

# SCREW MEN BALK AT THE TWO HUNDRED BALE MARK.

## Dock and Cotton Council Backs Them in Balking, So Peace Plan Ends in Talking.

### Mayor Behrman's Suggestion Was a Compromise on a Hundred and Eighty, But Neither Side Would Listen. Meantime Work Goes On.

Contrary to expectations, based on the statements Sunday of well-known colored labor leaders, the Dock and Cotton Council yesterday again indorsed the stand of the Screwmen, after the Screwmen themselves in joint session had refused the proposition of the commercial bodies and exchanges to go to work stowing 200 bales per gang, and the deadlock that is paralyzing the commerce of the port was tighter than ever, with no sign of a backdown by either side.

Mayor Behrman, whose efforts since the strike began have been vigorously expended in the cause of peace, was somewhat disappointed at the turn of affairs, and His Honor very plainly spoke his mind, and intimated that he intended taking further steps to force an investigation of all port charges and the influences that really tend to hurt the city more than labor troubles do.

Altogether it was a busy day, with the Screwmen's meeting in the morning, the session of the Dock and Cotton Council in the afternoon, and the brief conference in the Mayor's parlor at the City Hall, but nothing came of it all, and as one of the labor leaders said last night the situation is more serious than ever, and both sides are getting further apart each hour.

The two Screwmen's organizations, the white union and the black body, got together in the Screwmen's Hall, Exchange Alley and Blewville Street, at a little before 11 o'clock yesterday forenoon. There was a full attendance, and when President James Byrnes, of the white Union, rapped for order, the meeting room was densely crowded.

Mr. Byrnes announced that the meeting had been called for the purpose of reading the letter sent Mayor Behrman by the Conference of the exchanges and commercial bodies, in which it was proposed that if the men would go back to work agreeing to stow 200 bales of cotton a day, all port charges would be investigated by the Committee.

"The letter was published in the papers of Sunday," said Mr. Byrnes, "and I guess you are all familiar with its contents, but that it might be fully and properly considered, I will request the Secretary to read it."

While Secretary Thomas Harrison was reading the hall was quiet, each member of the two organizations following the proposition closely, suggestion by suggestion. Mr. Byrnes asked what the pleasure of the meeting was.

The assemblage broke loose in cries of "Turn it down!" "Throw it in the waste basket!" "We stand for 100 bales!" and when Mr. Byrnes had checked the enthusiasm with several peremptory raps of his hammer, and something like order was restored, he called for motions on the question.

It was duly moved and seconded that the proposition be rejected, and the motion was carried in a storm of "ayes" and not a dissenting vote from either whites or blacks was recorded. There being no other business to consider, the meeting was declared adjourned after having lasted hardly longer than a quarter of an hour.

At the conclusion of the session the following

**LETTER WAS DRAWN UP,**

signed by the Presidents and Secretaries of both organizations, and sent to the Mayor:

New Orleans, Oct. 14, 1907.  
Hon. Martin Behrman, Mayor, City of New Orleans, City: Dear Sir—At a joint meeting of the Screwmen's Benevolent Association and the Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1, colored, held this day, communication by you from the Joint Conference of exchanges and commercial organizations, and referred by you to our organizations, was carefully considered.

We sincerely regret to state that we find it absolutely impossible to accede to the request contained therein, i. e., to go to work upon a 200 bales per day basis, as we feel that this request is not based upon either fairness, equity or justice. Yours respectfully,  
JAMES BYRNES,  
President Screwmen's Benevolent Association.

THOS. HARRISON,  
Recording Secretary Screwmen's Benevolent Association.

T. P. WOODLAND,  
President Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1 (Colored).

NELSON SHEPARD,  
Recording Secretary Screwmen's Benevolent Association No. 1 (Colored).

The screwmen stood in the alley in knots and groups at the close of the meeting and discussed the situation. They all seemed hopeful and confident, and whites and blacks seemed firmly united on the main issues involved.

President Byrnes, Mr. Harrison, Mr. Jamison and other leading screwmen denounced the statement made by several of the colored men to the effect that Mayor Behrman had suggested before the meeting of the Dock and Cotton Council Sunday that the men accept the proposition to stow 200 bales in the interests of peace as being false. The screwmen leaders also denied that there was any friction among the unions, or any likelihood of the Dock and Cotton Council ordering the screwmen to make pack horses of themselves and stow the 200 bales, and their claims were borne out by the action taken by the Dock and Cotton Council later in the day.

The Dock and Cotton Council went into session at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and Mr. Byrnes, who is also President of the Council, was in the chair, with a full number of delegates from the unions affiliated in the Council.

This meeting, like the session of the screwmen, was very brief, and in half an hour the delegates were out of the hall, wending their way homeward. The only action taken was to receive a report from the screwmen and to indorse the stand the men took.

It was said after the meeting by a member, who was speaking unofficially, that he thought the men might agree to abide by the decision of an arbitration board, were they allowed to go to work under

**OLD CONDITIONS PENDING ARBITRATION.**

Several screwmen held an informal curbstone meeting in the alley and discussed the whole unpleasant business. They advanced the contention, backed by argument, which went to the effect that the commercial bodies' proposition had no parallel in labor history; that it was only fair that they should return to work under old conditions pending an investigation of all the charges made.

"Were we to go to work, as is proposed," said one, "it would practically amount to accepting conditions that were one of the issues to be arbitrated. We will go to work stowing 100 bales as of yore while they investigate and arbitrate, but no 200 bales for us."

Some of the men took kindly to the proposition of the Mayor to offer to stow 150 bales, but the majority were loud in their statements that they would starve rather than stow a bale over the old limit, 100.

After the meeting of the Dock and Cotton Council, President Byrnes, President Scully, of the white longshoremen; Mr. Harrison and other leading lights in the Council called at the City Hall and had a conference with Mayor Behrman.

On about ten ships lying the wharves with broken intervals from Clouet Street to Stuyvesant Docks, on this side of the river, and from Gretna to Westwego, on the other side, there were about three hundred strikebreakers and two hundred sailors working yesterday.

Altogether there was something like

five hundred strikebreakers in the city hired by the steamship agents and stevedores, but of this number quite a few are sick on board the bark Magdelene, anchored in the river off Cadiz Street, and yesterday half a dozen or so keeled over for the time being at least.

Those on the sick list owe their disabled state to Mississippi River water, a liquid they weren't used to. On the bark the river water is used for drinking and cooking, and such an ailment did it hold to the strikebreakers' constitutions generally that it began knocking them over like ninetails after it had had a try of several days.

While many of the men are confined to their bunks on the bark, none is seriously ill, and the doctor who is constantly in attendance states that in a few days his patients will be well again and stronger than ever. Some of the men went to work yesterday morning in an unfit condition, the sickness just beginning to take them in its grip, and before many hours had rolled by they had to give up and were taken to the bark for treatment.

Several of the leading stevedores stood in Carondelet Street yesterday afternoon, talking over the situation generally, and the strikebreaker and the class of work he furnishes came up for a little consideration.

The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the strikebreaker was at his best in stowing cotton. He is a miserable failure at stowing general cargoes and runs lots of freight, but cotton he can't very well damage, and is learning to stow it quite handily, if not rapidly.

Yesterday, for the first time since the strike began, the attempt was made to move

**COTTON THAT CAME IN ON STEAMBOATS**

from the wharves to the presses, where the bales are to be compressed. Two floats were put into service, and cotton, five or six bales at a time, was hauled from the levee to the press at Thalia Street. Two union negroes did the driving, but no attempt was made to molest them by the strikers.

The following ships were working yesterday: The Sandson, taking general cargo, at Clouet Street, with strikebreakers and sailors; the Mechanician, taking cotton, at Girod Street, with strikebreakers and sailors; the Philias, discharging coffee, at Julia Street, with sailors; the Colombian, discharging at Coloste Street, with strikebreakers and sailors; the Ranallo, discharging at Girod Street, with strikebreakers and sailors; the Priestly-old, taking general cargo, at Stuyvesant Docks, with strikebreakers and sailors; the Daleby, the Albanian and the Virginia, working strikebreakers and sailors, at Westwego.

The Floridan sailed Sunday night with a full cargo, and the Sandson and the Virginia will sail to-day with complete loads. The following ships will work to-day: The Mechanician, which has removed to Stuyvesant Docks; the Daleby, the Harold S. Lang, the City of Mexico, the Angola, the Ranallo, the Virginia, the Colombian, the Sandson and the Albanian.

One hundred more strikebreakers, a hardy crowd, recruited from the harvest fields of the West, will be brought into the city to-day to help work the ships.

A number of band men were put to

**WORK IN THE PRESSES**

yesterday receiving the cotton brought in by the two nonunion teams. It was said that strikebreakers would be introduced into the presses in number sufficient to do the work of the Cotton Yardmen, but this statement was denied by one of the best-known press managers. There were originally five negroes put to work yesterday driving cotton floats, but three of the number became frightened early in the day and deserted, leaving only two.

It was rumored last night that there was a threatened split in the Colored Longshoremen's Union over the question of supporting the Screwmen in the strike, but labor leaders denied the story and said that the blacks were standing firm as ever.

**THE MAYOR DENIES**

**Some Statements Not Printed in the Plaineye.**

Last afternoon representatives of the Dock and Cotton Council appeared in the Mayor's parlor to say that they had held a meeting and were come to the Mayor to tell him that the body they represented had adopted a resolution indorsing the resolution adopted by the Screwmen earlier in the day, refusing to go to work on a basis of a 200-bale a day.

At the same time the representatives of the Council said that the report that there was dissension in the ranks was an untruth, as was the statement that there was a weakening in the ranks.

While the Dock and Cotton Council were present last afternoon, Mayor Behrman took occasion to say that he was interviewed by no reporter yesterday, nor had he given out the statement that he had advised the men to accept a 200-bale a day basis. Whoever published the statement had no authority for it.

The Mayor said he had spoken with the labor representatives Sunday and had advised that as a compromise as between the 100 and the 200-bale proposition, to ask for an 150-bale.

"But this morning," said the Mayor, "I learned from Jim Weis and Joe Alroy, the Cotton Exchange representatives, that the 150-bale proposition would be rejected."

Mayor Behrman, in the course of conversation, expressed surprise at the seeming unwillingness to enter upon a full and open investigation of all port charges here and in Galveston, in order that an authentic and indisputable comparative statement might be had to determine beyond doubt just what a parity with Galveston is.

"This information certainly must be obtainable," said Mayor Behrman, "and if it is not secured before then, I intend to address an urgent appeal to the next General Assembly of the State to appoint a special joint committee of senators and representatives who will be empowered to summon witnesses and send for books, papers and whatever else may be necessary to arrive at the facts. I mention this now, because I consider it to be timely in order that candidates for the Legislature may consider the matter carefully and express themselves thereon in the course of their respective campaigns."

"If it be true that the business is now being moved to the satisfaction of the ship agents, I cannot appreciate why the investigation should not be undertaken by the Conference of Exchanges at once. This conference, in the communication addressed to me Saturday, stated that the question of investigating all charges and discriminations connected with this port was and is the purpose of the conference. If it is, and as I said before, if the ship agents are satisfied with the way in which their business is being handled, then why should there be further delay? It is recognized that the port is being made to suffer. One of the ship agents declared in the course of an address in the Progressive Union Hall that the demands of the Screwmen was a small item when compared with other discriminatory charges which are to be probed later. Hence, it is that I feel justified in the event the investigation is not made before then to appeal to the Legislature as I have outlined."