

## IN THE RAILROAD BROTHERHOODS

## The Legislative Board Game

Of the many festering sores which run through the American labor movement and keep it weak, backward and unable to function, the Railroad Brotherhood's Legislative Boards may be classed as one of the most destructive.

Like the rest of the unions in our craft system of organization the Railroad Brotherhoods are infested by swarms of high salaried bureaucrats, all seeking to keep their easy jobs and their big pay. The legislative boards have furnished an excellent excuse for still more office-holders to climb upon the workers' backs.

## The Make-Up of the Boards

Each organization of the Conductors, Engineers, Firemen and Trainmen maintains its own State and National Legislative Boards. The State Boards are made up of one representative from each Lodge or Division (meaning local union) with a Chairman, Secretary, and Executive Committee elected at stated biennial or triennial meetings as provided in the union constitution. The National Boards are made up entirely of Grand Lodge Officials, as in the B. of L. E. or of Grand Officers and the Chairman of the several State Boards, as is the case in the B. of L. F. & E.

Each one of the Four Brotherhoods has these boards organized in each one of the 48 states and the several Provinces of Canada. As a general rule each board maintains a lobbyist at each of the sessions of the State and Provincial Legislatures. The salaries of these lobbyists run variously from twelve to eighteen dollars per day, which accounts for the fact that these lobbyists are constantly finding more and more excuses to lay-off to perform some imaginary service.

On account of the big pay which the members of these Legislative Boards have helped themselves to, there is always present the strong temptation to prolong the Board sessions. As a general rule the members are also paid for coming and going to these meetings which is supposed to compensate them for actual time lost at their daily work and this privilege is often abused at the expense of the rank and file dues payer.

## How the Racket Works

The last session of the Minnesota State Legislative Board of the B. of L. E. can be used to illustrate how the beneficiaries of this legislative board system work the game. The whole board was kept in session for three days. The executive committee held a session on the fourth day. The only actual work done was the auditing of the books and the election of officers, all of which could have been done on the first day. The auditing committee was ready to report at noon the first day. The board passed a resolution eulogizing the legislative record of Senator Shipstead and hired an expert penman for five dollars to write the resolution before presenting it to the senator. The board members charged the dues payers for going and returning from the meeting regardless of no time lost in doing so. John F. Collins, Chief of Division No. 369, who also represents that Division on the legislative board, lives at St. Paul and runs a day switch engine at that point. He had only half as far to go to attend the board meeting at St. Francis hotel as he had to the round house where he gets his engine. Still he received pay for one day coming to the meeting and one day for returning from said meeting at the rate of \$16.00 per day, a total of \$32.00 when as a matter of fact he was running an engine on both of those days, or should have been if he was not.

In one expense account of the Minnesota B. of L. E. Board we find the following items: "To H. S. Martin, 1 days work looking up a picture for the B. of L. E. Journal of a depot, \$11.00", and again: "To H. S. Martin, 1 days work securing a picture of Magnus Johnson for B. of L. E. Journal, \$11.00".

From May 14th 1924 to December 12th, 1927, three years and seven months, the B. of L. E. Legislative Board of Minnesota alone spent \$12,451.87, of which \$5,261.54 landed in the pockets of the Chairman and lobbyist, W. W. Royster. This sum alone spent by the Board is enough to pay the affiliation fee of the 27 B. of L. E. local unions in the state to the state Farmer-Labor Party for 81 years

In the Firemen's Magazine of January, 1929, there appears a financial statement by the Secretary of the B. of L.F.&E. State Legislative Board of Pennsylvania, covering the three months of the third quarter of 1928. This statement shows disbursements during the three months in question amounting to \$19,106.10.

Just these few figures cited above, are enough to give the reader some ideas of the enormous sum of money spent annually by the Legislative Boards, state and national, of the four transportation Brotherhoods, and the political returns for this outlay of workers' earnings are practically nothing. To illustrate the complete uselessness of the Legislative Boards and their lobby, we cite below a literal quotation taken from page 6 of the Biennial Report of the Railroad Brotherhoods' State Legislative Board of Minnesota, which shows what happened to their legislative program at the 1929 Minnesota Legislature. Note carefully:

## "Legislative Program"

"The following legislation was sponsored by your representatives:  
 Clearance Bill ..... Indefinitely Postponed  
 Terminal Bill ..... Died on General Orders

Consolidated Primary  
 Ballot Bill ..... Indefinitely Postponed  
 Pilot on Light Engines Indefinitely Postponed  
 Minimum Passenger  
 Crew Bill ..... Died in Committee  
 Train Limit Bill, O.R.  
 C., B. of R.T. and B.  
 of L. F.&E. .... Died in Committee  
 Walks on Bridges .. Died in Committee  
 Switch Lights on all  
 Main Lines ..... Died in Committee  
 R. R. and Warehouse  
 Commission Bill empow-  
 ering it to deal with various operating  
 conditions on rail-  
 roads ..... Died on General Or-  
 ders".

The above program cost the four transportation Brotherhoods in the State of Minnesota approximately \$10,000 for the

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one year, 1929. Nearly all of this sum landed in the pockets of the four lobbyists who spent a pleasant winter in St. Paul.

About all these Legislative Boards amount to, is, that they furnish excuses for more office holders to collect dues from the railroad workers for their personal benefit and enjoyment. In addition to being extremely expensive these Boards are an actual obstacle to progress and independent labor political action.

The useless and expensive Legislative Boards and Lobby are part of the rubbish which will have to be removed to clear the path for labor's political party. This task has already been started by the progressive wing of the Engineers and Firemen in the State of Minnesota with the slogan, "A Labor Party instead of a Labor Lobby".

—C. R. HEDLUND

Other readers of the *Daily Worker* will feel with us, we are sure, when we say it pains us to announce that Earl Browder has been made editor of that journal. Relatives and friends of the family are invited. Omit flowers.

## Shall Three More Workers Burn?

Three militant workers are facing the electric chair. They are M. H. Powers, Communist Party organizer, Joe Carr Young Communist League organizer, of Atlanta, Ga., and Leonard S. Doherty, marine worker, now living in Boston. As a result of their working class activity among the textile workers of the South and the needle trades workers of Boston, these three men will burn unless the labor movement is mobilized in their support. The International Labor Defense is conducting their defense, but to the present, its participants are almost exclusively Communists and their closest sympathizers. Even the Communist press is giving it a minimum of publicity, apparently not realizing the serious charges against the three men.

## Electric Chair for Leaflets

Powers and Carr were arrested after they had spoken at mass meetings attended by Negro and White workers and had distributed leaflets issued by the Communist Party and the Young Communist League. They are charged with leading an insurrection against the state of Georgia! According to the laws of that state conviction can result in their being sentenced to the electric chair.

When the case came up for a hearing on Monday, April 21, Assistant Solicitor General John Hudson who is leading the prosecution, stated that the state would ask for the death penalty. At that time the bail of the two workers was withdrawn by the state. They are now in prison awaiting trial, scheduled to begin May 6. One of the reasons given by the assistant attorney-general for demanding the maximum sentence for the two workers is that if released they would participate in a May Day demonstration.

Leonard S. Doherty, was arrested several months ago in Boston when he was marching on the picket line during the strike of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union. At that time the Canadian

authorities stated that he was wanted for a murder committed there in 1925. This is an obvious frame-up, for Doherty was not in Canada during that year.

Information was received on April 24, that a federal warrant to deport Doherty to Canada is in the hands of an officer of the superior court of Boston. However, the day previous, Doherty was given a two months sentence in the Superior Court in a charge of beating up a scab during the needle trades workers strike. Therefore the warrant will not be served until after he has served his 60 day sentence. If deported to Canada, Doherty will be tried for murder, which with conviction, will mean the electric chair.

## Facts of the Case Suppressed

At the present time, the facts concerning these two frame-up cases are practically unknown outside of the limits of the territory with which they are concerned. In the Carr and Powers case, several Southern newspapers print the details. In the Doherty case, only part of the New England press publishes the news of the case. In addition, of course, the Party periodicals with their limited circulation from time to time publish inadequate accounts, but apparently have not taken either case very seriously.

Is it part of the "third period" point of view to allow militant workers to go to the electric chair without putting up a serious fight? Most criminal of all, is the lack of any attempt to organize a united front movement in their behalf. Although the Gastonia defense was sectarian the dramatic incidents connected with the police raid on the tent colony, resulted in a large amount of publicity in the capitalist press and the mobilizing of certain sections of the liberals and the labor movement for their support. In the present cases, these factors are lacking and unless the Communist Party wakes up, it will have three corpses to bury. These are

A «Broad» May Day  
Conference

Another of those farcical conferences, euphemistically designated as "United Front" out of respect to traditions of former days, was held by the official Communist Party in preparation for May Day on Thursday night, April 24th at Manhattan Lyceum. There were 985 delegates present who, it was claimed, represented many working class organizations and shops. But a subsequent examination of the list of organizations, which were announced to participate in the May Day parade, reveals only the Party auxiliary organizations and the new unions, both of which have long lost whatever mass character they once had, due to the false policies of the Party. Most of the delegates, it could easily be seen were Party members. The admission of the political bureau of the central committee two days later, that "the United Front conferences were not sufficiently broad" testifies clearly to the narrow character of the May Day Conference.

## Oppositionist Ejected

The delegate of the New York branch Communist League of America (Opposition) comrade Russell Blackwell, who had been sent with the idea that perhaps on May Day at least, the divided forces of the Communists might be united in demonstration against capitalism was forcibly ejected the moment he made his appearance at the door. Jack Perrilla, guardian of the Party line and formidable Trotsky killer, was commander in chief with the proper orders and slogans, and directed the strategical operations of the anti-Trotsky defense force from behind the lines—far behind, in fact.

The proceedings of the conference were another demonstration of the current Party methods which kill all initiative, stifle honest discussion, and destroy Communist influence. The Party controversies immediately made their appearance when a Lovestone follower, delegate from a shop, asked for the floor in the discussion, and was denounced for his Party opinions and not permitted to discuss. Later, perhaps to relieve the conscience of the Party, the credentials committee announced that it had been discovered that he represented no one and was accordingly unseated as a delegate. All the talking was monopolized by the Party bureaucrats, even when at last discussion was opened, only three delegates from the floor were allowed to speak, and right away again commenced a torrent of bombast from such staunch protectors of the latest Stalin line as Wagenknecht, Engdahl and Salzer. Eventually, when the delegates had become fatigued from the steady dripping downpour of oratorical tripe, and were hurrying out of the hall, the chairman Darcy thought it an opportune time to adjourn the meeting.

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Unemployed workers who wonder where their next soupbone is coming from can read nevertheless for the price of a daily newspaper about Mr. J. P. Morgan's \$2,500,000 private yacht. This is the most palatial yacht ever built. It possesses the dimensions of an ocean liner 343 feet long and 48 feet beam. The Corsair is expected to develop 16 knots. Teak imported from the Orient is used throughout the ship except in the crew's quarters. It is reported that Mr. Morgan will not work in the stoke hole.

.....  
 not the kind of heroes we want, which would be used to show the growing of class conflicts in America to the Stalinist regime in Moscow. Powers, Carr and Doherty must be saved! Let the International Labor Defense make the campaign for their defense a broad united front movement in which all sections of the labor movement can participate. Its refusal will mean that the Engdahls and the other Stalinist generals of the Red I. L. D. are more concerned with the prosecution of their idiotic formulae than with the proletarian defense of three militants.

The memory of Sacco and Vanzetti is yet too green to allow the American workers to remain with folded arms while the capitalist savages polish off their chairs to receive three more workers in their deadly embrace. —FRANK BROMLEY