Railroad Strike or Federal Inquiry?

Public and Press Demand Peaceful Settlement of Railway Wage Controversy by Interstate Commerce Commission or by Arbitration
TO THE PUBLIC:

In the following pages are reprinted some of the editorials which have been published in newspapers and periodicals throughout the United States, on the railway wage issue, settlement of which by the Interstate Commerce Commission or by arbitration under the Newlands law, has been proposed by the railroads and rejected by the brotherhoods of train service employes.

ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN RAILWAYS
GIVE COMMISSION POWER TO ACT

ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS, DENVER, JULY 12, 1916

It seems incredible in this day of enlightenment that there should be even the thought of a resort to a general railroad strike in the nation to settle a difference that exists regarding hours and wages between the employer and employed.

Such a course as threatens would mean enormous loss to the whole country and resolve itself into a war of exhaustion. At the end of it nothing would be gained which could not have been obtained by peaceable means.

The question is an economic one. It is not personal to capital or labor. The whole country has interest.

The four brotherhoods on the one side and the heads of the railroad corporations on the other, after all are but an inconsequential minority. The ninety millions are the ones requiring first consideration.

It is not necessary to go into the Justness or unjustness of the demands of labor or the stand adopted by capital—the great question to be borne in mind is that the issue is a public issue, to be determined in the interest of all the people.

It is asserted by the brotherhood representatives that the demands for shorter hours are just and in accord with public safety. Very well. If this be true, the public will demand that the concessions be granted and the public will dig down and meet the extra charges.

It is claimed by the executives of the roads that the increased payroll cannot be met by the roads and that the demands, in comparison with what prevails in other divisions of labor, are exorbitant and discriminative.

If this be so, the people will know how to act. But they must know the truth and the facts from independent sources.

The whole question is one for submission to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

By insisting upon governmental justice, rather than industrial warfare, the railroads strengthen their case enormously.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.
We have talked with a number of our conductor and engineer friends and we haven’t found one who wants this strike.—Enterprise, Fall Brook, Cal.

THREATENED RAILROAD STRIKE

WICHITA BEACON, JULY 1, 1916

*** In the light of the proposals which the National Conference Committee states it has made to the conductors, engineers, firemen and brakemen, if these train service men insist on striking they will not have the sympathy of the country.

One of the propositions of the railroads is to submit the wage question to the Interstate Commerce Commission. This government commission, by reason of its accumulated information bearing on railway conditions and railway revenues, is in position to consider the question of increased wages as a whole in such a way as to protect the interests of all.

This proposal will strike the country as being entirely fair because the country has confidence in the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The other proposition is that if the service men do not desire to leave the matter to the arbitration of the Interstate Commerce Commission, there be arbitration according to the provisions of the federal law by a board selected on terms of equal representation from the railroads and these employees.

If the leaders of the railroad brotherhoods persist in striking rather than take the matter to the arbitration of either of these two sources, the country will hold the opinion that the railroad brotherhoods did not have a defensible case, but were using the force of their control over train service to compel wages which would not have been given regard by a fair-minded consideration of all the interests involved.

This is not a usual labor trouble. The entire country is interested in it because the threatened strike menaces every human activity. Both sides will find that the public will demand of it a settlement fair to both sides.

PUBLIC CALLS FOR ARBITRATION

PORTLAND OREGONIAN, JULY 4, 1916

A great railroad strike in time of peace would be a national calamity; in time of war, a national disaster. That is the plain truth about it. Everybody knows it.

The Oregonian has more than once made the eminently fair and reasonable statement that the controversies between railroad employers and railroad employees should be submitted to arbitration.

The issue is not the concern of the immediate parties to it, but the third great party is the innocent party, the public.

The Oregonian has said plainly heretofore, and it repeats, that a nation wide railroad strike is an event which is to be viewed by the public only with alarm and dismay, and it has called upon railroads and workers alike to arbitrate their differences.

The alternative to arbitration is a strike.

It would take but three days to reduce New York to the point of starvation, if all railroad service were cut off.—Leslie’s Weekly.
RAILROAD WAGE CONTROVERSY

CHICAGO TRIBUNE, JULY 4, 1916

The neutral forces that are working to block a railroad strike will commit an unpardonable oversight unless they give more attention to the individual member of the unions and some consideration to his intelligence and common sense as a supposedly responsible citizen of a democratic system. ***

Right now the pacific, conscientious (railway) union man is in a delicate situation.

From what his leaders are saying to him he is not likely to assume that in the proposed strike for a 25 per cent increase in wages there is a buzz saw that will start when he starts and not finish until he and his organization is cut to pieces.

He will have to withstand group pressure and being called “yellow.”

He will be handed a ballot giving him the chance to vote for or against the strike, with no way open for an expression on arbitration.

The same leaders have deliberately prevented that.

This man has not yet been brought face to face with the processes of the neutral mind. He might not know that we don’t think he has a striking issue. He is getting good money, but maybe not enough. That is an arbitrable case.

The business man could tell this to him effectively, not through the railroads or through the labor leaders, but directly.

It would be a smashing victory for labor unionism if the labor unions themselves would put away a temptation to gain unfairly what they might gain fairly. There is no telling of how much service the business men could be to this element that has already shown itself on the Illinois Central, the Union Pacific, and the Santa Fe railroads.

The men will be appealed to, unless our democracy, like Shakespeare, is left on the shelf and only pulled out every Fourth of July for a dusting.

Industrial war means disaster to railroads and their employes, and discomfort and loss to the general public.—Carrizozo (N. M.) News.

FAIRNESS TO THE RAILWAYS

ST. LOUIS TIMES, JULY 5, 1916

Railway rates ought to be permitted to rise in concordance with the abnormal advances in the cost of railway maintenance.

The high cost of living has fallen upon the railroad just as it has upon the householder and the man who pays board.

Common navy beans cost the lunch counter twice as much a bushel as they did not long ago, but rails and box cars and other equipment railways have to use also are far dearer than they were before the war in Europe began.

Railroad ownership isn’t an entity. Capitalists may control, but they don’t own all the railroads. Tens of thousands of small investors hold railroad shares. When legislation cheats them out of decent and honorably earned dividends it is picking the pockets of the poor.

Give the railroads a chance to take a long breath.
HOW THE STRIKE VOTE IS TAKEN

RAILWAY AGE GAZETTE, JULY 7, 1916

Although scattered reports from various parts of the country indicate that many of the engineers, firemen, conductors and other trainmen are not in favor of a strike, it is evident that the officers of the brotherhoods of train employees are not neglecting any precautions to insure the result they want from the strike vote they are taking.

After having so worded the strike ballot as to give the employees no opportunity to vote on the question of arbitration, and as almost to preclude a negative vote regarding a strike, the executives of the organizations have issued instructions for the purpose of preventing any of their members from indicating that they are satisfied with their jobs by refraining from voting.

The circular letter of instructions for the taking of the strike vote, issued to the general chairmen, local chairmen, lodges and divisions of the four brotherhoods, and signed by their chief executives, includes the following (the italics are ours):

"It will be the duty of all general and local chairmen to use their best efforts in securing a full and complete vote. It should be understood that all members holding seniority rights or actually employed in service affected by this movement will be required to vote.

"In taking the vote the local chairmen will insist that the person voting read the ballot before signing same, but under no circumstances will he be permitted to take it away with him. After signing the ballot, have him detach it, place in envelope, seal same and deliver it to the person authorized to take the vote, who shall write the name of the person voting on the outside of the envelope. No influence should be used to induce him to sign one way or the other."

"Members will undoubtedly be approached by officials and others for the purpose of gaining information. All members are cautioned against giving out information or discussing the questions involved."

In spite of the naive instruction against using influence, it is not strange that strike votes taken under such conditions usually demonstrate such remarkable unanimity. The ballots on which the employees are asked to sign a promise to throw up their jobs, in the presence of a committee chairman and without discussing the questions involved, read as follows:

"I have personally read the foregoing statement and believe the request for an eight hour basic day with time and one-half time for all overtime worked in all except passenger service a just demand, and hereby authorize the chief executives and general chairman of the B. L. E., B. L. F. & E., O. R. C. and B. R. T. to act as my agents or attorneys in dealing for a settlement of these questions, and if the said chief executives and general chairmen are unable to otherwise effect a settlement satisfactory to them, I hereby cast my vote..." (for or against)

While it is of course possible for an employee to vote that the demand is "just" and to authorize the leaders to represent him, while at the same time casting his vote against a strike, it is apparent that no such result was contemplated when the ballot was written.

As between the federal inquiry into a railroad strike and martial law for the railways we should think that all of the railway employees would prefer a federal inquiry into a railway strike.—Miami (Ariz.) Silver Belt.

TRAINMEN MUST REMEMBER ALL

FALL RIVER (MASS.) NEWS, JUNE 21, 1916

The members of the railway brotherhoods should hesitate before voting to strike, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of their brother workmen in other walks who would suffer immeasurable loss should there be a general railroad tie-up.

The threats these men aim at the railroads strike as well at mill workers and miners and to wage earners of every class, and to farmers as well. The country will not endure a general railroad strike.
It is the bounden duty of the Interstate Commerce Commission to act for the public. If it has not the authority at present, Congress should confer such authority without a moment's delay. An emergency exists. A strike is unthinkable.—Rocky Mountain News, Denver.

SELFFISH LABOR AGITATORS
SAN ANTONIO (TEXAS) REPUBLICAN, JULY 8, 1916

*** Were the men who perform the labor on the railroad lines of the nation underpaid, were they unjustly treated, were they required to perform unreasonable hours of service, The Republic would not interpose a single objection to the demands made by the labor leaders.

Did this protest come from the laboring men themselves, then The Republic would—if convinced of the sincerity and tenableness of their alleged grievances—favor a prompt acquiescence on the part of the railroad managements.

But, the fact is, these demands are not only unreasonable, but they are made, not by the men who perform the labor, but by selfish labor leaders, whose employment depends upon constant friction between the employees and their employers.

Were conditions between these classes always harmonious, then the labor leaders, the walking bosses, the professional agitators, the grafting business agents, would lose their jobs.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the proposition to have all such disputes adjusted either by the Interstate Commerce Commission, which regulates the railroad rates of the country, or by arbitration, such as is provided for by the Newland law, is objected to by the labor bosses.

To agree to such arbitration might be infinitely better for the employees, and certainly it would be better for the public, but it would put the labor agitators out of business.

STRIKE SHOULD BE AVOIDED
LINCOLN (NEB.) NEWS, JULY 3, 1916

Without venturing to pass upon the merits of the controversy between the railroads and their employes which now threatens to end in a disastrous strike, it can be said that the employes are permitting themselves to be placed in an untenable position by their refusal to arbitrate.

If a strike affected only the interests of the railroads and their men, it would not be for the public to interfere.

But the fact that a strike will very materially affect everybody in the territory involved makes it a part of the public's business, and the public will vent its resentment, if it can do nothing else, upon those whose intractableness brings about the dreaded conditions.

Labor wars should be avoided along with all other kinds of wars.

Evidently the railroads have got to be protected from the demands of strikers, or allowed to fix their own charges.—Philadelphia Record.
PUBLIC'S RIGHT IS PARAMOUNT
MILWAUKEE FREE PRESS, JULY 4, 1916

* * * The railroads have asked for arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission on these grounds:

1. The Interstate Commerce Commission regulates railroad rates and earnings, therefore knows what they are earning.
2. It knows the costs of railroad operation.
3. It knows or can quickly learn whether, if the railroads grant this $100,000,000 a year wage increase, they can pay it out of present earnings, or must be allowed to raise their rates to get the extra money.
4. It has authority, if it finds the wage increase is justified and that the railroads must earn more money to pay it, to order an increase in rates to provide the extra money.

These reasons touch only the ability of the Interstate Commerce Commission to determine whether a remedy is needed, and if it is, to provide it.

There is another and a far weightier reason for the employment of a public agency, an arm of the people's government, as the arbitrator of such issues. It is this:

The issue is not one which concerns only the railroad owners and the railroad employees. It is an issue which concerns vitally the welfare of all citizens—of every man, woman and child in the United States.

The proposed strike would block traffic on all of the nation's main public highways. It would create a condition which the public could not endure; the public would use all of its forces, civil and military, to correct it as quickly as possible, and as fully as might be needful. Of this there need be no doubt.

The time has passed in this country when the public will permit its servants owning and working on its public highways to close those highways while they fight over a division of the income.

If the owners should ever againconcertedly refuse to submit wage issues to arbitration, and should thus block the roads, the public would demand that the nation take charge of them and run them.

If the workers, on the other hand, shall refuse arbitration and thus block the roads, the public will demand that other men be hired to do the work and that the police forces of city, state and nation be employed so far as may be necessary to protect these other men in keeping the roads open.

The public's right to unrestricted use of its highways is paramount.

A railroad strike at this or any other time would be almost criminal.—Grit, Williamsport, Pa.

STRIKE WOULD SETTLE NOTHING
WASHINGTON (D. C.) POST, JULY 5, 1916

* * * A disinterested body should decide the question. The men have their side and the railroads have theirs.

A strike would be mere coercion. It would not settle anything.

The public would suffer most, and the employees themselves would suffer more than the railroads.

The whole country would rejoice if the men would show their wisdom by voting for arbitration, which would insure justice to them as well as to their employers.
Organized labor under rational leadership, has done much for the working men of this country, but when any body of men refuse the limelight of a public inquiry by a government commission, and the settlement of disagreements by arbitration, it seems to us that they are not within their rights as American citizens, but are refusing to be amenable to well defined principles that are designed to protect the interests of all.—Herald, Belfast, Me.

THE SHADOW OF THE STRIKE
CHARLOTTE (N. C.) OBSERVER, JULY 3, 1916

* * * The railroads have a full realization of what a general strike would mean at this time to the business of the whole country and invoke a settlement by arbitration.
There is certainly a constituted authority before which both parties to the controversy could appeal with the knowledge that they would have fair and just treatment.

It is to the credit of the railroad companies that they urge the fullest investigation.
They want the people to acquaint themselves with all the facts involved in the situation.

The proposition that the matter in controversy be submitted to the Interstate Commerce Commission is proof that the railroads are courting investigation in good faith.

If there is any organized authority under which the railroads would naturally hesitate to commit themselves it is the Interstate Commerce Commission, whose past rulings have indicated little or no friendship for the railroads.
The railroads of this country are largely under the checking-up control of that commission. It has been ruling them with relentless firmness.
It regulates the rates they may charge and if it should appear that the brotherhoods have made demands upon the roads that are just, partly or as a whole, this commission would be quick to rule in favor of the men.

The Observer believes that an equitable adjustment may be arrived at through the medium of arbitration before so high and so competent authority as the Interstate Commerce Commission, and it believes it is time that the business interest of the entire country wake up to the importance of an effort in preventing the threatened strike.

The business world is sleeping on a volcano that may shortly break out and disrupt commercial conditions throughout the whole country.

The only thing is to have that railway wage controversy threshed out by an impartial tribunal, when the rights of both parties and, more important than all, the rights of the public, may be conserved. Decidedly, it is a matter for the Interstate Commerce Commission.—News-Telegram, Atlantic, Iowa.
The attitude of the train service brotherhoods, who are today voting on a strike proposition which, if carried and is ultimately successful, will mean increased freight rates every year equal to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the total valuation of all railroads in the United States, is distinctly traitorous to this country and deserves swift rebuke.—Enterprise, Imperial, Cal.

**ONLY A HALF-WAY STEP**

PHILADELPHIA BULLETIN

Senator Newlands has offered a resolution instructing the Interstate Commerce Commission to investigate the wages of railroad employes, make comparison with wages paid in other employments, with consideration for the degree of skill required and responsibility imposed, and also to determine the ratio of wages to gross earnings of the railroads and to the net earnings for capital.

The resolution is pertinent enough as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough.

All the information for which the senate asks is desirable and serviceable in the determination of the wage issue now pending between the railroads and their trainmen, and no body should be better equipped for obtaining it than the Interstate Commerce Commission.

But the mere finding of facts will not settle the controversy, and the commission which may compel the railroad corporations to do its bidding is without control over the other side of the controversy.

If the senate were to deal with the threatened railroad trouble adequately it would authorize the Interstate Commerce Commission to search out and hear all the evidence in the matter and then make a decree, and if necessary appeal to the courts to enforce it.

The claims of the trainmen’s unions and the replies of the railroads have been thoroughly ventilated before the public through the medium of the press and everyone is generally familiar with them. The fact that the union leaders refuse a review of the subject by disinterested men is itself a confession that they have a very poor case. Manufacturers’ News, Chicago.

It certainly is a fair proposition that the railroads make in reference to a settlement of the difficulty between them and their employes. It is that the question of wages be determined by the referring of the demands of the men to the Interstate Commerce Commission. No body is more competent to pass upon the equities of the case than is the Interstate Commerce Commission, for it knows all about the railroads of the country and is a commission which enjoys the full confidence of the public.—News, Batavia, N. Y.
THE IMPENDING RAILWAY STRIKE

PHOENIX (ARIZ.) REPUBLICAN, JULY 1, 1916

Regardless of the merits of the wage dispute between the railways and train service brotherhoods, out of which it is probable there will be a paralyzing strike, one offer of the railroads commends itself to the consideration of the public.

That is the proposition to submit the dispute to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The railroads in this case also offered to submit the case to arbitration under the Newlands Act.

But for obvious reasons, the Interstate Commerce Commission would be the better tribunal.

This commission regulates the incomes the roads may receive. It fixes their rates and its familiarity with the business of the roads would enable it to determine the rate of wages the roads could properly pay.

If the commission should find that the wages received by the employees of the roads are too low, it could order an increase; and, on the expense of the roads thus increased, new schedules of rates for transportation should be based.

Under such an arrangement there could be no reasonable ground for dispute between the railways and their employees.

The traveling and shipping public at last have to pay the wages of trainmen anyhow, and it would be cheaper for the public to contribute to a just, though higher, scale than it would be to endure the loss and inconvenience of a strike.

The time has passed when the country can afford to let the roads and their employes settle these disputes themselves in a ruinous way.

The consequences of a general railway strike are appalling to contemplate. The public is emphatically a party in interest. That there should be new legislation to protect that interest without injustice to either of the disputing parties is axiomatic.—The Outlook.

RAILROAD STRIKE THREATENED

LOS CRUCES (N. M.) CITIZEN, JULY 1, 1916

* * * The question is not so much one of justice between the men and the railroads as it is between the men and the people.

If the demands of the men should be granted, it would mean that about $100,000,000 additional would have to be paid in increased freight rates. This would have to be paid by the people.

The people might possibly stand for this, but they cannot be expected to stand for a strike in order for the trainmen to get it.

Labor legislation has yet a long way to go in the United States before ultimate justice to all parties is reached.

But a general railroad strike at this time might easily result in legislation which would be as unfair to labor and to unions as the present laws are liberal.

It is to be hoped that the railway employes will have the good sense to vote no on the strike proposition.
FACTS OF THE RAILROAD CRISIS
CEDAR RAPIDS (IOWA) GAZETTE, JULY 14, 1916

* * * The truth is that the disagreement is between two factions of railway employees—the managers and working-men—who should be equally interested in the success of the properties.

The money invested is designed to be of mutual benefit to them, and theirs is the common responsibility of justifying the confidence of those who, by the purchase of stocks and bonds, have made the construction, equipment and operation of railroads possible.

The managers built the lines no more than the men. The men operate the lines no more than the managers.

There are no class divisions between the section man and the president, that an intelligent public will recognize. They are as much a part of one thing as the drive wheels, the throttle and sand dome are parts of one locomotive.

In order to render investments in railroads stable and in order to insure continuous and efficient operation of the properties that are the arteries of commerce, the people have done several things:

First, they have declared that the properties must be operated and have arranged for receivers in the event that general officers and stockholders are unable to give service.

Second, they have declared that they have the right to regulate rates for their own protection; but they have in this connection assumed the responsibility of paying an income that will allow profitable operation.

To secure this income passenger and freight tariffs have been from time to time adjusted, now lowered and now raised, as the case might require. At all times the people have held fast to their right of supervision, refusing to entrust the matter to either the managers or the other employees of the railroads or to all such employees combined.

It was foreseen that between the employees who occupy managerial positions and the employees who operate trains or perform other work, there would be disagreements, and the people, in their capacities of sovereign rulers, provided means of arbitrating all such disputes.

The intention has been to provide means for avoiding strikes before making the logical declaration that no strike shall be allowed to tie up a property on which every line of human business endeavor depends.

The state, in other words, has the right to declare, and shortly will declare, that no body of citizens has the right to paralyze the business of all other citizens for their own gain.

Wages of trainmen are part of the expenses. Whether they are too high, too low or just right, the public does not mean to inquire. It is not competent to judge. That part of the matter is respectfully referred to such tribunals as the people have already created for the solution of such questions.

The wages of the men were fixed and determined on the former earnings and disbursements of the roads. If they are too low, the roads must be allowed to collect greater income to meet the payments. This fact should be universally understood.

Now if wages are to be advanced so that a material difference will be made in the balance between expenses and earnings, the Interstate Commerce Commission must in the end take up the readjustment of rates to cover the deficit.

“War is hell,” whether it be national or industrial.—Herald, Benicia, Cal.
THIS CASE IS LEFT TO THE PUBLIC
SIoux City Journal, July 29, 1916

* * * The public, acting through the Interstate Commerce Commission, is now limiting railway earnings by regulating rates. If the cost of operation is to be increased in the interest of the public, against the judgment of the railway managers, it is only fair that the public, acting through the Interstate Commerce Commission, shall allow additional earnings to cover the increased cost of operation.

To contend otherwise is to contend that it would be to the interest of the public to have the railways operated continuously at a loss, which is a manifest absurdity.

Under the plan of government regulation of common carriers, shippers are entitled to fair rates, railway stockholders are entitled to fair dividends and railway employees are entitled to fair wages.

It is up to the public, acting through the Interstate Commerce Commission, to see that any one of the interested classes does not take unfair advantage of the others.

In one way or another the public must look after this job. If it cannot be done under government regulation, it will be essayed under government ownership.

The power of the brotherhoods to deal misery and starvation on the people of the land is tremendous, and it is too great a power to remain in the hands of any portion of the nation's population. It ought to be taken away before there is a strike. If there should be a strike, however, it is certain that the Nation would remove the possibility of another such catastrophe.—Utica, Observer.

ARBITRATION IS POSSIBLE
Dubuque Daily Times-Journal, July 4, 1916

Much interest is being shown in the controversy between the railways and the brotherhoods over the wage controversy.

After the recent conference in New York, which accomplished no results, and when the brotherhoods announced a strike vote would be taken, the railroads proposed a settlement of the controversy either by arbitration under the present law or submission to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The railroads appear to have strengthened their claim by offering to submit the question to arbitration.

The country can ill afford to have a strike such as is possible if the brotherhoods reject all suggestions of mediation.

Upon the settlement of the controversy depends the very existence of not only the railroads and their employes, but all other lines of industry.
RAILROAD INTERVENTION

SANTA ROSA (CAL.) PRESS-DEMOCRAT, JUNE 23, 1916

The Interstate Commerce Commission has authority over railroad rates.

Why should it not have some measure of authority, too, over railroad wages, which so largely determine the rates?

There is special reason now for this suggestion. ***

As matters stand, the brotherhoods show a lamentable disposition to ignore public sentiment.

They have made drastic demands, and have refused to admit the possibility of compromise. They have declared that they will not arbitrate, although the railroads are willing to do so.

This is high-handed procedure, in an industry which is almost as much of a public institution as a city fire department or the national postoffice system.

The situation cannot be permitted to develop into a tie-up of the nation's transportation. There is too much at stake for everybody. The government intervened and forced a settlement of the hard-coal strike a few years ago. The threatened railroad strike would be incomparably more disastrous and intolerable than that miners' strike.

There need not be a strike, if the government takes a hand in the controversy before it goes too far.

The railroads propose that the present wage controversy be referred to the Interstate Commerce Commission at Washington. This is certainly a fair proposition.—San Diego News.

GOVERNMENT MUST INTERVENE

GREENVILLE (OHIO) COURIER, JUNE 1, 1916

The government should see that the railway companies pay good wages (which they do), and that their employees are not abused (and they are not). Then the government should see that no trains are held up nor traffic molested by strikers.

The people at large demand that the railways be kept open.

All the world doesn't belong to labor unions, and all the American world that employs labor pays it better wages than does any other country on earth.

Let strikers strike if they desire, but the government should see that railway traffic is not held up by strikers. The men who are leaders in the threatened railroad strike get from $4 to $7 per day.

The men who get smaller wages are willing to work on at such wages—for the pay is good—but they are bound up in a sort of "union slavery."

The brotherhoods already have put themselves in the wrong by refusing to submit their case to arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission or some other Federal board. If they persist in this policy, and declare a strike, they will receive not one bit of public sympathy, but only censure. And the good will of the public is essential to the success of a movement of this nature.—Colorado Springs Gazette.
There never can be a time when a railway strike that stops proper running of trains can be anything else than social and economic disaster.—Sun, Kendallville, Ind.

THE THREATENED R. R. STRIKE
ATCHISON (KAN.) GLOBE, JULY 15, 1916

A general strike, tying up the railroads of this country, is inconceivable. It is a disaster that would paralyze the entire United States, and the public demands that something be done to prevent it.

What this country needs right now, more than anything else, is industrial peace, but it is disturbed by the serious prospect of a labor strike which would menace every activity.

If there is a strike the railroads will suffer, but they will not suffer as heavily as the railroad men themselves.

Surely there is some way by which an equitable understanding can be reached.

There is much sentiment over the country, and this sentiment is growing as the strike cloud looms nearer and nearer, that the controversy be settled by arbitration.

One of the propositions is to submit the wage question to the Interstate Commerce Commission. This government commission, by reason of its accumulated information bearing on railroad revenues, is in a position to consider the question of increased wages as a whole in such a way as to protect the interests of all. The public has confidence in the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The other proposition is that if the service men do not desire to leave the peace, but it is disturbed by the serious prospect of a labor strike which would menace every activity.

Ultimately the question will be settled by arbitration. Why not settle it before and not after a strike?

The issues of the European war will be decided by arbitration after the combatants have fought off their blind fury and after millions and millions of lives have been sacrificed.

If there is a railroad strike it will ultimately be settled by arbitration, but after a heavy sacrifice by both sides and a tremendous cost to the public.

The public is vitally interested in the outcome of this controversy—indeed, more interested in that it be settled than in the details of the controversy which in the very nature of the case are of such detail that it is practically impossible for the public to pass fair judgment.

Someone or some set of men who have the knowledge of railroading and the power necessary to get the facts should settle the controversy now that it has been shown that the managers and the employees cannot get together.

If there is no adequate public machinery to do this, Congress should provide a means to prevent the calamity of so general a strike as the trainmen are proposing.

It is about time for the Interstate Commerce Commission to get into the railway dispute and prevent a ruinous strike.—Courier-News, Fargo, N. Dak.
Arbitration is sane and sensible. It is supported by public sentiment and is fair for both sides. A federal tribunal would give the trainmen a “square deal” and would save the country from economic disaster.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

SHOULD BE NO RAILROAD STRIKE
DENVER POST, JULY 11, 1916

Congress, in its wisdom or folly—it is hard to tell which—created the Interstate Commerce Commission and gave it very extraordinary powers over the railroads of the United States.

This commission has the power to regulate freight rates, passenger rates, equipment, and the charges that the railroads may make for whatever services they render the public. * * *

If Congress, through its Interstate Commerce Commission, assumed the right to regulate and govern the revenues of the railroads, then by this same assumption it has ample powers and should regulate the expenditures of these same railroads.

Assuming this power in one direction, they certainly should exercise it in the other, and the bill now before Congress, giving the Interstate Commerce Commission powers to arbitrate and settle the differences between the railroads and their employes, should be speedily passed, so that the impending trouble between the railroads and their employes might be arbitrated by this Interstate Commerce Commission and these differences fairly and honestly settled between these conflicting interests.

What better board of arbitration can one conceive of than the Interstate Commerce Commission?

Every railroad in the country reports in the most minute detail to this commission, showing their exact receipts and expenditures; so this Interstate Commerce Commission is in a position to know exactly what the railroads can afford to pay and what they cannot afford to pay, and should make an ideal arbitrator in matters of this kind.

By assuming and having power to arbitrate such troubles, the commission would amply justify its existence and render invaluable service not only to the railroads, not only to their employes, but to every person and every interest in the United States, and would become a great national stabilizer for one of the very greatest industries of the country.

The proposition of railroad officials to submit the wage problem to an impartial Federal tribunal smacks of reason, and the trainmen’s refusal to do this appears very unreasonable.—Tribune, Mineral Point, Wis.

The most desperate economic tragedy in the history of our country is getting ready to be enacted. We mean a nation-wide strike on all the railroads of the country.—Argus-Leader, Sioux Falls, S. D.

If the demands of the men are just demands there should be no hesitancy on their part in submitting them to a board of arbitration composed of capable, disinterested men.—Dubuque Telegraph-Herald.
STRIKE WOULD BE DISASTROUS
BEREA (CAL.) PROGRESS, JULY 7, 1916

* * * The editor of *The Progress* is a member of one of the strongest labor unions in the world today, with members scattered to the four corners of the earth.

But that union and the employers of that union have long since learned the folly of the strike system and have adopted other methods of adjusting their differences.

A national board of arbitration appointed jointly by the International Typographical Union and the employers of its members passes on all matters of dissension between the employer and the employee, and all parties must abide by the decision of that tribunal.

This system has not only proved satisfactory in the adjustment of grievances, but it has created a better working spirit and a better sentiment for justice between man and man.

In the pending trouble between the railroads and trainmen the former have suggested arbitration, first by the Interstate Commerce Commission, or, second, in accordance with the provisions of the federal law as set out in the Newlands Act. The leaders of the trainmen refused this proposal and a vote by the members on a general strike is now in progress.

With a full desire for justice for the laboring man and due consideration for his interests, we believe that submission to arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission would be the wisest course.

The business and operations are regulated to a large extent by this body and the commission better than any person or persons outside the immediate management of the roads, and in a position to know what the roads can and can not afford without working a hardship on themselves and the general public.

And surely the trainmen could feel assured of justice at the hands of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Arbitration offers a fair means for the solution of all trade and labor difficulties and in the threatening issue now before the railroad employes it should be accepted in the fair spirit in which it is presented.—Independent, Stockton, Cal.

CONTROVERSY IS WITH PUBLIC
DALLAS (TEXAS) NEWS, JULY 7, 1916

A strike would be disastrous to the railroads, but it would be more disastrous to the people at large. They would be the chief victims, as from them, too, must come the money to meet any demands the railroads might accede to.

Having this double interest in the matter, they are entitled to an impartial finding as to the justness of the demands that have been made by the employes.

Just now their controversy is with the railroads; but their controversy will be with the people of the country if, insisting on their own judgment of their own cause, they strike to enforce it.

In a controversy with the public they can not prevail.
LET THE COMMISSION DECIDE
JACKSONVILLE, (FLA.) JOURNAL, JULY 1, 1916

*** If the great increases asked by the railroad men are granted the public must pay the bill, for the railroads can secure these funds only from the increase of freight and passenger tariffs which they charge the public.

So the people are not at all out of place in expressing their views of the whole question.

Reference to the Interstate Commerce Commission would mean to a body with all necessary data at hand for considering the question.

The commission fixes the charges which railroads may make for the service rendered, and there is logic in the claim of the railroads that the commission is the proper tribunal for an arbitration of the differences.

The commission has the information at hand to decide whether or not the railroads can pay the increases asked for and still make a fair income on their property investments. If they cannot, and the commission still believes that the demands of the men are just, then the commission will undoubtedly be willing to grant authority to the railroads to increase their rates.

The questions of railroad wages and railroad rates have a very close connection.

The sensible, the logical, manner in which to handle the situation is to place it in the hands of the Interstate Commerce Commission for an adjustment that will be binding and the way to make its settlement binding is to give the Commission legal jurisdiction over the question of railroad wages which is closely related to the question of railroad rates, which is already in the hands of this body.

Post, Hartford, Conn.

CONSULTING PUBLIC OPINION
ORANGE (CAL.) NEWS, JULY 5, 1916

*** The principle of federal arbitration is growing in the estimation of the public, because it gives representation of the public's rights in disputes where otherwise they would have little consideration, although in every such case they are involved.

An informed public opinion is one of the best preventative, in the long run, of labor troubles.

Abuses of labor, when they become public property, adversely affect the interests responsible and public opinion touches every financial interest in the nation.

Strikes, when not supported by public opinion, invariably fail.

Federal intervention and open discussions of differences of employer and employed are good remedies.

The Railway Committee does well, in this instance, to take its case before the public. Its position is clearly stated and its request for Federal intervention seems well founded.
The railroads have proposed that the differences between them and the men be referred to the Interstate Commerce Commission and because that commission has more information on railroad conditions than any other organization it might make the fairest kind of an arbitration board.—Benicia (Cal.) Herald, July 7, 1916.

FEDERAL INQUIRY OR R. R. STRIKE?
ST. AUGUSTINE (FLA.) RECORD, JULY 8, 1916

This is a question which at the present time is agitating the minds of thousands and even tens of thousands of people in this country. An industrial warfare that might well dwarf into insignificance everything that ever preceded it of a like nature seems to be threatened by the demands of certain railroad employees. ***

It is hard to conceive any reasonable objection on the part of the dissatisfied railroad men to the plan of arbitration as suggested by the railroad concerns. An increase of salary, say the railroad companies, must come out of the transportation rates paid by the public, and those very rates are fixed and controlled to a large extent by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the public body proposed by them as the investigating body to which shall be referred the questions in dispute between them and their men.

This seems to be a very fair proposition, especially as no less a sum than $100,000,000 a year is involved, and only the conductors, engineers, firemen and brakemen are at present included in the demands made.

A COMPLICATED SITUATION
VACAVILLE (CAL.) REPORTER, JULY 7, 1916

** * * It would seem, however, that the railroads are between the two points of a pair of pincers.

Their employees demand a raise of pay on one hand and on the other the Interstate Commerce Commission refuses to allow them to increase their service charges to the public.

Few of the railroads are making enough to pay dividends, and if wages are increased, in fairness the railroads must be allowed to raise freight rates.

So, as in all cases of this kind, the public must eventually pay, and the unorganized laborer and the unorganized farmer, who are in no position to demand an addition to their income, must pay higher prices for all commodities they require.

Whereas, arbitration was once the foremost demand of labor organizations, we now find the officials of railway-men’s organizations refusing to accept arbitration and taking a vote on whether or not to inaugurate a nation-wide strike. The wisdom and justice of arbitration is as patent today as it was thirty years ago.—Sentinel, Erie, Kas.
Right now the pacific, conscientious union man is in a delicate situation. From what his leaders are saying to him he is not likely to assume that in the proposed strike for a 25 per cent increase in wages there is a buzz saw that will start when he starts and not finish until he and his organization are cut to pieces.—Chicago Tribune.

MORE POWER FOR COMMISSION
PUEBLO STAR-JOURNAL, JULY 13, 1916

*** The point is simply this: The Interstate Commerce Commission was created by law and given power to regulate and control practically every department of the railroad business except the cost of giving service.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has the power to make and adjust both freight and passenger rates; it has the power to enforce practically any kind of a freight and passenger service it may deem necessary, but it seems to have absolutely no power to say whether or not the cost of that service is justified.

It simply has the power to order the service started and maintained, and to increase or decrease freight or transportation rates, but it has no power to control the cost of the service, or to say that the expense of maintaining a service is greater than the railroads can stand and keep out of bankruptcy.

It ought to be admitted, therefore, that if the commission has the power to compel a railroad to perform a stated service at a stated price to be exacted from the public, the commission also ought to have power to compel the people to pay more for the service they demand, no matter what the cost may be, or else the commission should have the power to say that the cost is prohibitive and therefore not justified.

Given this power, when the railroads of the United States and the railway employes’ organizations of the country are unable to agree among themselves over a proposed wage schedule or over any other pertinent matter, it would be up to the Interstate Commerce Commission to say to both parties to the controversy: The demands of each of you are thus and so, and having failed to agree among yourselves, it becomes necessary for the commission to ask that each party to the controversy place its side of the question in dispute before the commission verbally or in writing for the purpose of having it considered and arbitrated, and settled in a manner which will be fair to both sides and to the people, whose patronage is required to enable either side to earn a respectable return. ***

Manifestly, then, Congress should give the Interstate Commerce Commission the power which it should very properly have had from its inception, if it is to be of real service, in finding that all parties, the people, the employes of the railroads and the railroads themselves, are given a square deal in all things having to do with the giving of adequate freight and passenger service in all parts of the United States.

Is the public willing to pay one hundred million dollars increase in freight and passenger rates to meet this wage demand of the already highest paid class of railway employes?—Independent, San Rafael, Cal.
RAILROAD STRIKE THREATENED
PORTSMOUTH (N. H.) CHRONICLE, JULY 1, 1916

The railroads are ready for arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission, which would seem to be the proper body for the task, as the members are familiar with all matters pertaining to railroading and are in a position to permit rates which would enable the companies to meet the extra costs of operation in case the demands or any part of the demands of the employees should be granted.

But if this proposition is not satisfactory the companies are willing to have the matter arbitrated under the provisions of the federal law known as the Newlands Act.

All they ask is that every question involved be submitted to an impartial body having authority to pass final judgment.

As stated, this will strike the majority of the public as a fair and honorable proposition.

If accepted, it would mean a certainty that the business of the railroads would not be interrupted, and this is a matter of prime significance to the companies, the public and the employees themselves.

Any material interference with the operation of the railroads of the country would mean disaster to business and all classes would be bound to suffer.

The railroad men and their families would not be exempt.

For many years the railroad companies have been having "packages" handed to them by legislation by railroad commissions; by labor unions; by everybody. This swatting of the railroads has gone on to such an extent that many of the railroads are now on their uppers. It is really time to quit kicking the railroads around and give them an opportunity to get on their feet so that they may be in shape to give us the service that the country demands.—Marengo (Iowa) Sentinel.

RAILROAD CRISIS IS ACUTE
DETROIT JOURNAL, JULY 5, 1916

The transportation companies are caught between two fires, the Interstate Commerce Commission forcing down freight and passenger rates and the employees forcing up wages.

The roads offer to submit the matter for settlement to the Interstate Commerce Commission, or, failing this, to submit it to arbitration under the Erdman Act, which was framed for the very purpose of encouraging arbitration and avoiding disastrous tie-ups that discommoded the public.

But the trainmen prefer to rely upon their organized strength to force their demands.

There are social and moral obligations that have rested upon workmen from time immemorial not to force the application of the law of supply and demand unjustly.
PUBLIC SENTIMENT MUST DECIDE

JACKSON (MISS.) CLARION-LEDGER, JULY 4, 1916

* * * So it will be seen that the railroads have offered to submit the controversy to three disinterested bodies, the Interstate Commerce Commission, Congress, and the Board of Mediation and Conciliation under the Newlands Act, created for the special purpose of handling just such controversies as that which have arisen between the railroads and their employes.

Eventually the decision must be made by public opinion and the employes are in danger of losing public sympathy in the beginning of their refusal to accept one of the courses proposed or proposal of some other pacific way by which a settlement may be arrived at instead of standing on their dignity and saying to the railroads, "Meet our demands or we will close you down, no matter what the public suffers or thinks."

Without public sympathy the employes cannot win, with it the railroads' case is already half won. No case is just that will not stand investigation.

The railroads have offered to submit theirs to investigation; let the men meet them half way and show that they have just as much confidence in the justness of their cause.

This country cannot afford a strike of such dimensions as the one contemplated and it will not stand it.

The controversy has now reached a stage when arbitration by a party outside of the controversy is the only practical way of settlement, and the Interstate Commerce Commission seems to be best qualified to reach a decision that is fair to all the parties concerned.—Pueblo Chieftain.

THE FAIREST WAY TO SETTLE IT

CHESTERTON (MD.) NEWS, JULY 1, 1916

In order that there may be a permanent settlement of the railroad wage problem, protecting the interests of the employees, employers and the public, the railroads propose that the controversy be referred to the Interstate Commerce Commission at Washington.

This proposed solution has already received the hearty endorsement of business men throughout the country through a referendum of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States.

The trains of this country are not going to stop so long as we have a form of government, courts and soldiers and peace officers to support the constituted authorities, and a citizenship that when aroused knows its patriotic duty. If the trainmen want to hold their jobs, it would be well for them to take wise counsel at this time and not to irritate the American people.—Leader, Staunton, Va.

It has also been strongly urged by many men in public life and leaders of economic thought in institutions of learning, and is without doubt the most equitable and the fairest way to settle the important matter.

The public is too much concerned to have any strike.

The railroads appear to have strengthened their claim by offering to submit the question to arbitration. The country can ill afford to have a strike such as is possible if the brotherhoods reject all suggestions of mediation. Upon the settlement of the controversy depends the very existence of not only the railroads and their employes, but all other lines of industry.—Dubuque Times-Journal.
All concerned—the railroads, and most of all, the people, whose interest is the greatest—could well afford to abide by any opinion the Interstate Commerce Commission might express as to the justice of the demands that have been made by four brotherhoods of railroad employes.—Dallas News.

SETTLING A RAILROAD STRIKE

PASADENA (CAL.) RECORD, JULY 6, 1916

The railroads of the country are facing a threatened strike which would do untold damage to the railroad companies, to the shippers, to the strikers themselves and to the public in general.

Be it said to the credit of the railroad companies that they have adopted the sensible method of handling the situation. They claim, and there is no doubt much in their contention, that owing to past and present financial conditions they are not in position to grant the demands of the railway men.

In a series of display advertisements they are coming before the public with their story.

They are urging federal inquiry. They are asking the public to judge their cause.

At least the railroads have taken the initiative in the right direction.

PROTECTION OR FREEDOM

PHILADELPHIA RECORD, JULY 5, 1916

The law fixes the charges the railroad companies can exact for their services. They can't raise their charges because they have higher wages to pay.

On the other hand, a manufacturer who decides not to pay the wages demanded of him can shut down, but the business of the country is so absolutely dependent upon transportation that the result of a general stoppage of the railroads is appalling to contemplate.

Evidently the railroads have got to be protected from the demands of strikers, or allowed to fix their own charges.

If the brotherhoods can advance, as they assert, facts, figures and reasons in support of the justice of their demands for increased wages, they ought to be willing to submit those facts, figures and reasons to the judgment of the Interstate Commerce Commission.—Telegram, Bridgeport, Conn.
The general public is slow to take sides between employer and employee in labor disputes.

It rarely ever even takes the trouble to inquire into the details of such disputes, or to reach a conclusion as to the relative merits of the contentions involved.

Such has been the case with the pending controversy between the railroads and the trainmen.

But the time has come when the general public must sit up and take notice.

The greatest strike in the history of America is imminent.

The strike vote is being taken, and a strike vote generally strikes.

In this case it will tie up practically the entire railroad system of the United States, and put an enforced embargo on business and commerce of every character.

That alarming feature of the case makes the general public a party to the row, and it must begin to make up its mind as to the rights and wrongs of the case. * * *

At a recent conference between the railroads and leaders of the trainmen, no agreement was reached.

The railroads proposed that a final settlement of the controversy be left either to arbitration under the rules prescribed by federal law, or by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The leaders of the trainmen refused both propositions and called a strike vote, which is now being taken.

If the strike is ordered, one of two things seems inevitable.

Either the railroads will have to suspend operations, or be given legal authority to increase rates to meet this extra $100,000,000.

Either expedient would hit the public a hard blow. Suspension of railroad traffic would almost bankrupt the country.

Its effects would directly reach every business man and indirectly every citizen.

Likewise, if the railroads were given permission to raise rates to meet the demands of the trainmen, this $100,000,000 would come directly out of the pockets of the people.

So, then, the people are quite considerably a party to this quarrel, although not of their own making.

What they are concerned about is to have it settled, and settled equitably and permanently.

The railroads are appealing to the bar of public opinion as to the fairness of their case and their proposal for settlement.

Whatever be the merits or demerits of the two contentions, The Texarkanian believes the trainmen have put themselves at a disadvantage in refusing the railroads' offers.

As a rule all fair-minded men are ever willing to have their disputes decided by the disinterested arbitration of their fellows. This is the spirit and underlying principle in the trial of rights by jury.

But if not willing to trust the issues with non-official arbitrators, what plausible objection can be urged to a submission of the case to a fair and competent tribunal, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission?

An appeal to the strike is an appeal to force, and force is blind to justice and equity.

The verdict of force is that might is right.
Responsibility for the prospective wrecking of American commerce and industry and for terrible privation in the cities where babies will not even get their milk will rest upon the side in this (railway) controversy that refuses arbitration.—Sioux Falls Press.

PROPER FUNCTION OF THE I. C. C.
HELENA (MONT.) INDEPENDENT, JUNE 29, 1916

For more than three years The Independent has advocated submitting the question of wages of railroad employes to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

It is gratifying at this time to note that the railways have proposed to the train service brotherhoods that the present controversy be submitted to the Interstate Commission, and that if it has not authority to act in such capacity, to go jointly before Congress at once and ask that such authority be given the commission.

But it is to be most seriously regretted that the trainmen should refuse to submit the present controversy to a federal commission, members of which were former members of the trainmen’s brotherhoods.

“The Independent” has always contended that the Interstate Commerce Commission should fix wages or determine maximum and minimum pay, at least, for railroad employes.

It does not seem possible that this country will much longer delegate the authority to a commission to fix the amount of a railroad’s income without safeguarding the interests of the stockholders by fixing a point at which demands for higher wages shall stop.

A railroad has but one way of making money—hauling passengers and freight at so much per ton or per passenger mile.

The Interstate Commerce Commission practically fixes the exact amount which the stockholders can possibly earn on their investment.

A railroad has many ways of spending its money. Certain officials are charged with the responsibility of making expenditures for operation, maintenance, advertising, executive work and the like.

But a railroad has no way of safeguarding its money if a brotherhood of employes decides to raid the treasury of the company.

Most of the earnings of a railroad are expended for labor. It would seem to be the part of good sense to require the Interstate Commerce Commission to hear wage controversies and decide whether or not the railroads shall add sums running into millions to their expenditures and take a chance of being permitted to soak the public to make up the increases in wages.

The suggestion of the railways that the dispute be left in the hands of the Interstate Commerce Commission seems eminently fair, for the reason that the Commission is the one organization in this country possessed of sufficient knowledge of railroad business to decide the matters in controversy upon their merits.—El Paso Herald.
A railroad strike should by any means be avoided, and if a Federal Inquiry will do it, that is what the public wants.
—Tellit, Robbinsdale, Minn.

SITUATION OF THE RAILROADS

SENTINEL, MARENGO, IOWA

We have watched with a great deal of interest the controversy which has been going on for many months past between the railway companies and the trainmen's allied organizations.

In a word, the trainmen are asking for practically a 25 per cent increase in salaries. The companies are objecting.

The editor of The Sentinel is a union man; he has belonged to a labor organization for many years; naturally it would be supposed that we would be prejudiced in favor of the trainmen in their contention for the increase in wages. We will, however, plead not guilty.

For many years the railroad companies have been having "packages" handed to them; by legislation; by railroad commission; by labor unions; by everybody.

Whenever anything had to be swatted, it was sure to be the railroad that got the swatting.

This swatting of the railroads has gone on to such an extent that many of the railroads are now on their uppers.

It is really time to quit kicking the railroads around and give them an opportunity to get on their feet so that they may be in shape to give us the service that the country demands.

THE RAILROAD CONTROVERSY

JOURNAL, CLARINDA, IOWA, JULY 13, 1916

Who is right, and who is wrong, in the controversy now going on between the railways of the country and the unions representing the workmen?

A strike is threatened.

This is something which the general public are much interested in, for without railways running we shall have no passenger service, no transportation of freight, no letters or daily papers.

We will be dead ones while it lasts.

On the one hand the railway managers give the unions their choice of two alternatives—submit the matter to arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission, who virtually have the making of rates for the railways to charge the public, and by the same reasoning would be the fair arbiters to decide the compensation to the workmen; or, by a second alternative, the railroads offer arbitration under the "Newlands Act" authorized by Congress.

To a fair-minded man either plan would seem to be fair, and to offer the workmen their choice of the two would seem to be doubly fair.

The government should have the first say in all railroad strike settlements, and also the last say.—New York Tribune.
There is every reason why this important dispute should be submitted to arbitration or to the Interstate Commerce Commission, so that a careful investigation may be made and a decision rendered that will protect the interests of the employes, the railroad and the public.—Washington Post.

RAILWAY MEN SHOULD EXPLAIN
WASHINGTON HERALD, JUNE 26, 1916

Unless the railway employes wish to jeopardize whatever of public sympathy may be theirs in their wage dispute with the companies they should hasten to explain the reasons for their refusal to submit the controversy to inquiry and arbitration by the Interstate Commerce Commission. * * *

The popular impression is that nothing could be fairer than the proposal for adjustment by the Federal tribunal which has at its disposal all the machinery and information necessary for such an undertaking.

Under such conditions it is difficult to understand why the employes should contemplate resorting to a strike in preference to seeking adjustment by the tribunal whose decision eventually will determine their fate to so large an extent.

If they have reasons they should set them forth clearly, in order that the public may judge of their merits.

It is almost staggering to contemplate the effects of such a strike, no matter what it might accomplish. Surely it will not be resorted to until all other methods have failed.

CONFESSION OF A POOR CASE
MANUFACTURERS' NEWS, CHICAGO, JULY 6, 1916

It is generally recognized that a strike, to be successful, must have the tacit approval, if not the unrestrained sympathy, of the public, hence the threatened railroad strike but faintly promises a realization of the hopes of the men who have inspired the movement.

They have refused to submit their grievances to the decision of the Interstate Commerce Commission or to arbitration under the Newlands Act, and by this refusal have practically confessed that their case is weak and would scarcely hold water in the estimation of disinterested men.

The rate of wages paid is so large a factor in the cost of conducting transportation that it has a direct bearing upon the rate to be charged the public for service.

Yet the leaders of the railroad unions are unwilling to see it that way.

To interrupt any considerable portion of our steam road transportation facilities just at this crucial time would not only seriously hamper the public, but it might disastrously hamper the government itself—Herald, Grand Rapids, Mich.
The present emergency should end with the final abolition of railroad strikes.—Portland Oregonian.

GIVE THE COMMISSION CONTROL
RICHMOND (TEXAS) COASTER, JUNE 23, 1916

The interstate railroads of this country should be controlled by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and if the powers and members of that body are not sufficient, they should be increased.

There are 96,000,000 people who are affected by every through tariff rate, freight or passenger, and the same number are affected by a strike on the interstate railroad lines.

If the brakemen, engineers or conductors are dissatisfied with their wages or hours of service, why must the public be made to suffer?

If the railroads are forced to accede to such demands, why must the public be made to suffer by a curtailment of the number of daily trains and a less efficient service in the handling of freight?

Let all questions between railway employer and employe be settled in a judicial manner, by competent judges, and force both sides to accept the results.

IT'S TIME FOR ACTION
JACKSON (MISS.) NEWS, JULY 9, 1916

No organization in the world possesses such power as the railway labor unions.

The Daily News does not know how Mississippi's representatives in Congress stand on this subject, but, since they are all candidates for re-election this year, it is high time for them to be doing something to render such a calamity impossible.

Mississippi is not only opposed to a railroad strike, but it expects and demands of its representatives in Congress that they be doing something to render such a calamity impossible.

The arbitration of railroad wages in 1915 held up business and development work all over the west, and it seems as if the reviving prosperity were to be nipped in the bud again.—News, Artesia, Cal.
PREVENT A RAILROAD STRIKE
COLORADO SPRINGS GAZETTE, JULY 5, 1916

*** During the present controversy the railroads have been eminently fair and above board in their dealings with their employees, and their attitude at this time will serve only to further strengthen their position with the public.

On the other hand, the trainmen, by persistently refusing to submit their claims to arbitration by a federal commission, have put themselves in the wrong.

Now the question has gone too far to be left in the hands of the two parties concerned.

Congress should immediately take it up and pass whatever legislation is necessary to bring the matter before the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the commission should be given whatever additional power is necessary that it may act fully and conclusively.

As at present constituted the commission is inadequate. It controls railroad revenue and that is about all.

Properly, it also should control expenditures of every sort; it should control all of the elements of the business if it is to be effective.

The present crisis shows the need of this, and Congress should by all means perfect the system it has inaugurated before there occurs a strike which will work a great injury upon the whole country.

The brotherhoods will make a grievous mistake if they use the force of their control over train service to attempt to compel wages which they would not submit to the fair-minded consideration of the Interstate Commerce Commission.—Globe, Atchison, Kas.

A QUESTION FOR ARBITRATION
IOWA CITY DAILY PRESS, JULY 13, 1916

The railway employes will make a very serious mistake if they refuse to accept the offer of the railways to arbitrate the question of wages, which is now in dispute, and which has led to the threat of a strike that will paralyze business and industry throughout this country.

The railway managers have offered to submit the matters in dispute either to the Interstate Commerce Commission, or to a board of arbitrators chosen in the usual way.

In the past, many times, employers of labor have arbitrarily refused to arbitrate wage disputes and labor organizations have savagely abused them for this disregard of the rights of the employes and the public.

That is all the more reason why in this case the laborers should accept the proffered arbitration.

The interests of the public are too enormous in this case for the people to look with much patience on a disposition on either side to permit a strike with all its appalling loss to those directly concerned and the even greater loss and inconvenience of the public, which is in the position of the innocent bystander.
A REASONABLE PROPOSAL
KEOKUK (IOWA) GATE CITY, JULY 6, 1916

The great railroads of the country, of whom demand is made by one-fifth of their employes for wage advances amounting to one hundred million dollars a year, offer to submit the question to the Interstate Commerce Commission. This tribunal, the roads declare, by reason of its information as to railway conditions and its practical control of railway revenues, is in a position to protect the rights and equities of all the interests affected.

This is an eminently fair and reasonable request and the commission is the proper authority to pass upon the matter.

What should be done by President Wilson is to notify the proposed strikers to arbitrate their differences under the Federal Act, or the government itself will step in at the first sign of trouble and guard the roads with troops to the end that they may be operated in spite of those who walk out.—Enterprise, Imperial, Cal.

WILL WE HAVE A R. R. STRIKE?
PHILADELPHIA COM'L LIST AND PRICE CURRENT

The offer of the railroads to allow the Interstate Commerce Commission to settle the wage dispute between the railroads and a part of their employees was an eminently fair one and should have been promptly accepted by the men. No other body with such an intimate knowledge of railroad conditions has such an unquestioned position in the public confidences, and, furthermore, with its control over rates, it is in a position not only to render such a decision as would protect the interests of the railroad employees, the owner of the railroads and the public, but, in the event of it favoring employes, it could easily grant the railroads the necessary increase in freight rates to enable them to bear the extra burden.

The refusal of the men to accept this proposition is unfortunate, as it is bound to jeopardize their case in the eyes of the public.

The cause of organized labor will receive a serious setback in the public mind in the event the railway brotherhoods vote to strike—having no just cause.—Banner-Press, Brenham, Tex.
All the railroads want is justice. Because they are a company is no reason why they should be abused.—Sun, Wolfe City, Tex.

**ARBITRATION OR STRIKE**

**COLEMAN (TEXAS) DEMOCRAT-VOICE, JULY 14, 1916**

The controversy between the railroads and their train service employees over the eight-hour wage movement has resolved itself, insofar as the public is concerned, into the single issue—"arbitration or strike." * * *

It is obvious that the public, which has a vital interest in the settlement of this dispute, will suffer most in the event of a railroad tie-up.

*Public sentiment, we believe, is largely with the railroads.*

That sentiment, however, is of little value unless it be crystallized and given concrete expression. The interest of the public lies in arbitration of this difficulty or its submittal to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

To accomplish that end it is necessary that the public take definite and positive action.

That act can only be accomplished through its representatives in Congress, and they can be induced to take action only at the demands of their constituents.

It is, therefore, not improper that newspapers should, through the medium of their editorial columns, urge that the citizens write to their senators and representatives in Congress, requesting the submission of the controversy to the Interstate Commerce Commission.

*Whether the public realizes the importance of this action is yet to be seen.*

**STRIKE DISASTROUS EVERY WAY**

**TAMPA (FLA.) TRIBUNE, JULY 3, 1916**

About the biggest strike in history is looming up in the background of the growing differences between the railroads and the four great brotherhoods of trainmen, engineers, firemen and conductors.

*If a strike comes, half a million workmen will be immediately involved.*

It is impossible to estimate the full effects of such a strike upon the prosperity of this country. But it would surely be disastrous, and every merchant, big or little, every manufacturer and every consumer would suffer, for the railroads are the arteries of commerce.

*It is time for Uncle Sam to take a hand in the game. If there be any virtue in arbitration there's a lovely opportunity for it now.*

Government action would be justified by the imminence of trouble with Mexico. Tying up of the railroads of this country in a finish fight, such as the threatened strike would precipitate, would be not only a commercial but a military disaster.

That the railroad employees are really seeking a further advance in wages, under the guise of shorter hours is generally conceded.—Denver Record-Stockman.
What better board of arbitration can one conceive of than the Interstate Commerce Commission?—Denver Post.

AN IMPENDING DISASTER
COLORADO SPRINGS TELEGRAPH, JULY 18, 1916

Each hour is bringing the country nearer the disaster of a nation-wide strike.

The railroads and their employees have held conference after conference with no result, the former offering to arbitrate, and the latter holding firm against such action, so that it is time for the public—the great third party—to speak, as it will be the greatest sufferer from a paralysis of transportation.

The men are voting to go out, according to the best information from the strike ballot now being taken, so that no time can be lost if the situation is to be saved.

The need of the hour is for action by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the logical authority to say what the railroads shall pay in salaries and wages, just as it now determines the charges they may receive from the public.

It's a poor rule that does not work both ways.

If income is to be controlled, expenditures must be considered, and the judge of one should look after the other.

The Interstate Commerce Commission is in a singularly fortunate position to learn the facts and to render justice.

It alone, of all the great governmental agents, is able to get at the merits of the controversy, and its findings would carry more weight than those of any group of men who could be picked.

The selection of this board of arbiters has been suggested by the railroads, so that they could not complain against its findings, while the workers would forfeit public support by refusal to abide by its decision.

The people are looking to Washington in this crisis to see whether statesmanship will rise to the occasion.

A bill is pending in Congress to give this commission authority to act, and there should be no hesitation in passing it to control situations like the present.

Indeed, the public demands that this shall be done.

WILL THERE BE A STRIKE?
EAGLE (IOWA) TIMES-GAZETTE, JUNE 28, 1916

After a conference from June 1st to June 15th, which was fruitless in settling the wage question, the roads proposed to submit the question to the Interstate Commerce Commission for arbitration. This was rejected by the trainmen, and they are now voting upon the strike question.

There is the gravest sort of peril in such a vote. A strike such as is threatened would be a calamity to the business men, to the manufacturers, to all the people of the United States. It might easily cut off food supplies from our cities. It would paralyze industry everywhere. This is fully realized by the railroad managers, but they cannot see their way clear to any such concessions as are demanded.

A general railroad strike would be whole lot more serious than a war with Mexico.
IF A R. R. STRIKE SHOULD OCCUR

The people of this country would know something had happened. They would find that there are conflicts which can bring about poverty and distress besides those of the battlefield.

They would also find out that certain organizations in these United States have acquired a power which is scarcely dreamed of by the average man, and that the weakness of the government is quite as pronounced, though in an opposite direction.

There would be homes in want, children without food and babies born to die of starvation, and the government would be powerless to prevent it.

Neither would these homes, these children and these babies belong, in a majority of cases, to the men who maintain them.

Our commercial machinery has become so bound up with transportation, and our daily life so dependent upon it, that should it suddenly cease, as it most assuredly would in case of a nation-wide strike, our whole economic system would be demoralized.

How would the cities procure meat and drink? How would the farmer market his corn, beef and cotton? How would we get oranges for breakfast or cream for coffee, not to mention the coffee?

It is surprising how indifferent the public is to this impending calamity; how much more willing it is to discuss the probability of war with Mexico, the question of submission, or the merits of various candidates for the exalted position of constable.

The important issue does not consist in whether the men are right or the railroads are right, but in devising some means whereby the right can be determined without involving such a terrible misfortune as a general strike would bring about.

The important function of government, as we see it, is to so regulate the relations between individuals as to give each justice with the least possible injustice to others, but especially those who have no part or concern in the controversy.

When organizations of individuals become so powerful that they can take law, commerce and the daily lives of people into their own hands without regard to whether it works hardship on disinterested persons or not, then there is but one remedy:

That is to so strengthen the government that it can regulate what they may do, just as it regulates what Jim Brown can do to John Brown.

The strike is a thing that must go because the sentiment of this country has turned against that sort of thing.

—Detroit Times.

The brotherhoods represent 350,000 workers, the railways 528 lines. The disparity between the railroad employees and the public served by these roads is equivalent to that between an infinitesimal fraction of the American people and a public numbering over 100,000,000 souls. No cause on earth, however equitable, can justify this tiny minority in striking at the welfare of the whole country. A railroad strike would bring measureless mischief to American business and prosperity. It might easily deprive hundreds of cities of the necessities of life. It would universally paralyze industry and communication.—Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Wash.
Unwillingness to arbitrate differences is a fruitful source of war both with guns and industrially.—Enterprise, Cleburne, Texas.

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM AGAIN

COLLIER’S WEEKLY, JULY 29, 1916

During 1914 business was rather dull in our country.
The basic iron and steel trades were running on low gear, and there was a lot of unemployment all along which got very bad that winter.

Materials were cheap, men were looking for work, and there was plenty of time to plan things ahead.

It was an ideal period in which to provide for the railroad future by new construction, by getting all existing facilities into the best possible condition, and so on, just as a successful farmer is in the habit of doing.

But it was not done.
The Interstate Commerce Commission’s abstract of statistics of steam railroads in the United States for the year ended June 30, 1915 (published one year later), shows that during those twelve months there were added to our railroads just 715.69 miles of new line, or less than one-third of 1 per cent of the total mileage on July 1, 1914.

That is stagnation, not progress.

Such an utter lack of development not only does nothing for our unsettled and partly settled sections, but it also does nothing to provide for the inevitable increase of traffic toward and between our big cities, and is, therefore, a real menace to the future prosperity of the United States.

It is not fair to say that regulation has failed, but regulation as now conducted sometimes too much suggests the usefulness of a wet blanket.

Public control of railroads and of other utilities must result in getting the right things done, not merely in preventing the wrong things.

Transportation is an enterprise for statesmen and workers, not for keepers and convicts.

State rights, monopoly, and other quaint war cries are being extensively used by politicians to distract attention from their own ineffectiveness in the matter, but it is still true that the problem of railroad regulation is to get more and better railroads to serve the people of this country.

By that test regulation will stand or fall.

The greater number of the railroad companies of the country are working along on a low basis of earnings.—San Francisco Argonaut.
Federal Inquiry or Railroad Strike?

Faced by demands from the conductors, engineers, firemen and brakemen that would impose on the country an additional burden in transportation costs of $100,000,000 a year, the railroads propose that this wage problem be settled by reference to an impartial Federal tribunal.

With these employes, whose efficient service is acknowledged, the railroads have no differences that could not be considered fairly and decided justly by such a public body.

Railroads Urge Public Inquiry and Arbitration

The formal proposal of the railroads to the employes for the settlement of the controversy is as follows:

“Our conferences have demonstrated that we cannot harmonize our differences of opinion, and that eventually the matters in controversy must be passed upon by other and disinterested agencies. Therefore, we propose that your proposals and the proposition of the railways be disposed of by one or the other of the following methods:

1. Preferably by submission to the Interstate Commerce Commission, the only tribunal which, by reason of its accumulated information bearing on railway conditions and its control of the revenue of the railways, is in a position to consider and protect the rights and equities of all the interests affected, and to provide additional revenue necessary to meet the added cost of operation in case your proposals are found by the commission to be just and reasonable; or, in the event the Interstate Commerce Commission cannot, under existing laws, act in the premises, that we jointly request Congress to take such action as may be necessary to enable the commission to consider and promptly dispose of the questions involved; or

2. By arbitration in accordance with the provisions of the Federal law” (The Newlands Act).

Leaders Refuse Offer and Take Strike Vote

Leaders of the train service brotherhoods, at the joint conference held in New York, June 1-15, refused the offer of the railroads to submit the issue to arbitration or Federal review, and the employes are now voting on the question whether authority shall be given these leaders to declare a nation-wide strike.

A Question For the Public to Decide

The railroads feel that they have no right to grant a wage preference of $100,000,000 a year to these employes, now highly paid and constituting only one-fifth of all the employes, without a clear mandate from a public tribunal that shall determine the merits of the case after a review of all the facts.

The single issue before the country is whether this controversy is to be settled by an impartial Government inquiry or by industrial warfare.

National Conference Committee of the Railways
RAILROAD WAGES

Shall they be determined by Industrial Warfare or Federal Inquiry?

To the American Public:

Do you believe in arbitration or industrial warfare?

The train employes on all the railroads are voting whether they will give their leaders authority to tie up the commerce of the country to enforce their demands for a 100 million dollar wage increase.

The railroads are in the public service—your service. This army of employees is in the public service—your service.

You pay for rail transportation 3 billion dollars a year, and 44 cents out of every dollar from you goes to the employees.

On all the Western railroads in 1915, seventy-five per cent of the train employees earned these wages (lowest, highest and average of all) as shown by the pay rolls:

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<td>Engineers</td>
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A 100 million dollar wage increase for men in freight and yard service (less than one-fifth of all employees) is equal to a 5 per cent advance in all freight rates.

The managers of the railroads, as trustees for the public, have no right to place this burden on the cost of transportation to you without a clear mandate from a public tribunal speaking for you.

The railroads have proposed the settlement of this controversy either under the existing national arbitration law, or by reference to the Interstate Commerce Commission. This offer has been refused by the employees' representatives.

Shall a nation-wide strike or an investigation under the Government determine this issue?

NATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE OF THE RAILWAYS