

“The Testimony of Jane Addams.” REPORT ON THE CHICAGO STRIKE OF JUNE-JULY, 1894, BY THE UNITED STATES STRIKE COMMISSION, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT JULY 26, 1894, UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 6 OF CHAPTER 1063 OF THE LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES PASSED OCTOBER 1, 1888, WITH APPENDICES CONTAINING TESTIMONY, PROCEEDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1 (Commissioner WRIGHT). State your name, residence, and occupation.-Ans. Jane Addams; live at No.

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street; am superintendent of the hull House.

2 (Commissioner WRIGHT). Are you a member of the Civic Federation? Yes, sir; I am a member of the board of conciliation of the Civic Federation.

3 (Commissioner WRIGHT). State briefly what your experience has been during the recent strike relative to the action of that board of which. you are a member toward securing an adjustment of the difficulties.-Ans.

The board met at the Auditorium during the early stages of the strike, before the convention of the American Railway Union in Chicago. I was asked by the gentlemen on the board to find out as near as I could the attitude of the strikers toward arbitration. The object of the board was to arrange for arbitration, not to be itself an arbitration committee, but arrange for a board of conciliation. My first intercourse with the strikers was when Mr. Heathcoate presented the case before the labor assembly committee, and I made an arrangement with him to go down to Pullman. While there I took supper with some of the girls working there, and went around to see the houses [end page 645] with members of the relief committee; also investigated as best I could the rentals, as compared with the tenement-house rentals elsewhere; the general committee there felt that I had better deal through the members of the American Railway Union and referred me to Mr. Howard; I saw him and found he was very friendly toward the notion of arbitration, and I reported that back to our board of conciliation. Mr. Bartlett, president of the board of conciliation, and one or two other gentlemen had promised to see the Pullman committee. We found it impossible to go further with the men until we knew more about the attitude of the company.

I made arrangements with the general secretary of the association and Mr. Bartlett, the president, to go and see the company, but through a mistake in the telephone message Mr. Bartlett failed to be present; but Mr. Estley, the secretary, and myself saw the representatives of the company. By this time the railway convention had assembled in Chicago, and the next time I saw Mr. Debs, Mrs. Henrotin went with me. This was our second call. We found Mr. Debs not only ready for arbitration, but he seemed to be eager to have the matter arbitrated. This was before the Pullman matter had been formally considered by the convention, although much discussed, and Mr. Debs arranged with our committee to meet the general strike committee at Pullman that same evening. He asked one of the Pullman men to go down and arrange to have a general session of the strike committee at Turner Hall, in Pullman. Mrs. Henrotin was unable to go down, and I was the only member of the committee that went to Pullman. That evening they had a meeting, at which there were present between fifty and sixty delegates from the local union, Mr. Heathcoate presiding. Some of the men at first were rather suspicious-did not know but what this attempt at arbitration was an attempt on the part of the company, and that the American Railway Union would not take up their cause-but their suspicions were quickly allayed, and after the case was presented they voted that they were ready to arbitrate any and all points, and that resolution was spread upon the minutes.

The proposition I made was the suggestions of Mr. Lyman Gage, president of the Civic Federation, and also president of the First National Bank of Chicago. I had talked with him, and also with the other members of the committee. His proposition was oily as to the settlement of rents. The suggestion was that three men be appointed by the real-estate board, who knew more or less about suburban rents; that they make an estimate of the Pullman rents as to whether or not they were exorbitant; that that estimate be submitted to the company and to the men, and a readjustment be made on that basis. That was the proposition I made to the general strike committee at Pullman. They were anxious to have that done, but they did not wish it to

appear that the rent was the only grievance, so they made their resolution general-that they were ready to arbitrate any and all points. I then came back to the city, feeling that we had made a beginning toward conciliation, and the other members of the committee went to see Mr. Pullman, I believe.

4 (Commissioner WRIGHT). Who were they?-Ans. The members of the committee were Mr. Bartlett, Mr. Butler, Professor Henderson, Mr. Carroll, and Mr. Ryerson, I think.

5 (Commissioner WRIGHT). What was the business of the men on this committee?-Ans. Mr. Ryerson is a capitalist. I don't know that he himself went to Mr. Pullman.

6 (Commissioner Wright). Were the other men business men in [end page 646] Chicago?-Ans. Yes, sir. Mr. Butler is an extensive dealer in general store supplies; Professor Henderson is connected with the university; Mr. Bartlett is in the wholesale hardware business; Mr. Carroll is editor of a labor paper and a very fair-minded man. It was impossible to come to any understanding with the Pullman company on that proposition, and it was dropped. We considered the effort a failure.

7 (Commissioner WORTHINGTON). You say it was impossible to come to an understanding. Do you mean it was impossible to secure any arbitration or conference with them?-Ans. It was always possible to see them. They were always very courteous to me, but they insisted there was nothing to arbitrate.

8 (Commissioner WRIGHT). Was it the view of your committee that they ought to arbitrate the question of rents?-Ans. We hoped they would agree to the appointment of this committee of three men from the real-

estate board to arbitrate the rents alone; then we hoped, after getting that settled, other matters would be settled, and the affair would be adjusted. We knew the rent was not the only grievance.

9 (Commissioner Wright). Was it the idea of your committee that on account of a reduction in wages there should be a reduction of rents?-Ans. No. Our first notion was that the rents were higher than the rents in other suburbs around in the vicinity, and we wished to take that question by itself, irrespective of the question of wages. We held that the company had applied strong competition to wages and had cut down wages, but had had no competition on rent, and the rents had been held up, and we wished to apply competition to the rents. Let these real-estate men say what the rent would be if subject to the ordinary competition.

10 (Commissioner WRIGHT). It was not a question, then, of wages and rents, altogether?-Ans. No; but we hoped it would lead to that. Our proposition was to put the rents on a competitive basis.

11 (Commissioner WRIGHT). And bring them to the basis of rents in other localities?-Ans. Yes, similar localities.

12 (Commissioner Wright) Did the question of the reduction in rents at Kensington and Roseland in the last few years to some extent form part of your plan?-Ans. We hoped it would, but the investigation was not taken up.

13 (Commissioner WRIGHT). But it would have been part of the plan if carried out?-Ans. Yes, sir.

14 (Commissioner Wright). Do you know anything about the relation of rents in Pullman to those in other localities where a similar class of people live?--Ans. I know very well in the neighborhood of Polk and Halsted streets in the locality of the Hull House, and it seems to me the rents at Pullman are higher than the rents in that vicinity, which is a mile west. You can get two rooms in that vicinity for \$6, while the cheapest two rooms I saw at Pullman were \$7.50, and most of them \$8.50. They were cleaner there because the surroundings were cleaner, but other facilities were no better.

15 (Commissioner Wright). What has been the result of your investigation in Pullman and other places relative to the health of the people, the condition of sewage and such matters?--Ans. No doubt the town of Pullman is much better plumbed than the neighborhood of the Hull House and Halsted street, but I don't know how it compares with Roseland and Kensington.

16 (Commissioner Kernan). Did you make any comparison as to other houses with more than two rooms?--Ans. Yes, sir; the rent seemed to be high for the cottages at Pullman, although I am not so [end page 647] familiar with the rents of people who have houses all to themselves, but they are high in proportion to other localities.

17 (Commissioner KERNAN). You did not carry your inquiries so far as to go yourself and see cottages of similar dimensions, etc?--Ans. Yes, sir; I did.

18 (Commissioner KERNAN). State what you did about that to satisfy yourself?-Ans. A number of cottages in Pullman that were renting for \$18 per month and some of them for \$22, it seems to me could have been rented cheaper than that in the city near Halsted street, or Polk and Loomis streets, such streets as that. I should say an \$18 cottage at Pullman could have been rented for perhaps \$15 in the thickly populated parts of the city.

At the close of the testimony, on the 30th day of August, Commissioner Wright made the following public announcement:

This commission has now heard all the witnesses which have been suggested by the various parties interested in this controversy, except a few whose testimony would be simply cumulative of points that have been covered.

At the opening of the hearing it was stated that the commission would decide at its close whether it had time at its disposal to listen to parties, orally, who had remedies for labor questions to offer, or suggestions as to legislation, and matters of that character. So much time has been taken up in hearing testimony on the facts relating to the late difficulties that the commission can not at present take up the secondary branch of the investigation. The commission will adjourn to meet in Washington, D. C., Wednesday, September 26, 1894, at which time it will be glad to receive, in writing, any suggestions as to the solution of questions involved in the late controversies. It will at that time hear any parties who may desire to be heard relative to the facts involved, and it may, after a careful examination of the testimony which has been offered at this hearing,

conclude to call further witnesses to supplement any testimony which has been given on either side. The hearing stands adjourned till Wednesday, September 26, 1894, at Washington, D. C.

Pursuant to adjournment at Chicago, the commission met in the Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., at 11 o'clock a. m., Wednesday, September 26, 1894, all the commissioners being present.

Commissioner WRIGHT. As announced at the close of the hearings in Chicago, the commission is now ready to hear any further testimony relative to the causes of and the conditions surrounding the recent controversy between the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company and their employees, and any solutions or remedies for the prevention of such trouble in the future that may be offered.

