stay in your place; don't attempt to move; we'll flood your job with negroes. That was the direct challenge, and I believe that the East -St Louis Journal wanted to involve the labor movement at all times; create a feeling that would sooner or later get the organized labor movement in bed, because I believe they feared, the big employers feared-- and I believe their fears are going to be grounded-- I believe there is going to be success in that direction; I think East St. Louis common labor is yet going to be organized-- I believe that the East St. Louis Journal, if it could in the interests of the big employers, discourage labor, put the labor movement of this community in ill-repute, sour the community against unorganized labor, that then these poor unfortunates could ^{not} get any assistance and could never succeed in bettering their conditions.

Mr. Cooper: Let me ask you a question right now, so I can understand your exact statement. The street car strike

was by unorganized labor?

Mr. Powers: By unorganized labor.

Mr. Cooper: The Aluminum Ore Company strike was by unorganized labor?

Mr. Towers: By unorganized labor.

Mr. Cooper: The American steel Company strike was by unorganized labor.

Mr. Towers: By unorganized labor.

Mr. Cooper: The packing house company?

Mr. Towers: Was partially organized, I believe.

Mr. Cooper: And partly ^{un}organized?

Mr. Towers: A great portion of it was unorganized.

Mr. Cooper: Then after that strike, the packing plants were unorganized?

Mr. Towers: Unorganized and are still unorganized.

Mr. Cooper: The companies insisting that the employees shall be unorganized?

Mr. Towers: That was their apparent position.

Mr. Cooper: And now unorganized labor struck for better conditions, better wages and better hours, and unorganized labor you say then was challenged by the companies, and you explained that challenge in this way: They must submit to those conditions or have their places taken if they went out?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Not only go out, but be deprived of the opportunity to work and earn a living to maintain their families?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir. Here was the position it

was putting them in: The one who possibly had merely a wife and one child, he could seek another field. The ~~man~~ fellow that was burdened with two or three children, he had to accept that hard condition, and he had to stay right on the job. He had no chance. There he was helpless, utterly helpless, no chance on earth to better his condition to meet this great increased cost of living. He was the most helpless creature in this grand republic.

Mr. Raker: A good many of those men are men with wives and two or three children?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely; yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: In other words, they just became helpless?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely helpless.

Mr. Raker: Now, a man with a wife and one child hasn't any easy job to move around if he is out of work and labor. He would be in about the same condition, wouldn't he?

781 Mr. Towers: It would be a great sacrifice for even him to move. The only thing he could do is to leave his wife unprotected for possibly three or four weeks while he made enough money elsewhere to send for her to come to him?

Mr. Raker: And if he had the matter staring him in the face all the time that if he made a demand or made any kick, wanted better conditions, he would be asked to stay out, and some negro take his place-- is that what they tried to convey?

Mr. Towers: They actually conveyed that to the white workers, and actually discriminated against him. They picked

the negro, and the white worker who had been in East St. Louis, had had experience in the plant, they left him stand in line and picked a man from the colored ranks who had had no experience in that line of work.

Mr. Johnson: Can you cite some instance right there?

Mr. Towers: Well, I can't cite specific instances. Those are general statements. There have been workers-- I know their faces; they live in our town-- that have worked at the Aluminum Ore, and came to me bitterly, almost crying, with the statement that they could no longer get a place in East St. Louis to work; that they were known even-- their faces were known; their experience was known, and when they would ask for a job they were told there was no work, and three minutes later they would pick out a big strong negro and call him into the place.

Mr. Baker: Now right there, there is another side to this, right in connection with what you have said. The negro, being one of your community, with his wife and children, was punished; had to suffer; had to go without employment and things to eat by virtue of the same conditions; didn't he?

Mr. Towers: Why, Mr. Baker, I want to say that that brings all the horrors to light. The negro-- the so-called friends of the negro-- have been his biggest enemy.

Mr. Baker: That is what I say. He would be really in a more deplorable condition than the white man?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. You can't express it, the horrors of it.

Mr. Raker. So you had the poor laboring man with his family, and you had, on the other hand, the negro with his family, striving without acquaintance, pitted against each other, for the purpose of making more wages for these great concerns-- more profits for these great concerns?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. Cruelly so. I don't believe there is another condition in the country like it.

Mr. Raker: Do you believe that was so arranged, engineered, to make that condition absolutely possible and permanent upon these people?

Mr. Towers: I don't think it was carried out, Mr. Raker-- I don't think it could have come about without most skilful engineering.

Mr. Raker: You don't believe the excuse that was made?

Mr. Towers: No, I think it was skilful engineering.

Mr. Raker: Pre-arranged?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely, while I have no positive proof.

782 Mr. Raker: And while the negro had the right to come here, to go where he wanted to work, to seek a livelihood for himself and family, this means was used for the purpose not only of imposing upon him but as well upon the white laboring men that were in the community?

Mr. Towers: He was an equal sufferer. As I have said before, I believe the friends-- the so-called friends-- of the negro, which are the big corporations, and some of the

petty leaders of the negroes, who are his so-called friends, have been his biggest enemy. It is a most sad and pitiful thought to think of those negroes being trapped, driven into a trap here and the condition that followed in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Publicly claiming to be his friends, and quietly and secretly, as you have stated, putting him in a trap where he is absolutely fleeced, not only of his rights, but of his livelihood?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely, and at a time when the nation was really wanting labor. Labor could have struck a nice balance without East St. Louis having three times its supply of labor. In other words, it would have to be skilful engineering and much effort used to bring about a condition that would force three times the necessary labor into a community at this time.

Mr. Baker: Now right there, didn't the paper here in East St. Louis take up these conditions and make them public, so that the people would know what was going on, to try and prevent it?

Mr. Towers: The newspapers?

Mr. Baker: No, I mean the newspaper of East St. Louis.

Mr. Towers: The East St. Louis Journal?

Mr. Baker: Yes.

Mr. Towers: I don't remember what its articles were pertaining to that particular part of it. I never read the East St. Louis Journal. I have only heard it referred to in our meetings as being antagonistic to organized labor, and that is the reason. I believe the East St. Louis Journal

was used to deceive the public and try in every way bring hatred or confusion against the only possible hope of the unorganized, which would be the labor movement.

Mr. Baker: Well, while the feeling existed, as you state, against organized labor, they were punishing 90 per cent or 80 per cent of their own home people who were unorganized, with their families, and living right in their ^{own} community; isn't that right?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely right. They were punishing both elements most cruelly pitted against each other. They had no regard for our own people. There had never been any encouragement, in so far as common labor is concerned, to my knowledge, that they have ever encouraged any permanency of citizenship of common labor. All they seem to care about is to pick them out at the gate, the crowd in the morning. And many hundreds of men I believe came through here at different times with no intention of staying here, but to pick up, possibly, a week's work, that he may buy a suit of clothes or something to pass on to some other locality. I don't think they ever made an effort. I don't think they wanted a class of labor that would demand a better standard of wage and better living conditions in a community; the more substantial citizenship. I didn't think they were interested in that. I think they were interested only in a floating population and keeping them floating.

Mr. Baker: That is a horrible state of affairs.

Mr. Towers: That is the true condition in East St. Louis.

Mr. Cooper: We have in the North manufacturing cities--
that is, cities that have large manufacturing plants, doing
782 millions of dollars' worth of business each year. You go into
many of these manufacturing communities and you will find homes
owned and occupied by laboring men and mechanics, comfortably
furnished. These people are among the very best citizens that
we have in all the northern country. There are many common
laborers that own their homes, pleasant little homes. They
live happily. Do you think that anything of that kind was
wanted here?

Mr. Towers: I don't think they desired that kind of
a condition in East St. Louis-- that is, the exploiters of
East St. Louis and this rich territory here. I will tell you,
if you will allow me to go back-- I don't want to go into too
many details, because I might become a bore to the Committee
to go too far into these matters.

years ago in the surrounding territory here the miners
lived in just such shacks as the East St. Louis unorganized
workers and negroes have been compelled to live in.

Mr. Cooper: You mean white and black?

Mr. Towers: White and black. They were company
shacks, put up by the cheapest methods possible. But the
development of their organization and a better standard of
wage-- when you leave this community, if you have time, and
visit these little surrounding towns, you will see the fine
homes from three to five thousand dollars owned by miners.
You will see their beautiful lawns and their beautiful hedges,
and the thrift that is applied in these homes, and then com-

pare them to the shacks in East St. Louis where the poor laborer has not got a chance. There has never been any encouragement for East St. Louis. East St. Louis is to be pitied. It is more to be pitied than censured. It has suffered from many complaints, high water and the like, and it is absolutely in corporate control. You can't get across the Mississippi River unless you cross the Free Bridge, without passing upon somebody's private property; and it is even stated by some of the best legal minds that their title to the river front is not regular. But that is the condition that exists. East St. Louis is absolutely squeezed by corporate control.

Mr. Foster: But they have got the river front and hold it, don't they?

Mr. Towers: They hold it, and they have got it so tight that even you as a Congressman, I don't think, dare intrude.

Mr. Foster: They have got all the river front?

Mr. Towers: All of the river front-- well, I don't know how far it extends.

Mr. Foster: Well, I mean all along the main part of East St. Louis and St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know about St. Louis.

Mr. Foster: Well, I expect it is about the same over there.

Mr. Towers: I wanted to go into another statement to strengthen what I had pointed out ^{is my} belief as to

somebody being the mouthpiece of the interests in East St. Louis, and to poison the community against organized labor.

Mr. Cooper: To get across the bridge on a street car-- the Eads bridge, which is the main thoroughfare between East St. Louis and St. Louis-- each passenger has to pay ten cents?

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Mr. Towers: Ten cents, yes.

Mr. Cooper: And then if you have an automobile with one passenger in it it is 40 cents to go across, and an automobile with more passengers-- with four, it is 50 cents for the auto?

Mr. Towers: I don't know just what their vehicle rates are. It is so much for a vehicle and then so much for each passenger. The driver and vehicle is so much.

Mr. Cooper: And the traffic across that great bridge has to pay toll?

Mr. Towers: It has to pay toll. It has had to do so until the Free Bridge was built, and the powers that have clutched East St. Louis and St. Louis in some way succeeded in holding up the building of that bridge in one diplomatic way or another for ten years before they succeeded in completing the bridge; and the lack of the bridge being built was in the interest of those who clutched this community.

Mr. Cooper: Well, here, right in the center of the nation, is this great stream and great traffic across it, interstate traffic, and it has to pay tolls of that kind in order to go from Illinois into Missouri, or from Missouri

into Illinois?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. You can't crawl across without paying five cents.

Mr. Cooper: It amounts to a high tariff between the two States?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Baker: In addition to that, as he stated, they have got the river front blocked and shut off.

Mr. Towers: You can^{not} take a motor boat or a skiff and start from this side of the river without laying yourself liable for trespassing on this river front.

Mr. Cooper: Practically, then, you are shut out?

Mr. Towers: Shut out completely. The river don't belong to the people.

Mr. Cooper: Can't men go down there and land along the shore here on the East St. Louis side?

Mr. Towers: Not without trespassing.

Mr. Cooper: Well, they put the law on you if you trespass?

Mr. Towers: I presume they would. A citizen may walk up and down the river front there, possibly, unmolested, as a sightseer, but I believe they would watch you if you done that.

Mr. Foster: Still St. Louis did bond itself for several million dollars to build a free bridge over here?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foster: Trying to get rid of this condition that exists?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; the so-called "arbitrary".

Mr. Foster: So as to relieve the people who desired to ship from St. Louis to East St. Louis, or from East St. Louis to St. Louis, that they might get rid of the paying of this toll?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foster: Over these bridges?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; that was the object in building the Free Bridge.

Mr. Raker: But both ends-- both in St. Louis and in East St. Louis the car system is such that it kind of drives you away from the Free Bridge, don't it?

Mr. Towers: There has been no incentive to attract you to the Free bridge on this side, at least.

Mr. Raker: On the other side also?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now let me ask you, the terminus of this Free Bridge is about a mile south of the center of East St. Louis, isn't it, three-quarters of a mile?

Mr. Towers: Well, I would judge it is about three-quarters of a mile from this building, I should judge. This would be the center of East St. Louis.

784 Mr. Cooper: About three-quarters of a mile south of the center of East St. Louis; and there is no street car tracks across it, either?

Mr. Towers: I think the tracks are laid. I don't think there are any cars, no. You can walk across or drive across.

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Mr. Cooper: Put you can't get across on a street car?

Mr. Towers: Oh, no.

Mr. Foster: And isn't it a fact that the railroads and these corporations are endeavoring now-- I don't know whether they will succeed or not, but I hope not-- trying to secure the rights over this Free Bridge, so as to finally defeat the object of St. Louis in building that bridge?

Mr. Towers: I don't think there ever was better brains hired than was ~~was~~ hired right in this community to try and engineer and bottle up the efforts of the Free Bridge or those who may honestly have promoted something in the interests of these communities.

Mr. Foster: You think that St. Louis honestly tried to get rid of this condition?

Mr. Towers: I think St. Louis started out honestly to get rid of it.

Mr. Foster: Because they spent several million dollars in building this bridge, and that now the newspapers have had a good deal to say, pro and con, in reference to the attempt of these people to secure all the rights of this Free Bridge and defeat the object of trying to get rid of this arbitrary?

Mr. Towers: The people in St. Louis held up the completion of the Free Bridge for a very long time. During the construction of the Free Bridge, the Council in St. Louis granted some company-- I think it was the Southern Tracks Company-- a fifty-year franchise, even before the bridge

was completed, and that dissatisfied the people of St. Louis and they refused to vote the bond issues to complete the bridge. I think for three distinct elections it was voted down. They repealed that ordinance and the people then voted sufficient bonds to complete the bridge.

Mr. Foster: So that the people's heart in this matter has been right?

Mr. Towers: Oh, the people in St. Louis have fought honestly, and they did the best they possibly could, but of course they were working against great odds.

Mr. Foster: But they wouldn't vote this money as long as that fifty-year franchise was a law in St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: No, they were determined on that.

Mr. Foster: The people were smart enough to keep from doing that.

Mr. Foss: I understood you to say that you thought common labor had been underpaid here all along for a number of years. Is that true?

Mr. Towers: I think the wages 20 years ago were within 10 cents a day of what they were up till the spring of 1916.

Mr. Foss: Well, what are they today? How do you compare them today with that of other places?

Mr. Towers: I think they are extremely low.

Mr. Foss: You think common labor is paid less here, *than it is* for instance, than it is over across the river in St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

Mr. Foss: Or up here in some of these neighboring cities?

Mr. Towers: All the surrounding towns.

Mr. Foss: Have you ever made an investigation into that subject?

Mr. Towers: No; only from general understanding of the labor conditions in different localities, and meeting the labor board from different points, finding out the common labor wage in the locality.

Mr. Foss: What you got, you got simply from hearsay?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: But you have never been to any of these places to find out what common labor was paid?

Mr. Towers: In our town common labor gets nearly
785 twice as much as it does here.

Mr. Foss: At the present time?

Mr. Towers: well, I have stretched that somewhat. They were getting nearly twice as much before the slight increases that were made in East St. Louis. In other words, when they were getting 17-1/2 cents an hour here, they were getting 32 in our town for similar kind of labor. In Alton, I think, about the same wage condition prevailed, and even little Granite City up above here.

Mr. Foss: You mean they were getting 32 cents?

Mr. Towers: 30, 32 and 35 cents an hour.

Mr. Foss: When they were getting 17-1/2 cents here?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: And that was when?

Mr. Towers: That was in the normal times.

Mr. Foss: A year ago?

Mr. Towers: Two years ago, 1915, at the close of the depressed period.

Mr. Foss: Well now, what are they getting today; do you know; down in Belleville, down in your own town?

Mr. Towers: They are getting from 34 to 35 cents an hour for common labor.

Mr. Foss: 34 to 35 cents an hour?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: How many hours?

Mr. Towers: An eight-hour day. They have had it for 12 or 14 years.

Mr. Foss: Now common labor is getting how much here in East St. Louis at the present time?

Mr. Towers: Track laborers are getting \$2 a day. For the contractor, if he is still doing any work, \$2.25, the last I have heard. The testimony from employers on the stand here, from the packers, was 27 cents an hour, and I have heard that it is 25 cents an hour in the ~~packing plants~~ packing plants-- in the steel plant.

Mr. Foss: Well, is there a great scarcity of common labor down in Belleville?

Mr. Towers: There has never been an employer until the Government built its Scott Field, the aviation field, six miles from our town. That robbed our town of common labor, and some common labor after the riot was brought in

from East St. Louis. A number of negroes were taken to Belleville, joined the organization, and got 34 cents an hour, after the riot.

Mr. Foss: What is the Government paying for common labor?

Mr. Towers: The Government?

Mr. Foss: Yes, at the aviation field.

Mr. Towers: The Government at the aviation field pays 30 cents an hour. We had a conference with the Army man and the officer in charge of the field, and the contractor, and they agreed on 30 cents an hour for common labor. We didn't feel it was enough. However, that is what it is; and 62-1/2 cents an hour for carpenters; time and a half for overtime and Sundays.

Mr. Foss: You say the Government robbed the town of Belleville of common labor?

Mr. Towers: Some common labor.

Mr. Foss: And they paid them 30 cents an hour?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

Mr. Foss: But the common labor in Belleville was getting 34 and 35 cents?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Foss: Well now, does the common laborer move that way towards the poorest pay?

Mr. Towers: Well now, I don't want you to infer that they took those workers off the jobs, but any surplus work, labor that may have been in Belleville, was used at

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786 the cantonment. There was another incentive for labor at the Government cantonment, that was that they weren't worked as hard as they were on some of the private jobs in our town-- that is, that is the story. They were worked ten hours a day, with time and a half after eight hours' work, which run their wages up to \$3.30, and made their day's pay, because of the eleven hour pay for ten hours' work, much greater than the wage conditions in Belleville. And it is not all common labor in Belleville that gets 34 cents an hour, but I am comparing it with similar labor in East St. Louis.

Mr. Foss: Well, aren't those exceptional cases that you speak of, 34 ~~and~~ ^{to 45} cents an hour?

Mr. Towers: No, they are not exceptional. That is all the work that is done by the contractors, streets, street building.

Mr. Foss: That is \$4 or \$5 a day-- forty five cents an hour for common labor?

Mr. Towers: Or an eight-hour day. I have never just figured it up. I guess it will run over \$4. That is building labor that gets 45 cents. It may be 42-1/2, but there is some that I feel sure are getting 45 cents. Now the Government buildings out there at Scott field, they attract labor from St. Louis. They came from St. Louis, and what would be surplus labor in Belleville ^{went} out there, and there was for a time a scarcity of labor in Belleville. In other words, men who would have taken up the harder work, concrete and such work as that, preferred

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to go and carry lumber for carpenters out at Scott Field.

Mr. Cooper: How long did it take to make that concrete road that they had a celebration for the other day?

Mr. Towers: Nearly two years. It started in March, 1916.

Mr. Cooper: How long is that road?

Mr. Towers: It is estimated at six or seven miles of concrete.

Mr. Cooper: How wide is it?

Mr. Towers: I think it is nearer six than seven. It is forty feet of concrete, 21 feet in the center for the railroad tracks, the street car tracks.

Mr. Cooper: Forty feet of concrete?

Mr. Towers: Twenty on each side; 19-1/2 feet of paving, half a foot of curbing, just 20 feet on each side.

Mr. Foss: what did common labor get in the construction of that?

Mr. Towers: Common labor got in 1916, 32 cents an hour. In 1917 they got 34 cents an hour. wages were increased through a conference with the employers of Belleville this spring, 1917. The job was completed under a scale of 34 cents. They weren't able to hold the men at 34, and they really paid the men 35, and some of them more. Some of the more proficient workers received more than that.

Mr. Foss: That was common labor?

Mr. Towers: Common labor working around the concrete machine, grading off the grade for the laying of the concrete, digging the trenches or curbing, to set the

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forms, and the handling of the material that went into the machines that mixed the concrete, and the laying of the concrete. The laying of the concrete I think pays more. The scale reads, "40 cents"-- some of that work pays 60 cents an hour, I think the frame setters.

Mr. Foss: This road was built by the city of Belleville?

Mr. Towers: By the city of Belleville, and Belleville contractors.

Mr. Foss: How much did it cost, a million dollars?

Mr. Towers: No, it cost \$240,000 and something-- 48 or 38, I think.

Mr. Foss: It was all stated in the press, I think, as a million dollar road?

Mr. Towers: Well, Belleville has learned to follow some other cities and boast themselves about four times the value, I guess. They have rated it, and call it, I believe, the million dollar paving. It cost, I think, \$238,000, if I am not mistaken. It cost the property ^{holders} ~~holders~~ \$4.95 a foot in front of this property.

Mr. Foss: How large is the city of Belleville?

Mr. Towers: Belleville is about-- at this time about 28,000 population.

Mr. Foss: Have they got any manufacturing plants down there?

Mr. Towers: We have-- Belleville, with St. Louis, really is a great stove manufacturing company. We have many big stove shops that employ-- well, the foundry

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business, the stove and jobbing foundry business, employs about 700 moulders alone.

Mr. Foss: But are there any other manufacturing plants that employ labor?

Mr. Towers: Oh, smaller manufacturing plants.

Mr. Foss: But it isn't an industrial center anywhere near this city?

Mr. Towers: It couldn't be compared with East St. Louis industrially. It is quite an industrial center for a small community. There are mines, foundries and small plants. Most of the industry carried on there, however, is carried on by local people. If the Committee will let me continue this one point, and that is I am going to follow up the street car company.

In the spring of 1917, or nearing the time of the expiration of the street car men's agreement-- that is, the motormen and conductors-- the town had gone through this, as I pointed out-- the street car and motormen's agreement with the company, which was the second or third agreement, I forget which, expired in July. Just prior to the expiration the press announced that there was going to be a strike; that the men had asked for a wage increase, and the company had taken the position that there wasn't going to be a wage increase, and I have been asked by many people-- and I want to ask this Committee later, if they will permit me-- I have been asked this question: How it was possible for a street car company to be able to get militia or Federal troops? The first report of troops

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being brought in here, into the street car barns, was that they were militia. I think the papers announced later that they had become federalized, and we had within the street car barns prior to the expiration of the street car men's agreement, a condition whereby a private company could get Federal troops onto the ground, and it was generally understood the object was to intimidate the street car men. That was the condition.

Mr. Baker: were they ^{in the} employ of the street car company?

Mr. Towers: employes of the street car company, that is, motormen, conductors and shop men, whose agreement was just about to expire, even told by some of the street car men prior to the expiration of their agreement, that it was made-- that they were made to understand that those soldiers were there to keep them from starting any trouble, and the trouble referred to would be a strike; and they were told by the officials of the company that if there would be any trouble-- if this came to a strike-- that the Federal Government was going to take over the street car company, and had the soldiers here to run the cars if any strike took place. In other words, it was understood in this community that this ^{Company} ~~community~~ had influence enough to get Federal troops on to the ground to intimidate a bunch of honorable, respected citizens who had for 15 years negotiated wage agreements with the street car company. Now that is the condition, and a question that I have never been able to answer, how they were able

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to do that. Nevertheless it was done, and it was plainly made known that they were there to intimidate the street car men.

It has been pointed ^{out} I have heard in a rather whispered way-- that certain officials in our community of big employing interests are secret service men and have been in a position to intimidate the workers of this community.

Mr. Johnson: Secret service men employed by whom?

Mr. Towers: By Uncle Sam.

Mr. Johnson: From whom do you get that?

Mr. Towers: Among those I might name one that I have heard has a secret service commission, whether it is full-fledged or just in an assisting way I don't know, and that is the general manager of the East St. Louis and Suburban and related companies, who had influence enough to get troops on the ground before any trouble of any kind was even thought of by a number of respected workmen of this community.

Mr. Johnson: what is his name?

Mr. Towers: D. R. Parsons.

Mr. Johnson: From whom did you get the information that he was a United States Secret Service man?

Mr. Towers: I didn't say United States Secret Service man. ^{I said} He is a ~~U. S.~~ ^{service} secret man, and I judge that to mean a Government secret man.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if he is Uncle Sam's secret service man, he is a United States Secret Service man.

Mr. Towers: I guess so.

789 Mr. Johnson: From whom did you get that information?

Mr. Towers: I heard it whispered here some time in the past.

Mr. Johnson: Who whispered it?

Mr. Towers: I don't know the parties. I am going to give you definite information. I heard Mr. Parsons himself state--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) Who is Mr. Parsons?

Mr. Towers: The man that I told you was general superintendent of the East St. Louis & Suburban Railway Company. I heard h'm say in my presence that he was a Secret Service man.

Mr. Johnson: Who else was present?

Mr. Towers: Now I inferred that he was a Government Secret Service man. That is the inference I took from the conversation.

Mr. Johnson: What brought about such a conversation?

Mr. Towers: Why, when I was in the office--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) Whose office?

Mr. Towers: Mr. Parsons' office-- with a committee of the track workers, and Mr. Parsons and one Mr. Merker--

Mr. Johnson (interposing:) Who is Mr. Merker?

Mr. Towers: Mr. Merker is one of their department superintendents, superintendent of construction, I think.

Mr. Johnson: Of the street railroad?

Mr. Towers: Of the street railway company-- taking up a matter as related to the agreement between the workers. There was a strike threatened. They desired the workers to work a ten hour day when the agreement provided for 9-1/2, and it looked as though there was going to be a strike. Mr. Herker called me on the phone and I arranged for a meeting with the firm and the committee; and the company had inaugurated-- had went back to the ten-hour day, and paid the boys an extra quarter for the extra half hour's work. In other words, they had paid them at the rate of 50 cents an hour for the extra half-hour's overtime. The boys weren't satisfied, and the union foreman made it plain that they were not to oppose that ten-hour work-day. The boys felt that it was taking away a condition that they had secured through arbitration, and some of them were opposed to it, and some felt they would like to work the half hour for the extra quarter, and we had a conference over that, and Mr. Parsons agreed that he wouldn't compel any of the workers that didn't want to work the overtime to do so. He would recognize the agreement to that extent, and that he would ask those-- he would ask them to work overtime each day because of the scarcity of labor, and as an incentive for this extra half hour would pay them 25 cents a day more, or two dollars and twenty-five cents. Now during the course of that conversation Mr. Parsons related some incidents pertaining to people escaping the draft law, or something-- I didn't pay

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much attention to it-- the only thing that impressed me is when he told me that he, with a number of others, were secret service men and were helping to look up these cases.

Mr. Cooper: You inferred he meant United States Government Secret service?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: To look up those evading the draft law?

Mr. Towers: Yes, that I guess was the incident he mentioned. I paid very little attention to the incident. The only thing that impressed me was that an employer of labor should be a Secret Service man. I felt that if that condition existed, he could easily use that against the workers, and that myself and other labor men should be secret service men if he is going to be a secret service man. That was the first thought that struck me. I had heard before that there were a number of big employers in East St. Louis-- in a whispered way, in conversations, I hear a great deal on the street corners, on the street cars, the back of street cars, that there were a number in East St. Louis who were secret service men, and that was the first specific instance that came to my knowledge, and it struck me as rather peculiar that one who had been so prominent in holding down labor should be in a situation to carry a Government secret service badge and would be in a way further to intimidate labor, or use it for person-

al advantage. I don't know as he did, but that is the thing that impressed me. I don't just know the incident, but I think it pertained to ^{some of} those trying to escape the draft law, or looking up rioters. It may have been the incident that he was trying to get evidence-- I believe that was it-- either looking up those who were trying to escape the selective draft law, or to secure evidence for the rioters.

Mr. Raker: For the rioters?

Mr. Towers: For the grand jury.

Mr. Raker: To find out who were the participants in the riots?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir. But it never would have struck me-- I think he would have taken the inference that he was assisting the community and looking up evidence if it hadn't been that he had influence, or his company had influence enough, to get Government troops down here in the street car barns with a threatening attitude towards an honorable bunch of workers, highly respectable ^{ed} citizens of this community, in an effort to scare them off. I want to say that they weren't scared; that it took some considerable pressure to prevent a strike. I was called as an arbitrator in that particular trouble. There was a settlement made that was not satisfactory to the street car men.

Mr. Johnson: You mean the street car labor?

Mr. Towers: The street car employes, the motormen and conductors, and shop men.

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Now those are the few things that I want^{ed} to show that would lead me to believe and try to justify my belief in the ~~fact~~^{fact} ~~belief~~, that the powerful interests had a wonderful method of holding down the efforts of the poor, unfortunates in East St. Louis.

Mr. Johnson: At this pause in your testimony, it is now half past 12, and the Committee will take a recess for lunch until half past one.

(Whereupon, at 12:30 o'clock p.m., the Committee recessed.)

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AFTER RECESS:

The Committee reassembled at 1.30 o'clock p.m.
pursuant to recess.

STATEMENT OF ALOIS TOWERS (Continued).

Mr. Johnson: You wish to continue your statement? Begin where you left off and go ahead.

Mr. Towers: I want to try and conclude, Mr. Chairman. I only want to say briefly what I seen of the riots.

I was in East St. Louis on the day of the riot. I saw ^{three} the mobs that day - at least what I would designate as the mob. I was in the street car company's office on the second floor, I think, with the committee, - that is the Arbitration Committee - and we heard a shot about 10.30 in the morning -

Mr. Johnson: Of July 2nd?

Mr. Towers: Of July 2nd. We rushed to the window and looked up the street. The mob was up this way on Collinsville Avenue. The office is down here Broadway on Collinsville Avenue. It seemed to me a part of the mob were running and closing in upon a different part about a block from where we were, as though someone had been injured. I took it someone had been shot. We then saw a negro running towards Broadway on Collinsville, and another mob after him. That evening - or that noon -

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Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) How long after 10.30 was that?

Mr. Flowers: That was the same time, both of these instances took place within three or four minutes.

At noon that day going out to lunch I noticed some soldiers patrolling Collinsville Avenue, as I went back after dinner. I didn't realize the situation was anything like it was. That evening about five o'clock I left the office - between five and five thirty - and I heard on the corner of Collinsville and Missouri that they were pulling negroes off of the street cars. I became somewhat uneasy. I didn't want to be in a car if anything like that took place. I boarded a Fallville car and sat on the back for a few moments, looking through the car before I would venture into the car. Not seeing any negroes in the car I went through the car and out in front with the motorman. There were a number of other passengers out there, and up ahead of us we noticed another mob. They rushed ahead of the car to a point about two blocks ahead of us on Collinsville Avenue. That would take us two blocks from this street that crosses Collinsville - Missouri Avenue. At that point it seemed to me -

Mr. Cooper: (Interposing) Which way from this corner?

Mr. Flowers: This direction (north), continuing on Collinsville.

Mr. Johnson: The one who reads that won't ~~xxxx~~ understand what you mean by "this direction".

3-JWA

Mr. *Towers*: Continuing north on Collinsville Avenue. The crowd rushed along the street and stopped at a point about two blocks ahead of the car, and I judged they had cornered a poor negro, and I saw a number of militia there. At the time I saw them the militia were apparently trying to do their duty - at least from what I seen. There was half a dozen militia men holding the crowd back with their guns across their breasts and stopped the crowd from going any further. When the car got up this mob I didn't see the victim. I don't know whether there was a victim shot. I never heard a shot on that occasion, and don't know whether he escaped into a building there or whether he escaped down the street because of the fact that the militia held the car back. Anyway they held the car back and they seemed to respect the militiamen and stopped as they got there. They didn't seem to have to use very much force.

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We passed through that crowd and continued on. I was glad to realize I was getting out of East St. Louis, because it seemed to be dangerous to be down here. That night from my home.

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) What you saw there demonstrated ^{to you} that the militia could have stopped the mob if they had wanted to at the other places?

Mr. *Towers*: It demonstrated to me that the mob at that time, up to that time in the evening could have been controlled, easily, I believe. The mob didn't seem to be - I had never seen a mob in all my life before in action, this mob was different to what I had pictured

4 a mob. I had pictured a mob as wild eyed, excited, blood in their eyes - serious looks. This mob didn't show that to me. They seemed to be more or less good natured, and I took it that the mob spirit that had those people was more to frighten the negro than really to get his life, from the looks of the mob and their faces as they rushed up the street. It seemed to me that they were enjoying the excitement more than having a murderous look on their faces. That night ---

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ nevertheless they took human life as they went along?

Mr. Towers: They did, yes, sir: I didn't realize at that time - I could't realize how horrible the affair had been in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Before you passed that, even to stop the mob ^{and to} ~~to~~ move it back or hold it in check, the militia that were there, in doing that, only had to raise their rifles with the butt in one hand and the barrel in the other?

Mr. Towers: Exactly?

Mr. Baker: With the rifle against the soldier's breast, parallel with his arms?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; exactly.

Mr. Baker: He just held his gun in that position?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: He didn't even have to present his bayonets to them or ^{was} ~~make~~ any attempt with the bayonets?

Mr. Towers: No, none whatever. I took it from that fight there, from seeing that, that the mob was ~~not~~

5 easy to control, and that the soldiers realized that they had the mob under control and didn't have to use any greater force than just to meet their onrush with guns across their breasts, ^{held} ~~held~~ as I have explained; and I felt that with the presence of the militia, that by dark the situation would be controlled. I live about a mile and a half on top of the bluff, which would be about eight miles from East St. Louis. This bottom is seven miles across. I got home and had supper I judge it was about six thirty or a quarter to seven when I came out and noticed the reflection of fire on the sky. That was before the sun had set, and the first thought that struck me was of course that the mob had went to burning, and I was rather surprised to think that it hadn't been controlled before it had reached that point. I never realized the horror of it until later on that night. I had occasion to go to town -

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) To Bellville?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir. I went down to catch a car and the regular cars had stopped. An employee from the yards was taking up what we call a "dinky" car, a small one that is used in Bellville, and he stopped and let me ride up town on that car. That was the last car that went uptown. That was then I guess seven twenty. No cars were coming to Bellville after that time, passing the point where I got on the car.

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Coming home that night I left the town about ten thirty

and it is about five miles to my home. I determined I would have to walk home or stay up town all night. I walked about twenty five minutes -

Mr. Baker: (Interposing) This is now from Bellville?

Mr. Towers: Yes, coming back. I met a car coming in. I boarded that car and rode back to town and came out on that car, went out on the front and spoke to the motorman and asked him about the excitement. He told me that this car wasn't run out to carry passengers; it was run out at the request and demand of the employees, the wives of the street car men - that ^{is} employees of the company. They had stormed the barns out in the east part of the town and demanded that they be taken out of town, and the officials allowed - instructed ^{James} the motorman and conductor to take the car to Bellville and take those refugees with their wives and families to Bellville. They got out all along the route.

Mr. Johnson: Were they whites or blacks?

Mr. Towers: White people. And the report was then that an armed mob of negroes was coming from Brooklyn, a little town up above here exclusively of negroes - or nearly exclusively of negroes. Those were white people, the refugees that the car carried to Bellville. And he told me that there were many white people walking out of town going east, and many other people were excited, and nearly the whole town was awake. Everybody was out, in fear - that a terrible

7 condition existed. It commenced to dawn upon me then how horrible was the situation in East St. Louis. He also told me that the negroes were scattering out to the east end of the town, scattering in every direction, and the scattering negroes and running whites, both in fear I presume, each thought the other after the other; and that thousands ~~the~~ were crossing the Free Bridge going into East St. Louis.

The next day I read in the papers of course the great number of murders committed that night. That is all that I know of the mob. I wanted to get to that point, to see if I couldn't conclude my testimony.

Mr. Baker: Before you get off of that, I would just like to ask you this question? What time in the morning do the cars start from the St. Louis side and cross over to East St. Louis, and then scatter out to the various towns - cross the ^{East} ~~East~~ bridge?

Mr. Howard: Well, I don't know just the schedule. I think there is a car leaves St. Louis coming this way between half past five and six, the first car. There is a car runs from Bellville, I think it is the owl car, that -

Mr. Baker: (Interposing) I don't care for that. I don't want to get that mixed up. I want to know the schedule time, if you can give it to us, when the cars first leave from St. Louis on the ^{East} ~~East~~ Bridge, coming across the river, entering East St. Louis?

Mr. Powers: I think it is six o'clock, I am

not positive.

Mr. Baker: No earlier than that?

Mr. Towers: I don't know.

Mr. Baker: Well then, let me put this if I can't get any more on that. When do the cars leave East St. Louis going to Granite City and Alton?

Mr. Towers: I think the cars leave the sheds the early morning cars, about five o'clock, five a.m., to scatter to the different scheduled points and pick up their schedules.

Mr. Baker: That is about the earliest?

Mr. Towers: I think so.

Mr. Baker: What time now, does the first paper get out from St. Louis to ~~East~~ St. Louis in the morning?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know just whether the regular cars carry the papers or whether the owl cars, do. There is an owl car that continues all night between Bellville and St. Louis. It makes the trip every hour.

Mr. Baker: I know, but if that is a fact, then there would be cars leaving from the gads Bridge early in the morning?

Mr. Towers: You prevented me from going into the owl car matter. I started to tell you there was an owl car running back and forth between St. Louis and Bellville on that line, and I presume to the other point, and I think their schedule is an hour from Bellville to St. Louis, and an hour from St. Louis back to Bellville.

9 So that would be a two hour space between the owl. The owl on its return - its last time of leaving Bellville, I think, is about four thirty, and it then becomes what they call the employees car. It picks up workmen to take to the sheds, to take out the regular cars in the morning, to begin their schedules. That is the reason I say I think it is about five a.m. that they take the cars out of the sheds.

Mr. Baker: Well, is there a car then leaving St. Louis for East St. Louis practically every hour of the day and night?

Mr. Towers: Between midnight - between one and five, I think there is a space of two hours.

Mr. Baker: That would be between what hours?

Mr. Towers: Between one and five; so that last car leaves Bellville at 12.40. That turns in at the shed. I think it is 12.40.

Mr. Baker: Is there anyone who could tell the Committee whether or not the St. Louis papers had the publication of this riot in them on the morning of July 3rd, that got over here in East St. Louis about five o'clock of the 3rd?

Mr. Towers: I think most any street car man could tell you that - any motorman or conductor.

Mr. Baker: But you don't know?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't know what time the papers get over here in the morning. I think they get over here rather early though?

10

I was going to continue my statement that I left off on this meeting of the East St. Louis trades and labor assembly. I wanted to get that clear and specific and well understood. The point I left off at was, I believe, where I told you that there was a committee appointed practically of every delegate comprising the Central Body, to appear at the City Hall and protest to the council meeting against the influx - the great influx of negroes. I told you the statement I heard that night was that they feared a small pox epidemic in town.

Mr. Baker: That is the same meeting you testified about this morning?

Mr. Powers: Yes, I told you the East St. Louis ~~meeting~~ ^{Journal} - then we got into that - advertised, as I learned later, that meeting as being a race meeting. The night of the 28th, on which this meeting was held, a great number of people appeared - so I am told and read - I wasn't down there myself -

Mr. Cooper: (Interposing) Wait a minute now. You said, as I understand, the meeting to which these delegates ~~xxxxxxx~~ had been requested to come and notified to come or attend, was on the - was that on the 28th?

Mr. Powers: To the best of my knowledge it was to be the night of the council meeting, which was the 28th, to be at the council chamber.

Mr. Baker: That meeting of May 28th had been

11 arranged for at the meeting about a week before?

Mr. Towers: About a week before.

Mr. Baker: Which you have told us about this morning?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

795 Mr. Baker: Just right there - it ~~wouldn't be~~ ^{would be} interrupting you at all I know ^{did} - ~~you~~ get a copy of that notice?

Mr. Towers: I did not.

Mr. Baker: Did you ever see a copy of the notice?

Mr. Towers: I have not seen it to read it over. I don't know what the notice is.

Mr. Baker: Were you a participant - did you help get the notice up?

Mr. Towers: No, the secretary, I think, did that. He may have had some of the committee. I don't know.

Mr. Baker: Was it discussed what the notice should contain?

Mr. Towers: The motion provided for the secretary ^{as stated this morning} / to either notify the local unions or the delegates - I ~~xxx~~ don't just remember which - to be present at the council meeting to protest - the next council meeting which of course was a week hence. The point that I want to make is that the Journal then, as testified ~~testified~~ by Brother Kerr, advertised this meeting as a mass meeting, and according to the press there were a great number of people at that meeting.

Mr. Baker: Before you pass from that, do you did you or any other members that were at the meeting

12 preparatory to the May meeting - I will call it the meeting of preparation for the May meeting - that will designate it - did any of you folks ever try to make an inquiry of the secretary or among your members to see who was the man in that crowd ^{that} ~~who~~ gave this notice out to the papers?

Mr. Powers: No, I don't think that was ever discussed. It is not very hard to find out what organized labor is doing. ^{They} ~~We~~ are never very secret about anything they are doing. They do their work openly and without any secrecy.

Mr. Baker: Now I didn't intend to get that view of it, but was it intended that this meeting should be known by the public for the 28th?

Mr. Powers: I don't think it was meant for the public to be taken into the meeting.

Mr. Baker: Then if it wasn't meant to take the public in, someone must have divulged the facts against the desire of your men? You were trying to get results, and their divulgence of it didn't assist you in getting results?

Mr. Powers: I don't know how the people on the outside knew that this meeting was to be arranged, unless they overheard delegates talking about the proposed meeting. It wouldn't be hard to get information.

Mr. Baker: Go right on with your story now.

Mr. Powers: Now following that meeting, all of the papers came out the next day telling of the meeting of the laboring people, the labor union representa-
~~tion~~

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tives at the council protesting, and quoted the speech of one Alexander Flannigan, and left the inference to those who would read it, that Mr. Flannigan was a part of the labor movement, without saying he was or without saying he was not. But the way the articles were written one would take the impression from the articles that Mr. Flannigan was a part of the labor meeting ^{that} ~~and~~ was called that night to protest to the council against the influx of negroes.

Mr. Baker: Well, now, were you at that meeting?

Mr. Towers: I was not.

Mr. Baker: Well, have you or your associates made an effort to find out just what Mr. Flannigan said at that meeting of May 28th?

Mr. Towers: I don't know what the local board has done. I have never made an effort personally to find out Mr. Flannigan's statement. All I know of Mr. Flannigan is what I have seen in the press, and what has been testified here. The newspapers quoted Mr. Flannigan, to the best of my memory, as closing the meeting with a fiery speech in which he made the statement that there is no law against mob violence, under conditions that existed in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Well, you understood that that was what Mr. Flannigan said, wasn't it?

Mr. Towers: No, I didn't understand it that way. All I had was the newspaper reports. Since this testimony is on I have heard that Mr. Flannigan's statement was somewhat different from that.

14 Mr. Baker: Well, have you a doubt in your mind as to whether Mr. Flannigan made that speech or not?

Mr. Towers: I have - I can't pass judgment on it, Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker: Well, why not?

Mr. Towers: Because if I were to attempt to pass judgment, I wouldn't know how to start. All I have is the newspaper report.

Mr. Baker: I know, but you had your friends there - at least about ninety of the men who had been summoned to be present there?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

Mr. Baker: Who had been notified to be present? That is right, isn't it?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Now have you made an inquiry of any of those as to just what Mr. Flannigan did say?

Mr. Towers: No, I never have.

Mr. Baker: Don't you think it is important that you ought to have known what Mr. Flannigan said?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't; not in so far as it might affect the laboring people.

Mr. Baker: Why not? Now Mr. Flannigan was there.

Mr. Towers: Because Mr. Flannigan is not a part of the laboring people of East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: I know, but Mr. Flannigan got into the meeting.

Mr. Towers: Was, he got into the meeting.

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Mr. Baker: And having been in the meeting, so that there would be no misunderstanding, I am wondering what is the explanation ~~is~~ that you people didn't get all the evidence as to what Mr. Flannigan actually did, so that you could take action upon Mr. Flannigan's improper speech there that night, if it was improper.

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know what the local boys have been doing on that. I only get to meet with them once every two weeks. The reason I went in that is to try to show that what was done by the Central Body, by the labor movement, they did legitimately and in the best interests of the community. I will say this, that I believe the general citizenship of East St. Louis looked to two forces to try to do something in a public way to have the officials of East St. Louis make some statement or at least make some effort to ~~discuss~~ *discuss* the great influx of negroes into East St. Louis. I think the two forces that they would have in mind would be the East St. Louis trades and labor assembly, the labor board, and those representing the commercial interests. These are naturally the two forces in which the people of the community would feel that something should emanate from those ~~two~~ forces to make an effort to change any conditions, or try to bring about a change to eliminate any evil that is a community evil.

Mr. Baker: Why didn't you attend that meeting on May 28th?

Mr. Towers: I didn't have time. My work is

16 in the locality took my time. I would have liked to attend the meeting, and now wish I had been at the meeting.

Mr. Baker: Could you give us the names of the men, of ~~those~~ who actually did attend that meeting, who would be able to give us just exactly what Mr. Flannigan did say?

Mr. Towers: I believe the secretary of the Central Body can give you the names of every one that was notified, and possibly nearly all those that attended.

Mr. Baker: Well, do you think you could find out now from your friends, and get the names of them, who would testify as to what Mr. Flannigan did say at that meeting?

797 Mr. Towers: I believe that any of the labor fellows who have testified would be in a position to tell you better than I.

Mr. Baker: Well, will you make it your business now to get out and see these men?

Mr. Towers: I will ask the labor fellows, those who were there.

Mr. Baker: See if they can't present four or five men who were there and who will know just exactly what Mr. Flannigan did say, as near as one can remember it.

Mr. Towers: I will willingly consult those men and let you know.

Mr. Baker: Now you think it ought to be done,

17 don't you?

Mr. Towers: Well, in a way, yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Flannigan wasn't representing you people?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Baker: We got into the meeting and did, as I understand you to say, just ^{to the} contrary of what you people were trying to get?

Mr. Towers: That is the general impression, according to the press. I don't know what Mr. Flannigan said personally.

Mr. Baker: Go ahead, now.

Mr. Towers: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that that will about conclude what I had to say, other than to - if the Committee will permit me - to read some testimony to bear out the statements that I have made that there was influences, skillfull influences, skillful engineering, at work to bring about a great influx of negroes into East St. Louis. Some testimony of certain individuals in the testimony before the Staff Council of Defense, I believe, will verify that. I have even heard that it was hard to get those people to come up here; and that many of them were afraid after the riots, and in order to get that few that were up here their ~~ixixixixix~~ testimony in there, if the Committee will permit me -

Mr. Johnson: (Interposing) To have a transcript of that record, if you will just direct us now, to the names of the witnesses.

18 Mr. Towers: If I can get a copy just for a moment I believe I can give the names.

Mr. Baker: While they are getting this index and copy, are there any other people that know about these conditions that didn't testify? That were afraid to testify?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't think they are in town at this time.

Mr. Baker: Well, where are they?

Mr. Towers: I think they left after the second riot. I will say this, that there were many negroes track workers who belonged to this ~~xxxxxxx~~ organization to which I have referred. I think most of those who testified were members of that organization, that had secured a job in East St. Louis and had joined the track worker's union, but after the second riot, I think most of those negroes were driven out.

Mr. Baker: Do you know of anybody that knows anything about the conditions that you have been telling about, that led up to the riot of May 28th, and July 2nd, that haven't given their testimony because they are under fear of what might happen to their lives or their property if they should testify?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't know any individually, Mr. Baker, but I feel that there are a great many people in East St. Louis that could give information.

Mr. Baker: That are afraid to testify?

Mr. Towers: That hesitate. I feel that way. I don't know any of them.

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Mr. Raker: Now, do you think that yourself and your associates could ^{get} ~~give~~ the names of these people and give them to the Committee?

Mr. Towers: I don't know that I could. Possibly some of the local boys could. I don't know that I could. I am not so well acquainted in East St. Louis outside of the labor boys. I have been coming down here for the last five years.

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Mr. Raker: Now is there anybody that you know of who hasn't testified in regard to this condition, that has been existing here and caused by the great concerns, that haven't testified, or know anything that would be beneficial to the Committee, who could give us any evidence upon those conditions?

Mr. Towers: I don't know as the Mayor has testified, has he?

Mr. Raker: Now, but I mean outside, any men that are keeping in cover or are afraid to testify for fear it will injure their business or injure themselves personally or their families or property?

Mr. Towers: No, I don't know of any that I could think of, Mr. Raker.

The names that I would like to mention, whose sworn statements show that there was extensive advertising and inducements by agents to come to East St. Louis, according to this testimony, are Joe Reed, and the names that follow, up to Sam Pettis. Joe Reed, William King, Warren King, George Lewis, Drew Avery and Sam Pettis.

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Mr. Raker: Those are colored?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; those are all colored people. There is a few others, I believe, that their testimony would tend in that direction, but those people were direct immigrants from the south. They had come here recently. That is the reason I name those particular people. The entire testimony, I believe, will tend to show that there was undue efforts made to induce the negroes to come to East St. Louis in greater numbers than were necessary to fill any jobs that might be in East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker: So that there will be no misunderstanding now on that statement of the witness, you asked the Committee if you could read that testimony to them. You have presented to the Committee two volumes of the testimony taken by the State Council of Defense?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: And the Committee has in its possession now that entire testimony and the statements that you refer to?

Mr. Towers: I wanted to say to the Committee, so they will have it--

Mr. Raker (interposing:) And can read it. The Committee can read it without having it read to them now.

Mr. Towers: I wanted to say to the Committee that officially-- I believe I have told one or two members of the Committee and the Clerk-- that I am obligated for the return of this transcript to the files in Chicago, and am going to

ask the Committee to return it to me when you are through with it. It was my request at the start to ask that this entire testimony be made part of this Committee's testimony-- that the entire testimony be made part of the record, as it was all taken under oath, and would tend to show a great deal as to the causes that led up.

Mr. Johnson: But this Committee had no opportunity to cross-examine any of these witnesses. At some future executive meeting the Committee will determine what use it will make of this transcript, and I wish to say to you right now that the probabilities are that the Committee will not have the opportunity of going over this testimony which you have furnished in these two volumes until most probably in December.

Mr. Towers: I would then have to wait until December for it to be returned?

Mr. Johnson: We would like to, if you are satisfied to wait.

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Mr. Towers: That is entirely satisfactory, just so I am able to return it to the parties who are holding me responsible for them.

Mr. Johnson: As soon as this hearing is over, it is going to take the stenographer probably two weeks to transcribe his notes before the notes will be available for the different members of the Committee. That will certainly take up to the 1st of December, at which time Congress will meet, and each member of this Committee will then have other

duties to perform in addition to this, and no member of the Committee has been home since Congress adjourned, and each of us will desire to go home for a short visit at least before Congress convenes.

Now getting back to the beginning of your testimony, you stated with some degree of positiveness that the troubles here have grown out of the employment by the several industries located in East St. Louis and adjacent to East St. Louis, of negroes in large numbers?

Mr. Towers: I don't remember of making that statement, Mr. Chairman. I think my statement was that the cause of the riots was the great influx of negroes from the South, and that I charged the big employing interests of East St. Louis of being responsible for that influx. I think that is the way I put that. I don't think I put it just that way. I may be mistaken.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if you did state it the way I thought you did, or if I was mistaken in it, the last statement of yours is the one which must be accepted as your true intent?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: During your testimony of nearly half a day yesterday and approximately half a day today, I have failed to gather that you have certainly located upon anybody connected or associated with any one of these large industries the bringing of negroes to East St. Louis. Now if you can refer to some specific instance of where some-

body whose identity is certainly known, as to when and where that was done, I would be glad to have that stated; if it has been stated, to restate it for the purpose of emphasis.

Mr. Towers: In answer, at the start of my testimony, to a question by Mr. Foss, if I had anything direct, I believe I pointed out two or three instances. One was the telephone conversation by the superintendent of the street car company wherein he was ~~six~~ complaining of a scarcity of labor, and that he could get an abundance of negro labor, and the tone in which he said it.

Mr. Johnson: To refresh the memory not only of myself but of other members of the Committee, will you say when that conversation was and with whom the street car superintendent was talking when he stated that?

Mr. Towers: He was talking with myself over the telephone.

Mr. Johnson: What was his name?

Mr. Towers: W. C. Meyers.

Mr. Johnson: And when was that conversation?

Mr. Towers: Now I am not positive whether the conversation was in the fall of 1916, the late fall of 1916 or the early spring of 1917. I don't know definitely. I think it was in the fall of 1916.

Mr. Johnson: Now what was the occasion of his saying ^{that} ~~in~~ he could get ~~many~~ of negro help?

Mr. Towers: I think my testimony shows that he complained to me that the activity of the representative of the track workers was preventing him from getting labor, as

he put it.

Mr. Johnson: White labor?

Mr. Towers: Labor. He didn't say white or black; he didn't have any black labor employed up to that time.

Mr. Johnson: Therefore, he necessarily referred to white labor?

Mr. Towers: Yes; that he was prevented from getting labor, and that labor was scarce and that he had to have labor and that he could get an abundance of negroes.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if he said that labor was scarce and almost in the same breath said that he could get plenty of negro labor, he therefore meant that white labor was scarce but that he could get plenty of negro labor? Was that about the substance of it?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir, that is it; yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And his talk to you upon that occasion you say was in the nature of a complaint?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And what provoked his complaint? What situation provoked his complaint?

Mr. Towers: He complained that many refused to go to work there because they had ^{to} become members of the track workers' union.

Mr. Johnson: That they wouldn't be permitted to work on the street railway work unless they belonged to the track workers' union?

Mr. Towers: Well, he didn't use the words "not be

permitted", but the activities of the representatives and the men on the job were such that the men joined when they went to work. Some refused to go to work when they were told they were expected to join the organization, and he was complaining because of the loss of the day or two days' labor of those men. He wanted me to make some arrangements whereby a man could work three or four days or a week without joining the organization. I told him I couldn't change the conditions of the agreement; that I would help him arrange the conference with the committee if he wished it.

Mr. Johnson: In other words, he was willing, both willing and anxious, to employ the white labor which was presenting itself, but was not entirely satisfied to be deprived of their labor during the few days which it would take for them to become members of the union labor organization? Is that correct?

Mr. Towers: Not exactly. It appeared that there were a great many workers who would have worked and went to work with that understanding, that they would work one or two or three days, and then leave the community or leave the job, and because they only wanted to work a short time they didn't want to join the organization; and rather than join the organization for two or three days' work they wouldn't start at all, and the complaint was that he was deprived of that labor.

Mr. Johnson: But yet he sought an interview with you, as the representative of organized labor, for the purpose of having those men of whom you last spoke permitted

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to go to work for the few days?

Mr. Towers: I inferred that that is what he meant by his conversation.

Mr. Johnson: And you in your capacity as a representative of organized labor, didn't make the arrangement with him which he was desirous of making?

Mr. Towers: I told him I would investigate, and I did take it up with the representative, and his story was somewhat different than that of Mr. Meyers. The two of us then went to the office to see Mr. Meyers, and I talked to Mr. Meyers-- I don't know whether he carried out that suggestion-- but the complaint ceased after that.

Mr. Johnson: The complaint upon whose part?

Mr. Towers: From Mr. Meyers. I suggested that he pass the word ^{to} with his foremen to cooperate with the representative of the track workers, and I felt sure that ~~xxx~~ there would be no trouble and no occasion for complaint either by the track workers or by the company.

Mr. Johnson: Well, who was it that was-- whose complaint amounted to so much that Mr. Meyers felt compelled to take the matter up with you?

Mr. Towers: The individual complaint?

Mr. Johnson: What individual complaint or what collective complaint, either?

Mr. Towers: I don't know. Possibly the complaint of some of his foremen, or possibly the complaint of some individual.

Mr. Johnson: And if those complaints came from his

foremen and other individual employes, they came from them because they were unionized; is that correct?

Mr. Towers: No, I wouldn't know how he would get the complaint.

Mr. Johnson: I wasn't asking you how he got it, but from whom he got it, and in what capacity it came to him. The non-union men, I take it for granted, did not complain that other non-union men were working upon the job, did they?

Mr. Towers: The non-union men did not complain that other non-union men were working on the job?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Towers: I never heard any such complaint.

Mr. Johnson: I say, I would take it for granted. Therefore, if there was a complaint going to Mr. Meyers that non-union men were working upon the job, it would come from union men, would it not?

Mr. Towers: I don't think there was a complaint of that kind went to Mr. Meyers. Mr. Meyers complained that he didn't get the labor of those men who wanted to work without joining the organization for just one or two or three days.

Mr. Johnson: Well, why would they join the organization in order to work one or two or three days, if nobody was objecting to their doing so when he sought to employ them?

Mr. Towers: Why would they have to join?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Towers: There was nothing compulsory about it. The men that were on the job took the position on the job that they should ~~be~~ join immediately when they went to work, as they had done. There was none of the men ever laid down their tools for refusal. Some had threatened to.

Mr. Johnson: But the men on the job were union men, were they not?

Mr. Towers: They were union men; yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And the union men who sought employment upon the same job, for some reason or other, didn't go to work until they became union men?

Mr. Towers: You meant to say the non-union men?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Towers: You said "union".

Mr. Johnson: well, I inadvertently said that. I
802 meant non-union.

Mr. Towers: The union men on the job naturally opposed those non-union men starting on the job without paying part of their initiation fee. They made that established rule, and succeeded in carrying it out without any friction.

Mr. Johnson: Some of the non-union men sought employment, and Mr. Meyers was desirous of employing them. Then the obstacle which stood in the way of their being employed came from the union men who were on the job?

Mr. Towers: Well, the way you put it, I guess yes would be the answer. The men demanding of the non-union

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men that they become part of the organization. They had no way of enforcing it other than to tell them that they wouldn't work with them.

Mr. Johnson: And that meant quite a serious thing to Mr. Meyers, the employer of the labor?

Mr. Towers: Not necessarily that I could see.

Mr. Johnson: Now why couldn't you see that it was not necessarily an important matter to him?

Mr. Towers: Because I believe that he could have gotten many steady men who would have worked steady.

Mr. Johnson: Non-union?

Mr. Towers: Men who would have joined the organization and held their jobs-- become permanent men on the job, and I tried to point out that that is the class of labor that should be desirable for the company as well as the track-workers.

Mr. Johnson: But if I have understood correctly, he couldn't employ the very character of labor about which you speak until-- without the loss of several days while they were being properly admitted to the union?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir, he could. He could employ them and there would be no complaint, providing the new employe would show a disposition that he was willing to join the organization.

Mr. Johnson: And to whom would he have to show that disposition?

Mr. Towers: To the representative of the organization.

Mr. Johnson: So at last, again, on final analysis, the complainant was neither the non-union man who was seeking work, nor Mr. Meyers, who was desirous of giving him the work?

Mr. Towers: I never heard of any complaint coming from the men. Mr. Meyers was the one that made the complaint.

Mr. Johnson: He was not objecting to the non-union men working?

Mr. Towers: No, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And the non-union men were not objecting to working?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Johnson: So that if there was any objection, it came from the union men?

Mr. Towers: It came from the track workers.

Mr. Johnson: You have also spoken of the representatives of some of the interests here employing large bodies of men, going out to the gates of mornings when the men came to work, and passing white union men unnoticed and signaling to a big strapping, able-bodied colored man, to come on in and go to work?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; I have testified to that.

Mr. Johnson: If I failed to catch the full meaning and intent of that, I would be glad to have you tell me again just why it was that certain white men were passed or in that way rejected by the employer, and these able-bodied colored men to whom you have referred being taken in their

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stead?

Mr. Towers: I don't know just why. My opinion is that the companies did that to frighten the white labor that might be in East St. Louis-- to show them that it was hard for them to get a job, even at the small wage, and to encourage the negro into the community.

Mr. Johnson: If I correctly understand you, it was the theory of these large industries, and it was the plan adopted by them, to in that way say to the white employe that if his labor was not satisfactory or if his contemplated strike should be carried out and put into execution, that there was another source from which he could get labor, and that was from the black man?

Mr. Towers: I don't think the employer had very much thought of a strike. It was just to-- I think it was a silent way which he had to make the white, common, unorganized labor, know that there was no chance on earth for him to better his condition; to discourage even the thought of organization.

Mr. Johnson: Well now, then, you treat organization and betterment of conditions as synonymous?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. The only force, I believe, in the country that will better the condition of the workers.

Mr. Johnson: Well, having gotten that, then, I can better understand just what you mean in some parts of your testimony which I didn't fully understand before. I believe you have expressed the opinion, not once but several times, that the negro was held up in front of the white

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laborer as a sort of a menace, and as you expressed it in your own terms, I believe, that the white laborers and the black laborers were pitted against each other by the employer of labor.

Mr. Towers: I have stated that. I have testified to that, I think, Mr. Johnson, cruelly so, to the extent that there was another waiting.

Mr. Johnson: Another what?

Mr. Towers: To the extent that there was still another waiting, another waiting for the job; that there would be three men for one job. That is the way I measure the labor condition as it existed in East St. Louis in 1917.

Mr. Johnson: So then, your analysis of the situation is that the employer of labor has cruelly pitted the black man against the white, and the whites against the blacks, in this locality?

Mr. Towers: Mercilessly so, and to the detriment of both.

Mr. Johnson: Therefore the white laborer having the black laborer pitted against him, has come to regard the negro labor as an enemy to his betterment?

Mr. Towers: I don't think the intelligent white or negroes necessarily regarded each other as enemies.

Mr. Johnson. I said as an enemy to his betterment.

Mr. Towers: Oh, to his betterment. I think they realize, both the poor negro and the poor white, that the position they were in was to the advantage of the employer

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only, and I believe they ^{both} deplored that condition.

Mr. Johnson: But both the whites and the blacks, according to your opinion, accepted the situation that each was pitted against the other by the employer of labor?

Mr. Towers: They had to accept it. It was forced on them. The most dense would fully realize it.

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Mr. Johnson: Just as a man might take two game-cocks, without reason, and put them to fighting for his own amusement or for his profit?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't say that. I don't know that that would be the right kind of a comparison, because--

Mr. Johnson (Interposing:): Well, give me a comparison, then, that will be better.

Mr. Towers: That had only been used at the time of the riots. Prior to that time I don't think the feeling between white labor and negro labor was such as would exist between the two fighting cocks.

Mr. Johnson: Prior now to what riot, May or July?

Mr. Towers: Both riots.

Mr. Johnson: Now, prior to the May riot, you say a representative of organized labor had taken up the question in common with other members of organized labor, with the view of having the city authorities do something which would prevent the influx of negroes into this community?

Mr. Towers: That was the object.

Mr. Johnson: How long was that idea going on in your mind, or in the minds of other leaders of organized labor in this section before the May riot?

Mr. Towers: That would be hard to state just how long.

Mr. Johnson: I know it would, because it would come on gradually, but from the time that it was-- how long then-- I will change my question to this: How long was it before the May riot that you and others representing organized labor found it in your minds, certainly there, that the influx of negroes was a menace to the white working men in this territory?

Mr. Towers: I believe that I have discussed it with laboring men throughout this county as early as the fall of-- the early fall of 1916, and had discussed it five or six or ten years ago with different acquaintances of mine in my own community, that I believed the time was coming when the employers of East St. Louis were going to turn over East St. Louis to the negro.

Mr. Johnson: So, as far back as ten years ago, in your capacity as an officer of organized labor, you foresaw the danger to the white laborer of the coming of the negro laborer into this territory?

Mr. Towers: Not in an official capacity, as a representative of labor, because I worked in the shops at that time.

Mr. Johnson: Ten years ago. When did you become an officer of organized labor?

Mr. Towers: About five years ago.

Mr. Johnson: And as far back as five years ago, acting in your capacity as an officer of organized labor,

you took up the situation in your own mind?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; I thought over it in my own mind.

Mr. Johnson: And you have carried it in your own mind, the coming of the negro here, as a menace to organized white labor?

Mr. Towers: No, I never considered it as a menace to organized white labor, because I felt that they wouldn't hurt organized white labor in this community, because the unorganized-- the common labor in this community was unorganized.

Mr. Johnson: Well, then, do I understand you to say that you have gone along through these years, believing that unorganized labor in this territory was not prejudicial to unorganized labor here in this territory?

Mr. Towers: In this particular territory, East St. Louis, I felt, and thought it over, and have asked myself the question, how was it best to advance common labor in East St. Louis? I had felt years ago that the only way in which it could be done was to await the time in which both white and colored would desire, sincerely desire, organization.

Mr. Johnson: That time has not come?

Mr. Towers: Well, I think it has been here for over two years.

Mr. Johnson: But yet it has not organized?

Mr. Towers: It has not materialized.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if the time has come for it--

804 Mr. Towers (Interposing:) Two years ago or more, I think, unorganized labor in East St. Louis sincerely desired organization to better their conditions.

Mr. Johnson: Why have they not organized?

Mr. Towers: Because of the helplessness of the situation in East St. Louis.

Mr. Johnson: Of what does that helplessness consist? What brings about that helplessness?

Mr. Towers: Because of there being three men for one job. That continued all through the depressed period.

Mr. Johnson: And that three men for one job is brought about only by the influx of negroes from the South?

Mr. Towers: That three men for one job was maintained through the influx of the negro from the South. During the depressed period it existed here without any special encouragement to the negro from the South.

Mr. Johnson: Consequently, the conclusion drawn from your own statement is that the detriment and the injury to common labor in this territory is due and attributable to the coming of the negro from the South in such large numbers?

Mr. Towers: That would hold good since he has come in in such great numbers ^{with} in the last year, I guess, you would term it.

Mr. Johnson: Then "Yes" would be an answer to my question?

Mr. Towers: Repeat your question.

Mr. Johnson: I don't believe I could. I will ask the stenographer to read it to you.

(The question was read as follows):

"Consequently the conclusion drawn from your own statement is that the detriment and injury to common labor in this territory is due and attributable to the coming of the negro from the South in such large numbers?"

Mr. Towers: It is a rather long question. I would say yes, the detriment to both white and black common labor, towards advancement.

Mr. Johnson: And that is what you term the "pitting" of the one against the other?

Mr. Towers: That is what I term has been the continuous pitting of labor against labor since as far back, I would judge, as the panicky condition beginning in the fall of 1907.

Mr. Johnson: And when the white laborer, the white common laborer, met the black common laborer, he felt that he was meeting one whose presence here was a detriment to his own welfare?

Mr. Towers: I presume that was his thought. That would be the natural thought.

Mr. Johnson: And when the black laborer, the common white laborer, would meet the common laborer, he too would reach the conclusion that the white laborer was the one who had reached the prejudicial conclusion that he, the black laborer, was standing in the way of the white laborer?

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Mr. Towers: I don't know that that would be his feeling. I believe the intelligent blacks would realize the condition in about the same light-- with the same thought as the white common laborer.

Mr. Johnson: Therefore each would meet the other with his mind made up to the fact or the conclusion that each was a detriment to the other?

Mr. Towers: I believe that that would be a natural conclusion.

Mr. Johnson: would that promote-- would that feeling promote friendly feeling between the races, or a hostile one?

Mr. Towers: To the intelligent, I believe it would bring them together on a common ground.

Mr. Johnson: And the common ground would be ^{for} each to get the employment if he could?

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Mr. Towers: And the common ground would be for the two to get together and try to work out some method whereby they would not be compelled to compete against each other; and their thought logically, naturally, would be to build an organization.

Mr. Johnson: And when they had organized and there was not employment enough for all, what would be the solution of the situation?

Mr. Towers: Well, that question I don't believe I could answer. I might say that that question would apply generally during the panicky condition that followed 1907. That existed all over the nation. Still, in most

instances, those who were organized, with plenty of competition for jobs, were able to maintain their standards. Those who worked, actually worked in the industries and were organized, in many cases and places arrangements were made for division of the work; that each would do his own portion of the suffering during the depressed periods. That condition existed all over this nation, I believe, during 1907, 1908 and 1909, to nearly the extent that it has existed in East St. Louis with the competition for jobs that has existed here all during that time.

Mr. Johnson: Are all of the negroes in this community unintelligent?

Mr. Towers: I believe that there is an element of negroes in East St. Louis that have a high standard ^{of} intelligence, and that will go just as far as the whites to better their condition; will be just as loyal to themselves and to their fellow workers as whites, if properly encouraged.

Mr. Johnson: Consequently, some of the negroes here are intelligent?

Mr. Towers: I believe the type of negro that has been here from five, six and more years, the bulk of them, are intelligent citizens.

Mr. Johnson: Then you express the opinion that a negro can't have intelligence unless he has lived in East St. Louis five or six years?

Mr. Towers: Well, if you take that induction from it, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson: Can I reach any other conclusion from what you have said? If the stenographer will read your answer, I don't believe you can see any other answer to it.

Mr. Towers: All right; if that is the idea that I leave, I would have to explain that I believe the Southern negro cannot compare in intelligence with the Northern negro. I don't think he is to be compared with the Northern negro in so far as intelligence and intelligent effort-- that he would be capable of the same intelligent effort of bettering his condition as one who had lived in the North for some time. That would be my personal opinion. I don't know, but I feel that way.

Mr. Johnson: And your idea, then, is that negroes who are teaching in colleges, such as at Tuskegee, Alabama, and other places, are not capable of filling those positions unless they have spent some portion of their lives in the North?

Mr. Towers: I don't think it is fair, Mr. Chairman, for you to use that type of negro.

Mr. Johnson: Tell, I was speaking of that type that you have classed as ^{an} unintelligent negro, because he lived South.

Mr. Towers: The type that I had in mind and that this investigation bears on, is the type of unorganized common labor that comes up here and competes with the labor of the North.

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Mr. Johnson: This investigation-- this Committee is not sent here to inquire concerning the unintelligent negro. It has been sent here to inquire into this whole situation, including the most intelligent of the white people.

Mr. Towers: Pardon me, Mr. Chairman; I didn't mean to leave that inference. What I meant was that what you and I had been discussing bore on the type of common laborer that came from the South into this community, and I don't think meant to touch on-- at least I hadn't in mind the educated negro or those who taught or attended colleges of the South.

Mr. Johnson: So it is the newly arrived negro from the South against whom your argument and reasoning is directed, and not to the old resident negro here?

Mr. Towers: I don't think-- will you repeat that, Mr. Chairman?

The question was read as follows:

"So it is the newly arrived negro from the South against whom your argument and reasoning is directed, and not to the old resident negro here?"

Mr. Towers: I couldn't answer that direct question, because I believe a portion of those people who come here are intelligent.

Mr. Johnson: You concede, now, that a portion-- and the portion not stated-- of the negroes who recently came here from the South, are intelligent?

Mr. Towers: I concede that, yes. I believe that. I don't know.

Mr. Johnson: Then your answer was simply yes?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Then when you sought to curb the influx of negroes into this community, you didn't seek to have the coming of the intelligent ones stopped?

Mr. Towers: No, Mr. Chairman, I believe that anyone who had in mind the stopping of the influx of negroes into East St. Louis had in mind stopping their coming to the best interests of both the negroes and the whites.

Mr. Johnson: Because, if I correctly understand you, there was not enough work here-- not more than enough work here-- for those who were already here?

Mr. Towers: Exactly. It would bring about-- the least that could be said-- a pitiful condition at a time when it was unnecessary for it to be that way.

Mr. Johnson: Then when more did come than there was work for, that is the influx that you understood to stop?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know whether there really should be a ~~distinction~~ distinguishing line. It was to stop the influx of the negroes which was crowding East St. Louis in such numbers that it was going to become a menace to the community in every way.

Mr. Johnson: So you sought to stop the influx, to the extent that it would stop the coming of both the intelligent and the unintelligent negro?

Mr. Towers: I don't think that there was any distinction made, or-- I don't know just how to answer your question.

Mr. Johnson: Now you have admitted that you undertook to stop this influx of negroes into East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; in the best interests of both the whites and the blacks.

Mr. Johnson: Well, to repeat my question again now, you have admitted, have you not, that you undertook to stop the influx of negroes into East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And in undertaking to stop that influx, you made no discrimination, and you sought to make no discrimination between the incoming of the intelligent and the unintelligent, but just simply to stop the influx, to stop the great influx of negroes into East St. Louis? Therefore you weren't willing for the intelligent negro to come here and undertake to get employment, where you say that if he were intelligent he would take up the subject intelligently, and become unionized, so that both he and the whites might be better?

Mr. Towers: The way you put the question, Mr. Chairman, it is hard to answer. All I can say is that the type of negro that did come, and that flooded East St. Louis, many of them were a detriment to the community, both to the negroes that were already here and to the white people that were already here. They were a type of negroes-- I

believe anyone would testify-- what I would term a "tough" element. This element, you could find many of them.

Mr. Johnson: Now the negroes that came--

Mr. Towers (Interposing:) Many of them. I don't say all of them.

Mr. Johnson: You said the type of negro that came was the "tough" element, and you didn't discriminate, separate the intelligent from the unintelligent?

Mr. Towers: I would qualify that if I did, by saying among those that came was a large type of the tougher element, that kept this community in turmoil.

Mr. Johnson: Now then, a part of that great influx which you say did come here was of a tough element, of the lawless element, and created turmoil in this community?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; I believe that.

Mr. Johnson: Did that tend to increase or to lessen the prejudice that might have existed towards the negro here?

Mr. Towers: I believe that that is the main factor in building the feeling in East St. Louis against the negro and really developing the race feeling in this community.

Mr. Johnson: Now you have said, and you have just said, that the incoming of the criminal negro to this community is the main thing which intensified the feeling between the races?

Mr. Towers: I feel that way. That is my opinion.

Mr. Johnson: And only a few moments ago you said that the employment-- that the pitting of the white man

against the black by the employers of labor did that very thing. Now which of these two would you select as being the principal cause?

Mr. Towers: I don't think, Mr. Chairman, that I said that that built the race feeling. I think that your questions tended to show in that direction, but I believe I said that the intelligent white and the intelligent negro laborer-- the condition that he found himself in-- would bring them to a common ground and a common realization, and not a hatred. They would feel that there was a condition here, whether they made it or however it came about, that it was here, and to the intelligent it would bring them to a common ground instead of hatred.

Mr. Johnson: And that common ground to which you have referred was not reached?

Mr. Towers: I believe that it was reached in so far as it could find expression. I don't think it has ever been expressed in the way of organizing, but I believe that in East St. Louis there is many common laborers, white laborers, and many negro laborers even at this stage of the game, that have no ill-will toward each other.

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Mr. Johnson: Did the riots, or either of the riots *give expression to* a meeting upon that common ground, or to a failure of meeting upon that common ground to which you have referred?

Mr. Towers: I think the riot expressed a failure of meeting fully on that common ground.

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Mr. Johnson: And that common ground being one having the employment of the two races as its basis?

Mr. Towers: Well, I couldn't say.

Mr. Johnson: Well now, what was the common ground to which you referred, if that was not it?

Mr. Towers: I didn't say it was not it. I say I couldn't say.

Mr. Johnson: You don't say it is or is not?

Mr. Towers: You make your questions so long that I don't know I could just answer it direct. Repeat that question again, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson: The stenographer will read the ~~ques-~~ question.

(The question was read as follows):

"Mr. Johnson: And that common ground being one ~~having~~ having the employment of the two races as its basis?"

Mr. Towers: Would the Chairman put that question just a little different, trying to bring out the same meaning?

(The question was read again.)

The question was, what was the common ground?

Mr. Johnson: Yes, I expressed the opinion in an interrogatory way that the common ground to which you have referred was one based upon employment for unskilled labor, without regard to color?

Mr. Towers: I believe ^{that} the common ground that would find itself naturally would be the workers understanding the conditions in their community, by virtue of understand-

ing the employment and working together, if that is what you mean. I believe that would develop that common ground to which I referred.

Mr. Johnson: Well, I don't think so, but we will pass along.

The first step that you would take, if I understand you correctly, towards a solution of the situation would be for the negro to become unionized?

Mr. Towers: I believe, Mr. Chairman, that is the only hope for the poor negro and the poor unfortunate whites.

Mr. Johnson: So, therefore, to repeat the question, your idea is that the first step necessary would be for the negro to become unionized?

Mr. Towers: The first step necessary for what; to keep the negro out of here?

Mr. Johnson: No; for the success and betterment of the laborer, of the laboring class.

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; I answer that yes. That is the only thing, the only method that will bring substantial relief to the negro laborer and the white laborer in this or any other community.

Mr. Johnson: And have there been efforts ^{made} upon the part of the leaders of organized labor to have negro laborers in East St. Louis join the union?

Mr. Towers: I think just as great an effort to have the negro organize-- that is, the negro laborer-- organized, as there has been to have the white laborer organized. In fact, there has been some success in that

direction.

Mr. Johnson: Would you have them in the one organization, or separate organizations?

Mr. Towers: That would be a question that would naturally determine itself after organization, I believe.

Mr. Johnson: Well, if you ask a negro to organize, do you ask him to come into your organization, or do you ask him to organize separately and apart from you?

Mr. Towers: We ask him to come into the organization established.

Mr. Johnson. You ask him to join the American Federation of Labor?

Mr. Towers: We ask him to join the American Federation of Labor, the organization under which he is working.

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Mr. Johnson: Well, if he is non-unionized he isn't working under any organization of the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Towers: Well, if he is a teamster he don't join the American Federation of Labor. He joins the teamsters' organization, which is affiliated nationally with the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Johnson: There has been some testimony here to the effect that the white laborer would not organize with the negro laborer. Can you tell me about that?

Mr. Towers: I don't know that there is any truth in that, Mr. Chairman. If there is, I don't know it. I believe just as soon as the negro laborer and the white laborer understand and desire organization, he has reached that

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point of intelligence where he realized that organization is necessary, and I believe the race feeling ceases to exist; that he feels that the one enemy to both is the exporting enemy.

Mr. Johnson: And the race feeling does exist until that has been attained?

Mr. Towers: I believe it would exist greater without that condition than where that condition prevails.

Mr. Johnson: That the race feeling - if I understand you correctly you mean to say that the race feeling exists to a greater extent without organization than it does with organization?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely, I say that unqualifiedly.

Mr. Johnson: And he negro here is not organized?

Mr. Towers: Partially organized in some lines of work.

Mr. Johnson: And because there has not been a complete labor organization among the negroes, there is race prejudice here?

Mr. Towers: Well, the race prejudice is such a big question that I don't believe that I could explain it fully, Mr. Chairman. I believe that you will always have some race prejudice here.

Mr. Johnson: Well we will take one statement of yours - I will take one statement of yours for the purpose of asking you whether or not that demonstrates race prejudice. I may be mistaken as to it having been made by you, but I don't think I am. If I am, you will correct

me; that white people don't like the moving of negroes into houses adjoining them.

Mr. Towers: I believe that intensifies the feeling, or developed the race feeling with the lawless element, more than any one thing that existed in East St. Louis.

Mr. Johnson: So that the fact that a negro would move into a house next to a white man was objectionable upon the part of the white man.

Mr. Towers: I don't necessarily mean that. I believe that wherever the dividing line ^{of} the segregated district cores' that condition must have existed for years. the condition I refer to.

Mr. Johnson: Is there a segregated district here for the whites or for the blacks?

Mr. Towers: There is naturally ~~sg~~ segregated districts.

Mr. Johnson: Not one made by law but one made *by* choice?

Mr. Towers: By choice, and adjustment in the community.

Mr. Johnson: Well now, who makes the choice, the white man or the black man.

Mr. Towers: I presume both.

Mr. Johnson: If the black man moves into a white neighborhood, then it is no longer a segregated district for each, is it?

Mr. Towers: No.

Mr. Johnson: Then who has made the choice?

Mr. Towers: The negro.

Mr. Johnson: The negro has made the choice?

Mr. Towers: I think the change will evolve a great deal of feeling.

Mr. Johnson: Now he has made the ~~change~~ choice of doing that, of becoming a part of the white neighborhood, and then if the white people object to it, then they have a choice?

Mr. Towers: Then they make a choice.

Mr. Johnson: In what way do they usually express that choice?

Mr. Towers: Well, the way ~~in~~ which I have heard it expressed is that it has reduced their property values.

Mr. Johnson: Or, in other words, the coming of the negro into a square reduces the value of property in that ~~area~~ square?

Mr. Towers: Why, that is the general implication.

Mr. Johnson: And in whose estimation is that? Is it not in the estimation or mind of the whites that the property reduction follows?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely in the minds of the whites.

Mr. Johnson: Isn't that a clear clean cut case of race prejudice?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: No doubt about that?

Mr. Towers: No doubt about it at all.

Mr. Johnson: If a negro ^{who} has joined the labor organization moves into a white section in East St. Louis, do

you think that would affect property values in the square in which he would rove?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: So whether he is unionized or whether he is non-unionized, that race prejudice still exists in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers: It still would exist under those circumstances.

Mr. Johnson: And the circumstance would be his presence?

Mr. Towers: His presence in that community.

Mr. Johnson: Therefore his presence in East St. Louis is not generally desired among the whites?

Mr. Towers: I don't think it is.

Mr. Johnson: And because it is not, and efforts have been made by certain people, by appeal to the Mayor and to the council and perhaps to other authorities, to stop the negro from coming here?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: And you yourself have joined in that appeal to stop the negro from coming here?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Now, why have you donethat?

Mr. Towers: All I can say, Mr. Chairman, is in the best interests of both the negro and the whites, because the feeling was being built that was bound to break out in an eruption sooner or later. Every one in the community could see it.

Mr. Johnson: Then that is strictly race prejudice, isn't it?

Mr. Towers: Well, I guess I would have to say yes. I believe that the race prejudice extends beyond East St. Louis. I believe it extends beyond throughout the Nation.

Mr. Johnson: So after having ~~traveled~~ traveled around over the country for fifteen minutes, you and I have reached the conclusion that race prejudice is prevalent here?

Mr. Towers: I have reached the conclusion within my mind that it is prevalent the nation over.

Mr. Johnson: And that this place is no exception to it?

Mr. Towers: This place is no exception to the general condition throughout the Nation.

Mr. Johnson: And the white man in East St. Louis doesn't want to live next door to the negro, whether he is unionized or whether he is not?

Mr. Towers: I believe that is the prevailing sentiment.

Mr. Johnson: And isn't it also true that the white men of the laboring organizations, don't want to affiliate in a brotherly way, even inside of that organization, with the negro?

Mr. Towers: I can - personally I will answer that question no, because I have sat in meetings with negroes in my own organizations, thirteen years ago, and without any prejudice. And to answer it more fully I believe that it establishes the best feeling that can possibly exist between those two types of people or races.

Mr. Johnson: But it has been testified to here under oath, before this Committee, by labor leaders, that

there are some trades that will not take a negro into their union?

Mr. Towers: There might be some trades. I don't know just what trades there are. I know our organization takes them in.

Mr. Johnson: What is your organization?

Mr. Towers: The moulders, and I pride myself that that is one of the best developed labor organizations in the country. The United Mine Workers, which I feel is the best labor organization the world has ever seen, takes in negroes. I was in Joliet at a state convention only recently, and representatives of the miner's organizations, negroes, sat in a convention of 800 delegates, mostly whites, with a few negroes present, from the State of Illinois.

Mr. Johnson: 800 whites and a few negroes?

Mr. Towers: I never heard an ill expression towards any one of those delegates. I have heard them take the floor intelligently and were given equal respect with the white delegates in the meetings.

Mr. Johnson: Have you ever heard of any ~~tax~~ trade or ~~craft~~ craft that would not take the negro into its organization?

Mr. Towers: I heard that testified here on the stand.

Mr. Johnson: Was that testimony false?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know the different rules and laws of all the labor organizations. There is a great many different organizations. I am not familiar with all the laws of each organization. The general poltby

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Mr. Johnson: Was that testimony false?

Mr. Towers: Well, I don't know the different rules and laws of all the labor organizations. There is a great many different organizations. I am not familiar with all the laws of each organization. The general policy

of the American Federation of Labor is that the American Federation of Labor discriminates neither against creed, color, or nationality.

Mr. Johnson: Would you give us your opinion as to whether the testimony which you heard, stating that there were certain trades and crafts which could not take them in, was true or false?

Mr. Towers: Well, from the way this testimony was given, I could see where even a white man under the circumstances in that organization could have been refused admission. I think the party who testified here stated - I think it was the Electrical Workers, refused to take in a negro who was a school teacher, and during the summer time was employed by the big employers, and that he made application in the Electrical Workers and his money was refunded. Our organization has refunded some money to certain applications, and it might happen that the money might be refunded to a negro and the statement would then go out that it is race prejudice. It may be that the Electrical Workers' organization has a certain standard of competency under which a man had to pass before he could become a member. Maybe he was refused for that reason. I don't know. I say that it is possible. In our organization a negro may apply for a membership and be rejected. Our constitution provides for working so many years at the trade. If he had only worked three years he would be rejected. He wouldn't be accepted to membership under ordinary circumstances.

Mr. Johnson: Nothing of that sort, however, developed in the instance which was given us of where the school teacher, negro school teacher, was rejected, is there?

Mr. Towers: There was no evidence given in this testimony by that party that that negro had worked very long at the trade or was very competent, other than his own testimony and his own statement ~~at~~ that he was competent.

Mr. Johnson: It was not, however, stated by that witness that he was rejected upon any other ground except that of being a negro, was it?

Mr. Towers: The testimony of that party that I heard here was that his money was refunded, that they wouldn't take him into the organization. I don't remember him even saying that it was because he was a negro. He inferred as much, I would judge.

813 Mr. Johnson: The Committee was given to clearly understand that he was rejected as a member simply because he was a negro.

Mr. Cooper: I wish right there, Mr. Chairman, ^{enter} to ~~xxxxx~~ a slight demurrer to that suggestion. I thought that there was some other reason assigned - that he was a school teacher and worked somewhere, I have forgotten where, occasionally, - that he did something - and it didn't show that he was rejected solely because he was a negro.

Mr. Baker: He was a mechanical teacher, teaching mechanical trades to the negroes here and still a high class electrician, and he wanted to apply to become ~~a member~~

a member, and they excluded him solely because he was a negro. That was my understanding.

Mr. Johnson: That is my understanding.

Mr. Cooper: Who testified that they excluded him solely because he was a negro?

Mr. Baker: We might not have used the word "solely" but that was the inference.

Mr. Johnson: The whole inference as I was able to get it was, that he was rejected for no other reason except that he was a negro.

Mr. Baker: In other words, he was a man that was highly educated, highly equipped in this profession, because he was teaching the negro people here this very business in school.

Mr. Towers: I don't remember the statement, Mr. Chairman, as to why - that he used the word it was because he was a negro, but I inferred that what was what he meant in the testimony.

Mr. Johnson: You heard the testimony and that was the conclusion you reached?

Mr. Towers: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: Just as we did?

Mr. Towers: He testified that this teacher worked for the big plants during the vacations.

Mr. Johnson: When he was not teaching school?

Mr. Towers: Yes, and that the Electrical Workers refused to take him in.

Mr. Johnson: Because he was not unionized they refused to work with him, because he was not a member of

the union, and he could not be a member of the union because he was a negro.

Mr. Towers: No, he made application for membership and the organization refused to take him in.

Mr. Johnson: Well, by refusing to take him in that was equivalent to refusing to work with him, was it not? They wouldn't have worked with him if he had gone there ~~was~~ as a nonunion man.

Mr. Towers: Not necessarily so. Some small plants might have engaged him, some plants where there were no other electrical workers employed.

Mr. Johnson: If this negro had presented himself at a union house or a union industry, the ^{union} people there wouldn't have worked with him, would they?

Mr. Towers: I don't know.

Mr. Johnson: You don't know?

Mr. Towers: I don't know.

Mr. Johnson: Who would?

Mr. Towers: The electrical workers.

Mr. Johnson: And you have no opinion now as to whether the unionized electrical workers in an establishment where no labor was used except union labor, and this negro had presented himself there, you don't know whether they would have worked with him or not?

Mr. Towers: I don't know, the way that question is put.

Mr. Johnson: Well, in my lack of knowledge about these affairs, help me then and don't undertake to be clouded me by saying you don't know.

Mr. Towers: Pardon me; I don't infer that at all but I will answer that question by saying no, I think they wouldn't work with him or a white man under those circumstances.

Mr. Johnson: That is exactly what I meant by the question. They wouldn't work with anybody, ~~who~~ Now they wouldn't work with this particular man, whether white or black simply because he wasn't unionized?

Mr. Towers: Because he had no card.

Mr. Johnson: Because he had no card, which is equivalent to not being a union man, isn't it?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson: Then if they wouldn't take him into the union because he was a negro how could he go to work in that place?

Mr. Towers: I don't see how he could go to work in that place.

Mr. Johnson: It would be impossible, wouldn't it?

Mr. Towers: Whether he is white or black, if the organization has the power ^{that your} question infers.

Mr. Johnson: But if they wouldn't take him because he was black, then he couldn't go to work in a place where only union labor was used?

Mr. Towers: No, I will answer that.

Mr. Johnson: He could go into an open shop perhaps, but not into a union shop.

Well, have you and I definitely reached the understanding that the employers of labor here have pitted

the white against the black until each has regarded the other as an impediment to his success?

Mr. Towers: I don't know whether I would view it just that way. I believe that both the negroes and the whites realize - have realized for a long time - that the pitting of the negro and the white against each other, in so far as ^{common} labor is concerned, is detrimental to both.

Mr. Johnson: And therefore each ^{me} regards the presence of the other as being against ^{his} best interests?

Mr. Towers: Well, that would be a hard question to answer, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson: But you have just answered it and this is a logical conclusion.

Mr. Towers: Well, if I have answered it - I was going to say, you could put the question this way: If there was three white men to one job, what would be the feeling? If there were three negroes in a community to one job, and they were all negroes, I believe about the same feeling would exist under all three conditions.

Mr. Johnson: Then you admit that the moving of a negro into the same neighborhood with white people is objectionable to the white people?

Mr. Towers: Why, I believe, that is common all over the country. The St. Louis papers are full of it.

Mr. Johnson: That is common all over the country?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; ^{I think} it is. The St. Louis papers are full of statements of communities organized where they actually organized communities to keep out negroes,

~~right in~~

right in St. Louis, and you will see a great deal of matter written where some negro has succeeded through the efforts of some real estate man in purchasing a home in some white community and there is feeling; and there is actually organizations in the City of St. Louis to prevent that sort of condition.

Mr. Johnson: That cannot be the result of anything except the white man's prejudice against the negro, can it?

Mr. Towers: I couldn't measure it in any other way.

Mr. Johnson: That is the only reason you can find for it?

Mr. Towers: I believe this, Mr. Chairman, that
815 under similar circumstances any locality in the country would have had about the same kind of condition that existed here - about the same kind of a riotous condition, the same kind of a feeling, regardless of whether it had been an organized community or an unorganized community, under somewhat similar conditions, where great hordes of one race, especially the black race, were crowded into a community such as it was here. I believe that the same feeling - I don't know whether the riot would have carried it out that way, because I believe in many localities they would have prevented it. I believe that it could have been prevented here, but that is what I think about the negro question. That was my statement, I believe, the great influx of negroes was the cause of the riots.

Mr. Johnson: Then your idea is that if there had

been only a few negroes here the race prejudice would have existed to a smaller degree than it did ^{finally reach,} ~~to a smaller~~ degree than it did ~~finally reach,~~ when a great number of negroes came. In other words the more negroes that came the more ~~xxx~~ race prejudice was emphasized.

Mr. Towers: I believe the sudden influx of negroes inflamed the race prejudice that seems to be in the mind of nearly every white man and negro in this nation. It is a serious problem.

Mr. Baker: In this nation or in the city, you mean?

Mr. Towers: In the nation.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, I have seen it not only - well, I have not seen it in my section of the country where I live, but for the last ten or twelve years I have been in Washington, and there I have seen just what you relate as existing here, that when a negro buys property or rents property anywhere in Washington that immediately the white people begin to get out and throw their property upon the market for sale, and it is sold for whatever they can get for it. In my judgment that is an expression of nothing except race prejudice.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Johnson: And I think that when they do that thing in East St. Louis, still it is an expression of race prejudice.

Mr. Towers: I was going to say, Mr. Chairman, that I believe that a certain amount of race prejudice existed here just about like it does everywhere else. I believe it became intensified through the great influx

of negroes which brought on resentment because of the different conditions that have been explained - testified to here by different people.

Mr. Johnson: Now I think you are getting at exactly the views that in the last half hour I have been endeavoring to get from you.

Mr. Towers: I wish I had known that half an hour ago.

Mr. Johnson: So do I, and we wouldn't have had all of this.

Mr. Towers: I wish I could have found myself half an hour ago.

Mr. Johnson: But you have just expressed tersely but plainly that the race prejudice between the two races, which exists all over this country, exists in East St. Louis.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Johnson: And that that prejudice between the two races was emphasized by both of the races, wanting the employment which was not sufficient for both; and that out of this race prejudice originated this ~~it~~ riot.

Mr. Towers: I am not going ~~to agree~~ to just agree to that one part of your statement, Mr. Chairman, that I claim that that feeling was intensified because of the **job** only. The feeling was intensified because of that condition; because of the property condition in the new neighborhood; because of the crime committed by negroes. *There are* ~~and~~ three or four things that followed this influx, that intensified that feeling that brought on

the riotous condition.

Mr. Johnson: Then if I understand you, the race prejudice which both you and I agree exist here and elsewhere, was exercised by a scramble for employment; by the deprecations which you and others say the negroes have committed and by the negro moving into localities where ~~he wasn't wanted~~ he wasn't wanted by the other residents of that locality, and by pushing himself into the ~~the~~ restaurants and picture shows and other places of amusement and in the streetcars and other places of travel, in which places the white man didn't want to come into too close contact with them. Those are the things, are they not which emphasize and have brought to expression the race prejudice?

Mr. Towers: Exactly.

Mr. Johnson: And that expression is ~~correctly~~ spelled in the four letters "riot"?

Mr. Towers: Exactly.

Mr. Cooper: I would like to ask a question or two. It has been said here that unions of white men would not have colored men in their organizations - they don't want them. What has been your ~~own~~ experience in your own union?

Mr. Towers: In my own union I have sat in meetings with ^{the} negro members, in Springfield, Missouri, as far back as thirteen years ago, I think it is.

Mr. Cooper: You attended a convention of delegates of unions, and there were negroes from those unions?

Mr. Towers: And I attended a convention in the early

part - ~~of~~ the middle part of last month, ~~October~~, a convention ~~that~~ convened on the 15th of ~~October~~, I think, in which 800 delegates, representing nearly every local union - or a good many of them in the State of Illinois - met in convention at Joliet, Illinois. There were some half a dozen negro delegates, to the best of my memory. Some of them took the floor and were accorded the same respect as any other delegates in that convention hall. I can go right to my town and visit miners' local meetings and find negroes taking part in the discussions - there as a delegate.

Mr. Cooper: Were those negroes members of unions?

Mr. Towers: They were members of the United Mine Workers' Organization. I can take you to our central body in the City of Bellville and show you a negro ~~working~~ ~~and~~ delegate.

Mr. Cooper: Now you attended meetings of delegates of various labor unions, and in attendance upon those meetings were negroes who were delegates from labor unions?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: I believe you said one of the strongest, one of the best unions in the country was the Miner's Union?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; in my estimation.

Mr. Cooper: And the moulder's union?

Mr. Towers: I said I believed that was one of the best, one of the best developed unions in the country.

Mr. Cooper: Did you say anything about the western miners?

Mr. Towers: ~~The western miners?~~ No.

Mr. Towers: The western miners, no, the United Mine Workers. I said the best labor organization that the world has ever seen, in my estimation, the United Mine Workers, which takes in negroes as well as whites; sends them to their conventions; sends them to state conventions; sends them to the central bodies as delegates.

Mr. Cooper: Then that demonstrates, doesn't it, that the unions are a business organization and not a social organization?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. I could tell just a little instance, Mr. Cooper, that will bear that out.

Recently our organizer from this district goes to Metropolis, Illinois, to organize a local of moulders. There was some seven whites and some thirteen negroes employed in the shops. The negroes admitted that they had been used against the whites all their lives and were tired of being tools for the employers, and sincerely desired organization. They joined the organization. The representative told them - I am repeating his statement in the meeting, "now, boys our organization must give equal protection to one and all. In the shop, in so far as the organization is concerned, outside of your personal matters, you will get equal protection. In the meeting hall this organization guarantees you equal protection. In the evening after the meeting your social affairs are your own." He told me that quite an intelligent negro came to him right after that and told him, "Mr. White Man, you said that just right. That is a business proposition. When we are in the

meeting or when we are in fellowship in the shop, but in the evenings we have got to find our place. You said that just right." Now, that shows that the intelligent negro even realizes the great chasm between the whites and the black workers. From the union viewpoint it is a different proposition.

Mr. Cooper: It is a business proposition and not a social affair at all?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Baker: Right there, so that I might not get misled - well, go ahead.

Mr. Cooper: I wanted to get this in consecutive order.

Mr. Baker: What I wanted was to see whether he said there were no social functions, connected with the organizations.

Mr. Towers: No, I said that the organizer said, "in the shop you will get equal protection from this union you have joined; in the meeting hall you will get equal protection and consideration. In the evening, after work, your social affairs, they must be your own. You will have to handle them in your own way; the organization has absolutely nothing to do with them."

Mr. Cooper: There is no requirement of social equality or anything of the sort, is there?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely not, it is equal protection.

Mr. Cooper: Not even with whites or blacks?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely not.

Mr. Cooper: Now you say have, and you do have, ---

~~possibly~~

possibly sometimes you get into your union white men whose manners are repulsive?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely so. More so than many negroes.

Mr. Cooper: More so than many negroes, and you don't require, because he is a member of the union that you and your wife must invite him to your dinner table, because he is a white man and belongs to your union, do you?

Mr. Towers: Many of them I would never invite to my home.

Mr. Cooper: Exactly. The union is purely a business proposition. Now let us see how it is a business proposition. The employers organize, don't they to protect their interests?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

818 Mr. Cooper: Many of them do, at least, admit that. Laboring men, ten of them after one job, are apt to underbid each other to get the job, aren't they, if it is just cutthroat competition for the place? The most dense worker can thoroughly understand that and see his position. Now, then, the working man must either get a job, become a tramp, or go to the poor house?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: If he is an able-bodied man?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: So then if ten men are competing for one job, the tendency is to cut down the wages to a figure that will barely keep body and soul together, isn't it?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Cooper: In other words the job will go to the man, some times - not always, but sometimes - to the man who will work for the least sum. Isn't that so.

Mr. Towers: That is the general understanding.

Mr. Cooper: So I am taking now the way it appears to the average working man, without entering into the merits of the proposition any more than to get the facts out - and so they organize unions to prevent this cutthroat competition and secure fair wages, what they call fair wages, better wages and better conditions, than they think they would get if compelled to resort to cutthroat competition among themselves?

Mr. Towers: That they know they will get, not think; that they know.

Mr. Cooper: Well, I am putting it in that way. Now then, something has been said here about the pitting of the white man against the black man in this city.

The Congress of the United States some years ago passed a law called the "Non-contract Labor Law", which prohibits the importation from foreign countries, under contract, of laborers, of any color, white or black, doesn't it?

Mr. Towers: Yes, so I understand.

Mr. Cooper: It would prohibit manufacturers in this city of St. Louis, East St. Louis, for example, from going to Greece, to Armenia, to Italy, to Russia, to other foreign countries, where the laborers are all white, and importing them under contract as they did before that law was passed?

~~Mr. Towers:~~

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

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

Mr. Towers: As I understand it, yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And that law has been on the statute books in Republican administrations and Democratic administrations, and nobody even so much as thinks it is going to be repealed. Isn't that so?

Mr. Towers: As I understand it.

Mr. Cooper: Now that would be the pitting, not of white men against black men if those people were coming here, but it would be white men against white men?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now, those people in those countries were working for a very few cents, comparatively speaking, *a day,* weren't they?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They were poor, ignorant as they could be. So the Congress of the United States ^{passed a law} to prohibit the coming here of white men under contract to work for such wages in competition with you and the other white men of East St. Louis.

Mr. Towers: Or in other words, to maintain American standards, as we understand them.

Mr. Cooper: ^{Exactly.} And we passed a Chinese Exclusion Law, didn't we?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They can't come here *except* under certain conditions. The Chinese laborers, work here for very much less per day and live under wretched conditions, that

the white laborers would not consent to live under, at wages which they wouldn't consent to work for?

Mr. Towers: That is true.

Mr. Cooper: That was to protect the white man against the yellow man, not the black man. In other words, these laws have been passed in accordance with the spirit of the American Republic, which is that no man, white or black, under our flag, ought to be compelled to work anywhere in this republic for less than a decent wage and under decent conditions?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely, Mr. Cooper.

Mr. Cooper: No matter what his color is.

Mr. Towers: I believe all forces of society should direct themselves in that direction, instead of practicing deception, as they do, on the helpless, unorganized workers, as they do to-day.

Mr. Cooper: Now, we want, all of us, of every political faith and of every religious creed in this country to have the black man secure in all of his rights. He is a citizen, on an equality with you and me.

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now, we can't make any laws ~~in which~~ in this country which exclude the black man from going with his family into any part of the United States, can we?

Mr. Towers: I don't think so.

Mr. Cooper: None of us, he must be allowed to go from state to state, and from community to community in his discretion or judgment as he may deem best for his own interests, just the same as the white man. Other-
wise

aise you absolutely nullify the Constitution of the United states. But it is one thing for a man, is it not, either white or black to go voluntarily into another community with a view to bettering his condition, and to have great numbers of them, by the thousands, induced to come into one comparatively small community, isn't it?

Mr. Towers: There is a great difference, a world of difference. It is the difference between the natural order of things and an unnatural condition.

Mr. Cooper: In other words, a forced condition?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Was that the condition you protested against?

Mr. Towers: That is the condition I believe, that ~~ninety~~ ^{ninety} per cent of the people of this locality protested in every way they could.

Mr. Cooper: Now we have it in evidence here that colored people ~~have~~ in this town are among your best citizens.

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Splendid citizens, law abiding, industrious and respected by the community; and that they thought that a very great injustice was being done ~~to~~ to some of these colored people who were induced to come north into this city.

Mr. Towers: I believe they did. They felt it even more keenly than many of the whites.

Mr. Cooper: We have had witnesses testify about the colored people coming here by trainloads, sometimes by

~~several~~

carloads, and getting out and going about on the streets, some of them with nothing on but overalls and a shirt, and a straw hat, a year ago this time, in cold weather, shivering, landing here without a penny of money, and hungry. Was it against that that you protested?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. The best interests of those poor unfortunate, white or blacks, that were being preyed upon by intelligent, brutish power somewhere.

Mr. Cooper: Now it has been intimated - I read it sometimes - that people because they don't associate *together* out of business, that there is necessarily a determination to ostracize them from society, beat them out, beat them down, deprive them of human rights; but if you look at the labor unions as you look at it, and I am taking your statement now embodying your view of the situation - the labor union is a purely business proposition?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

820 Mr. Cooper: And knowing that the black man is a citizen and entitled under the Constitution to his rights, the same as an American citizen, as you are, and he is guaranteed by that instrument protection ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ those rights, just as you are, and neither of us have any protection ^{under} except that, you know that the only way as a business proposition that both of you can be protected as American citizens is to enter an organization and mutually agree to defend your own rights?

Mr. Towers: Mutually protect each other. I was going to say I would like to qualify that. Besides

being a business organization, the more deeply one becomes interested in organized labor, the more he makes it the relation of his life, that he sees the humanitarian work that he can accomplish through this business organization; but in so far as the color line that you speak of, it is absolutely a business proposition, and that feeling of race prejudice I don't think would prevail in a meeting hall.

Mr. Cooper: Now this question - I have heard colored people say that they didn't want to go into white society. I have heard them say that. I don't know anything about it myself, but I have heard them say that. In the old days it used to be said of the Abolitionists, that because they didn't ~~xxx~~ live to see white men and black men bought and sold like cattle, that therefore they might want to marry them, and Lincoln said that the man who uttered that sentiment, or any man who did, indulged in what he said was "bastard logic" You might not want to buy and sell a woman, but you might not want to marry her.

Mr. Towers: That is true.

Mr. Cooper: You might want to see a black man treated decently when it comes to competing for your job and yet you might not want to invite him into your parlor to sit down to the board with yourself and your wife any more than you would some white men in the union.

Mr. Towers: And I don't think, as a rule, he would care to come.

Mr. Cooper: But you said a moment ago that there ~~were white men~~

were white men in your unions that you wouldn't under any consideration invite to your table and to associate with your wife and family?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Cooper: Now I want to ask you a word - the negroes that you have in mind as being objected to principally, coming here in such great numbers, were those who were without money, poorly clad - what we might characterize ordinarily as "plantation negroes"; without any means of support, isn't that so?

Mr. Towers: Without any means of support, and the rougher element that were in a way desperate as has been proven in the testimony, having committed a great number of crimes. I would like to say one thing that I have left out of the testimony, another thing which I believe helped to ^{develop and} intensify this feeling. Attorney General Prundage has done considerable in this community to eliminate some of the gambling, or a big part of it. While I still believe there is some gambling going on, I believe his efforts have been directed against most of the whites - against gambling generally, but it seems to be that the whites were the ones that suffered. I have been told that the negroes were catered to by petty politicians, and that the negroes were allowed to continue their gambling in this community, which would naturally bring on another condition which would develop a feeling between the whites and the negroes. Those who love the gambling game and were deprived of it - on the white side ^{of it} would naturally develop a feeling

against the negro who might be privileged to do something that he wasn't allowed to do. That was another thing that I believe intensified the feeling against the negroes here.

Mr. Cooper: Now one word more, Mr. Towers, about the strike at the Aluminum Ore Company. That strike was by non-union men?

Mr. Towers: Non-union men, yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Not organized?

Mr. Towers: Not organized, no, sir. I would like to say with reference to that first strike, Mr. Cooper, that two or three nights prior to their settlement, someone called up my home in Bellville and asked me to come to a meeting they were having at 26th and Louisiana, at that theatre that was referred to. My wife told me, but didn't remember who it was that called. I thought possibly it was Harry Kerr, and I have always stood willing to give him any assistance if called upon, so I finally decided that I would take the time to go to East St. Louis and go to that hall. I went down there and didn't find any of our labor boys there. I went ⁱⁿ to the meeting, and when I didn't find any of our fellows I determined I wouldn't take part in the meeting. I thought I might get what information I could and see what they were going to do, or intended to do, and before their meeting was called to order, someone came to me and asked me if I was an employee of the Aluminum Ore Plant. I told him no. He says, "I am going to ask you to retire." I says, "all right, I would like to

have you come on the outside with me for a short time." He came out with me and I asked him what he intended to do. He says, "we are going to organize." I says, "are you going to organize under the American Federation of Labor?" I says, "no." "do you know who called me up and invited me down here?" He says, "no." I says, "well, if you are not going to organize and have no intention of organizing under the American Federation of Labor, ~~xx~~ I don't care to be in your meeting and ~~xxx~~ wouldn't take any part anyway". What is your grievance against the American Federation of Labor? Why do you want to ~~defect~~ ^{deserve} so many of these honest workers in there? Why don't you help them instead of ~~defecting~~ ^{deserving} them at a time like this, which is so nice to organize these workers?" He said he had been a member of one of the organizations here - I forget which one - and he apparently had a grouch against the organization and started to tell me about that. I told him well, I didn't care anything about that. I didn't think his grouch ought to interfere with hundreds and hundreds of workers there who might do something substantial for themselves if they were not discouraged from coming into the American Federation of Labor. I told him I believed while he claimed he was a mechanic, that the 900 or 1,000 laborers, building a strong A. F. of L. organization would be able to lick both the company and the ~~xxx~~ so called skilled workers if it came to a test, and I says, "I believe those people should be allowed to build an organization without you fellows, if you are opposed to ~~xxx~~ your own organization in this community."

Mr. Cooper: The streetcar strike was by unorganized labor, - was it not?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now, how was that settled?

Mr. Towers: By an understanding between the company, a committee of the workers, and myself, in which I agreed if they would arbitrate - they even refused to arbitrate for a time -- ^{would} I used my influence to get the job going orderly.

Mr. Cooper: It was finally settled by arbitration?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; and the men returning to work, though without any promises - without any agreement - without knowing they were going to retain their organization. They returned to work and the settlement was affected afterwards in a very orderly way and along the lines and policies of the American Federation of Labor.

Mr. Cooper: Now when did that agreement end?

Mr. Towers: It ends the end of 1917.

Mr. Cooper: Now I want to ask you one question. You have been asked about Mr. Meyers' request that he be allowed to hire certain men. Was that after you had made this agreement for a settlement?

Mr. Towers: After. I don't want you to understand it that way. He never made no request to hire ^{such} these men. He complained to me that the boys on the job and the representative were keeping men from going to work, one or two or three days, as they may want to work, and claimed that he was being deprived of that labor.

Mr. Cooper: Yes. It is your idea, is it, that --- well, give your idea of how labor disputes ought to be settled.

Mr. Towers: My idea - if the employers - I think the whole matter is the general lack of education and understanding. I believe that many of our brightest employers are absolutely ignorant so far as knowing how to handle this great question between employers and employees. I believe in many instances the employers show the rankest kind of ignorance. Their false snobishness, in the first place, as a rule of wanting or being unwilling to meet with their own committees, or duly accredited representatives of the American Federation of Labor, is the one thing that creates more strife than anything else that I can think of.

Mr. Cooper: Is it your opinion that they are inclined to be exclusive and aristocratic, rather than democratic?

Mr. Towers: Why absolutely autocratic. We lack industrial democracy in our Nation. We don't enjoy that except in institutions that we are organized in. There we have a more or less industrial democracy where we can meet on a level with the employers.

Mr. Cooper: Now then, not all labor leaders are what they ought to be. Isn't that ~~sure~~ true?

Mr. Towers: That is true.

Mr. Cooper: There are some bad men who have been leaders of labor in this country.

Mr. Towers: That would apply to any force in society.

Mr. Cooper: Anybody in society is bound to have some bad men. The Twelve Apostle had one that was bad.

~~Mr. Towers~~

Mr. Towers: They had one that we feel was bad .

Mr. Cooper: You find ministers that disgrace themselves and their families. You find lawyers that do. You find men in all professions.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely.

Mr. Cooper: Now what is the duty of the labor union when it finds men in control of the organization whose integrity and ability cannot be trusted?

Mr. Towers: I believe just as soon as that is generally known, Mr. Cooper, I don't believe he would hold on very long. Of course a deceitful man or one who is a hypocrite is sometimes able to maintain himself with anybody, with any force in society for a much longer time than he should be able to do so.

Mr. Cooper: Now isn't this also true; some of these great corporations are financed by men living thousands, or many hundreds of miles from the plants?

Mr. Towers: That is absolutely true.

Mr. Cooper: And the plants are under the control of subordinates?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; the worst tyrants there are.

Mr. Cooper: You say the worst tyrants. I wasn't going to say that, but some of them are tyrannical.

Mr. Towers: That is the ones I refer to, some. And to qualify that, if you will allow me, Mr. Cooper, under competitive conditions, where the competition is keen, I believe nearly all of the employers are led in a way, - or must be in a way - by the meanest. The

meanest, in other words, set the pace of employers, nearly so.

Mr. Cooper: Now there are there any humane employers?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; just as humane as the conditions will allow them to be.

Mr. Cooper: There are many humane, kind hearted employers who take an interest in their working men?

Mr. Powers: yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And do the very best that they can possibly for them?

Mr. Towers: yes sir.

Mr. Cooper: there are many good labor leaders, good and bad?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Now there are some of these subordinate men in control of the plants, and to make a reputation for themselves, aren't they.

Mr. Towers: I think their very existence, the very existence of their position depends upon just that one thing.

Mr. Cooper: Now then, if by any chance a man, ambitious for himself, not of a very humane disposition, avaricious, wanting to make a reputation as a money maker, wanting a better salary and to go to the front, might treat the men in his employ very cruelly?

Mr. Towers: I think that he reached a point at which he absolutely considers his employees just like so many cattle, to make good his desire to get results.

Mr. Cooper: That reminds me of a sentence that I once read in a proclamation of Governor Dole of Hawaii. He complained that the big planters in Hawaii,--- and these are his exact words - "seemed ~~to~~ inclined to treat their employees as machines, as mere machines rather than as factors in the development of the State." Now a man can treat his men like mere machines, can he?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir; and succeeds in many instances.

Mr. Cooper: Now, it is your view and I don't say it is a correct one - but I take it to be your view, that a man with a wife and children, and a man employed under such a subordinate as that, cold cruel, and avaricious; this man not belonging to any organization, depending solely upon himself, wouldn't stand very much chance if he complained single handed?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely no chance. He is helpless and realizes ~~and~~ ^{his} helplessness.

Mr. Cooper: I am only citing that instance to bring into the record the exact position, as it ~~is~~ sometimes - alas too appears and/frequently/to laboring men.

Mr. Towers: I would like to make a statement on that also, Mr. Cooper: I believe that when a man is placed in that helplessness and raising a family, that you are holding back the progress of the American people; that you are making a coward out of that particular man. He then becomes an unfit citizen to raise true American citizens that would be capable of asserting American man-

hood as men should in our Nation: They are holding back progress.

Mr. Cooper: Or he becomes disgusted with the country that tolerates that sort of conditions with indifference, looks upon it with complacency; and his feelings become apparent to his family, and you have a discontented family, and ultimately you have many discontented families and a discontented community. In other words, you have industrial war.

Mr. Towers: All the time, silent or on the surface.

Mr. Cooper: Silent or on the surface, whether it is white or black, and you have sometimes, as one of the committee has just suggested to me - and a very apt expression - you also have some times and too many times industrial slavery.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely, where there is in an industrial district such as East St. Louis, or any other, where organization is lax and undeveloped, there is only one phrase you can apply, and that is the one just expressed, industrial slavery.

Mr. Cooper: Now you stated said, some times a grasping man, powerful financially and in control of a great institution, will so dominate the industrial situation that the humane employers, the good kind hearted men can't help himself, and the whole situation becomes bad.

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. The meanest employer under a tight competitive condition sets the pace for all employees.

-employers - or nearly the face.- and

Mr. Cooper: And the humane man who wants to do right, perhaps at a little more expense to himself and a little less profit, is handicapped, can't sell his goods?

Mr. Towers: Absolutely. That is the competition that the fair employer in the stove industry of this community is up against with reference to this East St. Louis malleable plant out here that the employer testified, ^{to} on the stand the other day.

Mr. Cooper: Well, now without taking either side of this vitally important controversy, I will sum it all up with this statement: Capital can't go on and carry on industry without labor.

Mr. Towers: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: And labor can't get wages without it has the employment of capital.

Mr. Towers: No, sir.

Mr. Cooper: Therefore they are interdependent.

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: They ought to be friends. The success of the industry is the success of the working man?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper: The more money it makes, the better wages he ought to get and the better his conditions. He is directly interested, isn't he, ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ the prosperity of the industry?

Mr. Towers: So much so that cooperation is absolutely necessary. How far you are going to develop

necessary
that cooperation might be the real issue; but to develop
industry to the fullest extent, cooperation is absolutely
necessary, and the worker must have equal consideration

Mercer at least with capital.

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Mr. Cooper. Now, in other words, you think that instead of making this an industrial war, and when one side complains of conditions and says, "I would like to have these things changed" and the other side says, "If you don't like it you can get out; I can get twenty to take your place"; if the man were always treated as a human being and consulted with and if his demands were reasonable, granted, it would be better?

Mr. Towers. That is ^{the} one thing that is necessary to real success in industry, cooperation, a democratic cooperation that will really bring about a feeling of real confidence, nothing smothered or hidden.

Mr. Cooper. In other words, it means to humanize these intense competitive conditions?

Mr. Towers. That is the best word, "humanize". To let the worker feel that he really is a human being in the sense that our Nation in theory places him. He is in theory a big American citizen, but in industry he is a machine, a mule or a piece of pig iron, insofar as the employer is concerned--- to let him know that he is a part of industry, a part of this great Nation, and that he really is a human being.

Mr. Cooper. Mr. Towers have you observed growing up in this country, where we say that all men are equal before the law, a very decided class spirit?

Mr. Towers. Mr. Chairman, I don't believe the brighter minds and the bigger minds of this Nation realize to the fullest that that class spirit really exists.

Mr. Cooper. We have in many communities and in

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many sections--- industrial centers of this country--- just as pronounced a feeling of class spirit and of haughty exclusiveness as they have in Europe, except we haven't any of the titles?

Mr. Towers. Exactly. I believe the industrial parents of our Nation are a greater power in the exploiting of the workers than the titles are on the workers on the ~~workers~~ over there, because there class struggle stands out so prominently and is so well understood that there is no question about the feeling; but here every force is directed to try to smother it, to put a false coat on it and to falsify it; in other words, almost a national hypocrisy as to that question and industrial tyranny and a lack of an industrial democracy within our Nation.

Mr. Cooper.

Now, Mr. Towers, a man who has the gift of making money and knows how to control men, and who knows how to take advantage of industrial conditions and legitimately make money, and employ men, is one of the most valuable citizens in the Nation, isn't he?

Mr. Towers. With a proviso that he is really a good citizen in the community and to his employees.

Mr. Cooper. That is what I mean.

Mr. Towers. That kind of an employer.

Mr. Cooper. In other words, the humane man who has the business faculty to succeed and secure the respect of his fellowmen, must be full of energy and forethought, he must be an honest man, honorable and fair, highminded. In other words, he is one of the noblest citizens. Isn't

that so?

826 Mr. Towers. He is; in other words, a real American.

Mr. Cooper. Now we want, do we not, as much as possible, as I said a moment ago, to try to humanize industrial conditions, and do away with this growing feeling of caste, class feeling?

Mr. Towers. That, Mr. Cooper, is absolutely necessary to the salvation of our Nation, I believe. That is my personal opinion. I believe, Mr. Cooper, that during this crisis and with crises arising suddenly, men who are in control, being able to use the national crisis to enrich ^{themselves} and on the other hand to force the workers into desperation--- I believe if it wasn't for the organized labor movement in our Nation today that we would be in confusion and turmoil right at this instant. In other words, I believe the organized labor movement of this Nation during this crisis is the salvation of our Nation.

Mr. Cooper. I have read what purported to be communications from Mr. Gompers, published in the newspapers, in which he very strongly urged labor to avoid anything like trouble if there was any way possible to do so; that the demands of the Nation were such that industries must be carried on and laboring men must go ahead with their toil, if possible for them to do so.

Mr. Towers. Continue the toil, but not to allow the employers to use the national crisis to exploit the workers.

Mr. Cooper. Yes, exactly.

Mr. Towers. If the workers can't keep pace with the changing conditions, then they become sufferers because of a condition that they are called upon to assist in, and others are becoming enriched because of that condition. That brings a terrible dissatisfaction into the Nation. To the workers it is absolutely necessary that they at least in this crisis keep pace with the increased cost of living. If they don't they are suffering, and many of them were suffering even before this crisis began.

Mr. Johnson. I take it for granted that you agree with me in the opinion that those who have enticed the negro from the Southern States into this place and other Northern States with the misrepresentation that in the North he would find ^{social} equality, is mistaken?

Mr. Towers. I think so, yes.

Mr. Johnson. I believe that both you and I agree that the negro is going to find that lack of social equality wherever he may go in all this country?

Mr. Towers. I think so. I believe that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Johnson. The white physician, for a fee, because it is a business transaction, visits the sick negro.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. The white lawyer, for the fee, takes the negro as his client.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. The white merchant disposes of his

wares for the price to the negro, because it is a business transaction.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. You take him into at least some of the business meetings of the labor organizations, because it is only business?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. I believe that all over the South, from which the negro is induced to go, there is more consideration paid to him than there is North to the places to which he is induced to go to hunt social equality. For instance, take the town in which I live. Everybody there is the child of a former slave-holder. There we have one of the oldest and handsomest Cathedrals in the United States. At Bardstown, Kentucky, where I live, there is a Cathedral there considerably more than one hundred years old. It was the first Episcopal see in the United States west of the Allegheny mountains. The diocese of Bishop Flaget, the first bishop there, extended from New Orleans to Montreal. Lewis Philippe, the King of the French, spent part of his time in exile there. He was well treated while there, and after his ascending the throne of France he made that congregation many presents. The presents which he made that congregation in the way of pictures, paintings, are worth more than a million dollars. The edifice itself is a handsome structure, and there the lines between the races are perhaps more tautly drawn than anywhere else in this country; yet in that church, where there are four columns of pews,

three are set aside for the whites and one for the negroes. I am a member of that congregation and when I, my wife and children, go there to church we approach the same communion rail that those negroes approach. Yet there are some people that have gone through that country and induced the negro to come further North where he may find more social equality. Do you believe he finds it?

Mr. Powers. I don't think he does, Mr. Chairman, as explained by you. He has a false idea of it.

Mr. Johnson. Is the witness Hawkins who was on the stand yesterday, in the room?

Mr. Cooper. Let this witness stand aside and let Hawkins take the stand.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF WILLIAM HAWKINS (Colored)

Mr. Johnson. When you were on the witness stand you said that ~~you~~ when you were taken in^{to} the police station on the night of July 2nd, that officer there demanded of you, and in answer to the demand you gave him, \$11.50 of your money; that he made the same demand of another negro who was taken into the station, and from him, with your assistance in contributing part of the money, he got another \$11.50; and that the same demand was made from another negro who was taken into the station with you, and from him this man got \$11.50. In the room now there are thirty or more white men. I wish you would leave your chair on the witness stand and walk around in this room and see if

you identify the man who exacted that \$11.50 from you and from each of the other negroes that you have named. See if you can identify him in the room?

(The witness left the witness chair and walked around the room among the audience).

Mr. Hawkins. I don't think I see him.

Mr. Cooper. Look them all carefully over on both sides of the hall, everywhere.

Mr. Hawkins (After a pause). I don't think I see him.

Mr. Cooper. Very well.

Mr. Hawkins. I don't know him personally noway. I could know him if I could see him, but I don't think he is in the house.

Mr. Johnson. Very well.

Mr. Towers, please come back to the witness stand

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF ALOIS TOWERS. (RESUMED)

Mr. Raker. You say that your organizations are not for the purpose of anything else except business?

Mr. Towers. I said, Mr. Chairman, relative to the negro situation, when asked questions pertaining to that, that the organization was a business organization and qualified it by saying that it is also a humanitarian

Institution
~~organization~~

Mr. Raker. Well now, is it organized for humanitarian purposes, ^{as well as} or for business?

Mr. Towers. As well as to advance our conditions,

economically, so far as wage increases are concerned, shorter hours are concerned; advance our mental standard because of shorter hours; school our children longer because of better wages, and therefore produce better citizens.

Mr. Raker. Well then, just what is it for, then; tell us.

Mr. Towers. It is for the general good of the working classes, to advance their conditions, mentally, morally; to get away from a long grind of commercial toil, and to get more of the wherewith of life, which are wages.

Mr. Raker. Then your answer was not fully correct when you said it was solely for business?

Mr. Towers. I didn't say solely, Mr. Raker.

Mr. Raker. You tried to convey the idea--- and practically conveyed the idea--- that it was primarily for business purposes. If you didn't intend that, and if your answer conveyed that idea, it was not correct?

Mr. Towers. Not wholly. The questions pertained to our organization insofar as the negro was concerned. What I meant to convey was, it was a business proposition insofar as the social affairs between whites and blacks might be concerned. It has nothing to do with the social conditions.

Mr. Raker. Well, you make no distinction in your charter or in ~~your~~ any part of your organization as to color, so far as the rules and regulations are concerned?

Mr. Towers. Absolutely none. The negro is wel-

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come in our organization. In fact, our particular organizations at one time asked the assistance of the great negro leaders.

Mr. Johnson. Mr. Towers, there is a witness here who is a street car conductor, who is being kept away from his work by our having kept him too long. If you don't mind it, we will call him as a witness, believing it will take only a short time. Then we will ask you to come back so that Mr. Raker may ask you some questions.

Mr. Towers. I am more than willing to accede to the request of the committee, Mr. Chairman.

STATEMENT OF STEPHEN F. PORTER, 1913-B
STATE STREET, EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.

The witness was sworn by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson. Please give the stenographer your name and address.

Mr. Porter. Stephen F. Porter, 1913-B State Street, East St. Louis, Illinois.

Mr. Johnson. What is your occupation?

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Mr. Porter. Motorman for the East St. Louis & Suburban Street Car Company.

Mr. Johnson. Mr. Porter, if you saw a soldier with his bayonet grab a boy shortly after the riot of July 2nd last, please tell about it.

Mr. Porter. Shortly after the May riot?

Mr. Johnson. Was it after the May riot?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

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Mr. Johnson. Very well. Tell what it was, who the parties were and where the incident occurred.

Mr. Porter. I was going out on Collinsville Avenue, the exact time I don't remember any more. It was on Saturday, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Johnson. Do you remember the day of the month?

Mr. Towers. No, sir. It was a week or so after the May riot. Just as I got close to about one hundred feet from Division Street, I noticed a soldier rush over towards a young fellow there with a bayonet.

Mr. Johnson. The soldier had the bayonet?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir. I didn't see the young fellow have anything whatever.

Mr. Johnson. Was the bayonet on the rifle?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; not when I seen it.

Mr. Johnson. He was using it in his hands?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; I thought he was fooling with the boy at first, and he stuck him with the bayonet. I think he stuck him in the leg. I was on the front end of the car going by at the time, a distance I presume of 30 feet away.

Mr. Johnson. Was the soldier in uniform?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. Just tell us now everything that you saw there.

Mr. Porter. That was all I seen there.

Mr. Johnson. What was the boy doing that provoked the

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soldier to stab him?

Mr. Porter. I didn't see him do anything.

Mr. Johnson. If he had been doing anything you would have seen it?

Mr. Porter. I certainly would, without he had done it prior to my approaching there. I could see all the way up the Avenue there, and there wasn't over ten people on that side of the street in that block.

Mr. Johnson. What did the boy do after he was stabbed?

Mr. Porter. He hit him--- and I would have hit him myself.

Mr. Johnson. He hit the soldier, but that was after he was stabbed?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir. It was a cowardly act. I have been in the Army myself, and it is something I wouldn't do. Any the man the size that fellow was ought to have been able to subdue that boy without using a gun or bayonet.

Mr. Johnson. But if I understand you the boy wasn't doing anything he didn't have a right to?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; that was my statement. If he had done anything he had done it before I came in sight.

Mr. Johnson. And what time elapsed between the time you came in sight of them and the time that the soldier stabbed him?

Mr. Porter. I presume a minute.

Mr. Johnson. So if the boy had been doing anything to warrant the soldier to stab him, he had desisted from it.

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from whatever he had been doing, and was strictly behaving himself when he was stabbed?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; the boy was standing still when I first seen him, and the soldier was at least twelve feet away from him.

Mr. Johnson. Then the soldier advanced upon him, or the boy advanced upon the soldier?

Mr. Porter. The soldier advanced upon the boy. Evidently the boy didn't know the soldier was approaching him at that time, and when he turned around the soldier was within a distance I presume of two or three feet of him.

Mr. Johnson. And stabbed him with the bayonet?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; stuck him in the leg.

Mr. Johnson. When you say you don't know whether the boy had been doing anything unlawful before you saw him, that statement is made out ^{of} an abundance of caution upon your part and not upon the theory that he was doing anything?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Did you know the boy was an errand boy carrying a pair of pantaloons?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I didn't.

Mr. Cooper. Did you see whether the soldier had a bottle of any kind or had been drinking then?

Mr. Porter. Well, he had that appearance.

Mr. Cooper. What do you mean?

Mr. Porter. Intoxicated, slightly intoxicated.

Mr. Cooper. The soldier acted as if he were intoxicated.

You were about thirty feet from him?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir--- that is, when the stabbing first took place. Prior to that, when I first seen them, I was 150 feet away.

Mr. Cooper. But when the stabbing took place you were about thirty feet away, right close up to them?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. You saw all of it distinctly?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. There was no chance of your being mistaken about any of it?

Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. You characterized it as a cowardly act.

Mr. Porter. I did, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Did you learn the name of either of them?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I didn't. I mentioned the matter to one of the officers the next day.

Mr. Cooper. An Army officer?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir, and he said they knowed all they cared about knowing about it. I don't know what his name was.

Mr. Cooper. He said they knew all they wanted to know about it?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Were you called as a witness?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I was not.

Mr. Cooper. You were not called as a witness?

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Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Why not?

Mr. Porter. That is more than I know.

Mr. Cooper. You told an officer in this city, a commanding officer---- some officer---

Mr. Porter (Interposing). He was a lieutenant.

Mr. Cooper. Do you know what his name was?

Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Where were you when you told him?

Mr. Porter. I told him on the corner of Illinois and --- the corner of Broadway and Collinsville Avenue. He got on the front end of the car.

Mr. Cooper. You have been in the Army yourself?

Mr. Porter. I have; yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. You know an officer, a lieutenant, when you see him?

Mr. Porter. I do, from generals down.

Mr. Cooper. And how long were you in the Army?

Mr. Porter. Nine years.

Mr. Cooper. The regular Army of the United States?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. And you told this officer that you had seen this soldier intoxicated, in a cowardly way stab that boy with a bayonet?

Mr. Porter. I didn't relate it in that way.

Mr. Cooper. What did you say?

Mr. Porter. I told him I seen one of his men stab

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that boy last night. "Well", he said, "I don't want to know anything more about it. I know all I want to know." I took it for granted he had all the evidence he cared about ascertaining.

Mr. Cooper. Did he secure your name?

Mr. Porter. He did not.

Mr. Cooper. Did he ask you where you lived?

Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Did he ask you any questions?

Mr. Porter. He didn't speak any more to me.

Mr. Cooper. And then when they came to have the military inquiry here, or elsewhere, about the killing of this boy, you were never called as a witness?

Mr. Porter. I was not; no, sir.

Mr. Cooper. That's all.

Mr. Porter. When did you say this was, what time; before or after the July riot?

Mr. Porter. It was after the May riot. I was not here in East St. Louis during the July riot. I was on vacation.

Mr. Cooper. You were here after the July riot?

Mr. Porter. I was here; yes, sir, but I say I was not here during the July riot.

Mr. Cooper. But wasn't this stabbing--- what day was that?

Mr. Porter. There was soldiers here during the May riot and soldiers here during the July riot.

Mr. Cooper. Tell, where was it you saw this boy stabbed?

2562

831 Mr. Porter. It was close to the corner of Divison and Collinsville Avenue. I presume it is in the neighborhood of thirty feet of the corner, maybe not that much.

Mr. Foster. What time did you come back after the July riot?

Mr. Porter. I came back from Colorado--- I left Colorado on July 9th.

Mr. Cooper. Was it after you got back?

Mr. Porter. I hadn't got away yet then. This was during the May riot I have reference to.

Mr. Cooper. When did you go to Colorado?

Mr. Porter. I went to Colorado on the 24th day of June.

Mr. Cooper. And you came back when?

Mr. Porter. The 9th day of July.

Mr. Cooper. Did you go to work for the company then?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir. I was working for them before that.

Mr. Cooper. It was after you got back that you saw that stabbing, wasn't it?

Mr. Porter. I may be mistaken with the two riots, but I am pretty positive it was the May riot.

Mr. Cooper. But the testimony all is it was after the July riot, after you got back here.

Mr. Porter. Well, I am pretty positive it was after the May riot. I may be confused in the two riots.

Mr. Cooper. You may be confused as to the two riots, but you are not confused as to the incident?

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Mr. Porter. The May riot I didn't know that had taken place until the following morning. When I went to work I was told about that. That is the first I knew about that May riot.

Mr. Johnson. But you are absolutely sure as to where this thing happened?

Mr. Porter. I am absolutely certain it happened about thirty feet this side of Division Street on Collinsville Avenue.

Mr. Johnson. And you are absolutely certain as to what time of day it happened?

Mr. Porter. Well, not absolutely certain. It was in the evening, either 7.45 or 8.45, I am not certain, for I was due in St. Louis on the hour.

Mr. Johnson. And you are absolutely certain that the man who did the stabbing was in soldier's clothes?

Mr. Porter. I am, yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. You can't be mistaken about that?

Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Johnson. And you can't be mistaken that the victim was a boy, a young fellow?

Mr. Porter. I presume he was 16 or 17 years old.

Mr. Johnson. And you are not mistaken that you told a lieutenant as to the incident?

Mr. Porter. I am not.

Mr. Johnson. And that he said he didn't want to know anything about it?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Johnson. Now then, if you are mistaken as to when it occurred, you are not mistaken as to the incident over which

2564

we have just gone?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I am not.

Mr. Cooper. That's all.

Mr. Foster. When did you go to work when you came back?

Mr. Porter. I went to work on July eleven. I was just merely on a vacation.

Mr. Foster. But, as stated by Mr. Johnson, you are not mistaken as to the incident?

Mr. Porter. I am not mistaken as to the incident. I will admit I may be mistaken according to the two riots, but I am not mistaken as to the incident.

Mr. Foster. You are sure you saw it?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Was this man's name McCafferty?

Mr. Porter. I don't know the man's name; but I think the name appeared in the paper as McCafferty, if I am not mistaken.

Mr. Johnson. Did you see an account of it in the papers the next day after you saw it?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; I just read the headlines of it. I seldom ever read the newspapers, only the editorial and sporting columns.

Mr. Foss. I want to ask you, was the boy all alone, or were there other boys there with him?

Mr. Porter. He was alone--- appeared to me. There were a couple of young fellows about ten or twelve feet on the north side of him. Whether they were with him or not I don't know.

Mr. Foss. Was he walking or standing still?

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Mr. Porter. He was standing still then.

Mr. Foss. You say the soldier ran a bayonet into him?

Mr. Porter. Stuck him in the leg.

Mr. Foss. What did the boy do then?

Mr. Porter. Well, he hit him. It appeared to me he hit him.

Mr. Foss. Did the boy yell, holler?

Mr. Porter. That I couldn't say.

Mr. Foss. You didn't hear anything?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I was on the closed part of the car.

Mr. Foss. And the boy hit him over the head?

Mr. Porter. It looked to me like he hit him in the face.

Mr. Foss. With his fist?

Mr. Porter. Well, that I couldn't say, whether he had his hand open or shut.

Mr. Foss. What happened after that?

Mr. Porter. There was a couple of other soldiers came over there. They had quarters in the Arcade Building, diagonally across the street. A couple of them came over there, and by that time I was out of sight. I had to keep going. That was all I seen of it.

Mr. Foss. You don't know whether ~~she~~^{they} took the boy away or not?

Mr. Porter. No, sir; I don't

Mr. Foss. You don't know how much of a wound it caused?

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Mr. Porter. No, sir. If I had had time I would have stopped, but under the conditions, I couldn't.

Mr. Cooper. You have read that the boy died?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir; I heard the boy died.

Mr. Cooper. How long have you been in the employ of the street car company?

Mr. Porter. It will be a year on the 5th day of December,--- for this company.

Mr. Cooper. When did you come to East St. Louis?

Mr. Porter. I came here and went to work--- well, I came here on the 22nd day of November, 1916.

Mr. Cooper. Where from?

Mr. Porter. I came here from Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Mr. Cooper. Where were you before then?

Mr. Porter. I worked in St. Louis.

Mr. Cooper. And before then?

Mr. Porter. I was in Washington. I was in San Francisco.

Mr. Cooper. You were in Washington? What were you doing in Washington?

Mr. Porter. I was helping erect the wireless station there at Arlington.

Mr. Cooper. The wireless station?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. Over on the other side of the Potomac?

Mr. Porter. Yes, sir.

Mr. Cooper. How long were you there?

Mr. Porter. I was there, I presume, close on to ⁴⁵ days.

Mr. Cooper. Whom were you working for?

Mr. Porter. I was working for a man named McCartee.

Mr. Cooper. Who was putting up this wireless station?

Mr. Porter. There was another man over him. Who he was I don't know. I never did get to see him.

Mr. Johnson. You may stand aside.

Mr. Cooper. I want to ask Mr. Porter one more question. The boy who was stabbed had no weapon in his hand, did he?

Mr. Porter. No, sir.

Mr. Cooper. He struck him with his fist or open hand?

Mr. Porter. I couldn't say whether he had his fist closed or not.

Mr. Cooper. But he had nothing else but his fist or open hand?

Mr. Porter. That was all.

Mr. Johnson. You may stand aside.

Mr. Raker. I want to ask Mr. Kerr a question or two.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT OF HARRY KERR.

Mr. Raker. Mr. Kerr, there has been some testimony here about a notice being sent out. So there could be no confusion about it, I asked you this morning here if you
833 would get one of those notices. Have you got one?

Mr. Kerr. Yes, sir (handing paper to Mr. Raker).

Mr. Raker. This is a copy of the notice that was referred to by yourself in your testimony?

Mr. Kerr. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And also a copy of the notice referred to by the witness who just left the witness stand?

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Mr. Kerr. Mr. Towers, yes, sir.

Mr. Baker. If there is no objection, I would like to offer this in evidence by putting it in the record. It is dated East St. Louis, Ill., May 23, 1917.

Mr. Foster. Are you going to read it? If you are going to read it for the record---

Mr. Baker. Well, I can.

Mr. Foster. The only thing is, I thought if he said that was the notice, ^{unless} ~~and~~ you want to read it, it can just go into the record.

Mr. Baker. Yes, just let it go in.

(The paper referred to follows:

11/2/17

PM

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Central Trades

Affiliated with the American
Federation of Labor



and Labor Union

Meets Second and Fourth Tuesdays
309 Collinsville Avenue

EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL., May 23/1917.

To the Delegates
to the Central Trades
and Labor Union:

Greeting:-

The immigration of the Southern Negro into our city for the past eight months has reached the point where drastic action must be taken if we intend to work and live peaceably in this community.

Since this influx of undesirable negroes has started no less than ten thousand have come into this locality.

These men are being used to the detriment of our white citizens by some of the capitalists and a few of the real estate owners.

On next Monday evening the entire body of delegates to the Central Trades and Labor Unions will call upon the Mayor and City Council and demand that they take some action to retard this growing menace and also devise a way to get rid of a certain portion of those who are already here.

This is not a protest against the negro who has been a long resident of East St. Louis, and is a law-abiding citizen.

We earnestly request that you be in attendance on next Monday evening at 8:00 o'clock, at 137 Collinsville Avenue, where we will meet and then go to the City Hall.

This is more important than any local meeting, so be sure you are there.

Fraternally,

CENTRAL TRADES & LABOR UNION,

EDW. F. MASON, Sec'y.

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STATEMENT OF ALOIS TOWERS (RESUMED)

Mr. Raker. Now the statement that you gave to one of the committee, Mr. Cooper, when you started in on your examination, was that the organizations preferred to were for the purpose of business?

Mr. Towers. A business proposition, insofar as taking the negro into the organization and bringing up his standard.

Mr. Raker. Now there isn't any statement in the by-laws, rules or regulations or the constitution of this organization, the main organization or any of its branches, that refers to the negro at all, is there?

Mr. Towers. Yes, it says that the organized labor movement shall not--- or our movement--- shall not discriminate against race, creed, or nationality.

Mr. Raker. Then it does not refer by name to the negro?

Mr. Towers. No.

Mr. Raker. There is no distinction made in any way, shape or form?

Mr. Towers. Absolutely none.

Mr. Raker. And it is organized for a much broader field than just simply business?

Mr. Towers. The organized labor movement--- I qualified that before--- is organized, and it is the only institution that can develop the process of the Nation insofar as labor is concerned in this age of commercialism, when great

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hories are employed by one man. It shortens the hours of labor and gives them more liberty in life ^{in the shape of wages.} It gives them ^{the opportunity} of developing better citizenship in our Nation or any nation.

Mr. Baker. It is organized then for a much broader and wider field than just simply commercialism?

Mr. Towers. Absolutely.

Mr. Baker. And if you intend to convey to Mr. Cooper that that was the purpose for which it was organized, you want to now state---

Mr. Towers (Interposing). I want to qualify it further.

Mr. Baker. It is organized for fraternalism?

Mr. Towers. For fraternalism.

Mr. Baker. Among the members?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker. That fraternalism ^{is such} ~~of the sort~~ that you call each other brothers?

Mr. Towers. Brothers, yes, sir. I apply that to a
834 black member of my organization.

Mr. Baker. Well then, going back again, referring to your answer to Mr. Cooper again, you didn't give it to him that it was not only organized for what you have told me up to this last question, for business, but for all functions that would uplift men connected with the organization, but it was organized for fraternal relations existing between the men.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir; it naturally developed fraternal

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relations.

Mr. Raker. And to the extent that you call each other brother?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And you try to recognize that every member that belongs to that organization is a brother in community strength and humanity?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. In trying to make the Government in which you are interested better?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. All governments, city, county and national?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. Now, you fraternize when you meet?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. You have banquets?

Mr. Towers. Some organizations have banquets; others don't feel that they can afford it.

Mr. Raker. When they can afford it, they have banquets?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And at such times no one can attend unless he is a member of the organization?

Mr. Towers. No, sir; he is not admitted to the meeting hall unless he is a member.

Mr. Raker. The doors are closed?

Mr. Towers. The doors are closed, a doorkeeper is placed there and a member without a paid-up card in the past

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work can't enter.

Mr. Raker. So then your statement is that you thus believe in associating with the colored people in all the functions provided for by your statement, the business relations, the fraternizing, the social relations, the upbuilding of the community in which you live, and making conditions better generally?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir. In other words let me state it briefly, the organized labor movement, organized---

Mr. Raker (Interposing). Don't repeat that again. I will give you plenty of time to repeat it.

Mr. Cooper. Wait a moment, Mr. Chairman. I do think that the witness, in view of that question being put in that way, ought to be allowed to answer it. The "social relations" as incorporated in the question might mean one thing to one man and another thing to another man, and the witness started to give his answer, and I think this answer in fairness to him ought to be allowed.

Mr. Raker. All right.

Mr. Towers. I was going to state, Mr. Raker, that the organized labor movement is organized to upbuild the working class as a class, better the working conditions, shorten the hours of time, secure more wages, which is more life, so they can school their children longer-- that applies to both white and black--- give them better opportunities in this Nation than their fathers had, so that they will develop into better citizens morally, mentally and in the best interests of humanity. And in the organization most of them

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make efforts to visit their members when sick, assist them whenever possible in securing employment, and do everything that is possible to make their life a little more worth living.

Mr. Raker. To see that we have better school conditions?

Mr. Towers. Better school conditions and greater opportunities.

Mr. Raker. For the children?

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Mr. Towers. For the children, going longer to school.

Mr. Raker. To see that they have better housing conditions?

Mr. Towers. Better sanitary conditions.

Mr. Raker. And better housing conditions?

Mr. Towers. Better housing conditions; yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And to see that they have good streets?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. To see that the conditions at the plants are so ^{that} the men can get the best out of life?

Mr. Towers. Absolutely. That is our aim and we are continually at it. As I said, the men well developed and understanding the labor movement makes it a religion. He will die for it.

Mr. Raker. Well then, there is no distinction as to color in the organizations?

Mr. Towers. Not in our organizations. I can't speak for all organizations. There are many organizations, and there may be some that make the distinction. We have negro

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members. I pointed out that I also know that the Miners have negro members. I also know in East St. Louis here that the Teamsters have some 75 or 80 members right in this locality where this race feeling has asserted itself so emphatically. And many other organizations, I believe, have negroes within their membership.

Mr. Raker. Well, the members have gatherings outside of the lodge rooms do they not?

Mr. Towers. Some of the organizations; yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. Of the families?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. It is quite an effort to have the families to meet and get acquainted, and have the children come together, of the members of the Association?

Mr. Towers. They have Labor Day celebrations.

Mr. Raker. Outside of that?

Mr. Towers. They have picnics by social organizations, inviting other organizations to participate. Occasionally some local union will give a banquet for its own members exclusively. They may invite a speaker from some other organization.

Mr. Raker. Do they ever invite the ladies?

Mr. Towers. Sometimes it is given to the families and their wives.

Mr. Raker. That is done quite frequently, isn't it?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. So that brings the members of the organization, their wives and their families together as one great

family?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And that is one of the purposes?

Mr. Towers. One of their functions.

Mr. Raker. One of the humane functions. I am in earnest about that, because I so thoroughly believe it. Nothing can do more good than to take the man away from his daily toil for a little while, that he might take his wife and children and meet his neighbor or fellow-worker and his wife and children, and have a good social meeting and gathering.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. That promotes better conditions; it promotes good feeling.

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. It promotes better laws?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir; it promotes a better understanding.

Mr. Raker. How long have you been really acquainted in and about ^{East} St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. I have been down here every two weeks for the last five years. I have been in and through here and have worked here for many years, ever since I was born, all my life.

Mr. Raker. Well, it may be fairly stated then that you are well acquainted with East St. Louis, not only the large plants, and about the plants, but the streets and ^{the} businesses and the general work that is being done here?

Mr. Towers. I only know of the institutions that are

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836 here. A great many of them I couldn't call myself well acquainted with in East St. Louis. I have been through, back and forth here, for 35 years.

Mr. Raker. You have traded in this town?

Mr. Towers. Very little.

Mr. Raker. You have been into the stores?

Mr. Towers. Very little. I trade mostly in my own town, Bellville. I lived in St. Louis for a number of years and traded over there. I don't know that I have had any business dealings in East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker. Have you ever been in the saloons here?

Mr. Towers. I have been in a saloon occasionally in East St. Louis--- few of them.

Mr. Raker. You have been to the City Hall?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir; I have been at the City Hall.

Mr. Raker. You are acquainted with the justices of the peace during the last nine months?

Mr. Towers. No, sir; not acquainted with any local justice here. I am acquainted with the Mayor and the chief of police.

Mr. Raker. Are you acquainted with any of the policemen?

Mr. Towers. No, I am not acquainted with a single police officer of the present or past force.

Mr. Raker. Are you acquainted with any of the bankers of East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. I am acquainted with one.

Mr. Raker. Just one?

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Mr. Towers. With one, Mr. Gillespie.

Mr. Baker. Are you personally acquainted with any of the retail merchants, the drygoods merchants?

Mr. Towers. A few.

Mr. Baker. How many?

Mr. Towers. I am acquainted with one.

Mr. Baker. Have you talked to any of them prior to July 3rd as to the conditions existing in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. No, sir.

Mr. Baker. How many of the merchants, the grocery men, do you know?

Mr. Towers. I don't know the grocery men in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker. Then prior to July 3rd you talked to none of the grocers?

Mr. Towers. I have talked to none of the business men in East St. Louis. In fact, I have a small acquaintance among the business men in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker. That would include now all of the businesses in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir. I am acquainted with some of the street car officials. I am acquainted,--- that is, I remember Mr. Nulsen of years ago, of the Malleable Iron Works. I am not acquainted with any other heads of industries here.

Mr. Baker. I am now talking about the men in business in East St. Louis, merchants, the little merchants, big merchants, shoe merchants--- do you know any of them?

Mr. Towers. I know one shoe merchant.

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Mr. Raker. No others? Do you know any of the barbers?

Mr. Towers. I know one or two barbers.

Mr. Raker. Well, did you have any conversation with these barbers prior to July 3rd?

Mr. Towers. No, sir.

Mr. Raker. Or the hotel men or the clerks in the hotels?

Mr. Towers. No, sir; I haven't talked with the hotel --- I was in and out of the Illinois Hotel during the time of the development of the feeling of the riot, but I never talked to the clerk or the proprietor.

Mr. Raker. Well, did you talk to any of the jewelers or watchmakers or shoemakers or shoe store men, between January 1st, 1917, and the 3rd of July?

Mr. Towers. I don't remember, to my knowledge, of talking to--- engaging in personal conversation with any of the business men in East St. Louis for the last six months.

Mr. Raker. Well, you call the "business men" now all these that I have named and their clerks too?

Mr. Towers. Yes, and their clerks.

Mr. Raker. Then, to make the statement short, from January 1st, 1917, until after, say, the 3rd of July of this year, you have practically talked to but two or three of the people of East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. Oh, no; I wouldn't say that. I have talked with the labor boys down here.

Mr. Raker. I am talking about these men that I called your attention to.

Mr. Towers. These business people I don't remember of engaging in conversation with any of the business men in the last six months.

Mr. Raker. Well, you include in the business people the clerks?

Mr. Towers. The merchants and proprietors of stores of any kind.

Mr. Raker. And their clerks?

Mr. Towers. The clerks, I call them laboring people.

Mr. Raker. Well, I asked you if you talked with any of the clerks of these business men here in East St. Louis.

Mr. Towers. I don't remember, Mr. Raker. I don't think I have.

Mr. Raker. During the time I have named?

Mr. Towers. I don't think so. I don't think I have. I may have. I don't just remember.

Mr. Raker. I would like to have you think about it. Think the thing over now and refresh your mind.

Mr. Towers. There is a couple of clerks that attend the meetings of the central body. I don't know that I have engaged in personal conversation with them.

Mr. Raker. But if you did talk to them, you don't remember?

Mr. Towers. I don't remember; no. If I have, and the occasion is called to my mind, possibly I may remember it.

Mr. Raker. Have you talked to any of the waiters, either men or women, during the same time, about the conditions in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. No, I don't think so.

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Mr. Raker. Have you talked with any of the saloon men, the proprietors of the saloon, or the bartenders, or their assistants, in regard to these conditions in East St. Louis between January 1st, 1917, and the 3rd day of July, 1917?

Mr. Towers. I don't remember that I have, any of the people you mention.

Mr. Raker. Well, could you say that there are any of those men particularly now that you talked with at any time during the time I have named?

Mr. Towers. I can't remember that I have, Mr. Raker. If my attention would be called to any specific cases, I might remember them.

Mr. Raker. Now I have tried to name--- and I have included in my questions, although not specifically,--- every business in East St. Louis outside of the manufacturing plants, such as the grocery stores, the corner grocery stores, the shoe shop, the barber shop, the furniture shops, the hardware store, the hotels, the saloon, the millinery stores, the jewelry store, and in fact I have tried to, by general name, call your attention to all of them--- also the provision stores, the butcher shops--- and I take it now that you have talked with none of these men or women or their assistants in regard to the conditions in East St. Louis from January 1st to July 3rd, 1917?

Mr. Towers. No, I haven't. I have an acquaintance--- my acquaintance with those people you have mentioned is very limited in East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker. Your acquaintance is limited. You don't

know them and haven't talked with them?

Mr. Towers. I don't know them and haven't talked with them.

Mr. Raker. Now what was the condition of mind and the feeling of merchants in East St. Louis relative to the conditions in East St. Louis from January the 1st of this year to July the 3rd?

Mr. Towers. That would be hard for me to answer, Mr. Raker.

Mr. Raker. Well, can't you answer it right off the reel now?

Mr. Towers. No, I can only surmise it.

Mr. Raker. You said you don't know. I want to be just as fair and give you an opportunity now to square this thing right up. You don't know them; you haven't met them; you haven't talked with them; you haven't heard--- did you hear anybody else say what they said?

Mr. Towers. Oh, I have heard--- I couldn't come to East St. Louis without hearing the negro question discussed on the street cars.

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Mr. Raker. On the back of the street cars?

Mr. Towers. On the back of the street cars?

Mr. Raker. Among these people?

Mr. Towers. Well, I didn't get among those people.

Mr. Raker. Now listen, let's get it plain so I may make a general question. You haven't talked with these people, you don't know them?

Mr. Towers. I wouldn't say I have not. I said I don't

remember of having talked to them. I may have engaged in conversation with one occasionally. I strike up conversations sometimes on the street cars, the back of a car--- it might be a merchant,--- well-dressed people occasionally. I don't know whether they were merchants or clerks.

Mr. Raker. Well now, from your knowledge you haven't talked to them?

Mr. Towers. No, sir.

Mr. Raker. Then you don't know the attitude or the feeling of the merchants relative to the conditions existing in East St. Louis between the dates I have named, namely January 1st of this year and July the 3rd?

Mr. Towers. No; I can surmise their feeling.

Mr. Raker. Oh, well now---

Mr. Towers (Interposing). I don't know, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Raker. Well, that is the way to do it. How that would apply the same to the shoe men, the shoe shops, so far as you know individually?

Mr. Towers. So far as I know.

Mr. Raker. So far it would apply to all the others that I have designated, so far as you know, of the talk and of the feeling of the people of East St. Louis relative to the conditions here between the time I have named?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. That would be very nearly half of all of the population of East St. Louis, wouldn't it?

Mr. Towers. I don't think so. I don't think that the clerks and the business men that you have mentioned---

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have referred to--- would be over twenty per cent of the population of East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker. All right, I will take another step: their families included, of which you didn't talk to?

Mr. Towers. No.

Mr. Raker. Or any of the members of their families?

Mr. Towers. No.

Mr. Raker. Now take these men, all of them, and the women in business of all characters I have named, and their families and relatives which I have named, whom you have not talked to, would be pretty nearly half of the population, wouldn't it?

Mr. Towers. No, not in my judgment, not over 20 per cent of the population. That would be my judgment, pertaining to this locality.

Mr. Raker. Well, were there any arrests during the last year and ^ahalf of white men for hold-ups?

Mr. Towers. Within the last year and a half for hold-ups? I don't know, Mr. Raker.

Mr. Raker. How many men within the last year and a half, white men, in East St. Louis, have been charged with crime?

Mr. Towers. Well, that would be hard for me to tell. I don't know.

Mr. Raker. Did you ever hear?

Mr. Towers. The only reference of crime that I would have in mind is what I see in the evening papers, when I pick up the paper in the evening.

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Mr. Raker. Did you ever hear or read it?

Mr. Towers. Yes.

Mr. Raker. About the crimes being committed by white men in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. Oh, yes; there was a terrible crime committed by I don't know whom, but presumably by some kind of a white foreigner--- or at least a white foreigner was tried for it. I think that brings it to my mind. I don't just remember--- it was about two or three years ago. A little foreigner boy was beheaded. His head was found in one part of the town and the body was found in another part; somewhere in East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker. A white man was supposed to have done that?

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Mr. Towers. A white man was tried for it. It was supposed to have been committed in one of the lowest dives in East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker. Well, outside of this homicide were there other homicides--- was the white man acquitted?

Mr. Towers. The white man was acquitted.

Mr. Raker. Were there any other charges of homicide by white men within the last year and a half, from September, 1916, until up to July 3rd?

Mr. Towers. Homicides? I don't recall. I can't recall.

Mr. Raker. Did you hear of any homicides being committed by white men during that period?

Mr. Towers. I don't recall of any cases. This here one case that I mentioned is the one that has stood out so

prominent, because of the terror and the horror of the crime.

Mr. Baker. Now, did you hear any complaint about thugs, white thugs--- I am relating to white men exclusively now--- investing East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. Why, Mr. Chairman, I believe that that is generally known. I live at the county-seat of this county and very often I have seen officers from East St. Louis bring up on the street cars both white and colored, handcuffed together, as high as seven or eight at one time on a street car. Now what their crimes were I don't know. I presume hold-up men or something more serious than common drunkenness.

Mr. Baker. Well, have you heard it discussed and repeated that thugs, white thugs, were operating in East St. Louis, during the period I have named?

Mr. Towers. I have heard it stated that it is not safe to be on the streets prior to the riot--- that it wasn't safe for a man to be on the streets of East St. Louis after dark; and I have visited East St. Louis and I have never stayed later than 8 o'clock in East St. Louis when I had my wife with me, for the last five years. That is the general reputation East St. Louis has.

Mr. Baker. That is by virtue of the white thugs investing East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. By the general character of what goes on after dark in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker. Now I tried to make my question--- I have asked it two or three times. I don't want to be accused of repeating, but I haven't got the answer.

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Mr. Towers. Let me try and answer it.

Mr. Baker. Did you understand me?

Mr. Towers. You asked me if that is because ^{the} of thugs
in East St. Louis?

Mr. Baker. No, that isn't the purpose of my question.
I put in and emphasized "white" thugs.

Mr. Towers. It was because of the--- I can't say--- I
can't answer the question the way you put it. It was because
of the general lawlessness that went on after lark in East
St. Louis, by the criminal element, both white and black.

Mr. Baker. All right, I will get back now again.

Did you hear it discussed that there were many white
thugs in East St. Louis during the time I have named?

Mr. Towers. I have heard that stated hundreds of times.

Mr. Baker. That there were white yeggmen in East St.
Louis?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker. That these white loafers invested these
saloons in East St. Louis?

Mr. Towers. I heard it so often that I would ^{not} visit---
wouldn't enter the saloons in this town.

Mr. Baker. That it was dangerous for a man to visit
certain parts of the town, by virtue of the white thugs,
640 yeggmen and loafers that invested these saloons. Is that
right?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir; I have heard that.

Mr. Baker. That was generally known and understood

by the citizens of East St. Louis, that men would not permit their families to go on the streets at night or in the evening?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker. Was any complaint made by virtue of drunkenness in East St. Louis by white men--- that is, drunkenness of the white men?

Mr. Towers. I don't know that complaints have been made to the authorities, but it would be nothing to see common drunks scattered in any part of the town at any time, any hour of the day or night.

Mr. Baker. That was discussed and was quite a subject of thought among you people?

Mr. Towers. Well, I presume that that thought was among everyone in and around this community. East St. Louis, it is sad to say, has suffered from that element. I don't know the cause of it. I feel that the mob thuggery of St. Louis makes this their hiding place at times. They run over here for a short time to operate and sneak back into the big city. I think St. Louis dumps thugs here at times. I can relate an instance that you may be interested in with respect to thuggery. There is an old citizen of this county, a man eighty years old, a retired coal operator, that has been held up and robbed on a street car twice within the last year, I would say--- or less. His name is Mull, a citizen of our town. He was relieved of his purse here some months ago, and only a few weeks ago he was jostled on the back end of the car and again robbed, and he caught the robber in the act, chased him with the assistance of others, and they ran him

down and captured him in some store, I believe, where he took refuge. Three of them performed the hold-up on him, ^{the} a pick-pocket game. That is twice that old citizen suffered within a year, I think will be the time. He is a citizen of our town, ^{passing through} ~~coming to~~ East St. Louis on the street cars.

Mr. Raker. Now, in addition to what I have called your attention to, had it been discussed with the people of your acquaintance that corruption existed in the political atmosphere in East St. Louis among the white men? I want to drive all my questions now to whites, so there can be no question of color.

Mr. Towers. Oh, I have heard it expressed for years that East St. Louis has been a bed of political corruption.

Mr. Raker. This related to white men, the buying and selling of votes, using the drunks to vote?

Mr. Towers. Using--- well, I don't want to say that.

Mr. Raker. Would they get them drunk?

Mr. Towers. Yes.

Mr. Raker. And pay them for their votes?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. And bring them in here, these thugs, loafers, yeggmen, get them to register and get them to vote?

Mr. Towers. Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker. Now was there any discussion among your acquaintance in regard to the question of your justice courts in all its phases--- that is, the various courts being inefficient?

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Mr. Towers. I believe that that was so generally understood that most anyone would grin when you would mention a justice court. *I can relate* an instance that may assist you on that.

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About three years ago, I think it was, there was a foreigner - I judge him to be a man about thirty five years of age - came to see me, a citizen of Bellville brought him down to see me. I asked him what he wanted. ^{He said} He wanted to get to ~~West~~ St. Louis and he didn't want to buy any money. He wanted me to take him to some members of his organization. He spoke broken. He said he was a Mason or an Odd fellow, I forget which. I wasn't so well acquainted with many of that order, but I immediately tried to locate some. Finally I found a rule buyer who was a Mason, or an Odd fellow - we will call it Odd Fellow to shorten the story. I took him up to this man and he referred me to ~~xxxxxxx~~ a cigar manufacturer and had me take him over to him. I didn't listen to their conversation, but after he left the cigar store he showed me a half a dollar or a dollar, I forget which, which the man had given him, that he had borrowed on the strength of his membership and was going to return it. He wanted to go right to ~~West~~ St. Louis on the cars without stopping. The chief of police had ordered him to leave Bellville. He was released from a thirty day sentence in the workhouse. He cried when he told me the circumstances. He said that thirty days prior to that time he ^{had} left St. Louis. He worked three or four weeks steady every day and Sunday, and had come over to West St. Louis to see the sights and for a little high life, as he put it. He had \$45. in his clothes. He visited the saloons, was attracted by

the women in the rear; and visited the rear, was robbed of his \$45., his hat and coat and went into the saloon keeper and made a hollar about being robbed; was locked up and sent to Bellville and given thirty days, and he didn't want to stop in East St. Louis. He was afraid to stop on his way back. He seemed to me to be a very thrifty fellow. At first I thought possibly he was an imposter, but when he went about getting this piece of change so honorably, I was inclined to believe his story; and I have heard in a general way many just such stories.

Mr. Raker: Well, then it was discussed that these officials were not straight?

Mr. Towers: I have heard that statement before, yes.

Mr. Raker: That they grafted?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Raker: That they gave the thug an advantage; if a thug or a tough or a yeggman came out and made good with some of his friends, it was winked at and he was given the advantage of it?

Mr. Towers: So much so, I believe, that nearly everyone understood and accepted that condition and that a decent citizen felt that he might as well stay in the back yard in East St. Louis. That is the general impression that has been left of East St. Louis.

Mr. Raker: That would make a man who was trying to protect himself and family and earn a living for them feel as though it was a pretty close call whether he

could keep out of their clutches, if he walked down the street or the place where the satellites of these various officers might have been?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: Was about the constables, if you have them here, have you any, or are they all marshals?

Mr. Towers: I don't know so much about that.

842 I am not a citizen here, you know, and there are a lot of things here that I don't know about.

Mr. Baker: But you have been going through here so many years. Was it regard to the police officers, how were they looked upon?

Mr. Towers: Well, I have heard the whole department accused of being a bunch of grafters.

Mr. Baker: Well, was it so pronounced that it was generally discussed among your acquaintances that they were a whole bunch of grafters?

Mr. Towers: I believe it was so fully discussed that every one rather accepted that to be the condition that prevailed in East St. Louis.

Mr. Baker: Did this reign of lawlessness and terror have any effect upon the people of this community, those that you are acquainted with now in your acquaintance and relatives?

Mr. Towers: I don't know just the effect it had on the immediate people in this community. I know that out in the county and surrounding territory there are many people that wouldn't stay near here any longer after dark than they were compelled to. I know that I have

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visited East St. Louis friends and relatives in East St. Louis and never would stay later than eight o'clock in the evening, when I had my family with me.

Mr. Baker: Now you had a riot here on the 28th of May, on the 29th of May?

Mr. Towers: Yes, sir.

Mr. Baker: You had a riot again on the 2nd of July. You have told us now about the conditions prevailing exclusively, now that I have called your attention to it, with the white population, the white officials, the conduct of the white men. I will ask you whether or not that lawlessness, that want of prosecution of the law, that entire breaking down of the law, that character of men that frequented these places, the fact of these men being found on the streets drunk day or night, or at any time, so that the people couldn't walk up and down the street without having to walk around them or step over them; the fact that graft was charged to the justice's court; the fact that the police department was discussed as to being corrupt and inefficient, had anything to do with the riots that occurred upon these two days.

Mr. Towers: I feel that it may have had something to do with it. I believe ~~the~~ generally the better citizenship in East St. Louis were desperate. That is my belief.

Mr. Baker: They wanted to clean them up.

Mr. Towers: They would like to have seen a general cleaning up, and were determined to have it.

Mr. Baker: That is all

~~Mr. Baker~~

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Mr. Johnson: The Committee will stand adjourned until two o'clock to-morrow morning.

(Whereupon, at 5:20 o'clock p.m., the Committee adjourned until 10:00 A.M. Saturday, November 3, 1917.)
