

REPORT OF A MEETING HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE  
AMERICAN RAILWAY UNION, AT THE TURNER HALL, KENSINGTON,  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 9TH., 1894.

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T. W. Heathcote, in the chair.

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The chairman said he had great pleasure in introducing George W. Howard, the Vice-President of the American Railway Union.

Mr. Howard then spoke as follows:

Mr. Chairman and Colleagues:

We have met here tonight to consider a very momentous question, and at the outset it becomes necessary to know whether you have implicit confidence in me.

A VOICE: We have.

MR. HOWARD: I have never misled a lot of men in my life.

A VOICE: No.

MR. HOWARD: I have never led a fight that was not won.

A VOICE: Hear, hear.

MR. HOWARD: But I want to talk to you this evening in an unimpassioned way. I want you to listen to me. I want you to let your prejudices subside. I want you to be perfectly calm; perfectly collected. I want you to have your Mother-wit about you, and I will give you my candid advice.

As the Vice-President of the American Railway Union I am simply your servant. In the American Railway Union we have no One-man power, as they had in the organizations of the past, but we work upon the principle of this government: "For the People and By the People", and in the American Railway Union the principle shall be and must be "The People". And they must decide for themselves what they want to do. So far as the officials of the American Railway Union are concerned, they will calmly advise you. You decide what you ought to do by a lawfully constituted majority of votes cast.

You appointed a committee to call upon the officers of the Pullman Company today. They, the committee, came to the headquarters of the American Railway Union, and we had something of a conference before we went to see Mr. Wickes at the headquarters of the Pullman Company. We found not alone Mr. Wickes, but Mr. Middleton, Mr. Brown, Mr. Bryant and three or four others. It seemed to me that all of the general officers of the Company were there.

A great deal was said and gone into and proved about the petty misdoings of some of your Straw Bosses here at the Pullman Works.

Now I have had a great deal of experience in the labor field in my time. I know what Straw Bosses are. When a man gets suddenly promoted, he cannot wear the same hat the

following day. He gets a swelled head at once. Some men feel that because they sit on a millionaire's slop barrel that they are millionaires themselves, and then they see how far they can reduce their fellow men to poverty, so that they may gain popularity. For that class of men I have the utmost contempt, and I want to see the time when, in one solid phalanx, we can march up and make a demand for the removal of these petty tyrants, and they will have to go.

A great deal was said today about the abuses heaped upon you at the Pullman Works. A great number of wrongs have been perpetrated there.

The committee was received in the fairest of spirits on the part of Mr. Wickes, and on the part of the balance of the officers. In the committee there were five of the girls from the Pullman Works. I ask you men to stand ready to protect them through thick and thin. We have not given the girls the credit that they ought to have had in the days gone by. You don't think about the drudgery of your families; you place a responsibility upon them that you ought to take yourselves. The woman ought to work up to the Ballot box. Let Woman be appreciated for all she is worth. Let her receive the same pay that a man does for the same piece of work. I want to see that time come, and come soon, and we can see it if we will only brace ourselves together.

Now think and understand of what has been transpiring at Pullman within the past three years. You have made an organization composed of three thousand men and women, and you are organizing right along. The girls are going to have a meeting tomorrow night in the Arcade, and I want you to help them, and to get closer and closer together. That is the only hope we have: to get together in one solid phalanx. Do not let anything divide us on earth.

At the same time I want to tell you this: Remember that the American Railway Union just commenced to organize on the fifteenth of last August. A great many parts of the country we have not yet organized. You cannot expect us to do too much.

We have organized mostly in the northwestern parts. We have organized the Montana Union, the Montana Central, the Union Pacific, the Great Northern, the Denver & Rio Grande, the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, the Ohio & Mississippi, the Chicago & Great Western and the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. We have those railroads organized already, and we are now organizing the Illinois Central and a great many other roads out of Chicago. When the proper time comes we will show you what we can do in the Eastern country as well as in the Northwest.

In the conference today Mr. Pullman himself came in to address the committee. Mr. Pullman told the committee how

he was interested with his co-workers in Pullman and in other enterprises throughout the country; how he had shut up the Pullman shops at Detroit and St. Louis and had centred and concentrated all of his shop forces here at Pullman, for the simple reason that he wanted to maintain Pullman at all hazards.

Well, I don't blame him for that. The town is named "Pullman" after him, and he and his co-partners have large sums of money invested in this property.

He made a plain talk to that committee, and I want to say that, in pushing forward the claims of the American Railway Union that we cannot perpetrate an injustice upon anyone, and at the same time be asking justice at their hands.

Then we are not fair if we will not accord justice to our fellow-man and co-worker. The principle is the same all the way through.

Mr. Pullman told us of contracts wherein he had lost \$4000., on one class of car and \$20000., on another class of car. He said "You can have a committee to examine my books if you wish, and you can see if I tell the truth or not. I would never have taken this contract if the foremen had not assured me that the men would acquiesce in accepting a reduction." And with that in view he took this contract at a losing figure, and we can see his books if we care to look at them.

Now, I understand what Humanity is and I understand what Capital is. I understand how they make assertions from time to time; how prone they are to be mistaken as well as other people, and how prone they are to lie. I won't say that he lied until we see what his books show up, and see if it is true that he took this contract at a losing figure,- that he has lost \$17.50 or \$12. a car,- I forget now which it was-- with the understanding that the men would complete these cars at the wages they are now being paid. He (Mr.Pullman) claims that the general officials, Middleton and Brown and others, met all of the bosses down here, and that there was an understanding that the men were to work for those figures, and that he had been assured that the men had agreed to take those prices, and it all depends on what the men will work for to see if he can take other contracts. He said: "If the men refuse, we cannot have work to run four weeks at best".

After all the troubles were gone over, as I told you before (and Mr. Wickes was very much exercised over what had been transpiring down here at the Shops), Miss Curtis, a capable little lady, spoke her piece very genteelly to Mr. Wickes, and he told her about all the shortcomings of the straw bosses, in fact he said that Mr. Pullman would be here tomorrow investigating each and every claim, and he wants the men to stand up and tell the truth about it. He

pledged that he would have every grievance rectified. He wants the man to speak boldly and not be afraid to tell the truth. He took the ground that he could not restore the pay, not at present. He had taken the contract at a losing figure. I think you should deal fairly with him until this contract is finished. This is my candid advice. It seems to me that you cannot seek to perpetrate an injustice and at the same time be asking for justice.

A VOICE: How about the checks?

MR HOWARD: He guaranteed that there would be no prejudice against any one of the committee; they would be treated with the same respect in the Pullman Shops as they always had. I think more of my reputation with the working man than I do of my life, and I tell you again, making that assertion, I have always paid my debts, and told men the truth; they can depend on me; I guarantee myself tonight from the assertions that I got from Mr. Wickes, that not one of the Committee will be allowed to suffer for serving on this Committee. Any violation of this, let me know, and I will be your leader to a finish. Don't you forget it. If there should be any prejudice shown against any member, as I told them before I came down here tonight, I want them to come directly to me, and I will immediately go with them to Mr. Wickes.

We are organizing the roads immediately around us. We are organizing in Chicago at the rate of nearly a

thousand a day. Our cause will not spoil, by any means. We can afford to be a little patient, and especially since these pledges have been made to you; then take no action at this present time. Don't be afraid to put your trust in me. You may have to be a little patient for awhile; but close up the ranks, and get them closer and closer together, and we will not suffer.

We are going to have a meeting with the girls tomorrow night.

I want you to understand that you have got a friend in me, under all circumstances, and if you have got a case you don't want to tackle, put it on my shoulders and I will carry it for you.

Now the Committee will tell you that they could not have been received by Mr. Wickes in a more gentlemanly manner than they were today. I tell you that Mr. Wickes was surprised. They read their complaints and he made his little notes and then said, "we will go down to Pullman and fix this thing up." Now listen to this: Suppose you got a hundred dollars a day, and you had some tyrannical spit-fire over you, that made your life a hell on earth, how long would you work? See how easy you are improving your conditions. Don't be afraid that you will get any worse off than you are. The A. R. U. is increasing its funds every day, and at the proper time they will



take them off the shelf! Don't fear to stand shoulder to shoulder, but go to each and every man and the man that is not for you is against you. There is only one line to step up to when the bugle blows, only one line, and he that does not toe the line is against you. The motto of the A. R. U. is this: "One out, All out, All back or none back."

If we had a fight anywhere, with any corporation in this country and we had to sacrifice one worthy man or woman, I would say we were licked. Those are our conditions. In times past when you have had your fights, and they have been settled up, you have had 50, or 75, or 100 men let out of the shop. We do not want to make that kind of a fight with the A. R. U. We do not want to sacrifice one worthy member, but as I said before "One out, All out, All back or none back."

A VOICE: How about our black list?

MR HOWARD: Yes, they told him about the black list, about everything. He contended that there was not a black list. We appeared before him and told him about that black list face to face; that is the way to do business. Let me tell you, when you have the opportunity offered you to stand face to face with those tyrannical members, speak your piece like a man; that is the way to do business.

Now, I know quite a good deal about humanity; I have seen a good many movements made in my time; I have seen some of the men that said they would spill the last drop of blood, who were among the first to do the "scab" act. They are generally the ones who do it, you know. Up here in our Great Northern contest, we had the Chairman of the Brotherhood of Firemen with us; he came to our open meetings, addressed those meetings, and he used the most radical language I have ever heard used. After meeting with us for ten days, he then turned completely round and bound himself to the President of the Company to do the "scab" act. How is that?

A VOICE: Good.

MR HOWARD: That is the kind of men you find sometimes. You cannot educate people in a day. One of the things to remember at this time is this: That six inches of foresight is worth a thousand miles of hind-sight.

I have good reasons for saying what I say to you tonight. I would not mislead you for a minute. I would not deceive you for a minute. I know what the conditions are. My advice is to go back to the shops tomorrow, and let them come down here---Mr. Wickes and his whole committee---Middleton and Brown will be with him, and let each man and woman in those shops, do his or her duty.

A VOICE: What are you going to do about those men who

were fired out?

MR HOWARD: Mr. Wickes pledged his word to me tonight that every one would go back. I will see that Mr. Wickes comes down here to settle it. He told me that there would be no prejudices held against any man. He told me that I could pledge it to the men. Now I have known Mr. Wickes for twenty-five years and I have always found him to be the soul of honor, a straightforward and upright man in every particular.

I will also say that of Mr. Garcelon, that I have always found him to be straightforward. So far as the balance of the men in the Pullman Circus is concerned, I have not known them very long. We want to see how they wash. We are just putting them through the suds right now. We want to see whether they will fade, or not, and if they do fade, we are not dead yet; but we will be here to say something about the washing when she is hung up.

Now, I will retire for a few minutes in favor of some other brother, and I will speak a little later on. This is the first day in years that I have had a headache. I addressed a meeting on 22nd and State last night.

Immediately after this meeting, there will be a meeting of the Blacksmiths to organize, so one of the committeemen informs me.

Now remember men, I want to benefit you. I will try and answer every question, and I will always be found to be doing what will redound to your best interests in all ways. Have the proper confidence in me, and I will not lead you astray.

(At this moment, 8:30 P. M., a crowd of girls came in and Mr. Howard said: "I want these men to give three cheers for the Pullman girls", and three good cheers were there given.)

MR HOWARD: (Continuing) I am glad to see the girls with us tonight. I am glad to know that they are being encouraged by their fellow-workmen in the Pullman shops. They need encouragement: They have not been encouraged in the past as they should have been; they have not been accorded the privileges that they should have been accorded by the men in the past. But remember that Woman has been tried in all the avocations of life, as teachers, preachers, professors, as lawyers, as doctors, as farmers, and on the field of battle, side by side with her brother. Woman has never been found wanting when she has been weighed. I know that men sometimes are prone to feel that they are the lords of creation, and the only people on earth, but you must accord something of respect, something of importance to the women of the world. Even in Christ's

time, woman made her mark. In all the clamor for Christ's life, not a woman's voice was heard. It was a man who betrayed him; it was a man who denied him; it was a man that condemned him to death, and that very man's wife begged in very pity and sympathy that His life might be spared. When he had been delivered to His captors, the very best friends He should have had on earth---His Apostles---ran away; but women followed after, shedding tears of pity and sympathy. Crucified on the Cross, Woman unaided and alone, pushed her way to the foot of the cross, and poured out her tears on behalf of the world's greatest Martyr. Woman was the first to greet Him when He burst the bands of death; Woman the first to proclaim the tidings of His resurrection, and Woman today has been foremost of all the best representatives of His Divine life that this world affords.

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The meeting was next addressed by Theo. R. Rohde, (Painter). Working number 7235. Resides at 367, 1st Flat, Stephenson Street.

MR ROHDE: I would like to say a few words for the painters. I have been in harness for the last twenty years myself, and about a year and a half ago, we started in with 20 members to organize the painters. The painters have stood up in the City of Chicago to be knocked down and kept down. But today they have gotten up, and they are knocking the

other fellows down. Thirty-five shops in Chicago are all that did not sign the scale; and some of the others did not want to sign the scale.

A painter has nine months in which he has nothing to do. In the winter time there is nothing to do. From early last summer up to now, he has had nothing to do, and now he stands up, with starvation staring him in the face, and is prepared to fall in line.

I want to tell you of the painters of Pullman. We have taken up this question and weighed it well. We have good opinion and good counsel in our membership; good level-headed men at the head of our Organization, and we have weighed this question for three months, and we have decided to see if we cannot better our condition. We have come to the conclusion, after taking everything into consideration, to fight the millionaire, and when your cupboards are empty, no money at home, and in debt, you may strike while the other fellow is sitting in his parlor and drinking champagne.

Then again we came to this conclusion: We cannot be any worse off than we are. We are ready to stand up and be knocked down as the men have been for twenty years in Chicago. As my friend, Mr. Howard, has said: The painters will step out as one man, and they are ready to be knocked down. But I will say this: We will wait till

the bugle sounds. We will wait till we get better advise-  
ment, and we will look into this matter a little further.

We are willing to bear the burden a little longer, if  
necessary; we will await the advice of Mr. Howard and Mr.  
Debbs, and when they sound the bugle, I will walk out with  
the painters. I will say that the painters of Pullman are  
the finest class of men on earth, and I don't say that  
because I am one of them.

Speaking of undertaking to fight the Pullman  
Company, I will say that we cannot afford to strike; we do  
not want to strike. We have been starving to death for  
the last eight or nine months; and now if they are going to  
make us fight, we will fight. If they would only turn us  
out on the ball ground here. But no, we have not got  
that kind of a fight to do. While we are walking around,  
he is drinking champagne; his cupboard does not get empty;  
in his camp want never enters; in our camp we are always  
in want. But if we could get him out on a battle field,  
it would be all right.

I will say that the painters are a liberal, open-  
hearted lot of men. They contribute their funds, they are  
willing to live and let live, and I want you to understand  
there cannot be enough said for the painters of Pullman,  
not saying that I am a painter myself, but I will say this,  
that we have put our shoulder to the wheel. We dare any

of them to undertake to interfere with our private business, we defy them to undertake it, and I will tell you that they are careful not to so interfere.

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The meeting was then addressed by R. W. Brown.

MR BROWN: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: To tell the truth, my mind is so taken up with my thoughts that I have been studying while sitting here, that I am as sad as I have been for years. As sad as though I had been to a funeral. I had not realized the sad condition that the people of Pullman are in, by the contraction of money, by the hoarding up of money, and, as I look over the finances of this country, I can see them driving us to the wall. I feel sad to contemplate such a state of affairs. But gentlemen, going down there today to the office of one of the strongest monopolies in the country, we brought those men in our presence, with Mr. Howard in the chair. We stated boldly in their face, that there were crimes and high crimes being permitted to the employes of Pullman. There were representatives of the press there today, and the men gave us their word of honor that they would give it to the press, word for word, and figure for figure. We did not wish to be misrepresented in the papers they represented.

There were charges preferred there, and those



charges were backed up, preferred in writing, and backed up by the names of the gentlemen who made them. The charges that were made last Monday, the majority of them had been investigated, and as Mr. Wickes went over them one after the other, he said : that charge is disposed of, and that, and that, and so on until all had been gone through with.

(At this time, invitation was given to the blacksmiths to meet in the hall upstairs at 8:50 P. M.)

MR BROWN: (Continuing) As I was saying, he took those charges one by one and laid them aside. After he got through with those charges, I rose to my feet---with the privilege of our representative here--- and said to Mr. Wickes, you have brought these officers down here, from Mr. Middleton, the Manager of the Pullman Works, and have offset our charges, and have not given us a chance to prove our charges. We made the charges and were not notified that these men would be here at three o'clock, and I said: Will you allow us to have these charges proven by the man or woman who made them? For instance, Miss Curtis has made a charge against the forelady. If the charge is not proven, Miss Curtis is made a falsifier of the truth. We have a right to prove our assertions, Mr. Wickes.

Mr. Wickes is a gentleman, and as our representative says, he is the soul of honor. He said, "Mr. Brown"

(I don't know where he got my handle from, somebody must have told him my name) "it shall be granted." He will come down here to Pullman and investigate tomorrow, and every man with his foreman (that is the straw boss), and every woman with her forelady, from the gentlemen of the management down, that have shown abuse, will be dealt with accordingly. You see at once that we gained a great point in that. Now, then, there is a point gained in our interest, and there is another thing that we gained. Mr. Pullman came in there, and he explained that the Company had been losing money. On a certain amount of cars \$20,000; on another \$10,000. On 300 freight cars \$12.50 or \$12.35 less than cost. It don't look reasonable. It looks (here he was interrupted by some fellow talking of "cuts"). Now, then, gentlemen, he not only said that, but he said to our representative, if you do not believe the assertion we have made, you can take one or two or three experts and bring them down to this office, and go over our books, and if you find that we have misrepresented things, then we will stand before you, falsifiers or as frauds. He didn't use those words, but that was the idea he conveyed. He gave us to understand that we need not look for any more reduction. He would employ as many men as he could; pay as good wages as he could. possibly pay them, and pay them accordingly.

Now then, gentlemen, our worthy representative here looked over the ground and talked with the committee. I will give you advice under the existing circumstances, and he says you can abide by it as you see fit, or you need not abide by it. If you take my advice, you will come out all right; take my word of honor that I will guide you through the wilderness of difficulties that lie before you. If that be a fact--that the Pullman Company are in that predicament, losing right along in order to keep these people at work in Pullman, we must meet them halfway, and wait until the times are so adjusted. Take my word of honor as a gentleman, he says: "I represent the great American Railway Union of this country; if they go back on one word, one iota, let me know it, and I will call to your back one of the greatest and strongest armies the world ever saw", and he says, "when we once call you out, you will never go back until you receive that that you demand. 'One out, all out, all back, none back.'"

Our argument tonight is: Let us follow the advice of the worthy gentleman that says he has led in many a victory. Never undertook yet to get that for his men unless he gained the victory. If that be true, then we will wait until he raises his hand, even though it be two weeks or three weeks. Understand this, gentlemen, that Mr. Howard and Mr. Debbs will hold counsel over this. I can

say those books will be looked into, and if there is a fraud there, we will come out and say the Pullman Company lied. This organization, and the Farmer's Alliance will say: Those people have done well, and we will win the strike, or we will sink Pullman with his millions so firm down beneath the public prejudice, that he will never be observed by the public.

I will give you my candid opinion tonight. The idea that filled me was, that every one of you should leave your post, but when I heard Mr. Howard talk, I said to myself, I am only just one man, and I am going to act with the leader in the Union. He (Howard) has no right to deceive us, and if he backs out, he is done for.

Now, gentlemen, I do not want you to strike. I think that in four weeks, or July at the furthest, will determine matters. Mr. Pullman talked to us so that we would not strike. When you bring a man like the President of the Pullman Company, you must make up your mind that he has a reason to give, or he would not. Let us wait on this man (Howard) and when he presses the button, as he uses that expression, let us come out like one man.

MR HOWARD: The brother says he wants me to say a word about the Repair Department. I am not posted enough to go over there and understand the whole lay-out. Now the

old man said this today, so far as repairs are concerned, and other contracts, that he is now just entering into, he cannot bid until he knows what we are going to do. Any business man understands that. We know that he cannot begin to make a bid upon cars of any kind before he knows what we are going to do---

A VOICE: What have we got to do?

MR. HOWARD: ---on the repairs of the building.

A VOICE: Let the old man use some of that four millions that he made last year.

MR HOWARD: I presume they are using the money. It is a good thing that they had the surplus. I am the worst radical in this house; the most radical dynamitard in the labor field. President Carpenter says that that man Howard is the most dangerous man in the labor field.

A VOICE: What about blowing up?

MR HOWARD: I do not use dynamite in that sense. I have always been a very radical man, but I advise you not to strike. You do not understand why I do that; because the time is not right just now.

What you want to do is to go out into the by-ways and bring them in; get yourselves thoroughly organized. You will have your conditions rectified. I ask again:

What if you got a hundred dollars a day, and you had to be mistreated, you would not work fifteen minutes. Everything

is working dead right, if you take my advice. The Committee were met in the best of spirits, and promises were made that those wrongs would be rectified. Let the good work go on. Be a little patient. We are in a position now to gain or lose the sentiment of the entire public of this country, and by a little shrewd play on our part we will win it. Take my advice. I would not dare to stand and talk to you the way I do, as the good brother says, if he does not do what he says he will do, he cannot stay in the United States. That man does not live today who can place his finger upon a dark spot in my whole career. I defy any man to attempt to do anything of that kind. I have traveled, I have suffered reproaches from those who did not like me, because of my having identified myself with the interests of the working man.

(Mr. Howard went on to speak of the victories he had gained in former strikes. Gave the people the information that the Company had detectives and spies at that meeting, possibly taking every word he was saying, and exhorted them to try and find them out, and when found, to "wipe up the floor with them" and not leave enough grease to grease a saw. He then gave a long dissertation of the medicine given to "scabs", and finally finished up with a "shady" story about "that tired feeling" presumably for the benefit of the ladies in court.