

LABOR NEWS IN TWO GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN  
DAILIES 1911 THROUGH 1947

(An Examination of Labor News and Editorial Comment  
at Selected Intervals in The Grand Rapids Press  
and The Grand Rapids Herald 1911-1947)

By

GWYNETH ROE

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## PREFACE

This thesis stems in part from a dual interest in the labor movement and in journalism, in part from personal experience.

In 1947 I went to work in Grand Rapids, Michigan, as industrial program director of the YWCA there. Before this I had worked in a number of labor relations positions for the federal government during World War II, and as assistant education director for a CIO international union.

Concurrent with my arrival in Grand Rapids the first city-wide telephone strike took place. I paid particular attention to the treatment it received in the two local newspapers, The Grand Rapids Press and The Grand Rapids Herald. It appeared to me that news of the strike was meager and the coverage spotty.

Shortly after the telephone strike was over I was asked to write a dramatic skit based on labor history in Grand Rapids. A major event in labor circles had been a furniture strike in 1911. In checking back issues of the Press and Herald on microfilm I was surprised at the difference in treatment that the furniture workers got, especially from the Press. It appeared actively to support

the strikers and covered most minute details of the strike with columns of space.

This apparent change in handling labor news in a large mid-west industrial community puzzled me. I was curious to find out if the contrast was as extreme as it appeared to be and if so, why it had happened.

There is a broader aspect of this thesis that concerns the responsibility of the press. For it seems to me that to examine the way labor is treated in the newspapers of a given community over a period of time, means also to examine the extent to which the press bears its responsibility now and in the past.

## INTRODUCTION

### Scope of the Problem

The treatment of organized labor by the run-of-the mill press in the United States has not been subjected to very close or careful scrutiny. From the few studies that are available it would appear that outside of large metropolitan dailies labor news is not handled as a regular "beat" in the sense that business news, society, woman's page, or police and court news are. Labor gets into the news, as a rule, when a controversy breaks out, either inter-union disputes that erupt into violence, or when strikes occur.

A good many leaders of organized labor, as well as the rank and file, take a dim view of the way labor news is handled in the press. A thesis on this subject<sup>1</sup> which canvassed the attitudes of labor leaders in a number of mid-west communities, on how labor felt about its treatment in the press, found nearly all of them critical of their local newspapers.

Perhaps the outstanding research study that has been made on this subject was an examination of radio news

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1. H. G. Medlock, "What Organized Labor Thinks of the General Newspaper Press," 1949, University of Missouri.

reporting by Leila A. Sussmann in 1944.<sup>2</sup> A sample of 33 network programs was studied for a period of seven weeks and a content analysis made of all labor news. This study found labor represented as being morally wrong five times as often as it was morally right. It found that pro-labor statements came almost exclusively from labor leaders themselves, but that anti-labor remarks were scattered between business leaders, government officials, "prominent Republicans," and anonymous rank and file union members. The conclusion of the report contains this comment: "What do these findings mean? They seem to prove beyond doubt that labor was treated unfavorably on the top news programs of the four major networks during the period studied."

A third study concentrated on the question of competition between two rival newspapers in the same community.<sup>3</sup> In commenting on the handling of labor news the report stated:

Nowhere was the near-identity of presentation so significantly evident as in the treatment of labor news... They (the two dailies) were as one in their handling of the one big labor dispute... All the resources of the papers, apparently, were at the employer's disposal -- news columns,

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2. Leila A. Sussman, "Labor in the Radio News: An Analysis of Content", Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 22, Sept., 1945, pp. 207.
  3. Stanley K. Bigham, "A Study of Two Competing Dailies," Journalism Quarterly, June, 1948. Two other studies are worth noting: Jean Douglas, The Treatment (cont'd)

editorial columns, advertising columns. In neither paper was there any evidence that the union involved had an opportunity to present its view on the issues, even through advertising.

Despite the evidence of these few studies there is a general recognition among journalists and the reading public today, that labor reporting is improving, that labor is receiving better and fairer treatment than ever before. This is due in part to the pioneer work of Louis Stark of the New York Times and the establishment of labor "beats" in most of the large industrial cities of the country; in part from the pressure of labor as a powerful and organized group demanding and receiving recognition.

But the inclusion of labor "beats" and the improvement in handling labor news would appear to be limited almost exclusively to large newspapers in major industrial communities. For the average reader living in any one of thousands of smaller communities in the United States (many of them containing active segments of organized labor) local news of unions and activities of labor groups is sketchy and barren.

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3. of Labor in the Contemporary American Press and Its Effect on Public Opinion, 1947, Ohio State University;  
and, W. P. Gant, A Survey of Labor News in the Three St. Louis Newspapers During World War II, 1949,  
University of Missouri.

### Background of Thesis

This thesis attempts to analyze the quantity and quality of labor news reporting, at selected intervals, over a 37 year period, by two daily newspapers in a fairly typical, mid-west industrial community, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Long famous for being the furniture center of the country, today the city concentrates on auto-parts and machinery. Its population of approximately 200,000 make it second to Detroit in size among Michigan cities. Most of its major industrial plants are organized today and there is a strong labor movement in the city, both AFL and CIO.

The two daily newspapers, The Grand Rapids Press and The Grand Rapids Herald, have been in existence for well over half a century.

The Grand Rapids Press, started as the Morning Press in 1890 and built itself up to a circulation of 7,000, at that time largest of any of five local papers in Grand Rapids. In 1892 it was taken over by George R. Booth who made it into an evening paper, which it has been ever since.

Booth was founder of the Booth chain of newspapers which today operates in seven Michigan cities. His younger brother, Edmund W. Booth, came to Grand Rapids

from New York City in 1906, to become editor and publisher of the Press. For the next 20 years he guided the destinies of the Press and under him it became variously known as "The People's Paper," "The Newspaper with a Backbone," etc.<sup>4</sup> E. W. Booth was one of the founders of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Today the Press has a circulation of 109,041. It is published daily, in the afternoon, except Sundays.

The Grand Rapids Herald, started as the Morning Telegram in 1884. In 1886 it was combined with a weekly called the Herald and has appeared as a morning paper since then.

The late Frank Knox, former Secretary of the Navy, was briefly city editor at the turn of the century. The late United States Senator William Alden Smith, (R-Mich.) was principal owner for a time. Through Smith, Arthur H. Vandenberg came into possession of stock in the newspaper. Vandenberg worked for the Herald in a variety of capacities, starting as an office boy and copy boy in 1900, working up to be city hall reporter, and then becoming state editor. When Smith purchased the paper in 1906, he made Vandenberg, then 22, managing editor. Vandenberg continued as editor of the Herald until his appointment to the United States Senate in 1928. At this

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4. See Appendix for fuller discussion on ownership of the Press and Herald.

time Federated Newspapers Inc. was formed to own and operate the Herald and two other Michigan newspapers.

Today the Herald has a circulation of 55,205 for its week-day editions, and of 70,968 on Sundays.

The Herald has always been a morning paper, the Press an evening daily, since 1892.

The Herald has had an active chapter of the American Newspaper Guild, CIO, among its editorial employees, for the past 10 years. The Press had a group organized into the Guild in 1943, at the same time the Herald unit was started, but this was abandoned after 1946, after a lengthy NLRB case was decided, involving unfair practices charges filed against the Press by the Guild.

### The Methodology

In order to examine the quality and quantity of labor news coverage as objectively as possible a simplified type of content analysis, limited to major subject matter categories, has been used.

### Sample

Periods were chosen when major events in the history of organized labor in Grand Rapids occurred, on the assumption that in order to find out how labor news was handled, there had to be some. Since the amount of

labor news was relatively small over this time period, the typical content sampling device of taking every nth issue would not have given an adequate picture. This is a purposely selected sample to get at peak periods of local labor news. No attempt has been made to be representative.

The periods were selected at decade intervals, beginning in 1911. The period including Labor Day was selected as typical of the peaceful labor activity of the 1920's when there was little local labor unrest in the headlines. One month, of approximately 30 issues, was coded for each period selected. The papers were alternated on a monthly basis. Following are the dates and events included in this study:

- 1911 - April, beginning of city-wide furniture strike --  
The Press.
- August, end of city-wide furniture strike --  
The Herald.
- 1921-2 - Period including Labor Day, one month's issue --  
The Press.
- Period including Labor Day, one month's issue --  
The Herald.
- 1937 - September, beginning of second city-wide  
furniture strike -- The Herald.
- October, end of city-wide furniture strike --  
The Press.
- 1945-6 - December, beginning of General Motors strike --  
The Press.
- February, end of General Motors strike -- The  
Herald.

1947 - April, first city-wide telephone strike --  
Both papers.

### Coding

All labor news has been sub-divided into four major types: Local, Editorial (including letters to the editor, some columnists, straight editorials, advertorials), National, and State.

All stories and editorial matter have been coded by: date, space (by column inches), subject matter categories, and whether or not the labor stories were on page one.

Local news stories and editorial matter have been coded by direction.

### Criteria for Direction

The designations used are: pro-labor, anti-labor, pro-management, anti-management, neutral, balanced.

A "pro" story is one in which more than half the content, and in most instances, the lead, presents the case of one party in a context favorable to that party.

An "anti" story is one in which the context is unfavorable to one party, so that its viewpoint is either not expressed or buried.

A balanced story is one in which both sides of a dispute are quoted with equal amounts of space, or in which the issues are presented for each party equally.

A neutral story devotes less than 50 per cent of space to quoted opinion. It includes little or no apparent interpretation. It presents a minimum of news couched in a "dead pan" style of reporting. It may be used in some cases where play, position, and size of an item tend to de-emphasize its news value.

### Examples

A pro-labor story would describe a threatened strike situation with the issues involved, as labor sees them, placed high up in the story.

An anti-labor treatment of the same type of story would play up the strike threat and ignore the issues. The lead and over half the story would be spent on the coercive tactics threatened by a union, and the issues would be omitted or buried.

A pro-management story would place management's case in a labor dispute, high up in the story, with over 50 per cent of space given to it, in a context that places the company in a favorable light.

An anti-management story would devote over half the space to describing the delaying tactics of a firm or industry, its refusal to bargain, and other allegations by quoted sources, as labor leaders in a strike situation.

During the 1947 telephone strike, one paper carried a picture and story on the opening day, of good looking

pickets carrying banners reading, "The voice with a smile is gone for awhile." The other paper carried a picture showing two faithful supervisory employees at work manning deserted switchboards. The former was coded as pro-labor treatment, the latter as pro-management, The Categories (See appendix for complete listing)

All data has been divided into two major breakdowns: categories relating to strike news; and categories relating to non-strike news.

Strike categories include five major divisions: Physical Conduct -- Peaceful Tactics, Coercive Tactics; Attempts at Settlement by Resolving the Issues -- arbitration, negotiation etc; Attempts at Settlement by Direct Intervention -- Court actions, injunctions, arrests, government seizure etc.; Status-of-Strike -- beginning, ending, wrap-up stories; Effects of Strike on Public Welfare.

Non-strike categories have been divided into five major divisions plus a miscellaneous group: Union Activities -- organizational, political action, internal disputes etc.; Joint Union-Management Activities -- peaceful bargaining; Community-wide or Nation-Wide activities of Organized Labor -- as Labor Day, Community Chest, War Bond drives, recognition of labor leaders; Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor -- unemployment, inflation etc.; Government Programs and Policies of Concern to Labor --

Specific pieces of legislation, General Policies, as New Deal or Fair Deal. A Miscellaneous category includes: Disaster stories, as coal mine cave-ins; Sabotage and Violence unconnected with a specific strike, as the McNamara bombing; Welfarism.

#### Purpose of Analysis

To discover the trend in quantity and quality of labor coverage this thesis attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What proportion of news space, by items and inches, in the Press and Herald, was devoted to labor news in each of the time intervals selected?
2. How much of the labor news was local, how much national, how much state, and how much editorial?
3. What proportion of labor news stories was on page one, what proportion inside?
4. What are the major subject-matter categories in each of the selected intervals?
5. How much labor news and editorial matter was related to strike news, how much to non-strike news?
6. What was the direction of editorial matter and local news stories?
7. What changes occurred in the quality of labor news stories and method of reporting?
8. What was the difference in the way the Press and the Herald handled labor news?

9. What conclusions may be drawn?

Sequence of Thesis

A separate chapter will show how each paper covered the events in each of the selected intervals and compare the two. A short chapter will compare the two papers across the years. The final chapter will draw conclusions.

## CHAPTER I

### LABOR NEWS COVERAGE IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD IN 1911.

#### Background of the Period

Back at the turn of the century Grand Rapids, Michigan, was busily engaged in becoming the furniture center of the country. The city was well situated with regard to raw materials and water power. Her population included many skilled and thrifty Dutch merchants and craftsmen.

An early report by the Michigan Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the first cabinet shop in the city was built in 1849 by an Abraham Snively.<sup>1</sup> The first furniture factory was built in 1848 by two men, William Powers and Deacon Haldane, who are credited with introducing the machine age and factory system into Michigan's furniture industry.<sup>2</sup> The report said, in part:

Indeed the three elements of success and permanency in localizing any industry co-exist in Grand Rapids and promise a long time permanency. There is the control of the instruments of production, factories well equipped and skilled workmen organized into community life. There is gathered here a large, industrious, painstaking and skillful community of

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1. State of Michigan 17th Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics, 1900, pp. 69, "Grand Rapids and the Great Furniture Industry of Michigan.

2. Ibid.

Hollanders, who here in furniture have repeated their achievements as the exploiters of skilled industries.... There are also the instruments of transportation, furniture cars and the semi-annual fairs, supplying as these latter do, the third element of bringing customers and producers together.

The BLS report concludes with some comments on the attitude of the furniture manufacturers toward their men.

When society was organized upon the military basis in olden times baronial hall and feudal castle were the representatives and home of that type of civilization. Into this new home of industry a new glory transcending that baronial hall must be a resident, it shall be men, women and children, intelligent, self-respecting and respected, loving their work and being loved by their masters, with homes simple, yet clean. These are our great baronial castles transformed into the modern homes of industry.

And the captains of these factories find in them an arena to exploit their religious convictions, building up with laudable pride a great industry, dominated by a religious purpose, as well as a pecuniary purpose. Over the doors of these factories the better class of masters are trying to write the creed of the new industrial religion, which will read thus: 'The fullest, freest, highest life for all the workers.'<sup>3</sup>

A little more than a decade later an employer publication<sup>4</sup> printed this paragraph:

The fires of Grand Rapids industries have been extinguished under a hundred boilers. The hum of machinery is no longer heard in the great factories. Desperate men, maddened women and hungry children parade the factory districts with bricks in their hands and murder in their hearts. A reign of terror prevails in certain portions of the city. Citizens go to their beds with troubled hearts, fearful that the morning paper will chronicle the destruction of one of our great factories by union incendiaries.

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3. Ibid.

4. The Free Press.

In a decade what had become of "the fullest, freest, highest life for all the workers" in the furniture center of the country? The answer lay in part outside the city of Grand Rapids. According to University of Wisconsin labor historian Prof. Selig Perlman considerable industrial distress followed upon the panic of 1907. He says of this period:

With the barking dog of the rising cost of living steadily at his feet, the wage earner could not afford to be anything but profoundly conscious and an attentive listener to the gospel of unionism.<sup>5</sup>

Along with a rising cost of living during this period there were other developments on the labor front. A concerted effort in the field of political action in 1910 had seen 15 American Federation of Labor (AFL) members elected to the national congress and a member of the United Mine Workers Union made chairman of the House Labor Committee. Sporadic movements of workers in many industries in different sections of the country organized swiftly to counteract low wages, long hours, and other conditions. On the west coast the McNamara case filled the headlines, in the east women in the shirt waist industry were organizing into the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in

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5. Selig Perlman and Charles Taft, History of Labor 1869-1932, pp. 581.

Boston and New York and in 1911 a young man named Sidney Hillman organized Hart Shaffner and Marx clothing workers in Chicago, and founded the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. Liberals and intellectuals in many sections of the country rallied to the support of organized labor and fought to correct industrial abuses.

Employer groups too were busy. In 1903 the Citizens Industrial Alliance was formed, a secret organization that was an offshoot of the National Association of Manufacturers. Its purpose was to promote the open shop and defeat union organization. An active chapter of the organization was established in Battle Creek, Michigan, an open shop center in 1904, with Walter Drew at its head.

On the surface Grand Rapids remained fairly remote from the rumblings of a stirring labor movement outside the state. But below the surface most of the 8,401 men working in 62 furniture factories, earning an average wage of \$1.91 for a 10 hour day, were quietly organizing.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Booklet by Viva Flaherty on 1911 strike. At the outset of her booklet Miss Flaherty states if her findings had been published earlier, as she proposed they would have given "a new interpretation of Christian social service in Grand Rapids. Its publication over the signature of an employe would have proved that the Fountain Street Baptist Church was not a class institution, the furniture manufacturers' church or a rich men's club as it was so frequently characterized during the strike." It was not published, she wrote, because a citizen of Grand Rapids (continued)

According to an analysis written by Viva Flaherty, social service secretary of the Fountain Street Baptist church, and suppressed until after the 1911 strike was over, the first cause of the strike could be traced "to a question of wages two years before."<sup>7</sup> She said:

In November, 1909, following as the men claim, a 10 per cent raise in the selling price of the product, a committee of three, representing the 45 cabinet makers in the Oriel factory, waited upon the management and asked for an increase in wages. They were told to return after the furniture season. They did so and the only reply to their request was the discharging, now that the critical season was over, of the chairman of the committee, who had been in the employ of the factory for almost 26 years, as a punishment for being an agitator... From this incident, demonstrating as it did the helplessness of the individual in bargaining with his employer, the attempt of the workers to organize may be said to have had its beginnings. Workmen from other factories also became interested and these men together took out a charter from the national organization of cabinet makers, affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, and in the following February sent for an organizer.<sup>8</sup>

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6. (not named but evidently referring to a minister Rev. Wishart) said it would prolong enmities. "Had the citizen mentioned consulted the writer of the article before exerting his influence for its suppression the reputation of the church would have been cleared and it would have been given a new lease on life." The booklet was published, she said, at "this late date" (October 16, 1911) because of "efforts now being exerted by furniture manufacturers to crush organized labor."

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

In July 1910, the first negotiations of the union men took place with the Furniture Manufacturers Association of Grand Rapids.

According to Flaherty, Grand Rapids in 1911 had a population of 115,000 with 8,500 employed in 47 larger furniture factories. Since 1906, wages had gone up 16 3/4 per cent in the face of a larger increase in the cost of living. Skilled cabinet makers earned from \$2.30 to \$2.46 a day. The general average pay of 8,401 men working in 62 factories in the same branch of the furniture industry was \$1.91 a day. But she adds:

Government statistics for 1907 show, however, that though Grand Rapids led the country in the quality of its output, it did not lead in the rate of wages paid its furniture workers. ... A considerable share of the work, perhaps more than in most industries, is done by unskilled labor.... These low rates for skilled workers give some indication of the much lower rate the unskilled receive... It is a significant fact that in dull times when men are being laid off, the averages go up, and in good times when the factories are employing every hand for whom they have room, the averages drop. This is because the factories in hard times try to keep their skilled and valuable hands employed so that they will not go elsewhere, letting go the less skilled workers.<sup>9</sup>

On March 25, 17 months after negotiations began, union members held a referendum vote among furniture workers and voted 95 percent strong to strike. A public commission began holding hearings early in April. The employers refused to concede on wages, hour, working conditions, and

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9. Ibid.

arbitration. On April 19 the walkout began. It attracted nation-wide attention. A story in the New York Times stated:

G. R. Mich. April 19. The long expected strike of the furniture workers of Grand Rapids which has been hanging fire for several months while a committee of citizens has endeavored to bring about an amiable understanding between the manufacturers and men was officially declared on at 9 o'clock this morning.

The union men in nearly 60 furniture and wood-working factories walked out. Between 6000 and 7000 union men including varnishers, and finishers as well as cabinet makers, carvers and woodworkers went out. Some 3000 other employees who are not unionized are affected by the strike.

The strike came to a head today as the result of the manufacturers' refusal in a communication to the Citizens Commission of Inquiry to grant any concessions to the men. The men ask a 10 percent increase in wages, a 9 hour day and the abolition of piece work. The manufacturers declare they will continue to treat with their men individually but refuse an increase in wages basing their refusal on trade conditions.

The strike continued for 19 weeks. At its close the men went back to work under the same conditions that prevailed when they struck. For the next 25 years the labor movement of the city remained relatively quiescent.

One of the significant factors in the 1911 strike situation was the apparent sympathy and support which the strikers had from civic, religious, political leaders and from the local press. In fact the furniture manufacturers got out their own publication, a small paper titled The "Free" Press, claiming they could not be heard in the three

local dailies, The Daily News (since gone out of business), the Herald and the Press.<sup>10</sup>

In a July, 1911, issue, The "Free" Press commented bitingly on newspapers coverage of the strike:

The daily newspapers of Grand Rapids, preceding and during the present industrial strife, have furnished the most startling exhibition of a partisan and servile press that any community has ever witnessed. So complete and absolute has been the control of the labor agitators and their ally, the city administration, over the editorial and news columns of all three of the dailies that the reports of the strike have been uniformly colored to create the largest possible degree of public sentiment for the strikers, while anything favorable to the employers' side of the controversy is belittled, distorted or entirely emasculated....

Prior to the beginning of the strike, the editors of the Evening Press personally inspected the payroll of one of the representative factories, taking ten workers who had been in continuous employment for the past five or six years, in each department, and ascertained that these men were now receiving an average increase of from 16 to 22 per cent over the wages paid five years ago. Yet, with this knowledge personally obtained, the editor of the Evening Press has never referred to it, editorially or in the news columns of his paper, and has sanctioned, if not encouraged, his reporters and newsgatherers to spread the claims of the labor agitators that there had been no increase in wages in the local factories in the past half dozen years.

...When the hopelessly ignorant and lawless Poles and Lithuanians riot and mob a bare score of workers leaving the John Widdicomb factory, and assault the handful of police sent to guard (?) them -- stopping in their frenzied defiance of law, order and authority only long enough to cheer Mayor Ellis -- the Herald printed its first and only fair, frank and manly editorial. And having been threatened with being

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10. See appendix for sample photostat copy of The "Free" Press, June, 1911 issue.

declared "unfair" by the strike leaders for this belated appeal for law and order, be it known the Herald has since said never a word editorially on the strike situation, while its news columns have rivaled both the News and the Press in catering to the strikers. The Evening Press, editorially discussing the riot, sought to place the blame on the manager of the Widdicomb factory for not closing his factory tight, and turning away those employes who were not members of the union and who sought to continue at work! Think of it!

The Herald is owned and managed by office-holders and politicians, and its course is dictated by assumed political, rather than business or moral influences. The News, long a losing venture, is under comparatively new management, and its course during the strike, and before, was perhaps what was to have been expected, whether it was inspired by the political publisher or by capitalists whose ideas of building up and bettering the city lie in the direction of investing their enormous capital in timberlands in the extreme West and South, and awaiting the 'unearned increment,' rather than investing it in furniture factories or other local manufacturing institutions that employ help.

The Evening Press has always made loudest professions of independence. From it, as from neither of the other two dailies, had the business men of Grand Rapids the right to expect some degree of fairness, some consideration for the city's chiefest industry. The Evening Press has for many years been one of the biggest money makers in the newspaper field. Its yearly net earnings are greater than those of any single furniture factory in Grand Rapids -- many times greater than the average net earnings of the local factories. But it is owned in Detroit. And how Detroit loves Grand Rapids is evidenced by the editorial comments on the strike in the Detroit Free Press and the Detroit Journal. The latter diplomatically urged the manufacturers to grant the demands of the strikers, even if it did spell ruin, while the former paper bluntly advised the manufacturers to cease trying to run their factories in Grand Rapids, as it was out of the question for them to compete with other places! Here, then is the reason for the disloyal course of

the Evening Press -- the Detroit owners' unreasoning hatred of Grand Rapids; OR the cowardice and pusillanimity of its management who feared the possibility of its rival, the News, gaining a few hundred added circulation at the expense of the Press, and so sought to out-Macfarlane the Macfarlane News.

And so we have the -- Blanche, Tray and Sweetheart -- the daily press of Grand Rapids, at the heel of out-of-town labor agitators and strike managers!

The "Free" Press also commented on the publisher of the Press.

They had a strike in Saginaw, at the city's largest and only furniture factory, called in April, the day following the strike in Grand Rapids.

The Saginaw city papers had enough local pride and consideration for both men and manufacturers to handle it sanely -- with this result:

The strike petered out and the men all went back to work two weeks ago, on identically the same conditions obtaining when they struck, although they made the same demands the Ellis-MacFarlane crowd did here.

Fortunately for Saginaw, while the Booths own one of the Saginaw dailies, Edmund W. doesn't manage it.

If it appears that we have devoted a disproportionate amount of space to the Evening Booth -- we should have said the Evening Press -- in our strictures on the local newspapers, "there's a reason," as the advertisement puts it.

The Evening Booth -- Press, we mean -- was at one time a really great local newspaper, frank and honest, fearless and independent. Can those of you who read the Press of Turner, and of Burch, imagine it adopting the woozy, wobbly, evasive, cowardly, spineless, destructive course characteristic of the Evening Booth -- well, let it go at that -- in the crisis of the city's history? We opine not. There's a limit to one's imagination. The momentum

given The Press by its former managers has not yet ceased. Hence its capacity for harm is even yet infinitely greater than that of its evening contemporary.

In another paragraph the "Free" Press cites these remarks by Publisher Booth:

The "Free" Press, that queer publication issued by the Gronberg trade paper (assumably The Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan) and professing to represent the manufacturers, but repudiated by them, says that the reason for its appearance is that the daily newspapers are muzzled so far as attempting to honestly and truthfully present conditions in the furniture strike. Yet in its editorial resume of the situation on page 4 "The Free Press" deliberately steals and uses as its own utterance the regular news reports of The Evening Press. The deadly parallel columns best show the maliciousness and falsity of its charge of unfairness against the daily press.

#### How the Press Covered Labor News in April, 1911

As an evening paper, the Press competed with the morning Herald and another evening paper, the Daily News. The press averaged about 18 pages in length, per issue, seven columns to the page. Advertising copy averaged between 50-60 per cent of total space.

##### A. Local News

The chief characteristic of the Press coverage of the local labor scene was a kind of microscopic quality that gave the reader a close-up of events as though he were a participant. No detail seemed too unimportant to be included in the day-by-day description of the strikers and their activities.

Excerpts from four news stories, one preceding the strike, one on the day it began, and two in the days immediately following, illustrate the kind of coverage the Press gave to labor in 1911.

The first, written nearly two weeks before the walkout, devoted two columns to negotiations between a citizens' commission of inquiry established to conciliate the furniture workers and manufacturers.<sup>11</sup> It had a headline, "Hope Not Given Up." The body of the story was devoted to reprinting a statement by the Carpenters' Union, and another by a rank and file union worker.

... Why do we want higher wages? Any schoolboy could answer that question. The whole country is ringing with protests against the higher cost of living. Not a newspaper in the land, not a magazine, from the cheapest popular grade...but have discussed this momentous question.... Now when the whole country knows that the cost of living, whether in the small comforts and luxuries of life which even a poor man may legitimately crave, or in the bare necessities of a human existence, has constantly increased, while the wages of the workingmen have remained practically stationary, the Furniture Manufacturers Association asks with surprise why we want higher wages....

Why do we want shorter hours? Are not political economists all over the world agreed that excessive hours of labor diminish not only a workingman's efficiency but are destructive of his physical, mental, moral and social wellbeing?....

As to the abolition of piece work, any one who has the slightest acquaintance with this feature of furniture work knows that the moment an industrious piece worker is turning out more work than the shop expects him to turn out he is told either to go slower or is given some additional work on his pieces so as to render the work more difficult....

11. April 3, 1911. Grand Rapids Press.

We request you to give the same publicity to this communication that has been given to all others thus far....

#### HERE IS THE VIEW OF A MAN IN THE RANKS

The following letter is in a sense a human document. It illustrates the viewpoint of many of the workers in the factories, as gained in conversations with the men, and enables the public to realize the position and sentiment of a man in the ranks:

"Editor of the Evening Press: In regard to our manufacturers statement saying they are paying the highest possible wages that can be paid, I will say they are away below the wage scale of even the small cities outside of Grand Rapids and as far as Jamestown, N.Y. is concerned, why that city pays good wages to their men, far better than they do here.... For instance the spindle carvers in the Jamestown carving works are paid 30 and 32 cents per hour. That was a year ago last month when I left there and came to Grand Rapids....

"The working man's wages are so small he can hardly pay \$8 a month for rent besides his living expenses and no social amusement....

"It is a shame the way the workingmen is treated and considering both classes with whom should we sympathize the most? It is the workingman that suffers and the manufacturers that reap the harvest. They have their swell automobiles that cost much money; the workingmen cannot even afford car fare, and I think this ought to be looked into right now. What we want is a good wage for a good day's work so that we can have better homes, better clothes and more substantial foods....

"It seems as if a workingman cannot organize or be on the committee of his shop fellow worker without being discharged the way the manufacturers have been doing. If the city of Grand Rapids or Mayor Ellis will look into this it seems as if the manufacturers want to run the city and object to new firms coming here. We want a new board of trade and more enterprises coming here to do business. That will boom our city. Thanking you all I hope you will all give this your best consideration and improve our conditions."

On the day the walkout occurred, every detail of the strike situation was explored by the Press and it is probable that every able bodied staff member was out covering a variety of angles on the event. The only thing lacking was a statement by employers. They were completely silent. The following excerpts show some of the detailed reporting jobs that were done.<sup>12</sup>

At exactly 9 o'clock this morning the exodus from the factories throughout the city began. The men quietly laid aside their aprons, gathered their tools and just as if they were leaving for their evening meal marched in an orderly fashion from the rooms in which some of them have spent a quarter of a century.

The walkout was conducted with the utmost decorum and there was a total absence of hilarity or boisterousness. Serious faced men of families walked beside young men of small responsibility and it was especially noticeable that there was very little congregation in the down town districts....

The organization of the men and the arrangements for the walkout which had been perfected during all the time the futile peace negotiations have been in progress, will be explained to the men in a body tonight when a mass meeting will be held at Ramona pavilion.... The plans call for a division of the strikers into three separate bodies. They will be assigned to separate meeting halls and the rules will require that each man report for roll call every day. There can be no exception to this....

After these subheads: "Arrange for Strike Benefits; Expect a Long Struggle; Hour Was Fixed Last Night;" the story picked up on a description of the strikers' behavior:

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12. Grand Rapids Press, April 19, 1911.

There was little levity shown among the men as they walked deliberately from the factories this morning. There was a feeling of tension that gave way when a few men appeared at the doors in the factories and stepped out to be followed by others. The men stopped a few moments in small groups, discussed the situation coolly and slowly walked away.... The men were quiet and an expression of seriousness was on every face. There was absolutely no excitement and no loud talking.... As the men of the various trades appeared on the streets they would wait for others engaged in the same line of work and then would saunter down the street to the corner. Some took the cars for home, but more walked....

For a time on Canal street near Michigan avenue the streets were lined with workers. They stopped at the corner to breathe and reflect. Some enterprising loan agency that had anticipated the trouble had a man at the corner who passed out circulars to the workers calling attention to the fact that money is loaned on easy terms. The men did not take kindly to this and one of them remarked: "Guess they think we are broke. Simply because we are out of a job they think we are going to starve. But we'll fool them." At this the men threw the circulars away.

The day following, the Press ran another three column story and in its ninth paragraph quoted Francis D. Campeau, attorney and secretary of the Furniture Manufacturers' Association:

He was asked if the manufacturers intended giving out a statement showing the number of men at work and the number out and he replied he had no such knowledge of such an intention. "There is absolutely nothing of interest which I could give out," he said.

The bulk of the story described a mass meeting of the strikers held at Ramona Park.

It is probable that the city never before witnessed a mass meeting like that held in Ramona pavilion last night by the furniture workers. The Street Railway company furnished dozens of extra

cars and these were packed from early in the evening. They carried a serious and well behaved crowd estimated at more than 4,000 men to the summer resort. The wooden winter covering was still in place and long after the auditorium had been packed to suffocation hundreds of men gathered in the space outside the rear partition. It is estimated 3,000 men were turned away.

The story goes on to cite strike leader MacFarlane:

"Cut out the booze until this trouble is over. You men must begin to realize that this is no picnic but a serious battle. You and your families will need every cent you get in benefits and we do not propose to furnish money to be spent on liquor."

The mayor of Grand Rapids then came on the platform:

"I am sorry to be here on this mission," he began. "I believe that today you have fully 95 per cent of the people of the city with you in your struggle and if you conduct yourselves like men you will deserve this confidence. But I came here direct from the police station. There they have a boy locked up charged with assaulting a policeman with a brick."

A few of the younger men snickered at this but the laughter was suppressed in an instant and the mayor continued. "Another man, a workman in the Valley city plant, lies seriously injured also as a result of lawlessness and booze. Instead of picketing the factories I tell you it would be better if you picket the saloons and keep your men from going in...."

Highlights from a final round-up story on April 21 fill in on the kind of treatment the Press continued to give the strikers:

It is understood that at the session (of the commission) the editorial in the Evening Press urging expert investigation of the actual situation in the local furniture trade, was given consideration....

While MacFarlane was talking with a Press representative one of the pickets from an outlying factory appeared and stated that two men were in the vicinity armed with revolvers. "Get their names if it is possible, and then go to police headquarters and report to the chief. If they are union men carrying guns we will drop them from the rolls at once." A meeting on the strike committee which is made up of the most responsible men in the ranks of the skilled mechanics of the city was in session today and reports were received from the various pickets.... "There is no denying the fact that in some sections there is a very difficult element to handle and that now pickets have been formed into regular detective squads."

Later in the story an incident of violence is described:

The district around the Grand Trunk Junction proved a little storm center of trouble last night. A number of men were considerably battered, though none was seriously hurt. The chief struggle occurred at the Kent plant of the John Widdicomb factory. The officers were paying off last night and a large crowd had gathered. It was here that a Joan D'Arc of the north end made a dramatic appearance upon the scene. A young girl, evidently a foreigner, with her hair streaming and her eyes flashing, sprang into the midst of the crowd swinging a large club. In her own language she urged the men to violence and the sight aroused those of her nationality.

The union pickets were cool-headed and determined in their efforts to prevent trouble and did their utmost and for a time it looked as if they might suffer for their efforts to keep peace.

The story goes on to describe blows that were struck at a fireman of the Kent plant and a detailed story about the fact that the bridge of his nose was broken was obtained by the Press reporter from hospital authorities.

### Summary

Some facts on the statistical analysis of local labor news coverage may sharpen the above comments and illustrations.

The Press devoted a total of 97 items and 1,442 column inches to labor news in April, 1911. Of these, 48 items and 995 column inches, representing 69 per cent, were on local labor events.

Out of 54 items and 993 inches devoted to strike news, (national, state, editorial, and local) 35 items and 895 column inches, representing 90 per cent, dealt with the local furniture walkout.

Out of 41 items and 1,060 column inches devoted to page one stories, 72 per cent were on the local furniture crisis.

Direction-wise, there were 32 items and 871 column inches of news stories, (88 per cent of all stories) that were pro-labor in treatment.

In this connection, a number of the examples just cited are very clear-cut cases of "pro" treatment. According to criteria listed in the introduction, "pro" stories are those in which over half the content presents the viewpoint of one side to a dispute up high in the story, in a context favorable to that side.

Since, apparently management had no statements to make, and little use for the local papers to boot, in the

early days of the strike especially, obviously over 50 per cent dealt with the side of the striking furniture workers. But the context favorable to labor was certainly emphasized by the Press, as the sentences re-quoted below show:

.... There was little levity shown among the men as they walked deliberately from the factories this morning.... The men were quiet and an expression of seriousness was on every face....

.... A meeting of the strike committee which is made up of the most responsible men in the ranks of the skilled mechanics of the city was in session today and reports were received from the various pickets....

.... The union pickets were cool-headed and determined in their efforts to prevent trouble and did their utmost and for a time it looked as if they might suffer for their efforts to keep peace....

B. Editorial News in the Press, April, 1911

The amount of editorial matter devoted to labor subjects was relatively small compared to all labor news, but the majority of opinion material was locally written editorials, nearly all concerned with the local furniture strike.

The direction of editorials was predominantly pro-labor. A genuine concern for the community's welfare was expressed in most of them. A few excerpts illustrate these two factors:

.... As a matter of fact the men have strengthened, not weakened, their cause by their display of moderation..13 The hesitancy they have shown to plunge this city into a bitter and wasteful labor war reflects credit upon them and their cause. This very reluctance to walk out proves the sterling

13. Grand Rapids Press, April 3, 1911 Editorial page.

character of Grand Rapids workmen....

The cause of the workmen, so far as the community is concerned, has been strengthened by their remaining at work, and the present is a day when community sentiment is no small factor in turning the tide of such issues.

The formation of a committee of five to inquire into the industrial problem which confronts Grand Rapids is an initial move which holds a promise of ultimate settlement of the controversy.<sup>14</sup> In fact it comprises all for which the Press has contended....

....The decision to make the sessions executive is wise.... It is certain that the patriotic organs of publicity in this city will be only too pleased to respect the wishes of the committee so long as it seems clear that the ultimate good of all concerned will best be served by this attitude.

The rank and file of the furniture workers of Grand Rapids are to be congratulated on the patience they have displayed during the days in which negotiations looking to a settlement of the industrial controversy has been pending.<sup>15</sup> The community in general is grateful to them for their prudence. The workers have shown a commendable discretion, and by their patience and self possession in the face of a trying crisis have done much to hold the respect and sympathy of their fellow citizens. They must continue to display this good sense and by their sobriety of speech and deed prove that they have an intelligent appreciation of the big problem involved....

The manufacturers doubtless realize that they also have a responsibility in this regard. They should carefully avoid giving offense and should remember that when a man is discharged for any reason just now the most likely inference is that the issue at stake has influenced his dismissal. This applies particularly to cases where the employe

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14. Ibid., April 5, 1911, editorial page.

15. Ibid., April 10, 1911, editorial page.

dropped is a member of a shop committee or otherwise prominently identified with the union, and factory superintendents should studiously avoid even the appearance of adding fuel to the flames....

#### GETTING AT THE FURNITURE FACTS<sup>16</sup>

....This attitude of the public in a situation of this nature is a powerful factor in determining the outcome. Before the public can take the attitude which it knows, not guesses, to be right, it must have absolutely unbiased and exact information.... The essential points of difference were summarized in The Evening Press last night<sup>17</sup>....

The men say there has been no general increase in wages. The manufacturers insist there has been a raise of 28 1/2 per cent since 1906.... Do wages here compare favorably with those paid in other cities? ... What really is the average wage paid in Grand Rapids? The workers present one set of figures. The manufacturers another.... Would a flat increase of 10 per cent and the inauguration of the nine hour day put some out of business?....

The Press has heretofore stated that it believed in many instances wages hadn't kept pace with the cost of living....

It is unthinkable that this community will tolerate a costly industrial warfare at its expense without making some effort to prevent it. The situation however is delicate and the difficulties are many.... The city has a large interest in this dispute. Its prosperity, its reputation as a progressive municipality are at stake. Is not this interest big enough to justify it in taking steps independent of either the men or the manufacturers to uncover the truth?.... If expert services are necessary there are plenty of public spirited men in this city who realize the importance of the crisis to subscribe funds.

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16. The Grand Rapids Press, April 20, 1911, editorial page.
  17. See photostat of this story in Conclusions.

The Press welcomes the news that the citizens' commission of inquiry is to continue its investigations in the present industrial controversy....<sup>18</sup>

### Summary

Statistics on the editorials in the Grand Rapids Press during April, 1911, include the following data: There were a total of 12 items and 73 inches on labor topics. Of these, eight items and 55 inches were in categories related to local strike news. The direction of all labor editorial matter was 70 per cent pro-labor; five per cent anti-management; and 25 per cent balanced.

### C. National News in The Grand Rapids Press, April, 1911

The McNamara case was the big news in this period. On April 24 the two brothers confessed and headlines broke into banners across the nation. A highlight of the story that was played up by the Press was the arrest of an ex-Grand Rapids attorney, Walter Drew, who was accused of kidnapping the McNamaras. In addition to this famous labor case there were a number of coal mine disasters and factory fires that made headlines in April, 1911.

### Summary

Out of a total of 322 column inches (26 items) representing 22 per cent of all labor news for the month, the

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18. Ibid., April 22, 1911.

Press devoted 218 column inches to the McNamara case. Most of the national news was non-strike in its content and most of it made page one. There were 283 inches of non-strike news and 296 inches of national news that made page one.

Chief categories under Strike News were: Attempts to Settle By Direct Intervention, and Status-of-Strike stories. Miscellaneous, which includes Sabotage and Violence unconnected with specific strikes, took up almost all of the non-strike news categories, since it covered the McNamara case.

D. State Labor News in The Grand Rapids Press, April, 1911.

Major state labor stories had to do with legislation in the state capitol at Lansing. Workmen's compensation laws were in the process of being drafted and discussed; compulsory arbitration was another major proposal; teachers' pension bills and child labor laws, all were the subjects of news stories. There were also two mine disaster stories in the state and a wage strike in Kalamazoo by a Stove Mounters' Union. This strike involved some Italian workmen who forced other cement plant workers to quit by threatening to stab them to death over a company reduction in hours from 12 to 10 per day.

### Summary

Statistically, there were 12 items and 52 inches of state news devoted to labor. Of this, nearly all, 48 inches, were in non-strike categories, the majority, 25 inches, related to specific pieces of legislation.

### General Summary

A few general observations at this point may serve to highlight some of the information presented above.

The Press reached a peak of local labor news coverage in April, 1911 which it did not again equal in any of the intervals examined. Over two-thirds of all labor news and editorial matter carried was local in origin.

There was twice as much strike news as non-strike and the bulk of it dealt with the furniture workers' walkout.

Page one labor news outstripped inside page labor news about three to one. Three-fourths of the page one material was local in content.

Over three-fourths of all labor news stories were pro-labor in treatment; over two-thirds of all editorial matter was pro-labor.

Nine times as many local stories fell into strike categories as into non-strike. Of these most related to Status-of-Strike category; next came Attempts To Settle On the Issues; next, stories relating to Physical Conduct

of the Strike, the majority of these dealing with Peaceful tactics.

The majority of national labor news stories dealt with non-strike events. Most of these were on the McNamara case which broke at this time. (Two labor leaders confessed to dynamiting the Los Angeles Times, and the story made headlines all over the world.)

#### How the Herald Covered Labor News in August, 1911

A characteristic of Herald reporting in 1911 was the emphasis it laid on always including management's point of view, as well as labor's, in a local news story. This may have been due, in part at least, to the fact that the strike was four months old at the time the Herald was examined, and management's seeming reluctance to be quoted, in the early days of the strike, had disappeared.

As a morning daily, the Herald averaged about ten pages per issue, seven columns to the page.

#### A. Local News

The waning stages of the furniture strike took up most of the local news space in the Herald during August. There were a number of big stories that broke, including the transfer of Bishop Schrembs to another diocese; a ruling by the Christian Reformed church that membership in the Carpenter's union would mean excommunication from the church; the departure of organizer MacFarlane; and the

return to work by the striking furniture workers.

Excerpts from a few major stories illustrate the Herald's treatment of local labor news in August 1911. The first was on the departure of Organizer MacFarlane. It was on page four and took up a full column. The lead sentence and first two or three paragraphs might appear to some to be more pro-management than pro-labor but as MacFarlane warmed to his subject matter and the reporter worked in more direct quotes, the pro-labor direction took precedence.<sup>19</sup>

#### DEMONSTRATION IN FAVOR OF ORGANIZER

"I have not here and never have favored a closed shop," declared Labor Organizer William B. MacFarlane in a stirring address of farewell to more than 2,000 striking furniture workers at a mass meeting at the Majestic theatre last night. "It is not the principle of union and no sane trades union will demand it of any manufacturers. I am in favor of a union shop, but let the manufacturer hire whom he please for it is his right and not that of the men employed in his factory to dictate who shall and who shall not be employed."

Not once did Mr. MacFarlane, who has dictated the fight of his fellow laborers, refer to the manufacturers disrespectfully and in many instances he had praise for some among their number. It was a speech full of advice and good cheer to the men, who he declared, "have given the cleanest and greatest fight ever waged in the history of organized labor."

".... The fight will go on after I am gone the same as it has gone on in the past and when I return

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19. Grand Rapids Herald, August 1, pp. 4, 21 inches.

to Grand Rapids in October I will find a body of men more firmly united than when I left them....

"The time has come in this struggle when want is beginning to be felt by some of our numbers, but never can organized labor be blamed for the present conditions. If the blame is to be placed, then let it be placed upon the heads of those men who for generation after generation have forced into subjection this body of men, who, when the time came, when conditions could be endured no longer, struck for what is rightfully theirs. Our national organization has spent more than \$117,000 here to say nothing of the \$17,000 more spent by local organizations, and those who think we are going to give up the fight now are badly mistaken, for it is going to continue if it costs organized labor a million of dollars...."

MacFarlane will sail August 15 for London to attend the British Trades Congress.

Another story concerned the return to work of the employes at the Gunn factory before the strike was officially called off. It is of interest because in it the company challenges the evening newspapers for misrepresenting them.

#### MEN RETURN TO GUNN FACTORY<sup>20</sup>

.... To the Public: The Evening papers of today have misrepresented the Gunn Furniture company in published statement. We have not had any negotiations of any nature directly or indirectly with the union and we positively will not do so. Before we submit to union domination we will close our factory....

....(The Herald continues) At any rate, it is evident that the employes who returned to work

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20. Grand Rapids Herald, August 9, 1911, pp. 1, 21 inches.

yesterday did so under an arrangement which is satisfactory to both employer and employe; and since it is the very evident desire on the part of the men to treat direct with their employes in this fashion -- a fashion which, in this case has produced the one result for which every citizen of Grand Rapids fervently prays, namely the return of employes to their benches -- it is perhaps true as one party interviewed last night put it, that IT IS NONE OF A NEWSPAPER'S BUSINESS WHAT THE TERMS ARE SO LONG AS THEY ARE AGREEABLE TO THE PARTIES INVOLVED. (*italics are writer's*)

The news about Bishop Schrembs's appointment and removal from Grand Rapids was evidently a scoop for the Herald and they gave it a full column on page one.

#### BISHOP SCHREMBS NOMINATED FOR TOLEDO DIOCESE<sup>21</sup>

....Bishop Schrembs expressed entire ignorance of, and complete surprise at the appointment when shown the foregoing dispatch (cablegram from Roman cardinal to papal delegate in Scranton, Pa.) by a Herald reporter last night....

"Would such an appointment be welcome to you?" he was asked.

"Well now I could hardly say as to that," he responded. "I should want some time to think it over before answering. As a matter of fact I know practically nothing about the new Toledo diocese. I have been connected with the Grand Rapids diocese a pretty long time, 22 years in all"....

There were two stories the Herald carried on the ruling of the Christian Reformed church, that are interesting because of the way they handled this bit of fairly explosive news. Grand Rapids has a very large Dutch population, and

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21. Grand Rapids Herald, August 10, 1911, pp. 1, 21 inches.

many, many of the men on strike were members of the Dutch church. The Herald put both stories, on alternating days, on page three, and gave each one seven inches:

#### CHURCH MEMBERS MUST QUIT UNIONS<sup>22</sup>

Those members of the Christian Reformed churches of Classis Grand Rapids west who are also members of the local labor union of Carpenters and Joiners, will be asked to withdraw from the latter organization, because its principles violate the doctrine of the church.

The consistory...will labor individually with the several hundred union men who are churchmen and try to demonstrate to them wherein the conflict lies. They will also seek to establish Christian Labor Unions among their members in the city, which will be built on principles that accord with the doctrines of the church.... The ritual of the labor union fell into the hands of church fathers.... It found three ways in which labor unions encroach on the church....

#### MAY APPEAL FROM CLASSIS DECISION<sup>23</sup>

Opinion among the men regarding the action.... varies and several have openly declared that if it comes to a choice between the church and organized labor, it will be the labor organization for them.... It was decided at yesterday's gathering of the Reformed Church to have their action printed in English and Holland and distributed among the members of their congregation. An offer of a furniture manufacturer to pay the cost of printing was refused.

Certainly the second story above contains two items that would have pleased the manufacturers if they had been deleted. One was the opinions of some of the furniture

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22. Ibid., August 10.

23. Ibid., August 11.

workers, whom a Herald reporter must have interviewed, that they would quit the church before giving up their union. The other was the fact that a furniture manufacturer had made an offer to the church to pay the cost of publishing and printing the church's ruling against the union.

One final local story is worth noting. Written on the day the 17 week old strike ended, it again played up the manufacturers' point of view first, but filled in down in the body of the story, with remarks by a union leader.

#### FACTORIES GIVE PREFERENCE TO OLD EMPLOYEES<sup>24</sup>

"The manufacturers at their meeting this afternoon did not take any action regarding the vote of the strikers to return to work, but of course the subject was the one most discussed," said William H. Gay. (lead) "The members of the association are all more than delighted at the outcome of the vote taken by the men. We all have a preference for our old men and will make every effort to take them all back...."

(Organizer Hyle is quoted lower down and given less space.)

"The situation is merely this: The men have been starved into yielding or some of them have. We realize that there are many who cannot be expected to continue the fight in the face of a probable exhaustion of strike benefits. These men must think of their families and the action merely gives them the permission to return to work as union men...."

The Herald concludes its 14 inch story on the end of the biggest labor event that had ever happened in Grand

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24. Ibid., August 19, pp. 1, 14 inches.

Rapids with this terse comment:

The strike lasted 17 weeks and one day. It was called April 19 and the national labor organization sent a total of nearly \$150,000 to help the cause. The single men were given \$4 a week and the married men drew \$5, until a short time ago when it became obvious that the end of the benefits was close at hand.

### Summary

Local news was 31 per cent of all labor news for the month. Space-wise it occupied 262 column inches. Most of it lay in Strike news. There was more inside-pages of local news than there was on page one. Directionally most of the local news stories were pro-labor.

### Editorial Matter

The direction of the Herald editorial page in August 1911 was strictly pro-management. One example of a straight editorial run the day the strike ended, illustrates this. It should be titled "It's Get Together Time."

### THE STRIKE ENDS<sup>25</sup>

The determination of the struggle is not to be construed as VICTORY for anyone.... The STRIKE was not the thing to be lost or won.

Many of these workmen, whose LOYALTY (at least) to their cause MUST have inspired admiration in all, have declared to the Herald that in returning to their benches they will seek to render a faithful and efficient service which will measure the very limit of their capacity. This is the RIGHT spirit. If it

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25. Ibid., August 19, 1911, pp. 5, 14 inches.

can be met with a kindred spirit of friendly cooperation...then they will PROVE themselves DESERVING of the improved conditions for which they have asked and for the accomplishment of which the manufacturers as a union are prepared to seek.

Bitterness must now be forgotten. There will be no satisfaction and little credit this morning for any man who STRUTS. It is get-together time -- for manufacturers and men, for the workman within (who has likewise displayed another kind of LOYALTY which has likewise excited another kind of ADMIRATION) and the workman without....

It will be the fervent prayer of every man and woman in the city that out of the crucible of our experiences of the last seventeen weeks will come conditions and mutual understandings which will spell good hours, good wages, good profits and the same old world-wide famous good furniture in a most permanently PEACEFUL Grand Rapids.

(Italics, quotes, punctuation, all the Herald's.)

Far more important than straight editorials, space-wise, were a series "Inside the Furniture Factories," which the Herald ran on its editorial page during the strike. Each story took up a particular plant and described it, the employes and the products, strictly from management's point of view. Each article took up at least a column, sometimes two. Excerpts from one of these will suffice to give their flavor.

INSIDE FURNITURE FACTORIES  
Grand Rapids Show Case Company<sup>26</sup>

If a stranger coming to Grand Rapids for the first time and having no previous knowledge of the industrial conditions in the city, could be taken through the plant of the Grand Rapids Show Case

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26. Ibid., August 4, 1911, pp. 5, 32 inches.

company and after seeing the 427 men that are rushing about on their manifold duties should be suddenly informed that a strike was in progress among the furniture workers, he would either be profoundly astonished or would not believe the statement for there is no indication at this point that such a serious thing as a strike was ever in existence. (lead sentence.)

.... The number of men at work at the Show Case company's plant is now slightly in excess of the number employed at the time the strike was called, for just previous to that time business had been a little slack and quite a number were laid off. Twenty-five more men would fill the factory as completely as is desired at this time. Treasurer Young states that the men that have been brought in from the outside towns are giving the very best of satisfaction and that many of them are moving their families here and are getting settled down as permanent citizens of Grand Rapids.

Many of these men who were employed in the Chicago factories were at one time union men and say that it was almost impossible for them to make more than a bare living in Chicago on account of the frequency of strikes and that they could never tell when they went to work in the morning whether they would be called out before night or not. Also, they claim that the cost of living in that city is greatly in excess of what it is in Grand Rapids.

For the benefit of the men who are working here and who have not been able as yet to secure regular homes the company is maintaining a restaurant and dormitory. Yesterday, while The Herald representative under the guidance of Mr. Young was making an inspection of the factory, the French chef was busy preparing dinner for the boarders and it was a dinner that any man or woman might be glad to discuss. The menu consisted of hamburg steak, a cold roast, lima beans, boiled macaroni, a great cauldron of a delicious smelling stew, potatoes with bread and the usual side dishes ad libitum.

On the same floor with the dining room, the dormitory is located and here were seen many cot beds with a profusion of blankets and all the other bedding essential for the repose of the tired bodies after their day's tasks are completed.

As the dining room was entered, strains of music greeted the ear and for a moment the impression was that the company had employed an orchestra to liven up the spirits of any that might be inclined to kill a little time before the noon whistle blew, but a glance across the room disclosed a couple of waiters seated besides a table listening to the strains emanating from a hugh phonograph and apparently enjoying their moment's recreation immensely. This little side light was an object lesson of the relations existing between the men and their employers, for instead of jumping up when Mr. Young came into view and pretending to get busy at something as would have been the case in the majority of places where the work is systematized as thoroughly as it is in the Show Case plant, these men simply looked up and grinned and returned to the enjoyment of their music.

At no place in the factory did there seem to be the least disposition on the part of the workmen to loaf or kill time and from the way the different workmen handle their tools it is evident that the Grand Rapids Show Case Company has secured some mighty fine artisans....

### Summary

Editorial matter took up 32 per cent of all labor content in the Herald. Well over half, however, was devoted to the "Inside Furniture Factories," series. The few "straight" editorials reflected a management point of view, also. Directional coding of all editorial content showed 70 per cent pro-management, 11 per cent balanced, and nine per cent anti-labor.

### C. National News in the Grand Rapids Herald, August, 1911

A series of violent strikes across the world made headlines throughout the month of August. Among them was a Mexican miners strike that precipitated a near state of

civil war, a Des Moines street car strike, a British dock workers strike in which the King's offer to mediate was spurned and 100,000 strikers clashed with police, a Cleveland garment workers strike in which a policeman was shot and killed and garment workers were arrested for murder, a threatened Chicago rail strike over recognition, a Coney Island rail strike in which 1200 police guarded 20 miles of railroad. There were several disaster stories involving coal mine cave-ins, another on the closing of 152 cotton mills and subsequent unemployment of 70,000 workers due to a drought.

#### Summary

Statistically there were a total of 293 column inches, representing 35 per cent of all labor news, of national origin. Of this amount 276 inches dealt with strikes; and 277 inches made page one. Major strike categories were: Status-of-Strike, 107 inches; Physical Conduct-Coercive, 95 inches; Attempts to Settle on the Issues got 42 inches and Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention, 32 inches.

#### D. State Labor News in The Grand Rapids Herald, August, 1911

There were only seven state stories during the month which totaled 61 inches. These ranged from a threatened strike of the Cooper's union in Benton Harbor to a price strike by blueberry pickers in Northern Michigan.

Summary

No state stories made page one and only six inches dealt with strike news.

General Summary

There were a total of 74 items and 839 column inches given to labor news during the month. Of these, 25 items and 262 inches, about 31 per cent, were on local events; 223 inches, 27 per cent, on editorial matter; 293 inches 35 per cent on national news, and 61 inches, seven per cent on state news.

The total amount of space the Herald devoted to all labor news was about evenly split between local and national, with the latter slightly ahead. Editorial content was almost as great quantitatively as local news.

Strike news was four times greater than non-strike with most of it stemming from the national scene. Almost all of the non-strike news was local in origin.

Page one stories took up more space than inside labor news; and two-thirds of the material on page one was national in origin.

The majority of local news stories were pro-labor in treatment; while the majority of editorial matter was pro-management.

Categories that showed up most frequently in material classified under strikes, for local stories fell into

CHART I PROPORTION OF SPACE GIVEN TO ALL LABOR NEWS IN THE PRESS AND THE HERALD IN APRIL AND AUGUST, 1911, IN COLUMN INCHES, BY FOUR MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS, LOCAL, EDITORIAL, NATIONAL, AND STATE.

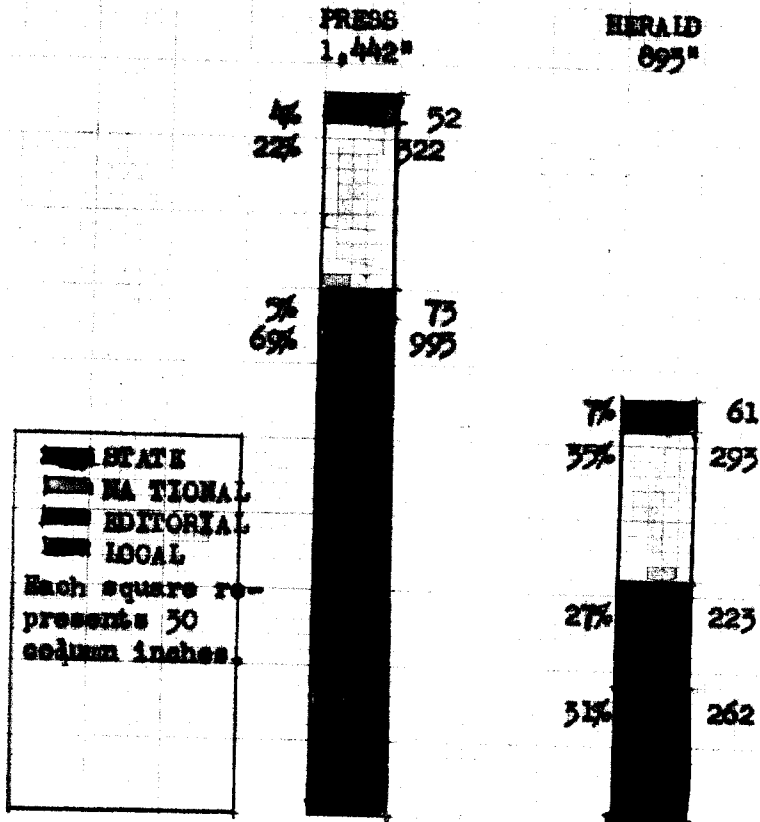


Chart I shows that the Press carried nearly twice as much total labor news and over three times as much local news as the Herald.

It shows that the two papers had roughly equivalent amounts of national and state news but the Herald had over three times as much editorial content as the Press.

CHART II PROPORTION OF STRIKE TO NON-STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD IN APRIL AND AUGUST 1911, BY COLUMN INCHES, FOR FOUR MAIN SUBDIVISIONS, LOCAL EDITORIAL, NATIONAL AND STATE.

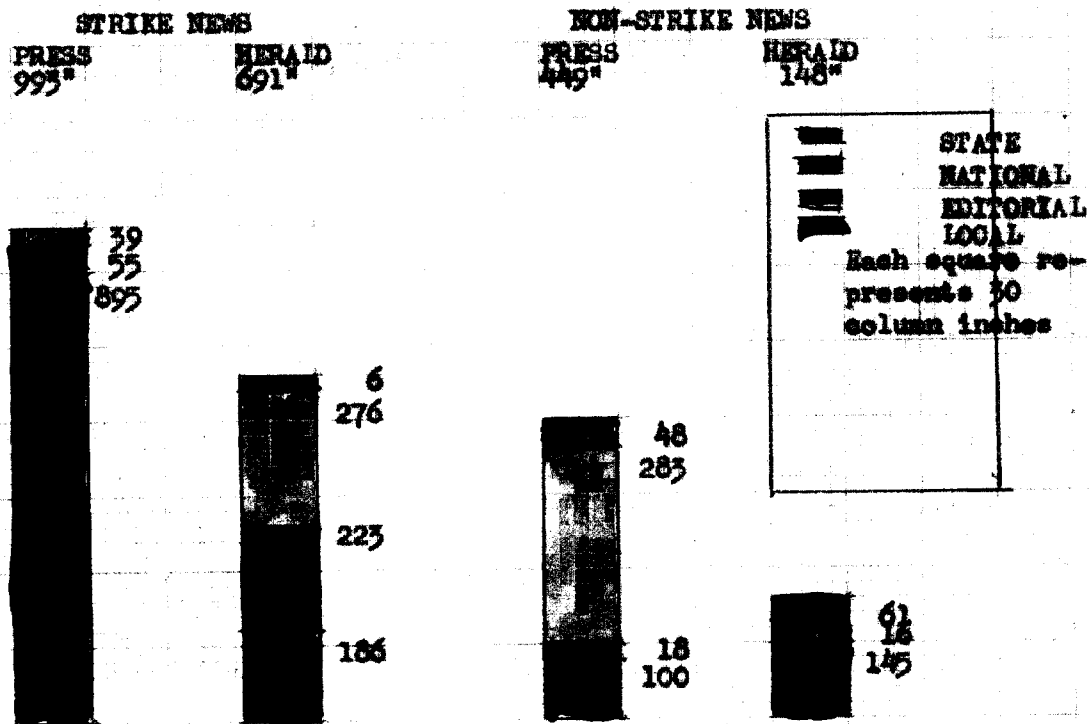


Chart II shows that Strike News in the Press was predominantly local in origin and nearly five times greater than in the Herald. The latter split its strike news pretty evenly into local, editorial, and national. The Herald had roughly four times as much editorial matter as the Press. Interestingly, the Press devoted most of its non-strike news to national events, while the Herald gave most space to local events.

CHART III PROPORTION OF PAGE ONE TO OTHER THAN PAGE ONE STORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD IN APRIL AND AUGUST 1911, IN COLUMN INCHES BY FOUR MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS, LOCAL, EDITORIAL, NATIONAL, AND STATE.

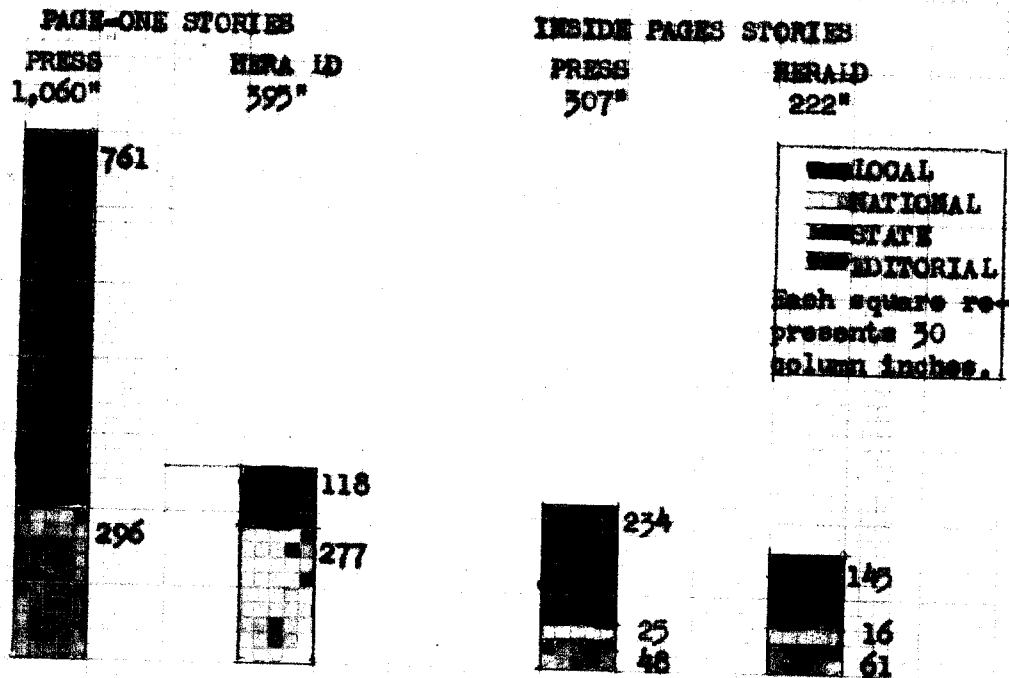


Chart III shows that the Press carried about three times as much labor news on page one as the Herald, and that most of it was local in origin.

Most of the Herald's page one labor content was national which is interesting in view of the fact that the closing days of the strike were full of fairly important news items.

CHART IV DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, APRIL AND AUGUST, 1911, IN COLUMN INCHES.

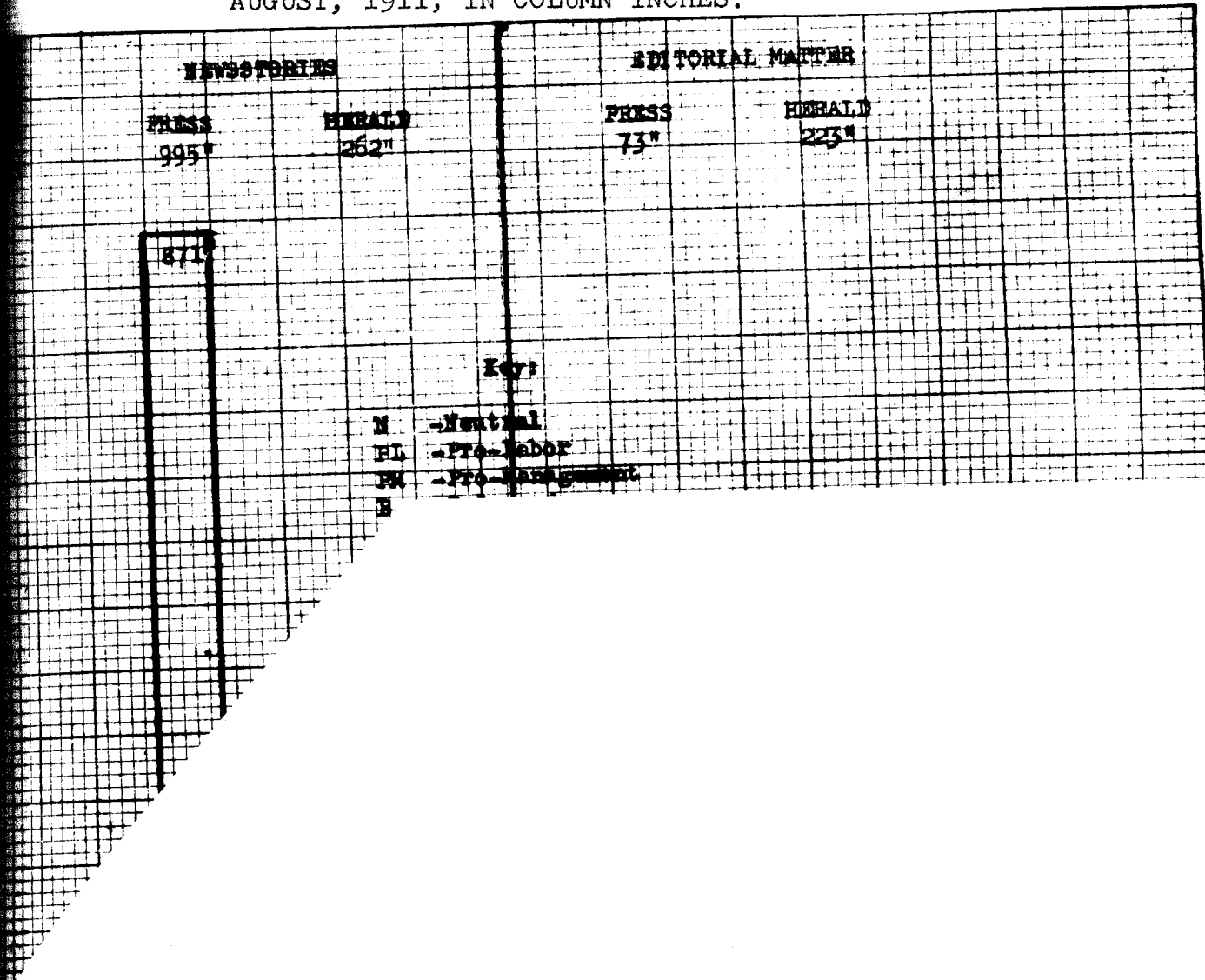


Chart IV shows that the direction of the Press labor news stories and editorials was predominantly pro-labor. It shows that the Herald news coverage was mainly pro-labor but that editorial content was almost entirely pro-management.

CHART IV DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, APRIL AND AUGUST, 1911, IN COLUMN INCHES.

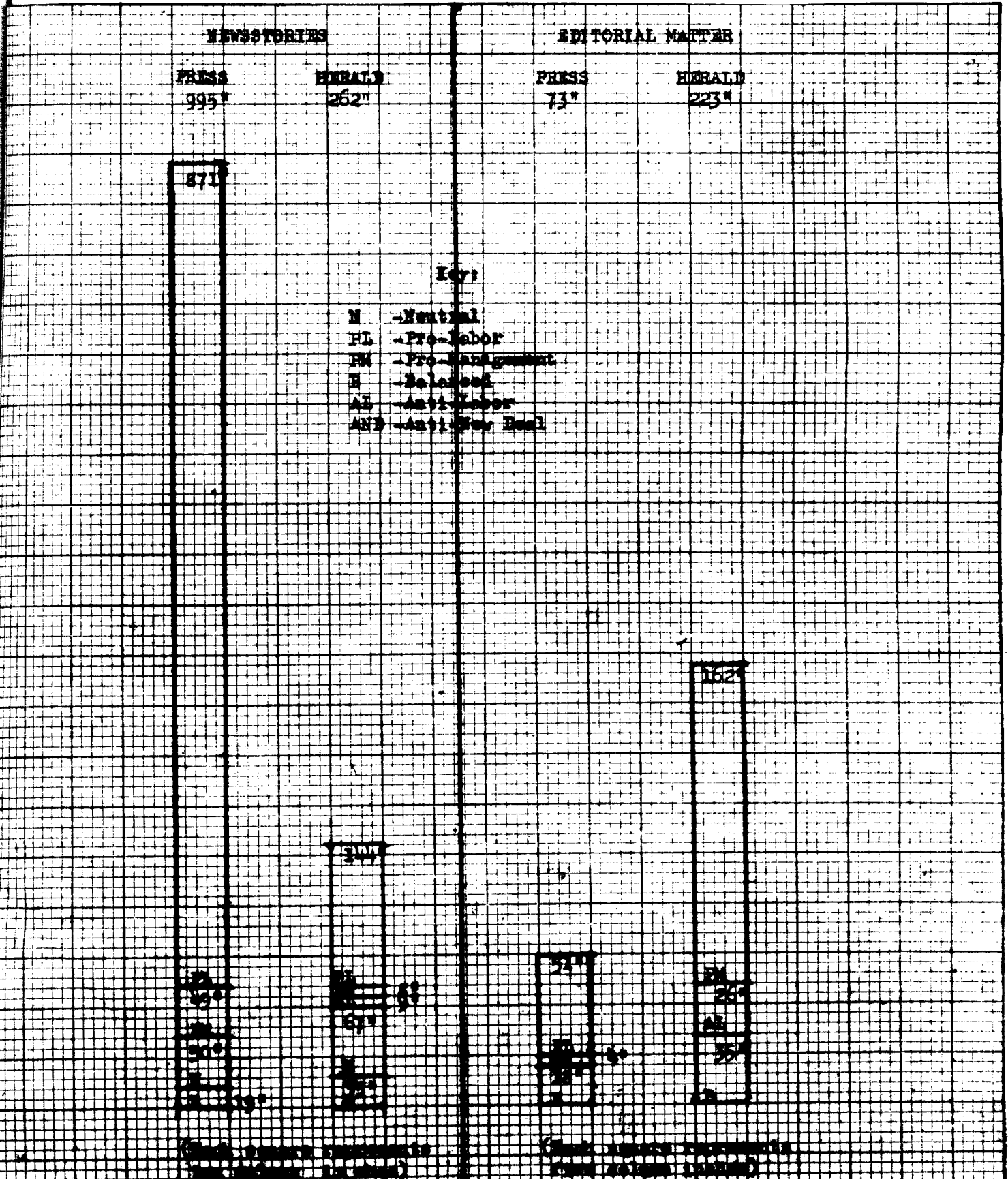


CHART V MAJOR SUBJECT MATTER CATEGORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, APRIL AND AUGUST, 1911.

		Press				
		1-A	1-B	1-C		29
		188	64			
LOCAL		Herald				263*
		1-E	1-M	2-D		*2-M 19
		123	63	57		
		Press				
		1M	2-A	2-A		2M
		39			251	31
LOCAL		Herald				202*

Chart V shows that major categories for Strike News on a local level were concentrated in Status-of-Strike categories for both papers. The Press gave a good deal of space to Attempts to Settle on the Issues, and Physical Conduct, Peaceful Tactics. The Herald gave most of its editorial comments to Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics. Nationally, the Herald concentrated its stories in Status-of-Strike, and Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics.

Press

1-A	188	1-B	64	1-C
-----	-----	-----	----	-----

Herald

1-E	123	1-M	63	2-D	57
-----	-----	-----	----	-----	----

\*2-M  
19

263"

Press

1M	2-A	2-A	2M
39			251
			31

Herald

1-A	95	1-O	42	1-E	1M	2M
					107	32
					17	

293"

Press 52"

1-M	52
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Herald 61"

1-M	61
-----	----

Press 73"

1-M	2M	73
55	18	

Herald

1-B	159	1-F	20
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\*1-M  
14

223"

LOCAL

NATIONAL

STATE

EDITORIAL

- Key:
- STRIKE CATEGORIES**
- 1-A Physical Conduct, Peaceful
  - 1-B Physical Conduct, Coercive
  - 1-C Attempts to settle on Issue
  - 1-D Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention
  - 1-E Status of Strike
  - 1-F Effect on Public Welfare
- NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES**
- 2-A Disaster, Sabotage, Welfareism
  - 2-B Union Activities
  - 2-C Joint Union-Management
  - 2-D Community or Nation-wide Union Activities
  - 2-E Economic Conditions
  - 2-F Pol. & Gov't Programs & Policies
  - 2-G General Gov't Policies
- (Each square represents 10 column inches. Categories with less than 50 inches have been combined under Miscellaneous, 1-M and 2-M.)

Nationally, the Herald concentrated its stories in Status-of-Strike, and Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics.

Status-of-Strike category; in editorial, into Physical Conduct-Coercive Tactics; for national news was split between Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics, and Status-of--Strike news.

Non-strike categories for local news were concentrated in Community-wide or Nation-wide Activities of Labor. There were no editorials and very little state news in non-strike categories. National news fell primarily into Government Programs and Policies -- Specific Legislation.

#### A Comparison of the Press and Herald in 1911

A few observations concerning the difference in treatment of labor news by the Press and Herald are illustrated by a series of bar charts which follow.

### Summary Highlights of 1911 Labor Coverage

The chief characteristic of Press reporting of the opening days of the long furniture strike was the sympathetic treatment given to the strikers. A wealth of detail was supplied the reader, including human interest stories, and close-ups of the strike leaders and men in the ranks, that brought them into sharp focus and made them seem human and likeable. Their cause was given emphasis and support in both news columns and on the editorial page.

The Herald's coverage of the closing days of the strike, on the other hand, appeared to place a good deal of emphasis on presenting the point of view of management as completely as possible. While giving the striking workmen "fair" treatment, from the standpoint of accurately quoting their speeches and remarks, the play of most local stories, and all editorials, were directed first at expressing management's point of view. The editorial page series, "Inside the Furniture Factories," were dictated almost verbatim by management and enabled employers to use the Herald's editorial page space as a sounding board for their views on the strike, as well as business conditions.

## CHAPTER II - THE 1920's

(August 17-September 23, 1921 -- The Press )  
(August 6-September 10, 1922 -- The Herald)

The aftermath of World War I in the early 1920's, brought a wave of violence and revolt to the labor movement. At the same time, with a Republican administration newly elected to power, employer groups began a concerted effort to enforce the open shop and an era of elaborate employe representation plans and 'company unions' was launched.

In 1923, Professor Selig Perlman, wrote:<sup>1</sup>

We have already pointed out that since the War ended the American labor movement has in the popular mind become linked with radicalism. The steel strike and the coal miners' strike in 1919, the revolt against the national leaders and "outlaw" strikes in the printing industry and on the railways in 1920, the advocacy by the organizations of the railway men of the Plumb Plan for nationalization of railways and its repeated endorsement by the conventions of the American Federation of Labor, the resolution in favor of the nationalization of coal mines passed at the conventions of the United Mine Workers, the "vacation" strike by the anthracite coal miners in defiance of a government wage award, the sympathy expressed for Soviet Russia in a number of unions, notably of the clothing industry, have led many to see, despite the assertions of the leaders of the American Federation of Labor to the contrary, an apparent drift in the labor movement toward radicalism, or even the possibility of a radical majority in the Federation in the not distant future.

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1. Selig Perlman, The History of Trade Unionism in the United States, pp. 259.

Historians Charles and Mary Beard noted:<sup>2</sup>

Although the Republicans could claim, with some justification in the election returns of 1920, that the country had turned its back on President Wilson's internationalism, they were not able in domestic affairs, to stamp out the spirit of progressive or radical insurgency, old in American tradition and yet ever new in its application to changing conditions...

Opposition to the war, such as it was, and to various measures adopted in carrying on the war, prevailed largely among the farmers and industrial workers who had fostered populist or socialistic movements during preceding years. The arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of war dissenters and labor agitators, notably Debs, revealed that the war for liberty and democracy abroad could be accompanied by stern measures of repression at home, under the very administration of President Wilson, world spokesman for those exalted war aims.

The social order was disturbed by strikes, numerous and widespread. Progressive and radical Democrats and Republicans in Congress tried to "make the rich pay for the war," to impose heavy taxes on profits, and to "restore the government to the plain people."

In Grand Rapids a number of employe representation plans flourished and there were numerous picnics, carnivals, and outings, sponsored by employers, for their employees.

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2. Charles A. & Mary R. Beard, The Beard's Basic History Of the United States, pp. 439-442.

The labor movement maintained a nucleus of AFL organizations, chiefly among the furniture workers, although other skilled crafts, such as electrical workers also were organized. The union members were concerned with legislation such as Workman's Compensation, Child labor, factory inspection, and the eight and nine hour work day. They were interested in radical and social reforms remotely, chiefly through speakers who occasionally came to address Michigan Federation of Labor conventions. "Big Bill" Haywood, head of the Industrial Workers of the World, was among these. Collective bargaining in the sense of signed contracts, negotiations with management, or recognition of the furniture workers, was non-existent.

How the Grand Rapids Press Covered Labor News in 1921  
(August 17-September 24)

Although the national labor scene was marked by strife and open warfare among West Virginia miners, locally and on a state basis there was no labor dissension. Peace and quiet marked the activities of organized labor. For this reason local news was light and concerned chiefly with labor day celebrations and a meeting of the Michigan Federation of Labor, held at Grand Rapids.

A. Local News

Plans for labor day celebrations and the MFL convention took up most space in the Press during this period. Stories, for the most part, dealt only with labor activities and cited only labor leaders.

The Press reporting continued to give the same detailed, sympathetic treatment to union men that marked the 1911 period.

For example on August 26, 10 days before Labor Day, the Press carried a two column cut at the top of page two, titled: "Plan Labor Day Fest...When Labor celebrates its own special day in Grand Rapids, September 5, the festivities will be in charge of these five men..."

All told the Press ran eight local stories on Labor Day. Three of them were concerned with the separate celebration held by the Holland Classis in the Christian Reformed Church who held their annual mission feast on Labor Day.

On the day itself the Press carried only four paragraphs on the local celebration, and put most of its efforts into national labor day messages from prominent individuals starting with President Harding. The heads and subheads marking the local labor day coverage included:

Mark Labor Day in Varied Ways; Unionists Hold Big Picnic at Ramona; Many take Auto Trips; Train Travel Heavy.

Members of the Christian Reformed churches of the city attended the picnic arranged by the League of Young Men's Societies of the Christian Reformed Church at Franklin Park.

By far more interesting from the standpoint of news treatment was the Michigan Federation of Labor convention.

As early as September 6, the Press carried a front page story, next to the lead story of the day, announcing that the Federation would meet in Grand Rapids, September 20, and announcing who would attend and that Senator Baker would speak on "Producer-Consumer Sales."

About 106 inches or five columns all told were spent on this event.

The lead story on page 15 of the September 19 issue stated: "Unemployment will be one of the vital issues discussed by the Michigan Federation of Labor at the 32nd biennial convention which will open in the Pantiland Hotel Tuesday. John Mooney, brother of Tom, will speak on The Mooney Billings Frameup."

When the convention opened the Press ran three fourths of a column on page one beginning with the lead:

"No matter what the outcome of open shop propoganda may be there is no power on earth that can crush the spirit of labor," said Carl Young.

On the following day the Press carried two separate stories describing different speakers and actions of the convention.

Two more front page stories followed. One of them on September 22 had the headline "Contests Loom in Election of Labor Officials; Charles R. Thorne and Edward Kosten Nominated for Presidency."

In addition to the MFL convention and Labor Day news there were two local stories on company sponsored social activities for factory workers.

### Summary

Statistics on local stories in the Press in the 1921 period include these: Out of a total of 1,083 inches devoted to labor, only 189, representing 17 per cent were local in origin; all local news was non-strike in type; only 78 inches, less than one per cent, made page one; 150 inches, over 90 per cent of all local labor news, were coded as pro-labor in direction. Union activities and Nation Wide Activities were the two categories of greatest frequency.

#### B. Editorial Matter

Seven locally written editorials appeared in the Press at this time. All of them were interesting. Two of them were outstanding examples of the kind of forthright, liberal opinions the Press expressed during the time E. W. Booth was editor.

Of the other five, two urged cooperation between labor and capital. One of these suggested that labor should accept wage cuts because the interests of labor and capital "are not so far apart as Gompers would have us believe."<sup>3</sup> Another said that strikes have an adverse effect on a normal return to a "balanced wage-price level....

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3. Grand Rapids Press, August 24, 7 inches.

So often in the past a weapon of justice, the strike now stands in the way of natural wage adjustments.<sup>4</sup> The time calls for frank round table discussion with final arbitration for deadlocks."

Another editorial took sharp issue with a gentleman in Boston who set up an auction block to dramatize the plight of the unemployed. The Press carried the story but the next day ran the following editorial:

Urbain Ledoux (auctioneer) believes that Boston in particular and America in general are not sufficiently worked up over the condition of unemployment which prevails in the larger cities. It would be futile to point out the uselessness of Mr. Ledoux's undertaking. The people who have to go down and attend a human auction in order to appreciate the misery brought about by unemployment are lacking in imagination. America is resolutely turning her back on pessimism and swinging into action again....<sup>5</sup>

The two outstanding editorials referred to above both concerned a semi-civil-war that had broken out in the mining fields of Mingo county, West Virginia. Violence flared out across the southern countryside and broke into headlines. The guiding hand of editor Booth is unmistakable in the lines that follow:

#### THE MARCH ON MINGO<sup>6</sup>

Men do not ordinarily pick up rifles and set out on a determined cross country march against a county controlled by martial law without a

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5. Grand Rapids Press, September 12, 1921, editorial page, 10 inches.
  6. Ibid., August 27, 1921, 12 inches.

grievance. It is all very well to say that the West Virginia mob of 5,000 has been aroused by agitators, a familiar cry in that state since the strike trouble began some months ago. Two years ago the government talked them out of a similar attack. This time it required a threat of federal armed force. Next time it will mean machine guns, bayonets, a pitched battle unless West Virginia gets down to business and substitutes the firm hand of just arbitration for the uncertain way of the lobbyist and politician.

The affair should never have been permitted to go to the stage of a long siege of martial law. It is the state's business, a matter of internal order and welfare coming under the police power of West Virginia....

The unfortunates who formed this mob had been misled in their choice of methods. Apparently they had no leaders able to present their case in any other way... The men who composed the mob are mountaineers, mostly, ignorant, rough, violent in nature.... The Mingo marchers had no more chance than the Ludlow armed camp; if the intervening mine leader had not halted them the government troops would have done so. There is no time to weigh causes when public order is at stake... But until states learn wisdom and determination in requiring square treatment from both sides in industrial disputes they will have to partake of the guilt.

#### AS TO MARTIAL LAW<sup>7</sup>

"Martial law" is not properly law at all but the suspension of it. The imposition of military tribunals upon any American district is a denial of constitutional rights permitted only because of a state of war. It is a sad reflection upon the efficiency of a state government when such means have to be resorted to. The case of West Virginia is still more critical, because it is highly doubtful whether any justification existed in the first place for the throttling of Mingo county by this weapon.

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7. Grand Rapids Press, September 12, 1921, editorial page, 15 inches.

The struggle between organized and unorganized labor, the methods of the Mingo mine operators and retaliation of their workmen, certainly justified state intervention and the requirement of arbitration. The state could have applied a firm hand and wise counsel to both sides. Instead West Virginia chose to play politics. Martial law, enforced by state troops with at least a show of impartiality, may have its benefits in such a chaotic condition as this state vacillation brought about. BUT THE TRAVESTY OF MARTIAL LAW PUT INTO EFFECT BY MINE COMPANY PRIVATE DETECTIVES, COMPANY MACHINE GUNS, COMPANY ARMORED CARS, AND COMPANY RIFLES, IS A DISGRACE. (Caps are writers). It is permitting a private faction to rule a district of this republic.

The fruit of this seed is full grown now, with hill ridges bristling with guns, deputies dying in patrol clashes, full-sized civil war imminent, government planes on the way and troops called, a long siege of martial law over five counties in prospect...

Martial law -- rightly only a last resort in case of violent resistance to the state -- was in West Virginia set up to further individual ends. Many ignorant but well-meaning men have been turned against their country and their state because of this. For the greater good of the nation they will have to disperse or die, but the state of this misappliance of a weapon of the state will long rest upon the good name of West Virginia.

#### Summary

Editorial matter, related to labor topics, took up only nine per cent of all labor content. Three letters to the editor accounted for 14 inches, and seven straight editorials, for 76 inches. A little less than half all editorial matter was pro-labor in direction.

### C. National News Coverage

Over 71 per cent of all labor news was national in origin. And 60 per cent of the national labor stories described the bloody uprising in Mingo county, West Virginia. A threatened national rail strike, an AFL convention in Atlantic City, and Labor Day celebrations across the country were other major events of the labor scene.

The wire coverage of the Mingo county uprising was vivid and detailed. There was little of the "dead pan" reporting typical of later days, about it. A few excerpts illustrate this:

Villagers along the line of march first caught sight of dilapidated wagons, automobiles and other conveyances in a motley caravan pushing over the hills. The vehicles were followed by a straggling army of unshaved, grim looking men, some with weapons dangling in the dust as they trudged along, others munching food or engaged in playful fisticuffs. They pitched camp near Blair Thursday night....

Across the Logan county line civilians with rifles resting across their knees crouched in waiting... They talked of the time two years ago when a similar army tried to march through their county to the troubled miners district.<sup>8</sup>

Miners massed for a fight along the Logan-Boone county line began withdrawing shortly before noon today, Don Chafin, Logan county sheriff advised officials here today. Chafin said his scout airplanes earlier detected a mass meeting near Blair mountain. Shortly afterward the miners' force withdrew and scouts reported their movements indicated they might be dispersing....

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8. Ibid., August 26, 1921, pp. 1, 42 inches.

It was believed from the volume of firing there has been greater loss of life than is reported. The number of casualties is guarded by the men on both sides.... Nearly all lines of communication in this vicinity are impaired....<sup>9</sup>

Reports that airplanes had dropped bombs on the homes and gathering places of miners on the Hewitt and Crooked Creek sections reached here today.

Four airplanes were reported to have dropped the bombs early today.

The reports here did not make clear whether there were any casualties.... The planes soared from the ball park here on their mission of destruction and flew over the objective territory at an altitude of about 1,000 feet.

Miners and their families scurried into the open in an effort to escape danger, it was reported....<sup>10</sup>

### Summary

Statistically, there were 772 column inches of national labor news in the Press during this period. Of this amount, 635 inches dealt with strike news. Nearly 80 per cent of all national labor news, 608 inches, made page one. The outstanding category for national news was Physical Conduct-Coercive under Strike categories.

#### D. State News

There were only 30 column inches devoted to state labor news during this period, low point for the Press

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9. Ibid., September 1, 1921, 42 inches, p. 1.
  10. Ibid., September 2, 1921, 42 inches, p. 1.

in all intervals examined. Most of the state stories dealt with labor day celebrations.

#### General Summary of Press Coverage in 1921

Out of a total of 1,083 column inches devoted to all labor news, 71 per cent was national in origin; three per cent, state; 17 per cent local; and nine per cent editorial in content.

Locally, the Press carried less labor news than at any other interval examined prior to 1947. National news outstripped all other types and more than two-thirds of all labor material was of national origin. State labor news was lower than in any other period examined.

Space given to editorial matter was relatively high for the Press.

The largest strike category consisted of national news in the Physical Conduct-Coercive Tactics groups; the largest non-strike category lay in local news under Union Activities.

Twice as much national labor news was concerned with strikes as with non-strike labor events. Practically all page one material was national in origin.

#### How the Grand Rapids Herald Covered Labor News in 1922 (August 6-September 10)

This was a peak period for total labor news in the Herald. Frequently there were from four to seven major

front page labor stories on the same date.

Nation-wide coal and rail strikes were in the headlines. State news centered on the effects of coal shortages on Detroit industries and of sabotage inspired by "Reds," on a Michigan rail line. Local news dealt with labor day celebrations, predictions about the coal shortage by employers, a variety of company sponsored picnics and a small uprising by rail strikers of the Pere Marquette line. Editorials concentrated on chastising the irresponsible elements in labor for waging "costly" strikes.

A. Local News

Out of a total of 189 column inches devoted to local labor news, about a fourth concerned Labor Day; a little more than a fourth dealt with company sponsored picnics and social events; a fraction of local news described a small uprising of rail strikers; and almost half of all the stories had to do with the effect of coal and rail strikes on Grand Rapids industries.

A story describing eggs that were hurled at strike-breakers tied Grand Rapids into the national rail crisis in a modest way.

EGGS SENT FLYING AT STRIKEBREAKERS<sup>11</sup>  
Policemen Hit, Too.

Strikebreakers returning from Wyoming yards after work were met with a barrage of eggs... Nearly 100 waited at both crossings for the Pere Marquette dummy which carried the strike breakers. The few breakers who got off at Franklin street were covered with smashed eggs and those who remained inside were hit through the windows.... A riot call was sent to headquarters at 10 but on the arrival of officers everything was quiet.

One of the most interesting local stories was a round-up of opinions by "representative" citizens on the coal miner's strike. It represented an attempt on the part of the Herald to find out what people were thinking about the most serious and biggest labor crisis in the country. The story was run after the fashion of a man-on-the street interview. But the interviewees were far from being average citizens. Most of them were company presidents. However, the Herald showed initiative and enterprise and an awareness of the serious impact of the coal strike on local industries, in the story. The author hazards a guess that if the Press had run a similar type story at this time the opinions of at least some labor leaders would have been included. Said the Herald:

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11. Grand Rapids Herald, August 8, p. 3, 10 inches.

WHAT IS OUR ANSWER?<sup>12</sup>

Here are opinions gathered from 18 representative citizens on the proposition as to whether the anthracite miners should have their old wage....

Clarence Dexter, secretary-treasurer Grand Rapids Chair company -- "I do not believe the miners demands should be met."

George Whitworth, president Berkey & Gay -- "If you meet the miners' demands because the public needs coal, nothing has been settled."

C. B. Kelsey, wartime county fuel administrator -- "As far as the coming winter is concerned it isn't going to make much difference."

Adrian Nagelkirk, editor, Creston News -- "I would make the concessions for the present. Many poor people are apt to suffer."

Edwin Owen, president Owen Ames Kimball Company -- "If the anthracite miners are getting the same wage as in 1920, I say fight it out now."

H. N. Morrill, business manager, Board of Education -- "I don't believe in strikes. If it is fought out now it will be settled."

Blaine Gavett, secretary American Public Utilities company -- "I am not conversant with anthracite mining. I don't think there will be suffering because coke or a combination of coke and Pocahontas can be utilized. In fact this strike will probably react by lessening the demand for anthracite."

Lee Hutchins, manager Hazeltine Perkins Drug company -- "I am a fighter and naturally I would advocate fighting it out now. But we must think of the people who buy small quantities of coal.... Therefore I would say compromise now."

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12. Ibid., September 2, 1922, p. 1, 21 inches.

Willard Keeney, attorney -- "I am not familiar with wage conditions. However, I am not in favor of an unjustly high wage because of the possibilities of public inconvenience."

Christian Gallmeyer, ex-mayor -- "I'd make that concession. Right now the problem of keeping warm next winter overshadows labor disputes. We want coal."

M. Thomas Ward, attorney -- "It is high time that the public took a stand and told labor this throttling of industry will no longer be tolerated."

Arthur S. Ainsworth, Bennett Fuel & Ice company -- "I would suggest that the demands be met as a remedy for the situation. High prices and high wages go hand in hand."

Fred Pantlind, manager, Hotel Pantlind -- "Perhaps in this present crisis the demands of the miners should be met but certainly within the next year some fair basis could be worked out whereby the miners would receive a living wage, and the price of coal would not be prohibitive."

Bishop Edward Kelly -- "In this emergency I would agree to grant the miners the wages they ask."

Clay Hollister, president Old National Bank -- "Do not give them what they ask, but let them go back to work and produce coal until the matter is settled by arbitration."

S. Wesselius, attorney -- "Give them what they ask until a just agreement can be reached. What the miners need is a living wage for 365 days a year and not big wages for 125 days as has been the case in the past."

James Kinney, city purchasing agent -- "Let the anthracite men return to work under the same agreement as the bituminous miners went on. That is the only fair thing to do. Arbitrate later."

Dewey Blocksma, president Breen & Halliday Coal company -- "We have got to fight it out some time and it might as well be now. If they won't be decent it's time to fight. They should be paid all that is fair but the price of coal must come down."

### Summary

Statistically, local stories represented but 10 per cent of all labor news. Directionally, 36 per cent of local news stories were coded as pro-management; 25 per cent, balanced; 22 per cent pro-labor; 10 per cent anti-labor and seven per cent neutral. By far the largest strike category was Effect of Strikes on Public Welfare. Non-strike categories centered in Miscellaneous-Welfarism; and Community-wide Activities of Labor.

### Editorial Matter

All editorial matter consisted of locally written editorials and all of these were stingingly, if ponderously, phrased. They left little doubt as to the Herald's attitude on the futility of strikes. They appeared to be completely consistent with editorial opinions expressed in the 1911 period.

A few examples illustrate the kind of opinions held by the Herald:

#### INDUSTRIAL CASTOR OIL<sup>13</sup>

.... If organized "Capital" at the first sign of dispute entrenches in a "rule or ruin" policy -- a "Now's-the-time-to-smash-the-union" policy, a recurrence of war will be as inevitable as it will be logical.

On the other hand if "organized labor" at its first arbitral disappointment, deserts the paths of organized adjudication (as the Shopmen's union did when it revolted against the U.S. Labor Board) there is no alternative for the Nation except either to fight to a finish or to put sharp teeth into national arbitral statutes.

Everything in the last analysis depends upon what the Cleveland Agreement calls a "proper spirit of obligation and responsibility on the part of all parties," in a word "collective bargaining" must be immutably acknowledged for Labor's vindication; but "collective dictation" must be adjured once and for all by all concerned and "collective responsibility" must be as fundamental as "collective privilege." ....

#### A CHALLENGE TO UNIONISM<sup>14</sup>

The finding of the coroner's jury investigating the Michigan Central wreck in which two persons were killed near Gary, Indiana, is a challenge to all Union labor and particularly to the shopcrafts now on strike. Pulling of railroad track spikes with deliberate intent caused the wreck, according to the jury's verdict....

No right minded Union men, including railroad shop workers approves this crime. Yet the net result of such violence is a lessening of public sympathy for the strikers' cause....

The railroad is offering rewards and employing detectives to seek out conspirators. Public officials are doing the same. But this is a job for the Unions. They are challenged to evidence their disapproval of such red handed crimes.... The unions could do nothing that would more spectacularly assure their integrity than to find and deliver to punishment the conspirators responsible for this crime. And, if the United Mine Workers, instead of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce, were backing tireless efforts to bring perpetrators of the Herrin massacre to judgment, all Union Labor would be elevated in reflected public esteem.

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13. Ibid., Editorial page, August 17, 1922, 14 inches.

14. Ibid., August 23, 1922, 6 inches.

THE FUTILITY OF STRIKES<sup>15</sup>

From 1916 to 1921 inclusive according to government statistics there were 10,254 strikes in the United States. This is the score which indicates the nature of their conclusions: won by employers, 3,516; by men, 3,112; compromised, 3,627.

What could more eloquently demonstrate the futility of industrial rebellion? What could more pertinently indicate the strike's lack of advantage for all concerned?.... In other-words the average strike is, at best, only a three to one bet.

The 10,254 strikes...cost a total of 264,485 lost days of work. The computation of wages thus lost by "labor" would be tremendous.... The computation of profits lost by "capital" would be equally tremendous....

Why in the face of such exhibits, should any advocate support the doctrine that strikes are a paramount advantage to anybody -- least of all to Labor?.... We confess to a total lack of understanding why every suggestion for establishing legalized industrial arbitration should be hastily and promptly assailed by Labor spokesmen as an assault upon something of paramount advantage to Labor. If we can assure the integrity of arbitration (and that ought not to be impossible), it would seem to The Herald that the establishment of legalized preliminary industrial arbitration ought to be hailed by Labor as a new measure of emancipation....

The Herald has frequently adverted to the International Typographical Union as a type, in times past, of worthy and useful Labor organization as it has functioned in a vast majority of American newspapers....

CLEAR THE TRACK<sup>16</sup>

Coal supplies are running low. Here, a municipal pumping station, necessary to community life, threatens suspension. There a great hospital

- 
15. Ibid., August 24, 1922, 10 inches.  
 16. Ibid., August 25, editorial page, 16 inches.

dedicated to the most sacred of all humanities is unable to protect its heat supply. Here a big factory providing livelihood to thousands suspends for want of fuel. There a transportation line essential to public intercourse struggles desperately for motive power....

Any sense in this composite situation? None whatsoever. The miners had certain legitimate rights. Such is invariably the case when industrial units disagree. Ultimately -- after five months of war -- they have come to terms on a basis which gives promise of ultimate permanent relations based on justice and truth. Is either factor say better off than it would have been if these terms had governed at the beginning instead of the end of civil war? Absolutely not.... Both of them are worse off -- and the public sits in the shadow of innocently inherited menace....

This is an emergency. The fact that it is created by our own typical short sightedness makes it no less imperative than if it had been created by natural calamity or by foreign war.... etc.

#### A FINISH FIGHT<sup>17</sup>

A "finish fight" is economic nonsense, and we repeat it is a thin paradox at best -- because the "finish" of one such fight is only the beginning of another. We are always going to have "collective bargaining." The thing we have got to escape is "collective dictations" by any group or class of overlords. The mass of Labor should speak for itself against a "finish fight." The mass of railroad stockholders should speak for themselves.... etc.

#### Summary

Statistics for the 1922 period show that the Herald devoted 131 inches, seven per cent of all labor news, to

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17. Ibid., August 29, 1922, editorial page, 17 inches.

editorials. Directionally they were about 50-50 between anti-labor and balanced. All of them dealt with the category Effect of Strikes on Public Welfare.

C. National Labor News

This was the peak period of national labor coverage for the Herald in all time periods examined. Coal and rail strikes filled the headlines daily.

On a fairly typical day, September 3, 1922, the front page of the Herald carried eight national labor stories and a small box on local labor day plans. Another local story concerned a church group getting together to pray for the end of the strike.

The headlines and stories on labor news, September 3, practically filled the front page. The headlines looked like this:

SHOPMEN'S STRIKE IN ITS LAST STAGES  
 OPERATORS GIVE IN TO PLEA PRESIDENT MAKES  
 DAY'S OUTRAGES ON RAILROADS SHOW DECREASE  
 GROSBECK HITS US BOARD FOR RR CRISIS  
 GRABLE SUFFERS BREAKDOWN DUE TO STRIKE STRAIN  
 AFL RENEWS VOW OF SUPPORT GIVEN SHOPMEN  
 RAILROAD OFFICIAL COMMITTING SUICIDE

Summary

A total of 98 items and 1,315 column inches eclipsed all other periods in national news coverage.

Strike news took up 87 per cent of all national stories. Strike categories that were most frequent were: Status-of-Strike; Attempts to Settle on the Issues; Effect on Public Welfare. Union activities and Specific Legislation, under Government Policies, were largest non-strike categories.

#### D. State Labor News

Most of the state stories told of the effect of the national strikes on Michigan industries. Plants were forced to shut down for lack of fuel or materials.

#### Summary

State labor news consisted of 20 items of 216 column inches, which represented 11 per cent of all labor news. Over half the stories dealt with strikes and over half made page one. Effect on Public Welfare was by far the largest category.

#### General Summary of Herald Coverage in 1922

Out of a total of 1,843 column inches devoted to labor news, 72 per cent went to national coverage, 11 per cent to state, 10 per cent to local events, and seven per cent was given to editorial comment.

A lack of local strife marked this period and as a consequence what little labor news there was centered on labor day celebrations. Nationally, labor coverage reached its peak in the Herald for all periods and for both papers.

Coal and rail strikes accounted for most of the upsurge in space of national origin.

A Comparison of the Press and Herald in 1921-22

The following bar charts and comments compare the two papers.

CHART I PROPORTION OF ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIALS BY MAJOR SUBDIVISIONS IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921-22, IN COLUMN INCHES

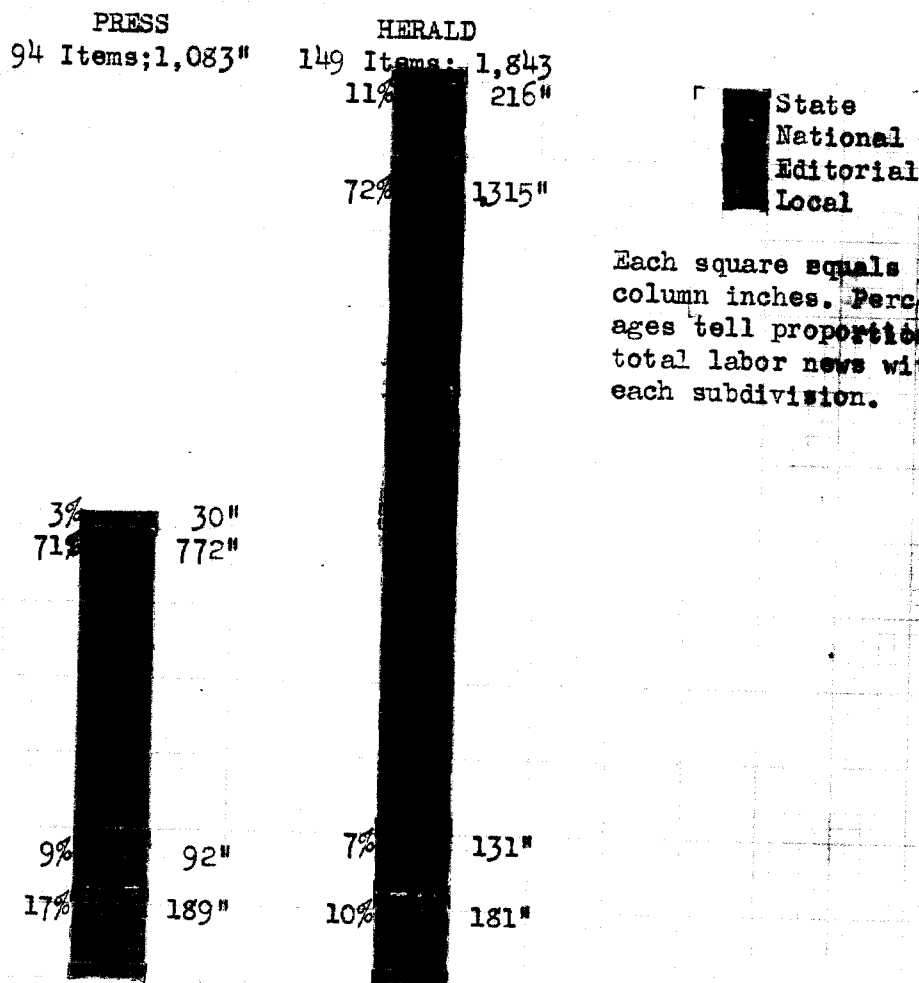


Chart I shows that the Herald outstripped the press in total labor news by almost 50 per cent. It shows that the Press had very slightly more local coverage than the Herald. The latter had about twice as much national news, a little more editorial content, and seven times more state news.

CHART II PROPORTION OF STRIKE TO NON-STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921-22, IN COLUMN INCHES

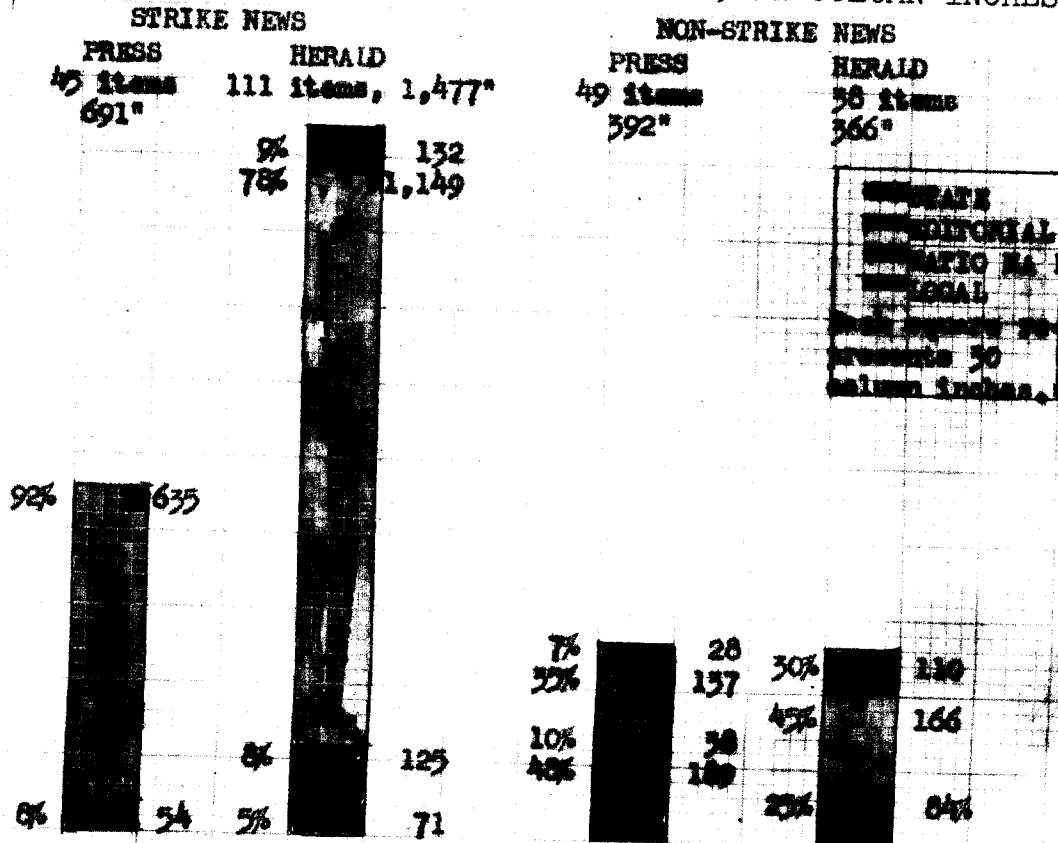


Chart II shows that the Press strike news was limited to national events and local editorial content. It shows the Herald strike news heavily concentrated in national stories, and with twice as much editorial content related to strikes as the Press.

In non-strike news, the Press had twice as much local news as the Herald, and a small amount of editorial comment, while the Herald had none. In national and state news the Herald led the Press.

CHART III PROPORTION OF PAGE ONE STORIES TO INSIDE LABOR NEWS IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921-22, IN COLUMN INCHES.

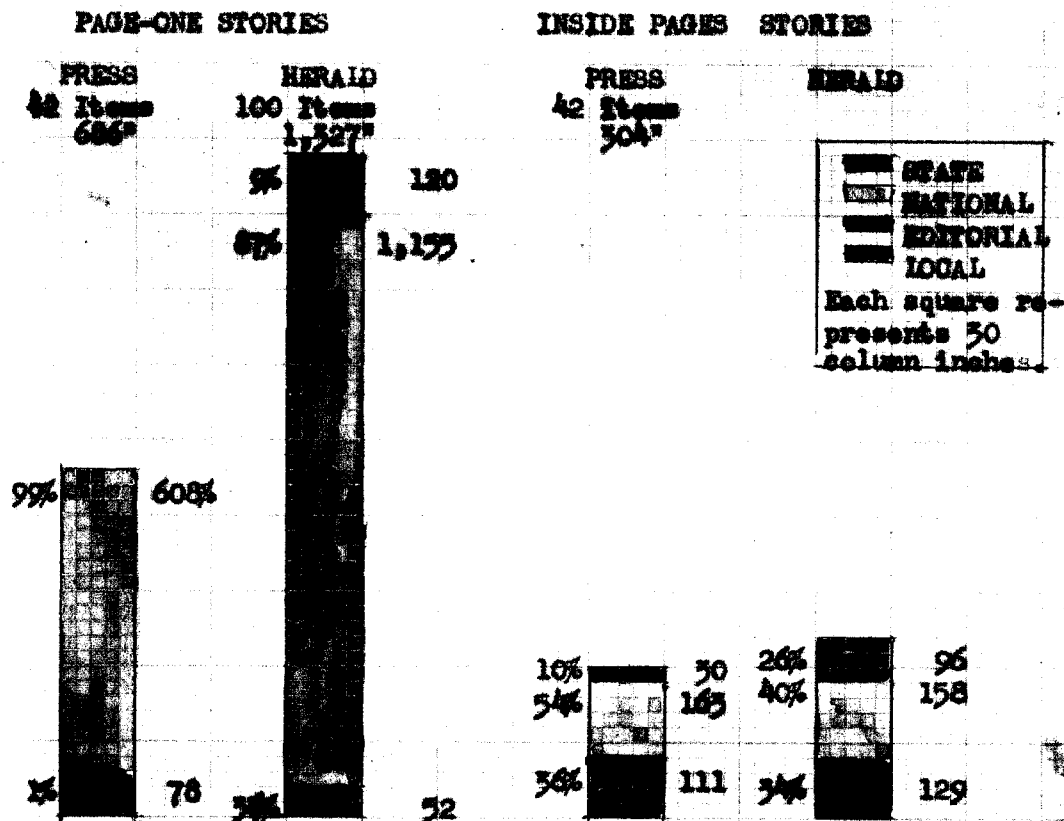


Chart III shows that 99 per cent of page one stories in the Press were national in origin, with one per cent local. The Herald front page news, while predominantly national, also included some state and local news.

Inside pages were about evenly split between the two papers in the amounts of space given to local, national, and state news, with national news predominating.

CHART IV DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIALS  
IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER,  
1921-22, IN COLUMN INCHES.

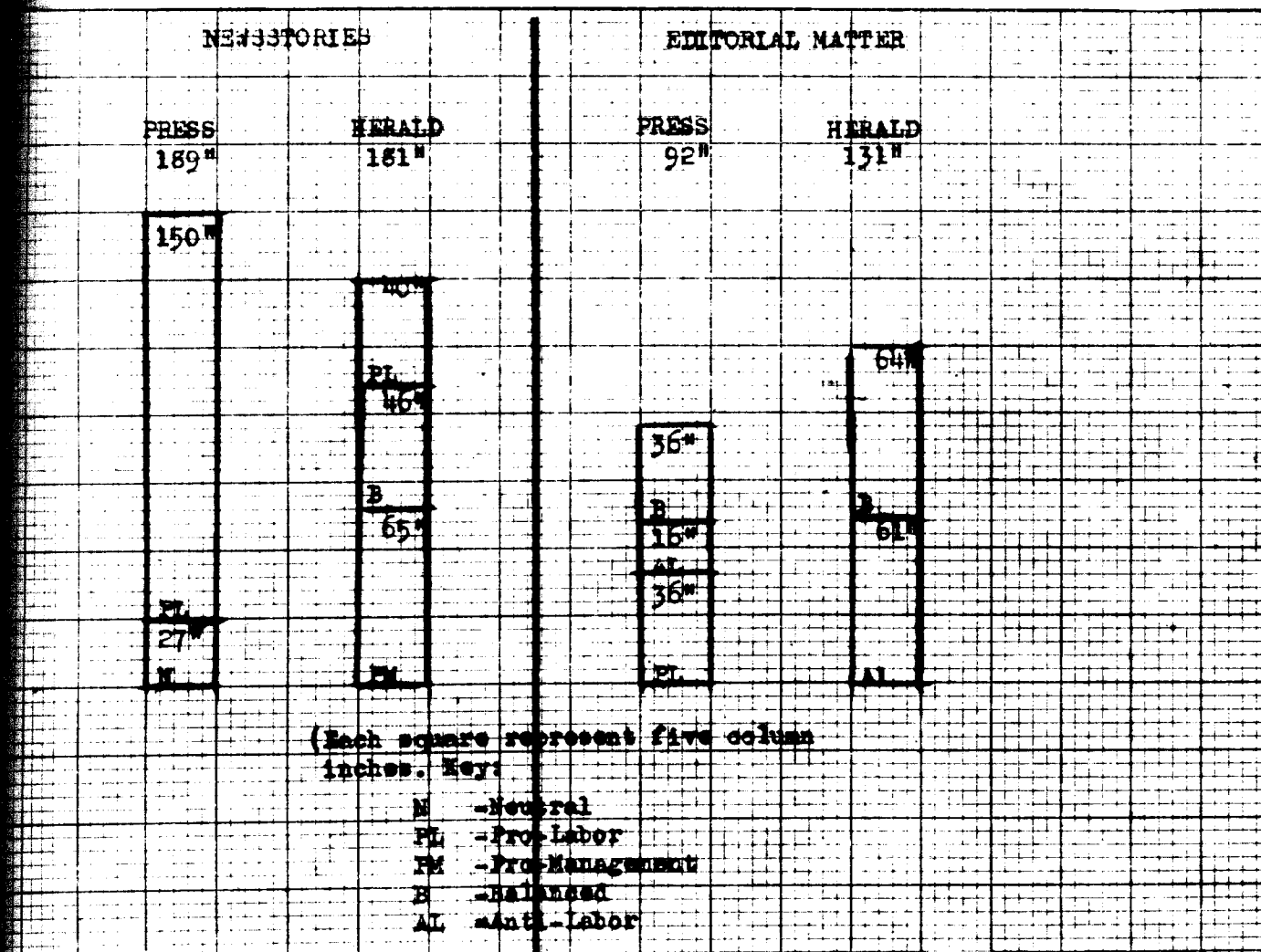
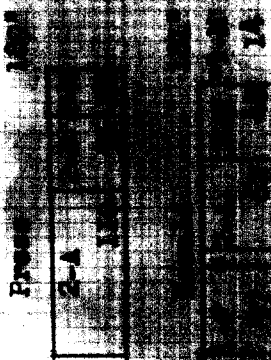


Chart IV shows that local stories in the Press were predominantly pro-labor; in the Herald, pro-management. It shows that in editorial content the Press was about evenly split between balanced and pro-labor. The Herald, on the other hand, was about evenly divided between anti-labor and balanced.

CHART V MAJOR CATEGORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT, AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1921-22, BY COLUMN INCHES.

Chart V shows that there were no major categories in local strike news in the Press, while the Herald comment was primarily in Effect of Strikes on Public Welfare. Both papers concentrated local stories in non-strike categories on Community-Wide Activities. The Press had more in Union Activities, the Herald in Miscellaneous-Welfarism. In national news the Press showed Physical Conduct-Coercive tactics as the largest strike category, while the Herald was divided between five categories, the largest being Status-of-Strike stories. Largest category in editorial content for the Press was in the non-strike group, of Economic Conditions. The Herald concentrated its editorials in the strike group of categories on Effect on Public Welfare.



Press 180"

2-A	100
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1A

Press

772"

1-B	441	1-B	70	1-D	72	1-M	52	2-E	70	2-M	67
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NATIONAL

Herald

1-B	143	1-0
-----	-----	-----

1-D	216
-----	-----

1-E	156
-----	-----

1-F	426
-----	-----

2-M	205
-----	-----

2-M	166
-----	-----

1,315"

Press 28"

2-M	28
-----	----

STATE

Herald

1-F	103	1-M	79	2-M	84
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266"

Press 92"

1-M	54	2-M	38
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EDITORIAL

Herald

131"

1-F	95	1-M	30
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\*2-M, 6"

**Key:**

**STRIKE CATEGORIES**

- 1-A Physical Conduct, Peaceful
- 1-B Physical Conduct, Coercive
- 1-C Attempts to Settle on Issue
- 1-D Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention
- 1-E Status of Strike
- 1-F Effect on Public Welfare

**NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES**

- 2-A Disaster, Sabotage, Welfarism
  - 2-B Union Activities
  - 2-C Joint Union-Management
  - 2-D Community or Nation-wide Union Activities
  - 2-E Economic Conditions
  - 2-F Pol. & Gov't Programs & Policies
  - 2-G Specific Legislation
  - 2-H General Government Policies
- (Each square represents 10 column inches).

Summary of Highlights of Herald and Press Reporting of the 1920's.

This was the only period examined during which there was little or no local strife in labor ranks in Grand Rapids. As a consequence local news was relatively light.

At the same time, national coverage in the Herald hit an all time peak.

Editorial comment was relatively light in both papers but nearly all of it consisted of locally written editorials.

State news was fairly heavy in the Herald, almost non-existent in the Press.

The quality of the Press reporting was reflected in the detailed coverage given the convention of the Michigan Federation of Labor. A running description of the convention kept Press readers informed of day-by-day developments and detailed stories were carried on what leading speakers said, and what political straws were blowing on the election of new officers. In its editorial columns the Press wrote stingingly of the Mingo County West Virginia uprising and laid blame for the civil war that broke out on the coal fields, to a corrupt county government.

But the travesty of martial law put into effect by mine company private detectives, company machine guns, company armored cars, and company rifles, is a disgrace....

The Herald local news and editorial columns both reflected a major concern over national rail and coal strikes. A round-up story of the opinions of leading citizens on whether or not the coal miners should be given the wage increase they demanded, showed an earnest, if one-sided, (due to the exclusion of labor spokesmen) attempt to find out and publish what people were thinking about the crisis. Editorially the Herald continued to reflect the point of view of management and to castigate labor unions for their coercive tactics.

## CHAPTER III - 1937

### (Second City-Wide Furniture Strike)

#### Background of the Period

The following double column headline and lead sentence from page one of the Grand Rapids Herald on Labor Day described the turbulence of organized labor in 1937.

LABOR TAKES AUDIT TODAY ON YEAR OF STRIKES  
AFL AND CIO CLAIM GAINS BUT PATH MARKED BY  
RIVALRY, RIOTS AND DEATH.

Washington A.P. -- Strikes, riots and martial law marked the year. More than a dozen workers lost their lives on industrial battlegrounds. The sitdown strike was used with paralyzing results. Internal rivalries split labor's house into warring groups....

Back of the labor strife was a new emancipation for trade unions derived from the New Deal.

In the New Deal program special favors were afforded to organized labor. The National Industrial Recovery Act made provisions for collective bargaining between employers and employes, but the Supreme Court in 1935 declared unconstitutional nearly all of that act. Then Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act, making collective bargaining generally mandatory on employers and employes. Industrial and other workers were authorized to form or join unions of their own choosing and to elect representatives empowered to bargain for them in matters of hours, wages, and working conditions. To enforce the act the National Labor Relations Board was created. By other legislation Congress tightened the hold of

organized labor on the processes of industrial bargaining.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of the change in relationship between industry and labor, brought about in the decade of the 30's was affirmed by Professor Perlman.<sup>2</sup>

....But what happened in this country? You know perfectly well that unionism in this country was not allowed to exist in the heavy industries. By 1901 there was a new anti-union pattern that came to be the model for the American employer -- a pattern that was developed by the United States Steel Corporation. The board of directors of that corporation took what amounted almost to an oath to extirpate unionism, and persisted in that oath for something like thirty-seven years. It was not until 1937 that the United States Steel Corporation -- to everyone's great amazement and surprise -- signed up with the steel workers, who at that time had become well organized.

But for a period of thirty-five years, beginning with the earliest years of the present century, American heavy industry set out to shape its industrial relations without the participation of unionism. Then came the collapse of 1930, and then the New Deal. The government was thrown into the picture as an important factor in industrial relations.

When in 1937 the courts validated the Wagner Act we had, at last, industrial government in the great majority of our industries. Management was brought under a legal obligation to deal with unions.

.... But it was the atmosphere of a shotgun wedding and shotgun weddings hold little prospect of real connubial bliss. The bridegroom is never satisfied. He feels he has been roped in and is forever dreaming of an opportunity to regain the freedom of his bachelorhood.

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1. Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, The Beard's Basic History of the United States, pp. 458.
  2. Selig Perlman, Labor in the New Deal Decade, Three Lectures Given at the I.L.G.W.U. Officers Institute New York City, 1943-1945.

In Grand Rapids, the labor movement reflected the new insurgency. Close to Detroit, birthplace in many respects of the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO), Grand Rapids heavy industrial auto-parts plants were on the threshold of genuine collective bargaining. For the United Auto Workers was beginning to organize and expand, from Detroit out to the second industrial city of Michigan.

The furniture workers of Grand Rapids looked upon the CIO as a potential answer to an old prayer and petitioned for a separate charter in it. A UAW organizer, Harry Spencer came to the city from Detroit, and helped the furniture workers map a campaign of strategy. A general strike was threatened, called, and lost within two months time.

The two newspapers, the Press and the Herald, took the strike in stride and gave it more parallel treatment than they appeared to in 1911. However, the positions of the two papers space-wise at least, was different. The Herald gave slightly more space to all labor news and considerably more to local labor news. Its editorials remained consistent, however, and deplored the disturbing effect of imported CIO radicalism. The Press editorially took the attitude that the strike offered a "meeting of the minds," between employers and employes, that was "healthy," and commended the furniture workers for a lack of violence that characterized the strike.

How the Herald Covered Labor News in September 1937 --  
September 1-30.

The Herald coverage of the opening of the 1937 furniture strike, put it in the place of the Press in 1911. It was examined for a period of several weeks prior to the strike and on the days immediately following.

Its total coverage, locally, was greater than that of the Press. Editorially too, it carried more than the other paper.

A. Local News

The great majority of local labor news, 90 per cent, dealt with the furniture strike.

The quality of Herald reporting at this time appeared to be one of presenting straight, factual information, with little interpretation, just the bare bones of the story. None-the-less 10 items were coded as pro-labor, 14 as neutral, four as balanced, five as pro-management, and two as anti-labor.

Why, if the reporting were of the "bare bones" variety, should there be such a wide divergence in the coding? A few examples of the kinds of stories classified under each direction help answer the question.

Neutral strike stories were pretty much of a wrap-up variety that noted "no appreciable change" in the status of the furniture workers. Neutral non-strike stories described Labor Day, a pay hike for local school teachers, several religious sermons on labor matters, and a state safety conference.

Balanced stories related to the strike were not as simple as the wrap-up type to code. Frequently, a story in which sharp clashes and violent arguments broke out, was coded balanced. The matter according to criteria set up (see Introduction) is settled by whether or not equivalent amounts of space and the same play, back and forth, are given each side.

An example of such balanced reporting is cited below. In it a fight broke out over the use of police protection for non-striking workers. Arguments flew back and forth at city hall and the Herald reporter covered them in a way that appeared to be accurate and objective. The reader gets a picture of a group of commissioners in heated dispute over a "hot potato" that's been handed them, which they are not sure how to handle:

Police protection for men who want to return to work at the plant of the Luce Furniture (plant)... Monday morning was doubly assured by the city commission Saturday when it gave its backing to the city manager and superintendent of police in taking any measures necessary to preserve order.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Grand Rapids Herald, September 19, 1937, pp. 1, 32 inches.

The action was taken after Martin J. Dregge, president of the Luce company against which a strike was called Friday morning, had sent a letter to all employes asking them to return to work with "the assurance of the Grand Rapids police department that you will have protection in exercising your right to work"....

Meanwhile a mass meeting of union members and sympathizers has been called for Sunday afternoon and a union ultimatum was sent to at least one other furniture manufacturer demanding action by Monday as the alternative to a second walkout in what the union threatened might become a general strike.

More than an hour of hectic debate in which CIO representatives attacked a resolution for a statement of policy proposed by Commissioner Harry C. Leonard, preceded adoption of a motion at a special city commission meeting Monday noon which put the city commission on record as backing up city manager C. Sophus Johnson and Superintendent of Police Frank O'Malley "in taking whatever measures are necessary to preserve peace and order at all times!..."

Declaring that both charter and state law provides for suppression of violence, Commissioner Hart declared in opposition to Commissioner Leonard's original draft, that it was unnecessary to adopt a resolution.

"We could avoid misunderstanding by a statement of policy," Leonard retorted. "The police didn't know which foot to stand on last time."

Superintendent of Police O'Malley said a number of men wanted to return to work at the Luce plant Monday and he had told them they had the right to return to work.

"We want to know what we are to do in such a case," City Manager Johnson said. "If we will be backed by the city commission if we enforce the law."

"It doesn't seem to me that Mr. Johnson, the city's chief administration officer needs to come to the city commission every time he thinks a crisis has arisen in Grand Rapids," Hart replied.

Attorney Robert Tubs, who attended the meeting in company with Harry Spencer, CIO organizer said: "If you are going to enumerate what law you will enforce I hope you will enforce the law prohibiting manufacturers from bringing labor in here from outside the state and not just rule on pickets...."

The rest of the story was devoted to the fact that a mass meeting of all CIO members had been called for Sunday and Spencer was quoted as saying:

"We don't want to strike but we must have closed shop contracts."

The last paragraph read:

Pickets are getting sandwiches and coffee while in the line from the kitchens in CIO headquarters and at the end of each eight hour shift are given a meal at headquarters if they prefer that to going home.

Of the 10 stories that were coded pro-labor, three examples were selected. The first of these is printed in full in the accompanying photostat. From the page long headline "General Furniture Strike Looms in City," to its conclusion, the story is Labor's. It describes why the strike is threatened, what the demands of the furniture workers are, their plan of strategy, a speech by the CIO director for Michigan, the fact that the president of the Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers association "declined to comment." Toward the end, "City's Third Chapter," a paragraph of interpretation is added, but most of the story is a factual account of the situation from labor's point of view.

# GENERAL FURNITURE

# STRIKE LOOMS IN

# CITY

## CLOSED SHOP, PAY RISE ARE CHIEF DEMANDS

G. R. Herald — Sept. 17 '37

Workers Prepared for Walk-  
Out Against Every Firm  
Refusing to Sign

### MANUFACTURERS DECLINE IMMEDIATE STATEMENT

Grand Rapids' furniture industry faces a general strike "not later than next week" and perhaps by the end of this week.

Furniture workers local of the United Automobile Workers of America is prepared to strike against every manufacturer who refuses to sign a closed shop contract providing the check-off, an immediate wage increase of 15 cents an hour, and, after 30 days, joint negotiations to establish uniform wages and hours throughout the industry in this city.

Shop elections, delegating authority to call strikes to shop committees, have been completed, it was announced by Harry Spencer, chief UAWA organizer here, who said Thursday night at a meeting of more than 800 furniture workers, that every shop is prepared to strike.

#### Stage All Set

A board of strategy has been named, he said, and picket captains and pickets drilled.

Standard wages and hours, on a city-wide basis, will be negotiated, if the original contracts are signed, by a committee representing the furniture manufacturers of the city and a committee representing the union, Spencer said.

"The contracts will be presented not later than next week—perhaps this week," Spencer said Thursday night. "They will be presented to manufacturers in rotation. The manufacturers will have a chance to sign. But if a manufacturer doesn't sign his factory will be closed."

#### Pledges CIO Support

The 800 furniture workers at the CIO hall Thursday night heard Adolph Germer, CIO director for Michigan, in an address in which he pledged the support of the CIO and its member organizations to the furniture workers.

Germer, in his hour-long address, contrasted the earnings of major industries and the incomes of great industrial families with the wages of employees, sketched the history of the labor movement, and urged united, organized action.

At the mass meeting, the workers voted their approval of strike plans and accepted the report of the wage and hour committee, tentatively setting a minimum of 50 cents an hour, with 70 cents an hour minimum for skilled labor.

At the same meeting, the strike committee of the International Ladies Garment Workers from Globe Knitting Works was introduced on the platform and the possibility of a strike Tuesday morning announced.

#### To Expand Later On

Spencer, commenting upon the proposed furniture strike, said that when the Grand Rapids industry is operating under closed shop contracts the union will seek to organize the industry in other centers.

Joseph G. Griswold, president of the Grand Rapids Furniture Manufacturers association, declined to comment Thursday night upon what the attitude of manufacturers would be.

A general strike, however, has not been unexpected. It has been talked for some time, and especially since the factory groups began taking strike votes, all based upon

a proposed standard agreement with the manufacturers.

#### City's Third Chapter

A general strike will write a third chapter in furniture strike history here. For a quarter of a century, following the only general strike in the industry here, a strike that was unsuccessful for labor, the labor situation was quiet. Then, last spring, at the end of the May market, the UAWA called a strike against the Robert W. Irwin company, the Macey company and the Irwin Seating company. It was ended after five weeks of idleness for 1,000 employes when a municipal mediation committee, assisted by a federal labor conciliator, brought the Irwin management and the union together with an agreement providing a shop committee and negotiation of wage adjustments.

Application has been made for a CIO charter for a United Furniture Workers of America, but this has not yet been approved by John L. Lewis, head of the CIO.

It was hinted that while Lewis agreed the membership was sufficient to warrant a charter he considered it to be concentrated in too small an area. It is largely in Michigan, with some members in Rockford, Ill. Other furniture manufacturing centers are virtually unorganized.

Some observers of the situation look upon the general strike threat here as the first step toward expansion to all furniture centers.

A different type of story in which management is quoted directly after the lead, but in which labor supercedes management space-wise in the body of the story, follows:<sup>4</sup>

#### STRIKE THREAT LESS OMINOUS AT WEEKEND

Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers and their CIO affiliated employees Friday night looked beyond a peaceful week-end to the threat of further strikes Monday in a chain started Friday morning with a walkout at the Furniture Shops of America Inc. formerly known as Luce Furniture company.

The UAW with which unionized furniture workers of Grand Rapids are affiliated held out the threat of strikes against other companies unless they immediately sign closed shop agreements that include the checkoff and a promise of negotiations in 30 days of standard city-wide wage and hour agreements.

At the same time Martin J. Dregge, president and general manager of the Furniture Shops announced that the plant will be running as usual Monday morning.

"Our old employes can come back to work at the regular time at their regular jobs," he said. "There is no grievance involved. We simply would not sign the closed shop contract with the checkoff and the immediate 15 cents an hour wage increase demanded."

Dregge said that although the company is employing about 350 persons, only 150 went out. He estimated that of these "less than 100 were union members." He said that what appeared a hurried strike action was probably in retaliation against a shop union which he said was started by "two or three employes who are as rabidly opposed to the CIO as two or three others are in favor of it." He declared he had no connection with it.

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4. Ibid., September 18, 1937, p. 1, 18 inches (no jump)

Harry Spencer, chief UAWA organizer here, however, called it a company union and said the strike was called to forestall "intimidation of employes to force them to join the company union."

Pickets surrounded the plant Friday afternoon and Friday night. Coffee and sandwiches were taken to them from the kitchens in CIO headquarters where Mrs. Harry Spencer began organization of the commissary and cooking crews, as was done during the Irwin strike last May and June. This time it was said, plans are being made to feed six or seven times as many pickets as were fed then.

No further strikes in any event will be called before Monday, Spencer said Friday night. Under the five day week, almost all employes are idle Saturday and Sunday. Spencer said that strikes, however, may be unnecessary.

"I think the employers feel that we mean business and that they will sign the contracts," he said. "We have a majority of the furniture plants organized and the men in all the organized shops have voted by secret ballot, to strike if the employers refuse to sign."

Spencer said a contract was presented Friday to officials of the W. B. Jarvis company and that he understood D. H. Osborn, secretary-treasurer in the absence of L. A. Jarvis had refused to negotiate. Osborn refused to comment. He told the Herald he was not authorized to speak for the company.

Jarvis employees voted Monday night to strike if a contract was refused, Spencer said. He said the vote was 134 for the strike to 72 against it. The union claims 730 members in the plants where about 860 are now working.

A report given Friday that a strike against the Grand Rapids Malleable Iron company had been tentatively decided upon was denied at union headquarters. There had been no strike vote it was said and negotiations were reported progressing satisfactorily.

Union members employed by Globe Knitting Works have taken a strike vote, announced Thursday night at a mass meeting for more than 800 furniture workers.

In the above story the CIO organizer in charge of the furniture strike is quoted: "I think the employers feel that we mean business and that they will sign the contracts.... We have a majority of the furniture plants organized and the men in all the organized shops have voted... to strike." This expresses labor's point of view in no uncertain terms.

A final example of pro-labor treatment concerned the strikers' reactions to the use of police to escort non-strikers through the picket lines. The story cites the labor organizer in charge, almost exclusively. His statements were calculated to gain public support.

CIO TO DOUBLE PICKET LINES, PROTEST TO GOVERNOR  
OVER ACTION OF CITY IN LUCE DISPUTE<sup>5</sup>

Chain picketing of Luce Furniture company plant by CIO members and sympathizers Monday morning in an effort to block the return of non-union workmen was announced at a mass meeting attended by more than 600 persons Sunday afternoon in CIO headquarters, 214 Ottawa ave., N.W.

At the same meeting a resolution was adopted protesting the city commissioner's action in approving police reinforcements, and plans for other strikes Monday and Tuesday were outlined.

Assurance has been given the police will provide protection for Luce employes desiring to return to the plant against which the union called a strike Friday morning. Against this move the union plans a double line of pickets to surround the plant.

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5. Ibid., September 20, 1937, p. 1, 28 inches.

"We are not looking for violence," said Harry Spencer, chief organizer here for the UAWA CIO of which striking furniture workers are members. "Strikes are not won by violence, and there is never violence when officers uphold the law. There are plenty of law enforcement officers in Michigan, and if there are not enough in Grand Rapids, it is the duty of city officials to ask the governor to send in the militia.

"The governor has said he will put the militia in the picket line, and the militia was used in the picket line in Detroit. Walter P. Chrysler himself had to have a pass to get into his own plant. That's all I'm asking in Grand Rapids. Bayonets are very effective in a picket line...."

Pro-management stories were more subtle and hence more difficult to code. They frequently implied a point of view without specifically pinning it down. An outstanding example of this is the attached photostated story, "City Commended by CLA for Action in Labor Dispute."

This is worth some study. The story quotes an organization called The Christian Labor association, which by its very title, implies prestige and respectability. It is doubtful if the average reader, outside of labor circles knew much about it. The Herald printed the statement of the CLA commending the use of local police to escort non-striker to work, verbatim. It made no attempt to present the other side of the picture. It offered no interpretation. By implication, the citizens of Grand Rapids were pictured as wholeheartedly endorsing the action of the police force. One sentence particularly expressed this:

We believe that all fair-minded citizens of Grand Rapids consider your action to be in the interest of the justice and fairplay which law abiding citizens do expect from those in authority....

## CITY COMMENDED BY CLA FOR ACTION IN LABOR DISPUTE

*G. R. Herald, Sept. 22, 1937*  
Vote of Appreciation Is Filed  
With Commission on  
Orderliness

The Christian Labor association, with which many Christian Reformed workers are affiliated, through the secretary of its executive committee, Tuesday filed with the city commission a commendation of the municipality's stand in providing police protection for non-strikers who desire to continue at work.

The communication reads as follows:

"The executive committee of the Christian Labor association in its meeting of this date (Sept. 20) having taken cognizance of the criticisms leveled against the city commission for its action in promising police protection for those workers who refuse to be intimidated by the CIO, and who are willing to work notwithstanding the call to strike by an organization to which they do not belong, commends the action of the police force at Luce's whereby it became possible for our members and others to exercise their right to work.

### Interest of Fair Play

"We believe that all fair-minded citizens of Grand Rapids consider your action to be in the interest of the justice and fair play which law-abiding citizens do expect from those in authority."

An assertion that the Christian Reformed church does not forbid its members to join labor unions was made before the Concordia club at its luncheon meeting Tuesday by Herman Wierenga, of Wyoming township.

Wierenga took issue with an editorial appearing in The Herald Tuesday which stated that a closed CIO shop in local furniture factories would work an injustice to Christian Reformed workers who are forbidden by their church from joining such unions.

### Motion Is Tabled

"I am in a position to know that this is not the case," Wierenga said, "for I was a representative of the Wyoming Park Christian Reformed church at the meeting of classis Grand Rapids west, held in Kalamazoo last May when an attempt was made to put through such a resolution. The matter was tabled."

Wierenga admitted that years ago the church may have had strict regulations concerning labor union membership, but he said that no longer does a Christian Reformed church ask an applicant seeking membership whether he has such affiliations.

## GLOBE CO. PACT IS ACCEPTED BY EMPLOYEE UNIT

*G. R. Herald, Sept. 21, 1937*  
3-Cent Hourly Increase Is Indorsed; Meeting Flays  
CIO as Un-American

### WORKERS TOLD TO IGNORE ANTICIPATED PICKETING

Employees union of the Globe Knitting Works accepted an agreement with the company Monday night at Moose hall, after more than 800 persons who attended the meeting heard speakers attack the CIO as "un-American."

There was a closed "strategy" meeting of male members of the union after the regular session had adjourned, apparently to plan what course was to be pursued if the Globe plant is picketed Tuesday morning by CIO members.

"There will be a picket line walking in front of the doors," Earl Brown, union trustee, told the union members, a majority of whom are women. "Just walk up to that line. The police will see to it that you are allowed to enter the plant. They know it would be a serious offense to lay a finger on you. And you are not, under any circumstances, to strike a picket."

Brown added that "after Wednesday, there will be a scarcity of pickets."

### Get 3-Cent Increase

The agreement, signed by Grover C. Good, president of the Globe Knitting Works, provided a raise of 3 cents per hour to all employees, and the equivalent for piece-work, established a 35-cent minimum for women employees, but did not set a minimum for men, which had been asked. It provided, among other things, for a work-spread plan in time of curtailed operations, for seniority rights, and set a 40-hour week and 8-hour day, with provisions for two eight-week schedules of 45 hours when peak production demands them. There were also provisions for overtime pay, and for grievance and arbitration committees.

The agreement was dated to begin Sept. 20 and continue until next Sept. 18, and to be renewed annually.

Brown, who said that a recent "strike" meeting at CIO hall was attended by only 28 workers from the Globe, of whom five were not CIO members, criticised Garment Workers union organizers, whom he declared "never had anything but a soap box before the CIO. I don't need to say what they are doing to the Wagner act. They are a detriment to organized labor."

### To Go Sled-Length

"This union," he declared, insists on doing things the American way. We'll fight until we drop before letting anyone call us 'yellow-bellies' and get away with it."

John Nichols, listed on the program as "a friend to labor," also criticised the CIO as un-American. Nichols introduced himself as a man who is interested in pension plans and who has set his goal to build pension plans to retire 1,000,000 persons in 10 years.

"This is an employees' union," he declared, "and there is a difference between an employees' union and a company union. The CIO won't recognize it because they don't get the \$2 a month dues from members."

The union, he said, showed American spirit in not letting 23 people tell 1,200 that they can't go to work. Nearly everyone in the crowded hall responded by raising hands when asked if they were going back to work Tuesday morning.

Richard Moore is president of the union; Peter Meeuwzen is vice president; Florence Mosher is secretary, and George Van Woerkom is treasurer.

A second story, coded as pro-management, concerned the winning of an election by an employees' independent union, at the Globe Knitting Works. The attached photostat of this shows a headline "Globe Co. Pact Is Accepted by Employee Unit." The lead sentence contained this phrase... "after more than 800 persons who attended the meeting heard speakers attack the CIO as 'un-American.'"

The body of the story described the terms of the agreement signed by the company president, and then went on to quote different speakers who attacked the CIO. But the implication of the story was that management was reasonable and fair and the Independent union recognized this and CIO charges of company domination were unfounded.

#### Summary

The Herald spent about half of all its labor content on local news. There were 618 column inches out of 1,288, devoted to the local scene. Nearly all of this related to the furniture strike.

The direction of local stories were predominantly, neutral, pro-labor, and balanced, in that order. The chief strike categories included, Status-of-Strike, Physical Conduct--Coercive Tactics, and Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention.

Editorial Content

During the 1937 period, the Herald remained consistent in its policy of decrying recklessness and violence in unions, but at this period the newly organized CIO had emerged and the Herald editorial guns pointed at them rather than the AFL.

A letter to the editor signed by one Robert Wilson on September 16, took the Herald to task for its editorials and expressed a working man's point of view about them.

I cannot understand how anyone who is an editorial writer can be so unfair to the workers. It must be that your editorial writer is always worshipping the golden calf that he cannot see that the horse and buggy days are over, that the working class will get more and more of the wealth they create and that the parasite class will get less and less. (Letter goes on to refute truth of a "Million Dollars Lost to Striking Workers" editorial).

When the orders are filled the factory closes down strike or no strike.

What sort of editorials brought forth a letter of this type? One describing a UAW convention in which the drive to organize the Ford plants was mapped, may have angered quite a few workingmen in Grand Rapids. These sentences especially were certainly not calculated to warm the heart of UAW men, and it was the UAW that was directing the furniture strike.

....The convention adjourned with something like a dove of peace flying over the hall.... But was that a dove of peace or a vulture which was flapping its wings around Milwaukee last week?....

The editorial follows in full:

### PEACE AT A PRICE<sup>6</sup>

The UAW held a convention last week. It started in turmoil over control of the new CIO affiliate. It ended in a queer sort of peace when John L. Lewis, supreme monarch of the CIO, roused the warring delegates to enthusiasm by announcing the CIO proposed to carry the fight to Henry Ford to force him to accept their union and its principles.

Lewis added more enthusiasm to the convention by announcing that all members of the UAW would be assessed an additional dollar to raise a war chest of \$400,000 to carry on the Ford conflict. Of course the convention delegates promptly voted the assessment by which the furniture workers of Grand Rapids and members of UAW elsewhere...will be called upon to pay to carry on a fight in which they are not the least interested.

The convention adjourned with something like a dove of peace flying over the hall.... But was that a dove of peace or a vulture which was flapping its wings around Milwaukee last week?...that threatened to destroy one of the world's greatest industries...to assess Grand Rapids furniture workers among others that this wrecking job may be given impetus?...Many of them like the furniture workers of Grand Rapids have lost wages for weeks in order to gain exactly nothing through UAW. Many of them are worse off as to wages than before Mr. Lewis and his agitators called them from their benches. It is hardly likely they will accept with pleasure the assessment. Lewis -- he brought them peace at a price.

Another editorial described the CIO and contrasted Lewis with Samuel Gompers. What the Herald believed about the CIO was apparent from sentences like this:

The CIO unfortunately seems in the hands of radicals not a few of whom are known and identified in Communist circles and activities. It aims to take by force. It uses force and violence.

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6. Ibid., September 2, 1937, editorial page, 11 inches.

The editorial is reprinted below:

### LABOR ON TRIAL<sup>7</sup>

Labor today is split in twain. The great AFL of which Samuel Gompers for so many years was the guiding genius...is today facing a battle for its very existence.... A new labor organization the CIO is seeking to take not only the prestige but the membership and so the...life of the AFL.

Lewis is no Samuel Gompers. The CIO unfortunately seems in the hands of radicals not a few of whom are known and identified in Communist circles and activities. It aims to take by force. It uses force and violence.

(The editorial goes on to describe sit-down strikes in Michigan costing millions of dollars) with no substantial return either in wages or betterment of conditions. It lost its little furniture strike in Grand Rapids after costing its members considerable loss in wages and without gaining a penny in pay or improvement in other conditions. That has been the record of the CIO everywhere....

Meanwhile the AFL is fighting the battle for the conservative and sensible working man. The battle is proving difficult because of the aid which the CIO received from the President of the U.S. and the government....

A third editorial placed the Herald on record as endorsing the AFL in no uncertain terms. It urged support of conservative leadership to avoid "disaster to the whole labor movement."

### GREEN ON THE SPOT<sup>8</sup>

....Gompers always won out and through his sanity and calmness and wisdom brought the AFL to the heights

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7. Ibid., September 6, 1937, p. 4, 14 inches.

8. Ibid., September 18, p. 6, 14 inches.

of its strength and prosperity, while at the same time preserving the respect of Industry. Green has followed the policies of Gompers. To change these policies and to seek to put the AFL on the same sort of footing as the CIO might easily lead to disaster to the whole Labor movement. The convention will do well to consider the history of its own organization before it replaces conservative Bill Green with some radical intended to match Lewis.

Perhaps the most significant editorial carried in the Herald at this period, possibly for all intervals examined, had to do with the ruling of the Christian Reformed church, regarding union membership.

The Herald defended the church ruling and stated that it "makes it thoroughly unjust and unrighteous for the CIO to demand a closed shop, particularly in our furniture factories."

The editorial from beginning to end was a pretty clear reflection of management's point of view, at least that management in charge of the furniture factories.

....The tenets of their faith forbid them to join a Labor Union.... Back in 1911 when the first furniture strike occurred here, many of the Dutch ministers warned their people that it was against the principles of their religious faith to join a Union. BECAUSE OF THIS, IN NO SMALL DEGREE, THAT STRIKE FAILED AND THE UNION THEN FORMED EVENTUALLY DIED OUT. (Caps are writer's)

There are several things wrong with this editorial. In the first place as the photostated story on page 98 indicated, a spokesman for the Christian Reformed church in 1937 denied that the 1911 ruling was any longer in effect. In the second place, did the Herald mean to imply that the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, AFL,

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1937

## *It's Unjust Here* R. Herald

Every community has its peculiarities. Grand Rapids has its and the particular peculiarity prevailing here makes it thoroughly unjust and unrighteous for CIO to demand a closed shop, particularly in our furniture factories.

Perhaps a majority of Grand Rapids' famed furniture workers are of Holland birth or Holland extraction. A great many of these men whose craftsmanship has been handed down to them through many generations are of the Christian Reformed faith. The tenets of their faith forbid them to join a Labor Union in just the same manner that it forbids them to join the Masons, the Elks or any other similar order. Back in 1911 when the first furniture strike occurred here, many of the Dutch ministers warned their people that it was against the principles of their religious faith to join a Union. Because of this, in no small degree, that strike failed and the Union then formed eventually died out.

A closed shop requires that no person may work in a plant unless he belongs to a Labor Union and under present conditions membership would be confined to CIO or its affiliate, UAW. Therefore, those Christian Reformed Hollanders who have provided us with the finest of craftsmanship to be found in the furniture industry anywhere would be debarred from working in a factory in which the closed shop had been accepted. It is largely for this reason that the manufacturers refuse to accept it. Many of the men who have been in their employ a great many years, who have been highly skilled and most faithful would be barred from further employment. That would be a rank injustice on the part of the manufacturers and an equally rank injustice on the part of the organization or the Government if they forced such a principle.

The Constitution of the United States guarantees freedom of worship to every man and woman under the Stars and Stripes. It guarantees that no prejudice shall attend any man because of his race, color or creed. To enforce a closed shop would violate every principle of those constitutional guarantees. It would deny work and opportunity to be self-supporting because of the religious belief of many of these workers.

All these men ask is that they be let alone to worship God in the manner which they believe is right, that they be permitted to work when there is opportunity. To deny them this right is unconstitutional and immoral. It will lead eventually to the wrecking of Unionism throughout Grand Rapids industry. The same conditions that obtain among the furniture workers likewise obtain among the workers of Grand Rapids generally.

"died out" shortly after the 1911 strike? And in the third place, was it the intent of the Herald to commend a religious institution for helping to break a strike?

It would seem to the author that the Herald's continuous objection to the use of "strong arm" tactics by unions, is mild by comparison with the use of dictatorial religious power, to control men's personal actions. There would seem to be far more democracy in an open and shut fight between two opponents whether equally or unequally matched, than in a situation where a man's destiny is taken out of his own hands and he is told by the church that his soul will go to hell if he continues to belong to a union.

#### National News

The amount of national news carried by the Herald in 1937 was less than in any period except 1911. Most of it did not relate directly to strikes.

Subject matter of news stories, for the most part, dealt with the New Deal, and the rising insurgency of the labor movement. Both AFL and CIO national conventions produced a number of lengthy items in which the labor peace was a major issue. President Roosevelt, blasted the "sins" of both labor and capital and urged that "the conference table replace strikes." Harry Hopkins was cited in a number of stories related to unemployment and relief. The Teamsters Union and the Longshoremen in California clashed and a state

of open warfare was declared on the west coast docks. On labor day both AFL and CIO were in the spotlight and each side claimed large gains in membership.

#### Summary

National news represented 28 per cent of all labor news in the Herald in September 1937. Over half of it was placed on page one. The majority of it fell into non-strike categories. Chief among these was Union Activities. The largest strike category was Physical Conduct--Coercive Tactics.

#### State Labor News

This was the period when the UAW-CIO was actively engaged in organizing the auto industry in Michigan and many stories dealt with the early attempts. Labor day received a good deal of coverage. Internal union politics within the UAW were seething and these made headlines.

#### Summary

State news was lowest of all types of labor content in the Herald in September, 1937 representing 10 per cent of the total. The largest category was Union Activities. Only a small portion of state news, about a fourth, dealt with strikes. None of it was on page one.

### General Summary of Herald Labor Coverage in September 1937

The Herald gave a total of 1,288 column inches to all labor content during this period. Local labor news was larger than any other type and represented 40 per cent of the total. National news took 28 per cent; editorial content, 14 per cent, and state news 10 per cent.

The Herald was examined at the period marking the beginning of the second city-wide furniture strike, which accounted for the large amount of local news.

Practically all local stories related to the furniture strike and the majority of them were placed on page one.

Editorials continued to take unions to task for coercive and irresponsible conduct and were aimed, in this period, directly at the CIO. They also continued to reflect a predominantly management point of view which was climaxed by the editorial on the ruling of the Christian Reformed church, forbidding union membership.

The chief direction of local stories was neutral, of editorials, anti-labor.

### How the Press Covered Labor News in October 1937

The Press was examined at the end of the second city-wide furniture strike which doubtless accounts for the fact that it carried less local news than the Herald.

The quality of Press reporting in this period shifted from the predominantly pro-labor direction it showed in 1911

and 1921 to balanced and neutral. There was less attempt to supply the reader with detailed information about the strikers. At the same time the Press appeared to make every effort to present the positions of both union and company leaders, equally.

There were few editorials concerned with labor topics. The longest one, titled "A Meeting of the Minds," praised both workers and employers at the end of the second furniture strike.

#### A. Local News

Nearly all local stories described some aspect of the furniture strike. Stories were coded most heavily in this order: neutral, balanced, pro-labor, pro-management, anti-labor. This was the first time any Press local stories had fallen into the latter group.

One story coded as neutral, which might in some respects be considered pro-labor is shown on the attached photostat with a banner headline, "C.I.O. Rejected as Bargainer by Jarvis Men."

From the lead sentence announcing the election results, to the number of ballots cast for and against the CIO, in paragraph two, to the last half of the story describing the fact that the UAW organizer planned to appeal the election, the story is handled as a brief, factual account of an event, with no interpretation, or background.

# C. I. O. Rejected as

## UNION LOSES BY 60 VOTES

G.R. Press — Oct. 8, 1937

NLRB Election Results in  
Ballot of 337 for and  
397 Against.

### SANDERS PLANS APPEAL

Representative of U.A.W.A.  
Charges Company Broke  
Stipulations.

Production workers at the W. B. Jarvis Co., manufacturers of automotive hardware, Thursday voted down the C. I. O. union, United Auto Workers of America, in an election conducted by the national labor relations board to determine whether this organization would be sole representative of the workers for collective bargaining.

Of the 741 votes cast, the union received 337, and 397 voted against it. There were 7 votes challenged and 11 blanks.

#### Sanders Plans Appeal.

Announcement was made Friday by Lebron Sanders, international U. A. W. A. representative, that he will appeal the result to the NLRB and request a new election.

Sanders charges the company invalidated the stipulation that all production workers on the pay roll as of Sept. 20 should be allowed to vote.

He charges he has affidavits from 71 men to the effect that they had been laid off—not dropped from the pay roll, as company officials contend—and that they were eligible to vote.

#### Violation is Charged.

Sanders also charges the company violated a stipulation that there would be no electioneering on Jarvis premises by calling workers into a conference room and telling them that "if the union wins you won't be allowed to work the number of hours you want to."

He alleges the company failed to keep its agreement to put back to work by Oct. 4 all men who were on the pay roll as of Sept. 20.

Sanders said he signed the certificate of election results under protest.

# Bargainer by Jarvis Men

## Spencer Will Leave; Union To Realign

G.R. Press — Oct. 9, 1937

Harry Spencer, chief local organizer for the United Auto Workers of America, announced Saturday he would leave Grand Rapids soon and will have no more connection with union organization in the furniture industry. He has been appointed head of a national organization to organize tool and die makers for the U. A. W. A.

Spencer said his successor here has not yet been named but there were reports at C. I. O. headquarters that Lebron Sanders would be chosen. Sanders acted as adviser to local No. 256 of the W. B. Jarvis Co. in the recent strike at that plant. He is international representative of the U. A. W. A. with headquarters formerly in Lansing. It is understood furniture organization hereafter will be directly under the C. I. O. while the U. A. W. A. will confine itself to the metal trades.

Spencer's appointment came directly from Homer Martin, international U. A. W. A. president, with whom he conferred Friday in Detroit. The organizer was offered the position twice before but had declined on the ground that the local situation made acceptance impossible.

#### Motion for Spencer.

Motion was filed in superior court Saturday asking that the case against Spencer on charges of assaulting an officer be remanded back to police court. It was filed by Attorney Samuel B. Keene of Detroit and stated the U. A. W. A. organizer had acted before legal counsel was employed when he waived a police court examination Wednesday.

The organizer is charged with assault and battery against Patrolman Clarence Baker.

Judge Thaddeus B. Taylor is to pass on the motion Monday. Spencer is at liberty under a \$300 bond for his appearance in court next Thursday.

A second story coded as neutral, also shown in an attached photostat, "Spencer Will Leave," simply recited the facts about the departure of the UAW organizer in charge of the furniture strike. Spencer made the announcement, the Press printed it. The last paragraphs told of an assault and battery charge against Spencer.

There were no direct quotes in the story which was solely related to activities of union men. However, the net effect of it was neutral, not pro-labor. A reader might have shrugged his shoulders after scanning it and said, "So, Spencer is leaving, another man takes his place, so what?"

An obvious example of balanced reporting was one in which the Press obtained a copy of the Union demands in negotiations with the Gunn company, and then went to the company and obtained a statement from them, and printed the two side by side.

The fact that the union organizer was placed in the lead and the union statement run first, made up for the fact that the company issued a somewhat more lengthy statement.

A photostat copy of the story is printed in full on the next page.

A less obvious case of balanced reporting was a story about a hearing before the city commission on alleged police brutality to strikers. The Press reporter handled a

# Union and Company Views

G. R. Press. ————— Oct. 7, 1937.

C. I. O. Outlines Demands in Proposal Made Kindel; Gunn Issues Letter.

## UNION DEMANDS.

Harry Spencer, chief local organizer for the C. I. O. Furniture Workers local, No. 418, announced Thursday the union's "minimum demands" for settling strikes against six local furniture manufacturers.

Spencer released a copy of a proposal he has made in negotiations with the Kindel Furniture Co., against which no strike has been called. He said the concessions in this plan represent "rock bottom," below which the union will not go in negotiations.

The organizer declared he would have been willing to sign a contract containing terms of his proposed Kindel agreement with any of the following companies which have been struck: Luce Furniture Co., Imperial Furniture Co., Grand Rapids Chair Co., John Widdicomb Co., Widdicomb Furniture Co. and Gunn Furniture Co.

### Insists on U. A. W. A. Agency.

Spencer's draft of his proposed Kindel contract contains no reference to wages. However, he said, he would recommend no contract to striking workers that does not provide for "wages at least as high as that paid by the Kindel Furniture Co."

A digest of the proposed contract, now awaiting action by the management of the Kindel Furniture Co., follows:

1. Recognition: Local No. 418, U. A. W. A., is to be sole bargaining agency. However, any employe may bargain as an individual, although he must first submit his grievance to the shop committeeman who "shall accompany him to any company official to which the grievance is presented."

### Nine Hours Day's Work.

2. Hours: Nine hours is to constitute a day's work and five days a work week. Pay and one-half is to be allowed for all time in excess of nine in any one day or forty-five in any one week. Time and one-half also is to be paid for work on all Saturdays, Sundays and on five legal holidays. There is to be no work on Labor day under any conditions.

3. Piecework: A time study is to be made in all departments.

4. Layoff: Employes who are to be laid off for 15 days or more shall be given 24 hours notice. Where it is practicable the department will reduce the hours of work to 25 a week before anyone is laid off.

## For Seniority Rule.

5. Seniority: The last person to be hired is to be the first laid off in slack periods.

6. Discrimination: No shop committeeman or official of the union is to be discriminated against on account of union activity.

Before the strike furniture workers voted unanimously for a proposed contract listing a closed shop with checkoff, 15-cent blanket increase in pay, five-day week of forty hours, seniority, abolition of piecework, minimum wages of 50 cents an hour with 70 cents the minimum for skilled workers. Spencer described these demands as "a basis for negotiations."

## GUNN STATEMENT.

Herewith is reproduced a copy of a statement obtained from a striking Gunn Furniture Co. employe and later confirmed by a company official as having been distributed among employes on Sept. 17:

The Gunn Furniture Co., in order that its employes may be fully informed of the relationship existing between them and the company, wishes to set forth its policy as follows:

1. The company recognizes the right of every employe to join or refrain from joining, any organization or any union. The company will not discriminate against any employe because of membership or non-membership in any lawful organization, or by reason of race or creed. It is the policy of the company not to enter into any agreement which will compel its employes to join or refrain from joining any organization, in order to get or hold a job with us. In other words, we will continue to operate on an open shop basis. The company will insist that there shall be no solicitation of union membership on the company's premises, nor shall there be any coercion or intimidation of employes, directly or indirectly, to compel them to join or for their refusal to join any lawful organization. The practice of such intimidation or coercion by any employe shall be grounds for immediate dismissal.

2. We recognize the right of every employe to discuss with the management, in any way he pleases, matters affecting his employment. We thus recognize the right of employes to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing and whom they may so authorize.

## Wage Adjustments.

3. The company will make every effort to arrange its manufacturing schedules so as to provide continuous and steady employment throughout the year.

4. The management and operation of the plant and direction of the working forces, including the right to hire, promote, suspend, transfer from one job to another, or discharge for cause, must remain in the hands of the company. In promotion, in layoffs and in rehiring the company will give due regard to ability, efficiency, physical condition and personal habits, but special consideration will be given to seniority, number of dependents and to those who maintain an established residence in this community. New employes will be regarded as temporary employes for the first three months of their employment. The company will be under no obligation to re-employ any employe who is discharged or laid off during this three months' period.

5. The company will continue its present wage policy of paying wages as high as generally prevail in its competitive industry for like work under like conditions. The policy as to wage increases will be to share with employes any future prosperity by granting fair wage increases whenever operating results and conditions permit. It will continue to review the existing individual rates in order to correct inequities and to recognize increased ability, skill, knowledge of the business and value to the company, both from a standpoint of day rates and piece work, with the intention of giving all employes the highest possible income to be derived from loyal and co-operative efforts.

## Hours and Overtime.

6. The company's policy on hours and overtime pay will be:

(a)—Eight hours will constitute a normal day's work on the first five days of the week.

(b)—Five hours will constitute a normal day's work on Saturday. The company will try to arrange its schedule to avoid Saturday work whenever possible.

(c)—Overtime at the rate of time and one-half will be paid for all work except the maintenance department:

1. In excess of nine hours in any one day.

2. In excess of five hours on Saturday.

(d)—There shall be at least one day of rest in seven.

7. The following days will be considered as holidays: New Year's day, Memorial day, Independence day, Labor day, Thanksgiving day and Christmas day.

8. The company will continue as in the past, in striving to improve equipment and install safety devices, and to co-operate with its employes in reducing the accident hazards in our plant.

9. The above reviews in general the relationship between the company and its employes and shall remain in effect until such time as general economic conditions, or other conditions beyond our control, make changes necessary. If, and when changes are necessary, they will be made with due regard to the rights, privileges and well-being of the employes.

highly explosive story by selecting direct quotes from all three groups involved, the commission, the union, and management. He did not attempt to minimize the heat of the debate that went on by choosing innocuous or colorless quotes. The story gave a picture of the hearing and the people participating in it:

Almost repeating its "fadeout act" of Monday night, the city commission late Thursday afternoon finally got around to airing the issue of police methods used in the current furniture strike after Mayor Tunis Johnson insisted charges by the C.I.O. should be investigated.

"Do we have to investigate everything that goes on, then have it blow up in our faces as having nothing to it?" demanded Commissioner Harry A. Hart, recalling that charges by the UAW last week had failed to produce proof that city owned vehicles were used to help non-strikers....

Frank Malone, a Kelvinator member of the UAWA presented the longest and most impassioned speech for the pickets.... He recounted that a big policeman picked him and threw him as far as the wall -- a distance of at least 10 feet.

Martin Dregge, president of Luce Furniture company, declared; "The police have done a wonderful job. They are trying to be decent, but there's a limit to what people can endure...." Joseph McGrain, UAWA member said the pickets had obeyed the police each time but last Monday didn't have a chance, were clubbed before they could retreat.

Commissioner Hart asked what the strikers expected the police to do -- "spray them with perfume and kiss them?".... (Later on Hart said) "If union members are smart they'll get some other leadership."<sup>9</sup>

A third example of balanced reporting showed how a Press reporter handled the story of violence on the picket

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9. Grand Rapids Press, Oct. 8, 1937, pp. 2, 21 inches.

line, about which hearings were held at the city hall. He was careful to cite each source from which he obtained direct quotes and he attempted to reconstruct the story of what happened through eye witnesses. Again, management, the union, and law officers were interviewed and quoted::

Another fracas occurred Monday morning at the Luce Furniture company plant on Godfrey avenue, S.W., police taking two pickets to St. Mary's Hospital and charging that Harry Spencer, CIO organizer assaulted patrolman Clarence Baker.<sup>10</sup>

The plant, scene of picket and police scuffles a week ago, was picketed by 400 to 500 men and women it was reported by police captain Lehigh Slater who said the lines were walking four abreast when he reached the plant with 10 third ward policemen at 6:15 a.m.

Police said Spencer sought to close the south truck entrance of the plant by forming a "human chain". Patrolman Baker and other officers ordered to keep the entrances open for workers broke up the chain, Baker alleging Spencer bent the fingers of the officer's left hand backward in resisting.

Spencer reported he was struck on the temple by a police officer. He said he would ask Prosecutor Fred N. Searl for a warrant against the policeman who hit him.

As to whether this officer is Patrolman Clarence Baker who said he is to swear a complaint against Spencer the organizer said: "If he's the man who says I twisted his fingers it must be that one. I never touched him but there's no question but what a patrolman touched me." Spencer said he was treated for his scalp wound by Dr. Christian G. Krupp who took one stitch. The organizer insisted he is feeling all right despite the blow and that "he might go out and do some negotiating today."

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10. Ibid., October 8, 1937, p. 2, 21 inches.

Captain Salter said he and his band of 10 men encountered difficulty in opening the first picket formation for a truck. He said the line had to be opened and that police clubs went into action. Those taken to the hospital were Roy Conner, 45 of 225 Rathbone st., S. W., former lumber yard worker at the plant and Frank Dowd, 68, of 617 Ionia ave., N.W., former steam tender. Both suffered forehead lacerations. The injured strikers reported at the CIO hall after leaving the hospital.

Luce company officials said more men were reporting for duty Monday because of the 5-cent an hour wage increase. They stated 172 men were at work, 17 more than last week. Organizer Spencer stated "not more than 75 persons went into the factory in spite of the nickel raise" and that many of the men who entered were foremen.

Louis Thompson, 1128 Rathbone S.W., secretary of the John Widdicomb Co. unit of the UAWA CIO reported the order to start swinging clubs was given by Captain Slater. "Only a few policemen used clubs," said Thompson. "The others just pushed. We pushed too, but did nothing else."

Spencer, Officer Baker, and Captain Slater visited the prosecutor's office, Spencer specifically asking for a warrant against Baker. The officers did not specifically seek a warrant against Spencer but told their story accusing Spencer of pushing back Baker's fingers. The prosecutors said no warrants would be issued until he had talked to all witnesses. Police reported quiet prevailed on other strike fronts except for picketing at the Globe Knitting Works."

Of the stories coded as pro-labor the following is a sample of what one reporter caught from the dramatic session at city hall, when strikers gathered to protest the police action on the picket line. It left an unmistakable impression that the commission had given them the run-around and done it so quickly, they scarcely knew what happened:

....The crowd which numbered among its members at least four persons with patched heads, sat rigid for a full minute as if stunned apparently awaiting the next move....

The story follows in full:

### BOOING REPLACES PROTESTS AT COMMISSION SESSION<sup>11</sup>

Adjourned exactly 10 minutes after convening Monday night the city commission was roundly booed by a crowd of CIO members gathered to protest alleged brutality by the police in handling pickets at the Luce furniture plant Monday.

Although an emergency squad of six officers awaited in a committee room adjoining the commission, the crowd (largest to attend a commission hearing in at least three years) according to <sup>the</sup> city clerk, waited quietly while the commission went through routine business.

Mayor Tunis Johnson inquired: "Is there anything else to come before the meeting?" Commissioner Harry A. Hart moved the commission adjourn. All except Joseph Kozak and Mayor Johnson hurriedly left the chamber.

The crowd which numbered among its members at least four persons with patched heads, sat rigid for a full minute as if stunned apparently awaiting the next move.

As the last commissioner filed through the committee room several officers of Local 418 rushed to the rostrum to ask the mayor why they hadn't been heard.

The mayor said he hadn't had a chance to call for anyone from the audience who wished to be heard, the move to adjourn was so fast. "I don't know why," declared the mayor....

"We do," said a voice in the audience....

Two examples of pro-management stories are shown in the photostats attached, both dealing with return to work, of furniture strikers at the Luce plant.

The story with the banner head "Strikers Will Return to Work at Luce Plant," was a kind of round-up story on the

11. Ibid., October 5, p. 2, 14 inches.

# Strikers Will Return

## WILL GO BACK AT 7 MONDAY

Q. R. Press, Oct. 9, 1931.  
Furniture Company Em-  
ployes Vote 44 to 11 to  
End Walkout.

### BALLOT IN C. I. O. HALL

Will Be on an Independent  
Status; Dregge Says  
'No Discrimination.'

"The strike is over as far as our plant is concerned," declared Martin J. Dregge, president of the Luce Furniture Co., Saturday, following announcement that strikers had voted, 44 to 11, to return to work.

The vote was taken in C. I. O. headquarters late Friday afternoon. It came after a one-hour conference ending at noon between the Luce management and a four-member committee headed by Matt Westrate.

A fifth member, Dominic Peretti, found guilty in police court of sabotage in connection with the strike, did not attend the conference.

Dregge reported the committee agreed the men were to return to work as employes of the Luce Furniture Co., not as members of the furniture workers local, No. 418, of the United Auto Workers of America, which called the strike three weeks ago Friday. He said he offered them the 5-cent increase given nonstrikers Sept. 30.

#### "No Discrimination."

"There will be no discrimination against any of the men by reason of their having been on strike," Dregge asserted. "Everyone for whom we have work will be taken back. We expect to be running substantially at 100 per cent production by noon Monday, but it may take a little time to make adjustments in the work."

He reported 198 men on the pay roll at 7 a. m. Friday. Later in the day 18 men returned, virtually 100 per cent of the veneer room, Dregge estimated. Added to this total of 216 workers, the 44 who voted to return accounts for 260 of the approximately 350 men on the pay roll when the strike was called, according to the Luce president.

## to Work at Luce Plant

Dregge also declared "lots of men who have not worked during the strikes aren't members of the C. I. O." and charged they had been kept away through union intimidation.

He said all members of the committee went into the plant cafeteria following the conference Friday noon and ate lunch with the men on the job.

F. Stuart Foote, president of the Imperial Furniture Co., reported that 60 men were working Friday of the 476 men on the pay roll when the C. I. O. called a strike more than two weeks ago. About 50 have returned in the last two days, he said.

Quiet was reported Saturday at the four other furniture factories against which strikes are being conducted. Picket lines were reduced, inasmuch as the plants do not operate over the week-end. Three of the furniture manufacturers—Grand Rapids Chair Co., John Widdicomb Co., Gunn Furniture Co.—have followed a policy of operating on a curtailed basis, insisting "the jobs are here when the men want to return." The Widdicomb Furniture Co. has not tried to operate since Monday, when the C. I. O. called a strike against it, according to company officials.

#### Peaceful at Globe.

Grover C. Good, president of the Globe Knitting works, against which the C. I. O. union, International Ladies Garment Workers, has been striking for almost three weeks, reported his plant has been operating "practically 100 per cent" in all departments. The plant, being on a 40-hour week, does not operate on Saturday.

"Everything is peaceful and orderly," Good declared.

He said he considers only 26 I. L. G. W. U. members as on strike. Good reported about a dozen pickets were standing by at the 4:30 p. m. change of shifts Friday. He said there was no singing, heckling nor display of banners.

The pickets have been temporarily enjoined from activity by Superior Judge Thaddeus B. Taylor. A hearing on making the injunction permanent is scheduled for Monday morning.

## LUCE CO. REPORTS MORE MEN RETURN

Q. R. Press, Oct. 8, 1931  
Treasurer Says 18 Have Left  
Strike Ranks to Re-  
sume Jobs.

A substantial gain in the number of workers reporting for duty at the Luce Furniture Co. plant on Godfrey-av., S. W., where a strike was called three weeks ago, was reported Friday by company officials.

Vincent A. Snell, company treasurer, reported 18 men who have remained away from the plant because of the strike reported again Friday for the first time, increasing the number of employes at work to 198. This includes the clerical staff of 18 men and women.

Those returning Friday have been on the picket lines at various times. Most of them are veneer department workers. A few are finishers. Snell said the plant was operating Friday with approximately 100 fewer workers than when the strike was called.

Police reported the strike fronts were quiet again Friday morning. Officers remained in cars parked near the Luce plant, where virtually all of the difficulties between police and pickets have occurred. There were approximately 40 men and women picketing the Globe Knitting Works, Capt. John Spoelstra said. Police reported they recognized some of the pickets as persons named in the superior court temporary injunction banning picketing.

appears it bodes well for the future of the industry in this city. It indicates that henceforth discussion may be renewed periodically, before precipitate action is taken rather than afterward. In this manner future losses to manufacturers and workers alike may be averted in a spirit of understanding." The editorial is reprinted in full in the accompanying photostat.

#### Summary

A total of only 51 column inches, representing but four per cent of all labor content in the Press, were devoted to editorials. This was the low point of editorial content for either paper in all periods examined.

#### National News

The AFL and CIO conventions were both still in session early in October and the Press carried many stories on both. The National Labor Relations Board was under attack from the AFL, and the question of labor peace was much in the forefront of the news about the two conventions.

A United Press story described memorial services among Illinois coal miners for 16 miners killed 39 years before in the "Virdin" massacre, and referred to Mother Jones who "for half a century appeared in her black bonnet wherever labor strife was most acute and offered her dynamic leadership for the cause of organized labor."<sup>13</sup>

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13. Ibid., October 11, 1937, p. 9, 12 inches.

G. R. Press.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1937.

### A MEETING OF MINDS.

After several weeks of disruption in the Grand Rapids furniture industry the strike that crippled the operation of half a dozen factories is virtually over. Workers have returned to five of the six struck plants and it is likely that industrial peace will have fully returned before the end of the week.

While it is unfortunate that this disturbance should have come on the eve of an important style market and while the workers themselves apparently have compromised their original demands so that there has been small visible material gain, the industry as a whole may be able to salvage certain intangible but very real benefits. For although it may not be immediately apparent, there seems to have been a meeting of minds between employers and employees that will count immeasurably for good in the future.

Employers, through their public statements, have indicated that they realize to a greater extent than ever before the problems of their workers. They have necessarily recognized the right of employees to organize and to bargain collectively and they, have undoubtedly recognized the justice of pleas for as high a standard of wages as conditions in the industry will permit.

The employees, on the other hand, have come to a realization that this industry does face certain competitive conditions that do not obtain in many other industries. Many of the workers have been lifelong employees in the making of furniture. They did not need to be told that if their demands were too great they would harm themselves by forcing their employers to compete on too high a standard with rival manufacturers in regions in which labor is a much cheaper commodity. They did not need to be informed that they placed their own jobs in jeopardy if they asked too much.

The statement of one of the leading manufacturers on this point is revealing.

"As in the past, the policy of the company will be to pay wages as high as generally prevail in our locality and in the furniture industry for like work under like conditions. We will be glad to share with our employees any future prosperity by granting wage increases whenever operating results and conditions permit."

But in the spirit of the times, perhaps, a reminder of actual conditions was needed. The strike brought this question into the open again and created a healthful discussion of it by the workers and the managements. Employers and employees, we believe, have come to a fuller understanding. We hope it is one that will be lasting. There should be a friendlier disposition by furniture labor and its employers here to sit down for mutual discussion of the problems of the industry.

A matter for congratulation and for which the workers should receive high praise has been the absence of physical strife in Grand Rapids. Local workmen for the most part comprise an intelligent, skilled craftsmanship and a type of laborer given more to reason than to violent display. As a result, disturbance of the peace has been at a minimum. There seems to have been frank recognition on the part of the majority that law and order are prime requisites of a stable community.

While conditions elsewhere may be fertile ground for the breeding of violence, it has been demonstrated here that a sober-minded citizenry is not readily stirred to unreasoning action. So long as that spirit prevails Grand Rapids may expect intelligent advance in the promotion of industrial relations.

The fair spirit of the employers has been shown in their willingness to discuss at any time the issues raised by those on strike. In declaring that "no employe is required to join any organization or union and no employe shall be discriminated against because of membership or nonmembership in any lawful organization," the managements were not only abiding by the federal law, but also playing an impartial role as between those wishing exclusive jurisdiction and the considerable numbers who did not wish to follow that method.

If the meeting of minds is as real as it now appears it bodes well for the future of the industry in this city. It indicates that henceforth discussion may be renewed periodically, before precipitate action is taken rather than afterward. In this manner future losses to manufacturers and workers alike may be averted in a spirit of understanding.

G. R. Herald.

OCTOBER 30, 1937

### Mr. Spencer, Furniture and the Worker

Editor of The Herald: What has become of Mr. Spencer? He came like a zephyr in the spring and went with the first touch of frost in the fall. But, unlike the gentle zephyr, his insidious reasoning, and his lack of knowledge of local conditions, has left many local workers in a condition that more nearly represents the action of a tornado.

Thousands of dollars lost in wages, other thousands gone forever in orders not executed, envy, distrust and hatred fomented and what for?

To demonstrate the organizing ability of a labor agitator, to collect a substantial sum every month from the laborer and to cripple industry with unjust and unreasonable demands.

Grand Rapids has long been known as the "Furniture Capital of America," has been proud of its furniture industry, conscious of the ability of its workmen, exulted in the quality of its product, and yet withal has not produced any outstanding wealth—either individually or as corporations. Compared with other industries—like steel, autos, clothing, even gum and cos-

There was violence along the CIO organizing front, particularly in the south, and a number of stories dealt with the murder of CIO organizers.

#### Summary

The Press devoted 39 per cent of all its labor content to national stories. The majority of these were not related to strikes and only a small fraction got on page one. By far the largest category for both strike and non-strike groups was Union Activities.

#### State News

Labor news from Michigan represented 17 per cent of the total labor content in the Press in the 1937 period examined.

About half of it related to strikes. Only a fraction of state stories were placed on page one.

Most of them dealt with NLRB elections, UAW organizing drives, and a Detroit mayoralty campaign in which the CIO and AFL ran opposing candidates. There were a series of small strikes throughout the state.

#### Summary

Of a total of 203 inches devoted to state labor news, only 49 inches made page one; and 103 inches related to strikes. Largest strike category was Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention; for non-strike, Union Activities.

A Comparison of Press and Herald Reporting in 1937

The following bar charts and tables illustrate the similarities and differences in the way the two papers treated labor news in September and October, 1937.

CHART I PROPORTION OF ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER BY MAJOR TYPES, IN COLUMN INCHES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1937

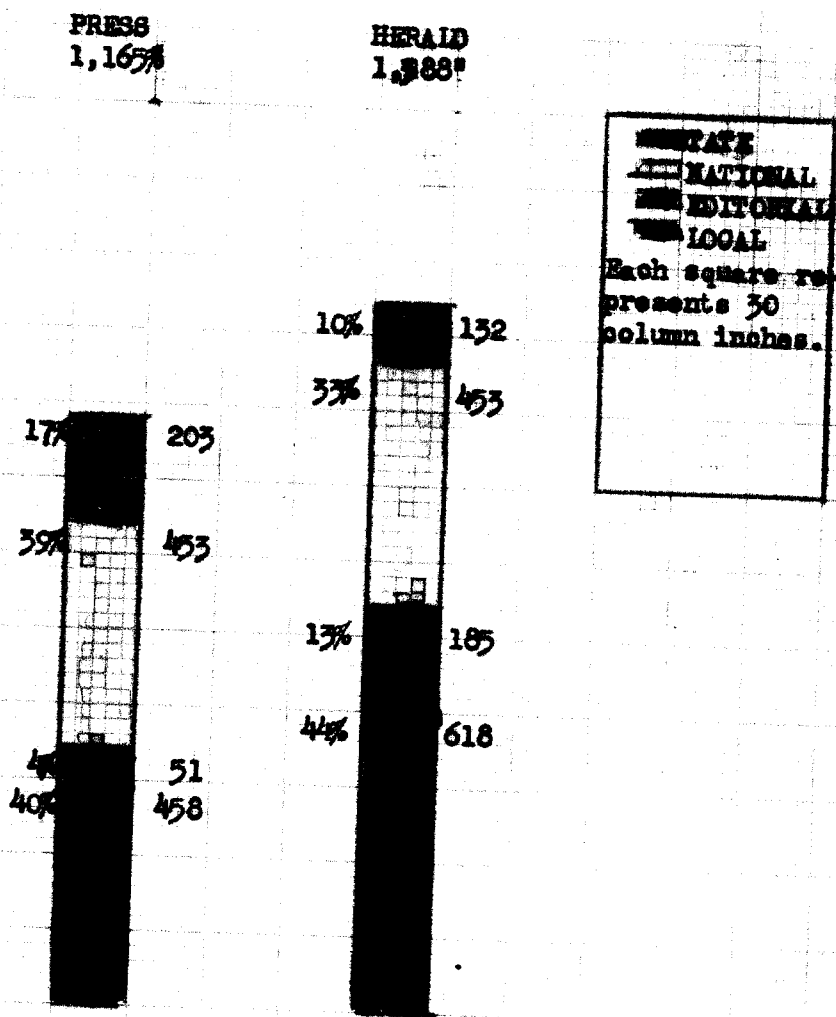


Chart I shows that the Herald led the Press slightly in total labor news coverage and had about a third more local news coverage. The Press led the Herald in national and state news, while the Herald had more editorial content.

CHART II PROPORTION OF STRIKE TO NON-STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD IN COLUMN INCHES, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 1937

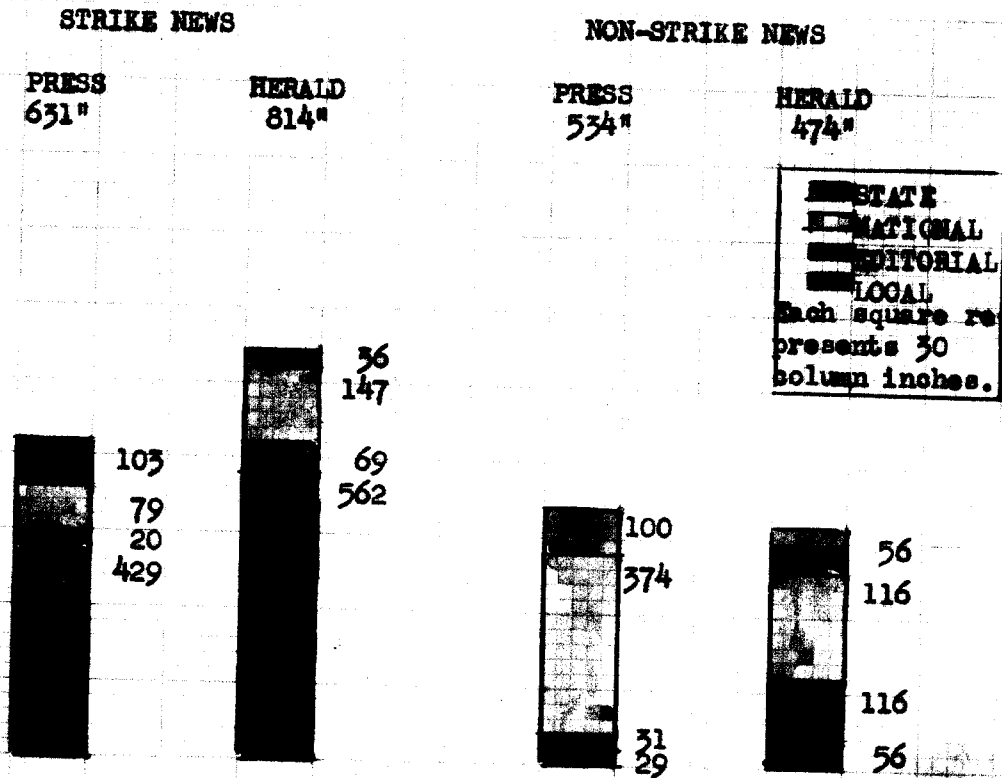


Chart II shows that the Herald had more strike news, most of it on local events, than the Press. Both papers were about even in non-strike total coverage, but the Press put most of this into national stories while the Herald split it more evenly in the four areas.

CHART III PROPORTION OF PAGE ONE STORIES TO INSIDE LABOR NEWS IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1937

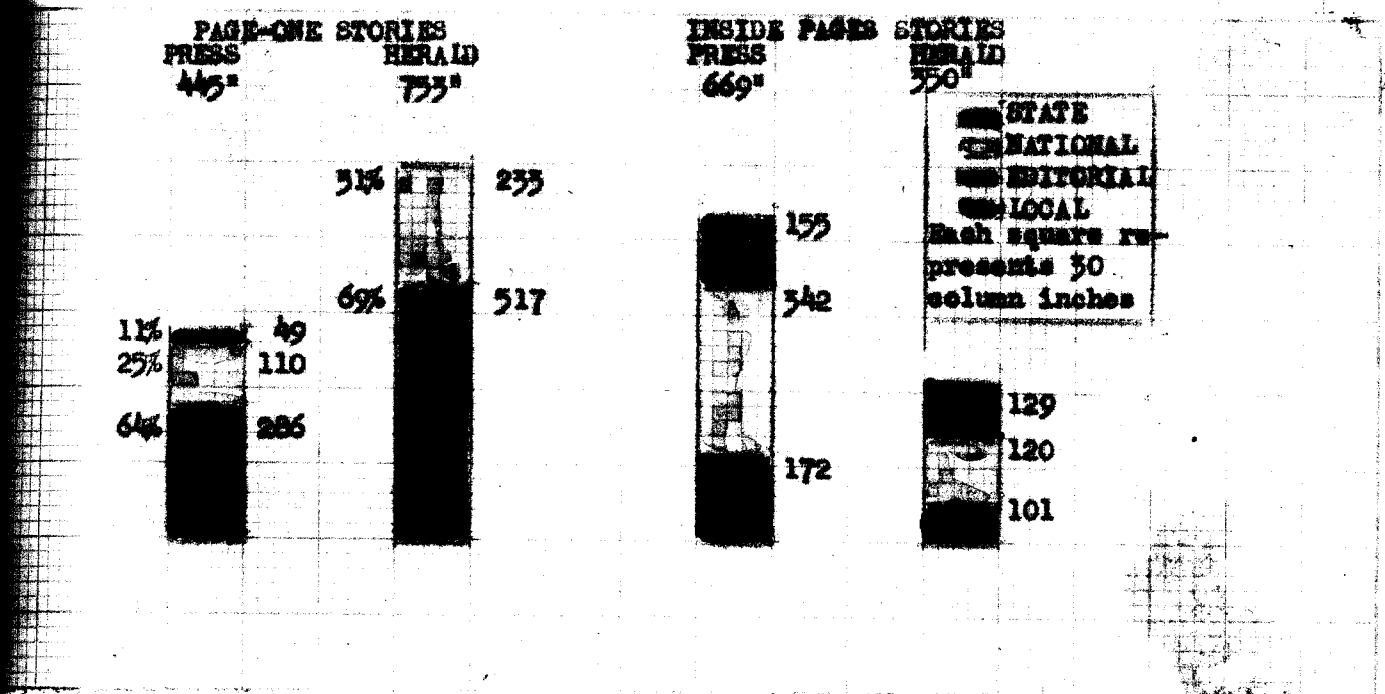


Chart III shows that the Herald outstripped the Press in amount of space it gave labor news on page one and that more than half of it was local in origin. The Press gave twice as much total space to inside pages as the Herald. The Press put most emphasis on national news, the Herald was split pretty evenly between state, national and local.

CHART IV DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIAL  
MATTER IN THE PRESS AND HERALD IN COLUMN INCHES,  
SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, 1937

Chart IV shows that the direction of local news stories in the two papers were primarily balanced, neutral, and pro-labor. However, the Herald had more pro-labor stories than the Press.

In editorial matter the Press was divided pretty evenly between balanced, pro-labor, anti-labor, and anti-New Deal. The Herald gave most space to anti-CIO material, and an equal amount to pro-management and pro-labor stories. It had more anti-New Deal commentary than the Press.

MINNESOTA

MINNESOTA

PRINTED  
1888

PRINTED  
1888

PRINTED  
1888

PRINTED  
1888

122

201

129

152

68

91

137

82

PT

PT

8  
10  
12

15  
14  
12

28  
28  
28

PT  
AND

11  
69

(Each square represents  
twelve 10 column inches)

(Each square represents  
five column inches)

\*Anti-CIO

K-1

N - Neutral

PH - Pro-Labor

PM - Pro-Management

B - Balanced

LT - Anti-Labor

AND - Anti-New Deal

CHART V MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR STRIKE AND NON-STRIKE LABOR CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD FOR SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1937, IN INCHES.

LOCAL	Press 458"					
	1-B	1-O	1-D	1-M	2-M	* 1-M
	79	67	99		172	29 12
	Herald 618"					
	1-B	1-O	1-D	1-E	2-M	
		159	66	122	184	56
NATIONAL	Press 453"					
	1-M	2-B		2-O	2-M	
	79		246	85	43	
	Herald 353"					
	1-B	1-M	2-B	2-D	2-M	

1-B STATUS OF STRIKE  
 1-O OTHER LABOR DISPUTES  
 1-D PHYSICAL CONDUCT  
 1-M COERCIVE TACTICS  
 2-B ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE BY DIRECT INTERVENTION  
 2-O STRIKE SETTLEMENTS  
 2-M STRIKE SETTLEMENTS  
 2-D STRIKE SETTLEMENTS  
 2-M STRIKE SETTLEMENTS

Chart V shows a relatively similar distribution of stories in both strike and non-strike categories. For strike categories both papers had most space in Status-of-Strike and Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention, and Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics.

CHART V MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR STRIKE AND NON-STRIKE LABOR CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD FOR SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1937, IN INCHES.

LOCAL	Press						458"
	1-B	1-O	1-D	1-M	2-M	* 1-M	
	79	67	99		172	29	12
	Herald						618"
	1-B	1-O	1-D	1-E	2-M		
		159	66	122	184	56	
NATIONAL	Press				453"		
	1-M	2-B	2-G	2-M			
	79		246	85	43		
	Herald				353"		
	1-B	1-M	2-B	2-D	2-M		
	82	65	116	50	40		
STATE	Press				203"		
	1-D	1-M	2-B	*2-G			
	47	55	94	6			
					132"		
	1-M	2-B	2-M				
	36	53	43				
EDITORIAL			51"				
	1-M	2-M					
	20	31					
					184"		
	1-F	2-M					
	53	16		115			

Key:

STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 1-A Physical Conduct, Peaceful
- 2-B Physical Conduct, Coercive
- 1-O Attempts to Settle on Issue
- 1-D Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention
- 1-E Status of Strike
- 1-F Effect on Public Welfare

NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 2-A Disaster, Sabotage, Welfarism
  - 2-B Union Activities
  - 2-O Joint Union-Management
  - 2-D Community or Nation-wide Union Activities
  - 2-E Economic Conditions
  - 2-F Pol. & Gov't Programs & Policies
  - 2-G General Gov't Policies
- (Each square represents 10 column inches. Categories with less than 50 inches have been combined under 1-M and 2-M Miscellaneous).

Summary of Highlights of the 1937 Period

For 1937 the Herald labor news was sampled at the opening of the second city-wide furniture strike, Press labor news at the end of it. This reversed the 1911 sampling of the two papers when the Press was studied at the beginning, the Herald at the end of the first city-wide furniture strike. Because of this reversal the Herald outstripped the Press in total and local labor coverage.

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of this period was an apparent shift in the direction of Press reporting from pretty straight pro-labor to neutral and balanced. The Herald directional coding on local stories, followed the pattern of the Press very closely. Both papers gave most space to neutral reporting, next came balanced, and third pro-labor.

The Herald editorially remained consistent with its past sharp criticism of labor while the Press maintained a middle of the road view that was most clearly expressed in its editorial on the end of the furniture strike, "A Meeting of Minds."

The Herald placed more total labor content on page one than the Press, and considerably more local news.

There was a marked similarity of distribution in both strike and non-strike categories for all types of labor content in both papers. There was more emphasis on Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics, and Attempts to Settle by

Direct Intervention, in Strike categories, than in previous periods. In non-strike categories, the two papers concentrated on Union activities.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GENERAL MOTORS STRIKE - 1945-46

The CIO was in its heyday in 1945. An upsurge of organizing had swelled the ranks of both AFL and CIO unions and the labor movement was growing steadily more powerful. During World War II unions and companies had joined in all-out efforts to obtain maximum war production.

But when the war ended in mid-August, and the no-strike pledge to which labor had agreed for the duration was lifted, a wave of strikes hit the country. Public sentiment began to swing against organized labor. Strike-curb legislation began to pile up, nationally and in many state legislatures.

Excerpts from an editorial in The Grand Rapids Press during this period, titled "Rights and Responsibilities," reflected a growing impatience on the part of the public.

....We have but recently emerged from a successfully waged war in which labor assumed its rightful responsibilities; its contribution to the final victory was as important as that rendered by any group.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Grand Rapids Press, November 20, 1945, p. 4, 8 inches.

But labor's responsibilities did not cease with the firing of the last gun.

It has the equally great task of helping to build a firm economic foundation under the peace so dearly bought. It can no more afford to seek a blindly selfish gain in these times than it did in the darkest hour of the war. A large scale stoppage of production while the war was in progress might have cost us victory. Further impediments to the resumption of all-out production for peace may so seriously retard our reconversion program as to do irreparable damage, both to labor and the nation itself. THE "SHOTGUN STRIKE" FOR ARBITRARY HIGHER WAGE LEVELS BEFORE COMPANIES CAN DETERMINE COMPETITIVE CONDITIONS OR PEACETIME INCOME AND COSTS IS AN EXAMPLE. (caps are writer's)

The responsibility for avoiding such a development assuredly is not that of labor alone -- but it bears equal responsibility with government and business. And it is with STEADILY WANING PATIENCE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY WAIT FOR SOME SIGN FROM LABOR THAT IT INTENDS TO SHOULDER THAT RESPONSIBILITY AS PATRIOTICALLY AND WILLINGLY AS IT DID SO MANY TIMES IN THE WAR.... (Caps are writer's)

How the Press Covered Labor News in 1945 (November 21-December 21)

As previously noted, the Press is an evening newspaper with a daily circulation of about 109,000. It averages approximately 40 pages per issue and publishes six days a week, excluding Sundays.<sup>1a</sup> It is owned by the Booth chain of eight Michigan newspapers.

The Press was examined during beginning stages of the General Motors strike. As a consequence its total labor coverage was high and the amount of local labor news was greater than that carried by the Herald.

A unit of the American Newspaper Guild was in existence on the Press in 1945. It had been organized among Press

<sup>1a</sup>. Based on one weeks count, July 1953.

editorial writers in 1943 and had won elections in 1944 and 1945. In 1946, however, after losing an NLRB case, in which it had filed unfair labor charges against the Press management, the Press unit disbanded.

#### Local News

The major event in Grand Rapids labor circles at this time was, of course, the General Motors strike. Two plants in the city were shut down as a result. The United Rubber Workers International, CIO, held its national convention in Grand Rapids during this period, and this, too, was an item of labor news.

The Press reporting at the beginning of the General Motors strike was a startling contrast to the 1911 era. A remarkable change had come over the manner of handling labor news. In place of detailed statements of the issues, as seen by the union men, there were dull statistical accounts of the number of men out on strike with little or no reference to reasons for the walkout. Instead of the highly personalized vignettes of individual strikers and sympathetic portraits of strike leaders, there were no comments from rank and filers and the few quotes from union leaders sounded authoritarian and remote from the strikers. There was no attempt to make the pickets seem like human beings. In 1937 the Press reporting had stressed

both union and management points of view and had succeeded in giving a picture of both groups, through eye-witness accounts of events on the picket lines, at the city hall, in union headquarters.

Part of the contrast in Press reporting in 1945, with earlier periods, lay in the fact that many of the local stories were five or six inches in length and buried on inside pages.

Undoubtedly a strike which closed only two plants locally and which was part of a nation-wide tie-up, was not as newsworthy an event as a city-wide strike of a local industry. Nevertheless by 1945, auto parts had replaced furniture as a major industry in the community, and 3,500 of the industry's key workers were out on strike.

It is of interest to note that in 1911 the average length of local stories was 20 inches, in 1945 this had shrunk to eight inches.

On the day the General Motors strike began, the Press carried a banner headline, "Strike Paralyzes GMC plants." A center cut picture of pickets standing before the two local GM plants and a two-thirds column story were given to Grand Rapids' share in the event.

From the lead sentence to the closing paragraph the story was a routine, dull recital of facts. The only reference to issues was a one-sentence description given on a handbill carried by the strikers: "GM refuses the

union's proposal to arbitrate wage demands."

The story is reprinted below:

The two local General Motors plants, Grand Rapids Stamping Division of the Fisher Body and Diesel Equipment Division were closed Wednesday at 11 a.m. by the strike of 3,300 employees, members of the UAW-CIO who joined the national strike.<sup>2</sup>

About 1800 employes of Grand Rapids Stamping Division, members of local 730, and 1500 employes of Diesel Equipment division, members of local 167, were in the walkout, union officials said.

As the day shifts quit their jobs the workers punched time cards and left the plants in an orderly manner. Picket lines were formed immediately, some of the workers joining the lines while the majority went to UAW halls for instructions or to their homes.

Handbills calling for the strike at 11 a.m. were handed workers as they reported for their shifts early Wednesday. The handbills stated "GM refuses the union's proposal to arbitrate wage demands."

Immediately following the walkout at Diesel Equipment members of local 167 went to CIO headquarters on Sheldon Ave., S.W. where John Van Buren, president of the local, gave instructions on maintaining contact with union officials. Van Buren said the union, through its welfare committee was prepared to assist members who may become in extreme need of financial help.

Van Buren told reporters the union had agreed to permit two men to finish approximately \$60,000 worth of materials in the heat treatment process. This would be completed by Friday night, he said. One maintenance man, one power house employe and plant protection man for each shift will be permitted to pass the picket lines but office employes, including C. F. Runchey, resident manager, will not be permitted to cross, he added.

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2. Ibid., November 21, 1945, p. 1, 14 inches.

Van Buren said that in a conference with Runchey Wednesday before the strike the union offered to permit office employes to pass the lines if they complete the pay roll. Company officials declined the offer, Van Buren related.

The union and management at Grand Rapids Stamping division reached no agreement Wednesday morning about power house plant protection and maintenance men crossing picket lines, according to Edward G. Tilma, president of local 730. Office workers will not be permitted to cross, Tilma said. He stated picket lines will not be maintained Thanksgiving day or on Sundays "unless necessary."

Captains of picket lines have been instructed by presidents of the unions that "no liquor or rowdyism will be permitted on the picket line." Pickets carried signs stating "More Pay to Make More Buyers;" and "A Saving Wage, Not Just an Existing Wage."

Veterans of WW II, members of local No. 730, were asked by Tilma to report in uniform for picket duty Wednesday afternoon. A meeting of members of local 730 will be held at 8 p.m. Wednesday at CIO headquarters on Sheldon avenue.

Diesel Equipment Division is making fuel injectors for government and civilian use, according to C. F. Runchey, resident manager. The government contract is a continuation of similar contracts held during the war, he said.

Grand Rapids Stamping division has been making stampings for GM cars using Fisher bodies.

This was the lead story on a major strike in the community:

Immediately following the walkout...members of local 167 went to the CIO headquarters...where John Van Buren, president of the local, gave them instructions on maintaining contact with union officials....

This sounds more like a meeting of a boy scout troop than a large local union on strike. The inclusion of some

comments from the workers, or management, or the public, on what was at stake in the crisis and how they felt about it, would have helped to drive out the neutral tone.

Another story, the following day, November 22, which got five inches on page two, described the fact that pickets would stay home Thanksgiving day, and quoted an admonition by the UAW regional director to the strikers about the need for convincing their families "of the justice of your cause." The item follows:

LOCAL STRIKERS STAY AT HOME  
GM MEN WILL RESUME PICKETING FRIDAY

"Our men will be back at their posts on the picket lines Friday morning," Tilma said, adding that the program for the opening day of the strike which started at 11 a.m. Wednesday, "went off without a hitch."

Grand Rapids Stamping employes who crowded into the main auditorium of the CIO center Wednesday night were pondering the warning of Leonard Woodcock, Muskegon, regional director of the UAW that they "must convince their wives and families of the justice of your cause."

Commenting on that Thursday morning, Tilma said that because of the numbers of wives and daughters of members who had worked during the war, "There's every reason to believe they understand the issues involved here."

The mass meeting voted to forego collecting wages due them rather than permit office workers to cross picket lines to prepare the checks, Tilma reported. No arrangements have been made Tilma said Thursday to permit Frank C. Harrington, manager of the Stamping Division, to cross the picket line. Harrington's name, Tilma said, was omitted from a list of eligible maintenance and plant protection men who will be allowed to enter the plant. Harrington could not be reached Thursday for comment.

There is something almost of The New Yorker vein about the strikers "who crowded into the main auditorium of the CIO center" and sat "pondering the warning," that they "must convince their wives...of the justice of your cause."

A number of other stories were coded as neutral because they lacked any interpretation and in terms of play, position, and size, tended to de-emphasize news. The treatment given the United Rubber Workers convention was a case in point.

On December 10, 1945, the Press devoted two inches to an announcement that the 10th annual convention of the URW would open Friday with 400 delegates. The item was placed on page two. This was an international body of delegates from one of the major CIO unions and of interest nationally as well as locally. Such treatment was in sharp contrast to the reports on the conventions of the Michigan Federation of Labor in 1922.

The same date that the above story was run, the Press carried a five inch item on page one concerning the GM strike. It related the bare minimum of facts on a major piece of news and cited no one:

Local production employes of General Motors corporation will vote Monday and Tuesday on President Truman's proposal that they return to work.<sup>3</sup>

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3. Ibid., December 20, 1945, p. 1, 5 inches.

Members of local 730 UAW, CIO, representing Grand Rapids Stamping Division employes, will vote at a meeting called for 8 p.m. Monday in the CIO hall. Wives have been invited. They will hear a report on the national UAW meeting in Detroit Saturday....Members of local 167 will hear a similar report and vote at a meeting Tuesday.

On December 16, 1945, the Press carried a one inch notation on page 16 to the effect that "Rubber Workers Back UAW CIO Strike in Resolution Adopted by the General Executive Board Tuesday." This item also was coded as neutral.

A mass rally of the auto workers was held on December 20, 1945. Bishop Haas, head of the Catholic diocese of Grand Rapids and former director of the national Fair Employment Practices Committee, created by President Roosevelt, described an employer's responsibilities to his employes in a speech that got 10 inches on page two. Victor Reuther, brother of Walter, the red-headed, dynamic, young president of the UAW, received seven inches on page two, for a speech he gave in which he described the strike aims of the General Motors branch of the UAW. There were few direct quotes in the story.

Bishop Haas is a nationally known figure whose home town is Grand Rapids. Victor Reuther, apart from being famous as a Reuther brother, had come to the city from Detroit, specifically to inform people on the issues and status of the GM strike, the biggest event in labor and industrial circles in Michigan.

Both items were coded as neutral because of lack of interpretation, use of few direct quotes, and a de-emphasis in terms of placement and size.

### Summary

The Press devoted a total of 267 column inches to local labor stories in 1945, about 17 per cent of total labor content. More than half of it dealt with the GM strike. Less than half was placed on page one. Chief direction of local stories was neutral. The two major strike-categories were Physical Conduct--Peaceful tactics, and Attempts to Settle on the Issues. Chief non-strike categories were Union Activities, and Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor.

### Editorial Comment

The total amount of editorial matter in the Press swung upward in the period of the General Motors strike. However, in the month examined (November 21-December 21) only a small amount consisted of locally written editorials. There were many letters to the editor, a number of advertorials, and quite a few comments by labor columnists.

The direction of locally written editorials changed from primarily pro-labor and balanced, characteristic of previous periods, to anti-labor and pro-management.

A fairly typical example of the reversal in direction

was an editorial titled, "Production and Inflation."<sup>4</sup> The last sentence stated:

But as work interruptions and delays increase, business reserves are sapped and the very stuff with which we had hoped to fashion a sound economy is dissipated for ends which benefit none.

Another editorial took sharp issue with labor for usurping some management prerogatives, and referred specifically to the General Motors strike.<sup>5</sup>

....Isn't labor in attempting to take from management part of the complicated job of determining unit prices, destroying management's power to do the highly specialized job of selling and therefore assuring jobs? As to this business of tying wages not to any general industrial or area level, but to the company's previous profits and the company's books what becomes of labor in a less successful company which is barely making money?

Are there to be dozens of different wage rates for the same job in the same producing area depending on individual firm profits? Or is all labor to be paid the wages set by the profits of the highest profit firm with the inevitable result that several others will go out of business? Doesn't that inevitably tend to monopoly? And isn't labor the victim of monopoly and the chief beneficiary of a busy competitive economy?

We can well understand why General Motors simply cant see the future of its business if it is to be subjected to all these interferences with the difficult job of management. But the more we think about it, we understand less and less the desire of Mr. Reuther to interfere with the functions of management. Even if he won we think it would be the worst thing that could happen to union labor.

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4. Ibid., November 23, 1945, 6 inches.

5. Ibid., December 8, 1945, 14 inches.

A number of sentences from this are of interest:

We can well understand why General Motors simply can't see the future of its business if it is to be subjected to all these interferences with the difficult job of management.

Contrast this with the editorial, "Getting at the Furniture Facts," back in 1911.<sup>6</sup>

...."The men say there has been no general increase in wages. The manufacturers insist there has been a raise.... Do wages here compare favorably with those paid in other cities: Is a minimum wage scale on an hourly basis practicable? The men say it is. The employers declare that the great variety in the quality of goods manufactured makes it impossible... What really is the average wage paid in Grand Rapids? The workers present one set of figures. The manufacturers another. Are some of the factories paying all they can for labor? Would a flat increase of 10 per cent and the inauguration of the nine-hour day put some out of business?....etc.

In 1945 the Press editorial emphasis was on management's point of view, in 1911 the paper appeared to regard "the difficult job of management," with a raised eyebrow and large question mark.

A more subtly revealing editorial titled "Give it a Chance to Work," ostensibly urged that collective bargaining be given a fair trial.<sup>7</sup> A number of points are worth studying in this. It is printed in full below:

The vast majority of people in this country, and that includes employers generally, accept the principles of collective bargaining. In his address at the opening of the labor-management conference in Washington, Eric Johnston, president of the U.S. Chamber

6. Ibid., April 20, 1911, 17 inches.

7. Ibid., November 30, 1945, 7 inches.

of Commerce said: "Collective bargaining is an essential part of the democratic process." But what is happening to it? Has collective bargaining failed or is it just being merely ignored?

To judge from recent events one would conclude that collective bargaining is not being given a decent chance. In the case of General Motors the union set forth its demands and then steadfastly refused to recede from them one inch. That isn't collective bargaining as most Americans understand it. A strike vote has just been taken throughout the giant steel industry. In excess of 700 steel plants will be affected if a strike is called. Yet many of the plants have never been presented with any concrete demands from the union. In those cases, it would seem, "A labor dispute" did not actually exist -- although the National Labor Relations Board is authorized under the War Labor Disputes Act to conduct such ballots only where a dispute does exist.

On the face of it, one can only assume that strikes and the threat of strikes have replaced collective bargaining. The house appropriations committee finds the present state of affairs both absurd and costly, so far as taking of strike votes under government supervision is concerned.... At any rate, it can be argued with considerable authority that officially conducted strike votes merely encourage strikes.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO MOST OF ALL IS TO IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING. WE NEED TO GIVE IT A REAL CHANCE TO OPERATE. PERHAPS THE BEST WAY TO ACCOMPLISH OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO CUT AWAY OUT-MODED WARTIME MEASURES AND DRAFT NEW LEGISLATION -- WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT CONGRESS APPEARS ABOUT READY TO DO. (caps are writers)

Presumably the legislation referred to above was of the strike-curbing variety that eventually led to the Taft-Hartley labor act. At any rate it would appear to the writer that the Press might be considered to have its tongue in cheek when urging genuine collective bargaining, and in the same breath recommending legislation to do away with

"outmoded wartime measures," presumably such as the War Labor Board, and NLRB agencies which were created in part at least to enforce and protect labor's rights to bargain collectively.

In neither this editorial or the one cited immediately following, is there much left of the guiding hand of E. W. Booth. The writer believes he could not have written or approved either editorial. The policy appears to have swung around from 1911 to 1945. The integrity and simplicity that marked Booth's thinking have been replaced by words that appear to say one thing and mean another, and by an attitude of expediency and compromise.

One of the local editorials that was coded as pro-management concerned a speech given by Bishop Haas, previously referred to under Local Stories. In it Haas criticized the free enterprise system and the Press took him sharply to task. The Bishop thereupon took the Press to task with equal sharpness for misquoting him. The interchange follows.

#### THE BISHOP SETS A TEST<sup>8</sup>

(The editorial began by citing from the text of the Bishop's speech.)

"The challenge put to private enterprise," the bishop declared, "is to produce enough food, clothing,

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8. Ibid., December 15, 1945, 21 inches.

housing and comforts for all people. If it fails to meet this challenge I am convinced it will be discarded..." (The Press editorial then continues)

This is a forthright statement and a rather exciting prediction. Even in its heyday private enterprise never produced enough of these commodities and comforts for everybody. Enough requires definition anyhow; but certainly there ALWAYS WERE SOME PEOPLE UNDERFED, BADLY CLOTHED AND SHELTERED AND ON PUBLIC RELIEF, WHO DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FROM PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. IN FACT THERE WERE QUITE A FEW WHO WERE UNEMPLOYABLE BY PRIVATE ENTERPRISE ON ANY EFFICIENT BASIS WHATEVER OR WHO DIDN'T WANT TO BE EMPLOYED. AND THERE ALWAYS WILL BE. (caps are writers)

We are certain the private enterprise system deserves a better chance of survival than the bishop's severe and impossible standard would provide....

Two days later the Press ran another editorial in which it said it was printing below a letter from Bishop Haas regarding an Associated Press misquotation. The Press alleged the AP had a copy of the Bishop's speech and that after checking with the chancellory and learning there were no copies available as yet for distribution, the Press used the quotes exactly as the AP had cited them. It then went on to quote the Bishop's communication.<sup>9</sup>

The challenge put to private enterprise is to produce enough food, clothing, housing and comforts for all people. If it fails to meet this challenge I am convinced it will be discarded. (The Bishop was citing the Press editorial.)

My actual words were: And it is all important that there be enough food, and clothing and housing and comforts produced to supply all the people with

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9. Ibid., December 17, 1945, 14 inches.

all they need. This is the challenge that is put to private enterprise. If private enterprise fails to meet this challenge I am convinced it will be discarded.

May I suggest that you have not only partly misquoted, but what is even less defensible you have underquoted me with reference to the above passage....

The Bishop then went on to declare his faith in the system of private enterprise. He also pointed out to the Press that copies of his speech were available the day before it was delivered.

A 63 inch advertorial by the American Iron and Steel Institute, "There Are No 'Hidden' Steel Profits," cited the CIO steel union charges and answered them. The 42 inch advertorial by the Michigan Unemployment Commission explained why, under the law, the strikers could not receive unemployment compensation while on strike. Why this was carried as an advertisement, whether it was state-wide in distribution, the writer was unable to ascertain.

Some of the letters to the editor were highly interesting and written vehemently, regardless of which position the authors took regarding the GM strike. They about balanced each other out in quantity and space. Many of the letters were from war wives whose husbands were over seas and they were bitter about the strike. One war widow wrote:

....I am very sorry my husband had to die for these strikers. I wish every one of them would be sent to Europe or Japan....<sup>10</sup>

Another letter urged that there be a "hitch in service for strikers."<sup>11</sup> Still another advocated that strikers trade places with service men who want to come home.<sup>12</sup> A soldier wrote urging that service men be left out of the strike controversy and not wear their uniforms on the picket line.<sup>13</sup>

One of several letters from wives of men in service, and from ex-service men took up the defense of the workers. One of these stated:<sup>14</sup>

The men on the home front are not such a bad class of outlaws as some consider us. We are all in sympathy with these war wives and want to see all the families reunited as quickly as possible but they shouldn't get too excited. They don't want their husbands to rush home just to get one of our jobs. After all they ask what can they do with their meager allotment of \$100 per month. They should stop and consider for a moment what they and their husbands will do when the husbands return home and take jobs with a big fat \$1 per hour attached? I can assure them there will be less than \$100 per month for all their expenses....Why the strike?.... When it comes to a state where a man's weekly wage will not balance his expenses then there is no alternative but to do something to have an adjustment.

Try and catch these, you weeping women. All these little troubles we are going through for our readjustment of wages are for the benefit of your family and all service men's families as well as for us "bold communistic bandits" on the home front.

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10. Ibid., November 29, 1945, 5 inches.
  11. Ibid., December 5, 1945, 6 inches.
  12. Ibid., December 15, 1945, 6 inches.
  13. Ibid., December 5, 1945, 6 inches.
  14. Ibid., December 1, 1945, p. 4, 7 inches.

### Summary

This was the high point in editorial matter for the Press in all periods examined prior to 1947. Out of a total of 418 inches, however, only 97 or 23 per cent, were locally written editorials. There were 18 letters to the editor; 10 columns devoted to labor analysis, from Washington, D. C. columnists; and two large advertorials.

Directionally the content of the editorial page was pretty evenly divided between all six designations, due to the inclusion of so many letters to the editor and columnists' comments. However, locally written editorials were predominantly anti-labor and pro-management, for the first time in all periods for which the Press has been examined.

### National News

Many of the major industries of the country were in the throes of strikes or threatened strikes in the winter of 1945 and the Press frequently carried round-up summaries of strike news. Oil, steel, rubber, and telephone unions were involved. The packinghouse workers were nearing a breaking point in negotiations with the Big Four packers, and the Montgomery Ward "case" was in the headlines in Chicago.

The General Motors strike was involved in half a dozen stories from Washington, most of them dealing with President

Truman's appointment of a fact-finding board to look into the wage-profit picture of the company.

There were eight stories on a labor-management peace parley called by the President. Non-strike news centered on strike-curb legislation; there were 14 stories related to this subject.

### Summary

The Press spent 34 per cent of total space given labor news on national events. Less than half of this dealt with strikes. About half of the national labor news was placed on page one. The chief strike categories were Attempts to Settle on the Issues and Status-of-Strike stories. Non-strike categories centered on Government Policies--Specific Legislation, and Joint Union-Management Activities.

### State News

This was the peak period of state labor news in the Press. Over 30 stories described the General Motors negotiations and strike developments in Detroit and Flint. One story told of a committee of 14 prominent citizens, invited by the UAW to study their wage case and make recommendations. Mrs. Thomas McAllister, chairman of the National Consumer's League, and a resident of Grand Rapids, was in the group of 14. This story appeared at the bottom

of page 24 in the December 6, issue of the Press.

There were a number of stories that described a teamsters strike in Holland, Michigan. During the course of it, the owner of a trucking firm threatened to liquidate his business when 100 drivers walked out, and the Teamsters union promptly offered to buy up the firm. It took negotiations by the union's international officers to straighten out the situation.

On November 29, the Press carried a UP story of about eight inches, on the front page of its second section, datelined Flint:

#### GM CITY AWAITS INEVITABLE STRIKE RESULTS

"This is terrible," said a bar tender. Across the street a butcher stood behind a meat filled counter in a shop without customers. By another week, the impact of the GM strike is expected to affect virtually every business in Flint....etc.

On December 17 the lead story of the day was also datelined Flint with a three column head,

"300 Flint Police Split UAW Picket Barrier. Break Lines at AC Plant. Office Help Forced into Drifts at Lansing."

(lead sentence) - Reinforced police squads were called out early Monday in Flint and Lansing to guard General Motors office and clerical workers in entering plants through expanded lines of UAW-CIO pickets.

A story datelined Detroit on November 28, that told of an exchange between Rep. Claire Hoffmann and Walter Reuther, got five inches on page 10, with the head, "Reuther Parries

Hoffman's Jabs." In reply to Hoffman's charge that he was the number one draft dodger because he had "neither chick nor child and his wife is employed," Reuther stated:

I have never asked for a draft deferment. I have one child, my second one having died three months ago.

### Summary

The Press carried a total of 58 items and 666 column inches on state labor news in the 1945 period. Much of it concerned the General Motors strike and negotiations in Detroit.

Over 90 per cent of state stories dealt with strike news. About 70 per cent of state news was placed on page one, more than in any other period. The largest strike category was Attempts to Settle on the Issues; largest non-strike category was Union Activities.

### General Summary of Press Coverage in 1945 (November-December)

This was the peak period for labor coverage in the Press. Out of a total of 1,970 column inches, the Press devoted 34 per cent to national labor news; 31 per cent to state events; 22 per cent to editorial content; and 13 per cent to local news.

There were more letters to the editor during this period than in previous intervals which swelled the editorial content.

Page one space went to about 45 per cent of all labor news. Out of 900 inches on page one, 52 per cent was of state origin; 36 per cent national; and 12 per cent local.

A change took place in Press reporting during the period of the General Motors strike. There was a shift from marked pro-labor treatment of local stories to a predominantly neutral tone. Locally written editorials, for the first time, also, showed up chiefly in anti-labor and pro-management designations. The contrast in reporting quality was most apparent when compared to the 1911 and 1921 periods. In the 1937 period also the Press gave more space and put more effort into obtaining opinions from both management and labor during the second city-wide furniture strike, than it did in 1945.

The Press was examined at the beginning of the General Motors strike, and as in 1911 gave greater total and local space given to labor news than it did in the period (1937) when it was examined at the close of a strike.

The fact that the GM strike was part of a nation-wide tie-up and not of strictly local origin, undoubtedly contributed to the fact that a smaller amount of space was given it, than the 1937 and 1911 periods, where the tie-ups were local.

How the Herald Covered Labor News, February 20-March 20, 1946.

As previously noted, the Herald is a morning daily with a week-day circulation of 55,205; on Sundays, of 70,968. The daily paper averages about 20 pages in length, the Sunday issue, around 120 pages.

As a morning daily, the Herald is in a position to report night meetings and thus "scoop" the afternoon paper on any big local news that breaks.

A local of the American Newspaper Guild CIO, was established on the Herald in 1943 and has been in existence ever since then. A written contract has been renewed annually. According to Guild members the Herald management has shown fairness and has made a serious effort to live with the Guild. Relations between the Herald and the Guild have been consistently good and in general, Guild members say they regard the Herald management as an example of fairness and good faith in its relations with them.

Local News

The quality of Herald reporting during the period of the General Motors strike shifted from the predominantly neutral tone of the 1937 period, and the primarily pro-management direction, of 1922, back to the pro-labor direction it had shown in 1911. There were many balanced local stories as well.

The Herald treatment of local stories was in pretty direct contrast with the way the Press handled labor news at the same time. There was more color, more information, and a kind of seasoned objectivity in the method of handling, labor news on the Herald that put it on a par with some of the best national labor reporting.

The fact that local news in the Herald was scanty by comparison with the Press (the Herald had 178 inches, the Press, 267) is somewhat beside the point. It bears out the apparent fact that generally there is more news at the beginning of a strike than at the end.

The key to the quality of Herald reporting in 1946 showed most clearly in the balanced stories. A number of these are cited below.

PHONE WORKERS FAVOR DEMANDS SUPPORT FEDERATIONS  
NEGOTIATIONS TO POINT OF STRIKING FOR THEM<sup>15</sup>

Two Grand Rapids affiliates of the National Federation of Telephone Workers were on record Tuesday night in favor of the national Federation's blanket "across the board" wage increase demands and in support of negotiations to the point of striking for them.

The action of Grand Rapids members committed them to join in the threatened nation wide telephone tie up scheduled for Thursday morning if they receive such instructions from the national Federation headquarters.

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15. Grand Rapids Herald, March 6, 1946, 11 inches.

(The story goes on to cite the size of vote and to list wage demands.) (last paragraph) - William C. Bergman, Telephone Company manager here, said local dial service probably would continue for some time in the event of a strike here and that an attempt would be made to handle emergency long distance calls although most long distance service would cease.

The story explained what the threatened strike was about in the first paragraph. It tied in Grand Rapids with the national Federation in the second paragraph. It listed the size of the vote and told what the wage demands were. It got a comment from management about what affect the local strike might have on phone service, certainly of interest to the average reader.

This next story is about a local incident on which there was conflicting opinion. The Herald reporter apparently went to a good deal of trouble to find out what the facts were and how the incident actually occurred:

WILDCAT STRIKE LEADS TO FELONIOUS ASSAULT CHARGE,  
VETERAN CARRIES HOT GUN TO WORK<sup>16</sup>

Lawrence Squires (age, address) carried a shotgun to work Tuesday a.m. and subsequently landed in a cell at Police Headquarters charged with felonious assault. Squires who is a veteran of two campaigns in Italy had returned from the Army about three months ago and to his job at plant 2 of Michigan Wheel.

Police arrested Squires Tuesday a.m. when pickets at the plant complained he had threatened one of their number with a gun. Squires insisted to officers he had made no threats but had carried the gun because he believed pickets were planning to harm him if he attempted to enter the plant which had been out on what he called a "wildcat strike" since Monday.

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16. Ibid., March 6, 14 inches.

Pickets admitted the strike was "wildcat" in nature but said it fell in this category because they had not had time to file a strike notice. Squires said he did not leave the plant Monday when the other employes went out because he believed the strike was not authorized and he was in dire need of money. He lost a child about two months ago.

The ex-soldier told officers that when he left the plant Monday evening pickets told him he would not be able to go to work Tuesday. He said he decided this constituted a threat and Tuesday, over the protests of his wife, carried the gun to work.

Stories concerning the happenings at the plant when he arrived differ. Squires says he did not point the gun at any one and that he placed a hand on Chris Geigle of Orleans, only to push him to one side when Geigle attempted to block his path.

Geigle told police that Squires pointed the gun at him and his story is born out, police report, by other witnesses. Geigle who signed the complaint against Squires said, "The gun was pointed right at my chest."

Charles R. Evenson, president of the company which operates Plant Number 1 at Market avenue as well as the one in which the strike started said the company had been experiencing some labor troubles of late.

Evenson told the Herald there was an unauthorized strike several weeks ago when the company refused to discharge an official at plant No. 2. At that time Evenson said a number of men did not walk out and among these was Squires.

The trouble Monday is said by Evenson to have started from this previous difficulty. Short of help, the company had ordered Herbert Fairchild, chairman of the union's shop committee to work with Squires. This, Evenson said, Fairchild refused to do. The result was that the company discharged Fairchild. This caused Monday's walkout. Approximately 28 employes of plant No. 2 were involved in the walkout. About 100 employes of plant No. 1 went out in sympathy.

Evenson said he had been assured by union representatives that plant No. 2 employes would be back at work Wednesday morning. Employes who are out are members of the International Moulders and Foundry Workers Union, which is an AFL organization.

Squires said he was a union member and would strike if the union called a strike but that he did not intend to strike unless he had been notified by the union. He told police the gun he was carrying was not loaded....(Squires was released after \$500 bond was paid by his father....has five year old son...second son, five months, was suffocated in his crib January 26.)

The rather painstaking details that went into the above story, the effort to get varied points of view, and to explain why a walkout of a 100 men took place a week earlier, before mentioning the fact of the strike all are rather reminiscent of the early furniture strike stories in the Press. This was an explosive story, subject to misinterpretation and it was handled in a balanced and factual way by somebody who presumably could look at the situation from both management and labor's points of view.

A third story dealt with the end of a strike of local furniture workers<sup>and</sup>/is an excellent example of balanced reporting. It cites the positions of both management and labor, tells what issues were involved in the strike and how they were settled:

#### BERKEY AND GAY STRIKE ENDS<sup>17</sup>

Approximately 300 Berkey and Gay Furniture Company workers were back on their jobs Monday under an agreement

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17. Ibid., March 12, p. 5, 7 inches.

between management and labor which included an approximately 11 per cent wage increase.

The agreement between the company and members of Local 415 UFWA, ratified by the union in voting Saturday, ended a strike at the plant which began February 25 when the union sought a 30 per cent wage increase.

Morris Miller, union regional director and M. J. Williams, vice president of the company said the wage increase will be approximately 11 per cent for all workers.

Miller said the agreement also provided for time and a half for Saturday and double time for Sunday regardless of whether the days were the sixth or seventh days worked in a week, but Williams said the proposal still was under negotiation. He said the company previously had paid those wages for the two days when they were the sixth or seventh days worked.

Williams said the settlement also included an incentive payment program which would pay a bonus of between 15 and 20 per cent to an average worker for above standard production. "The incentive payment plan will be placed in operation within 60 days," Williams said.

The lead story on March 14 described the end of the General Motors strike. The Herald gave it six columns including cuts with two stories on the local plant's return to work. One of these was a human interest story that ranks with the best journalistic writing, in the author's opinion. It was coded as pro-labor. The other local story described the end of the strike in one and a third columns. This story was coded as balanced and is a good example of crisp, adequate, complete reporting. A few excerpts from it, including the lead set the tone.

## 2,700 GRAND RAPIDS WORKERS AWAIT SIGN TO RETURN TO JOBS

Settlement of the 113 day General Motors strike set the stage here Wednesday for an early return of approximately 2,700 employes of the company's two Grand Rapids plants.

Union officials at both, however, indicated the strikers will remain off the job until final ratification by the union and ending of the strike in all the company's 92 plants in the nation.

Officials were reluctant to comment on the settlement agreement until it is ratified by union delegates at meetings in Detroit over the weekend.

(The rest of the story dealt with negotiations on local grievances and cited spokesmen for the unions and management)

The human interest story is cited in full. It occupied a column on page one. The by-line was Seth Anderson's, <sup>former</sup> city editor of the Herald, and today, farm editor:

### LIFE BEGINS AGAIN FOR GM FAMILY

No smoke from factory stacks, no noise from the plants, a thin line of pickets where streams of men should be hurrying through the gates during shift change hours.... These are the obvious marks of a strike but the real ones are elsewhere.

One is the milling crowd of men at union headquarters, tight lipped and not very happy.

One is the presence of hundreds of families whose income has been shut off and who are wondering where their next meal is coming from.

One is the stack of groceries waiting for distribution to needy union members who pull picket duty.

When they end, as they did Wednesday, it's not an occasion for a party. Instead it's one of real happiness and relief.

"It seems too good to be true," said William Grit, 41 year old machine operator who has a wife and five children at home. The others at Union headquarters nodded in silent agreement.

The strike is very real to the Gritt family as it is to hundreds like them in Grand Rapids.

During the war, he said, he worked 56 hours a week at \$1.14 an hour. Then he was laid off for a time and, recalled, he went to work as a machine operator at \$1.06 an hour for a 40 hour week.

When the strike came in November Grit stayed home at 202 Crown St., S. W. or did picket duty. For a time he had another job but that didn't last.

The strike cost him approximately \$1,000 in wages, but he thinks it was worthwhile. With five children and no income except union welfare fund payments and a box of groceries from the union, \$1,000 is a lot of money.

But Grit feels a little like a soldier after a victory: "We paid a high price but it was worth it," he says. "I'd stay out 112 days more if it was necessary," he declares.

But he's glad the strike is over and so is his wife when he arrives home. "I've had my fingers crossed all day. Won't it be nice to go into a store and buy what we want instead of what we can get or what we should?" she said all smiles. The cutline under a picture of the GM striker and his family read:

Grit's four oldest children -- James, 16; Marcia 14; George 12; and Davis 6, all smiles too, because they are old enough to understand -- a little.

Grit tosses his youngest daughter Jean 3 up into the air. She doesn't understand about strikes, but she does about falling. Grit catches her. "Daddy," she says and smiles.

Caption for picture read: Strikes End Brings Happiness to Worker and Family.

There are several points worth noticing in the above story. It was printed on page one and given a full column. It described the reactions of a striker and his family to the settlement in a manner that appeared authentic and which was neither overplayed nor toned down. It presented a point of view that was contrary to the Herald's editorial policy and which included this comment.

We paid a high price but it was worth it....  
I'd stay out 112 days more if it was necessary.

It was a sample of top notch journalism devoted to a side of the strike that generally does not make headlines, the effect on the pocket books and morale of the men on the picket lines and their families. The story had the same sympathy characteristic of the Press in 1911, but an objectivity that is a prerequisite of good, modern reporting.

An example of a two-inch story, coded as pro-labor, which did not overlook any facts or appear perfunctory is cited below:

#### PANTLIND, UNION SIGN AGREEMENT<sup>18</sup>

J. J. Ruttman of Toledo, Ohio, international representative said Tuesday the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, AFL, has signed a closed shop contract with the management of the Pantlind hotel covering 230 workers. Thomas Walker hotel manager confirmed his statement.

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18. Ibid., February 27, 1946, p. 7, 2 inches.

Asserting it is the first contract of its kind covering Pantlind employes Ruttman said it provides for a closed shop, vacation with pay and sick leave. Ruttman said the provision on wages will be disclosed later.

The Pantlind is the largest hotel in Grand Rapids and the description of the number of employes, the terms of their contract, and statements by the organizer and management, over an initial contract justified the story news wise. Yet a spokesman for the Press a few months ago told the author that it was against their policy to carry any stories of the signing of collective bargaining agreements because "there are just too many of them." He referred particularly to the auto plants by comparison with which the 250 hotel employes would be even less significant.

#### Summary

The Herald had 178 inches of local news, representing 11 per cent of all labor content in the 1946 period examined. Directionally, there were 102 inches coded pro-labor; 64 inches, balanced; and 12 inches, neutral.

The largest strike category was Status-of-Strike; the chief non-strike category was Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor. About half of local labor news was placed on page one.

Editorial Comment

The tone of Herald editorials during the 1946 period was consistent with the attitude toward labor expressed in other periods examined. The bulk of them were anti-labor. Excerpts from a few illustrate their direction:

March 13, five inches -- Now Foremen May Unionize -- Thus we have another example of the extremes to which the Wagner Act has taken us and the Wagner Act is the basis upon which rests many of the labor disturbances of today....

March 11, seven inches -- Coal Strike Next? -- The latest threat of a strike was invited by the concessions which have been made to strikers in many other industries.... Last spring the miners were granted a wage increase accompanied by an increased price of coal. We are likely to get another increase this spring and every other spring until the whole structure topples and all industry is forced to go back to first principles and rebuild from the ground....

March 7, five inches -- Who Will Pay? -- Settlement of the strike of the Packinghouse Workers with a grant of a 16 cent increase in pay and an offset of 1 1/2 per cent in the cost of living may give the strikers something to think about. How much did they actually win through their strike? What will be the ultimate penalty in inflation? Who will pay the shot? Those who will pay for this increase in wages are all the people....etc.

February 21, 11 inches -- Was it Worth it? -- The steel strike has been settled. Not all the 750,000 men will be back to work before two weeks since the cold furnaces must be reheated and adjustments to the price schedule and the new wage rates must be made.... It might be wise for Labor to consider whether its meager gain in wages and for Management to consider whether its losses in production were worth the bitter fight and the strike....

March 2, five inches -- Who Will Win? -- The strike of the General Motors workers now in its 102nd day is said to be no nearer a settlement than when it was first called.... Who will win the victory? No one. Every factor plus the public is a definite and very heavy loser through this strike.

March 20, 14 inches -- The Better Way -- The loss in unfilled order to General Motors exceeds 500 million and lost wages between 128 to 140 million.... On this basis it will take 1,680 days or four and a half years of steady labor for the workers to make up their losses... Wouldn't it have been far better if the GM workers had accepted the proffered 11 per cent increase and remained on their jobs while the negotiations concerning the other 7 1/2 cents were being carried on?.... It seems to the man on the street that far more is gained by continuing work until a wage advance is negotiated than to shut off all earnings until final agreement is reached.

March 15, eight inches-- Who Was the Winner? -- Two great strikes were settled Wednesday. One was of the UAW-CIO against General Motors. That strike had run 113 days and it will be several days before the men are actually back at work.... The other strike brought to an end was that of the UE General Electric. That strike had run for 57 days.... Everybody in the Nation is happy that the strikes are ended. The question which all parties must answer is: Who was the winner?.... The strikers have been without work, without pay.... They have suffered, The companies have lost production. The United States has lost in reconversion. The people of the country as a whole have lost materially through the setback to the prosperity which was waiting only production of much needed merchandise... We have been told that war solves no problems. The same may be said of strikes.... etc.

March 9, five inches -- (On Old Charlie the milk horse who made his rounds during a milk strike even though the milk wasn't there.) Charlie got no more hay nor grain for his work. He didn't ask any more. He just went about his business while his driver loafed and the kiddies went without their milk....

On February 21 the Herald ran one of its two pro-labor editorials, "Frankenstein Retires."

The UAW will lose one of its most aggressive officials with the retirement of Frankenstein and at the same time will lose perhaps its most highly educated official. Frankenstein is a college graduate and likewise a student. He is a splendid speaker and physically and mentally unafraid of anything. He is an advocate of unionism because, through his studies, he is thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of the cause of the worker. Yet he is not to be classed as the sort of radical which has done inestimable harm to that cause. Frankenstein argues his cause from knowledge and belief. He is not purely a rabble rouser ....etc.

This is of interest partly because it gives a portrait of the type of leadership the Herald approved in union circles, partly because the man was a member of the CIO, of which the paper generally took a pretty dim view editorially.

#### C. National Labor News

National news took up 35 per cent of all labor content in the Herald in the 1946 period. Major events centered on a variety of national strikes with flare-ups of violence that made headlines.

The steel fact-finding panel appointed by President Truman was much in the news. Coal negotiations were in full swing. A nation-wide phone strike was in the offing. Power strikes paralyzed Pittsburgh, Pa., and Houston, Texas. A city-wide transit strike threatened New York.

General Electric and the United Electrical Workers, CIO, signed an agreement ending a 57 day walkout. Episodes of violence occurred in Philadelphia at the General Electric Plant. Mounted police attacked picket lines and strikers retaliated by throwing 800 marbles under the horses' feet. The Herald carried a number of pictures of the mounted police riding down the pickets.

#### Summary

Out of 556 inches on national news, 419, or 76 per cent, dealt with strikes. About 37 per cent, 275 inches, made page one. The largest strike categories were, Attempts to Settle on the Issues and Status-of-Strike stories. The chief non-strike categories were, Union Activities and Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor.

#### D. State News

News from the state labor scene hit an all-time peak for the Herald in 1946. Most of it had to do with the General Motors strike and negotiations in Detroit between the company and the UAW. A Detroit milk strike took up a good deal of space. Other stories dealt with UAW-CIO wage talks with Ford, Packard and other auto companies.

A looming fight for the presidency of the UAW broke into the news columns with R. J. Thomas and Walter Reuther sparring at one another. Headlines read:

BOOM REUTHER FOR UAW CHIEF: GROUP OPENS DRIVE TO  
OUST THOMAS<sup>19</sup>

and

BATTLE FOR UAW PRESIDENCY THROWS GM STRIKE NEGOTI-  
ATIONS IN SHADOW<sup>20</sup>

### Summary

The Herald spent a total of 593 inches on state news, 38 per cent of all labor content for the 1946 period. Of this, 83 per cent dealt with strikes, and about the same proportion made page one.

Chief categories in the strike group were, Attempts to Settle on the Issues and Status-of-Strike. Non-strike categories were divided between Union Activities, Joint Union-Management Activities, and Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor.

Of a total of 48 items from the state scene, 27 were related to the General Motors strike.

### Highlights of Press and Herald Coverage in 1945-6 Periods

The outstanding features of this period were the rather complete reversal between the two papers in the quality of local news stories and the change in the direction of Press editorials.

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19. Ibid., March 10, p. 1, 21 inches.

20. Ibid., March 11, p. 1, 11 inches.

The Herald labor reporting was more comprehensive, sympathetic and objective than the Press coverage of local news. The latter shifted from the sympathetic, human-interest approach of the 1911 days and the rather detailed presentation of both management and labor points of view in 1937, to a dull, semi-statistical impersonal account of labor events.

Its editorial columns reflected a growing criticism of labor's point of view, a growing sympathy with the problems of management. The Herald editorial columns were consistent with past attitudes expressed about organized labor, and the majority of them were coded anti-labor.

But the Herald reporting presented quite a different picture. It covered fully and with understanding a series of local labor stories that contained sufficient facts, interpretation and color to be both readable and informative. Highpoint of local stories was a human interest feature on one of the General Motors strikers and his family, the day the strike was declared over.

The Press reached its peak in total quantity of labor news in the 1945 period.

#### A Comparison of How the Press and Herald Handled Labor News in 1945-46

The following bar charts illustrate the differences and similarities in the way the two newspapers treated labor news during the period of the General Motors strike.

CHART I. PORPORTION OF ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER BY MAJOR TYPES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, 1945-46, IN COLUMN INCHES

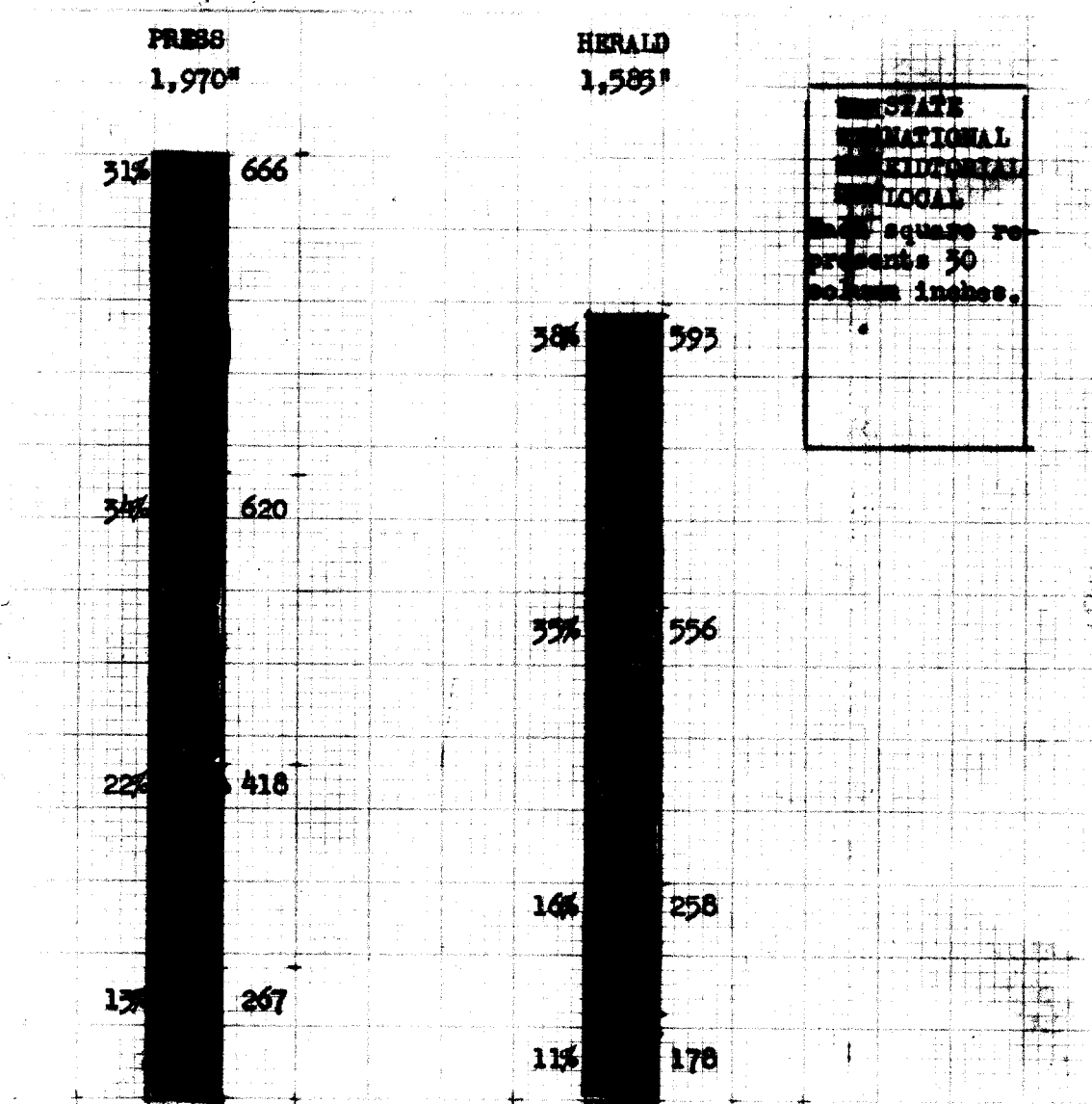


Chart I shows that the Press carried about 400 inches more of total labor content than the Herald. The two papers were roughly equal in national and state coverage but the Press carried a third more editorial content and local news than the Herald. The Press was examined during beginning stages of the General Motors strike; the Herald at its close.

CHART II. PROPORTION OF STRIKE TO NON-STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, BY MAJOR TYPES, IN COLUMN INCHES, 1945-46

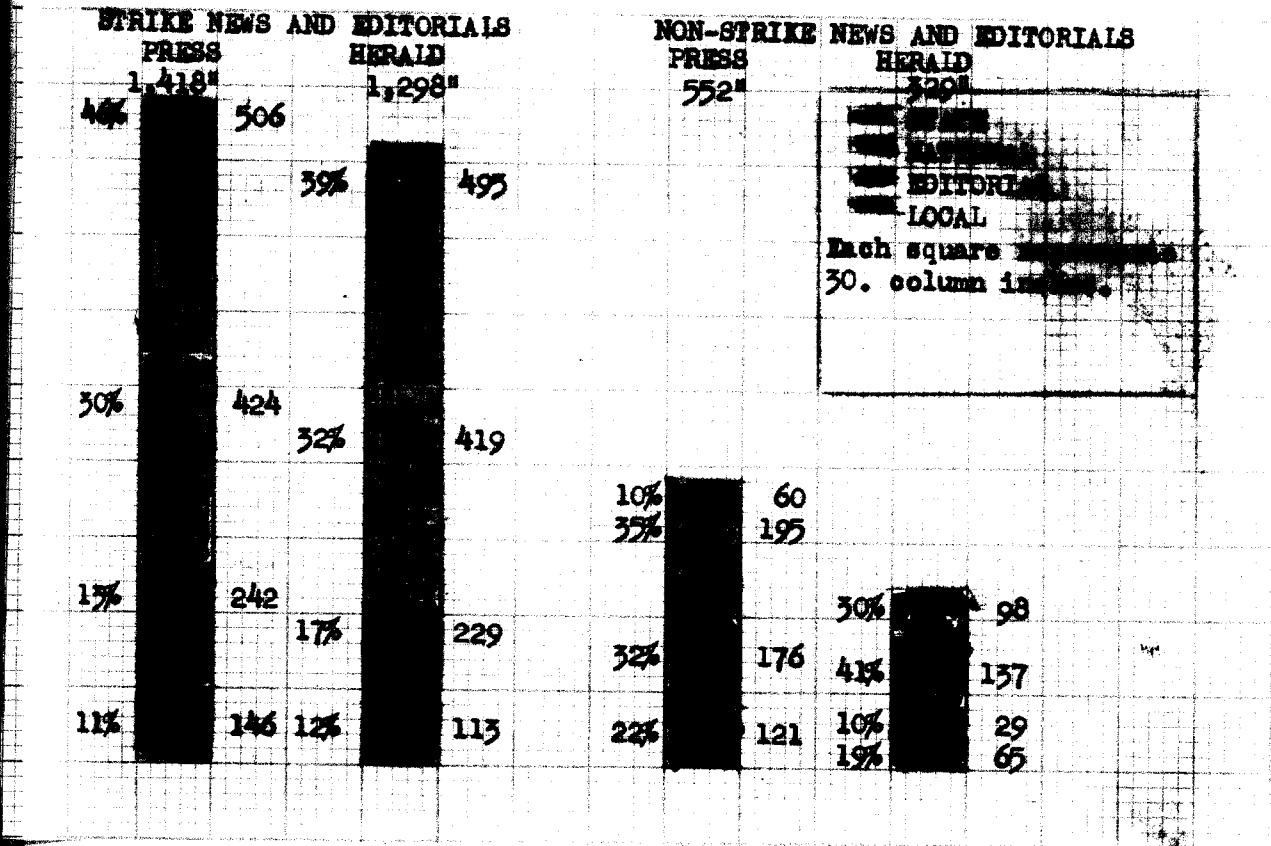


Chart II shows that the two papers were about even in their distribution of strike news throughout all four major types, national, state, editorial and local. The Press had considerably more non-strike news than the Herald. The two had about the same distribution proportionately of state, national, and local non-strike news, but the Press carried about six times as much editorial matter as the Herald.

CHART IV. DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD IN COLUMN INCHES, 1945-46.

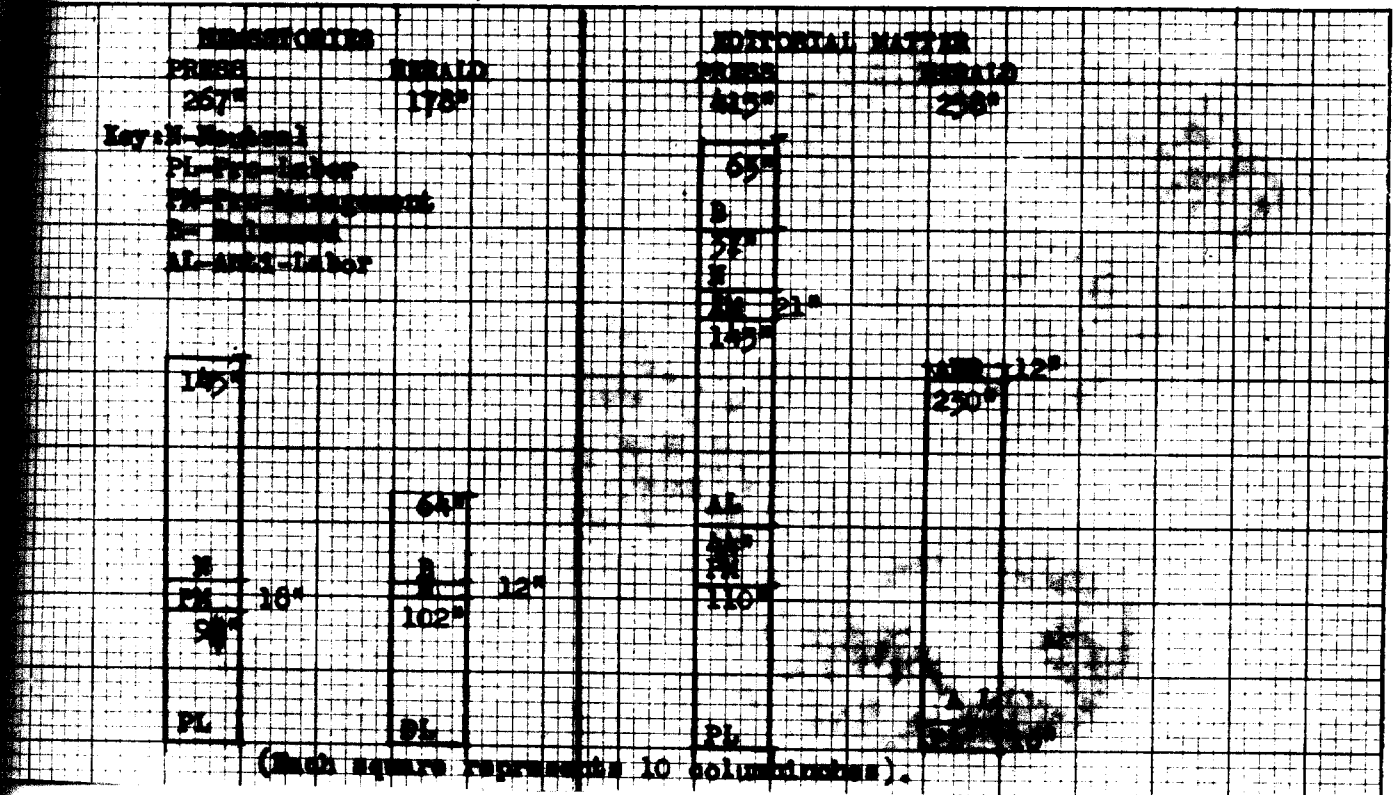


Chart IV shows that the direction of local news stories in the Press was predominantly neutral; for the Herald, predominantly pro-labor.

Editorial content in the Herald was almost exclusively anti-labor while the Press had a much wider distribution, due to the inclusion of many letters to the editor, advertorials, and labor columnists' comments. Predominant direction of all Press material, however, was anti-labor.

CHART V. MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND STATE STORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, IN COLUMN INCHES, 1945-46.

Press					267"
1-A	1-C	2-B	2-M		
76	49	48	73		

Herald			178"
1-E	1-M	2-M	
61	52	65	

Press				

Chart V shows a consistent similarity among major category groups for both strike and non-strike news. Most frequent strike categories for both papers were: Physical Conduct, both Peaceful and Coercive Tactics; Attempts to Settle on the Issues (although the Herald had none locally); Status-of-Strike stories; and Effect of Strike on Public Welfare.

In non-strike categories, the most frequent throughout the three types in both papers were, Union Activities; Joint Union-management Activities; Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor; and Government Policies -- Specific Legislation.

Interestingly, the strike category Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics, was used more frequent for local stories in the Press while the Herald carried more in the Physical Conduct--Peaceful Tactics category.

Press 267"

1-A	1-O	1-M	2-B	2-M
76	49	41	48	73

Herald 178"

1-E	1-M	2-M
61	52	65

620"

Press	1-E	1-M	2-O	2-M
1-O	200	130	94	62
				98
				75

NATIONAL

Herald 556"

1-B	1-O	1-E	1-M	2-B	2-M
59	132	197	31	49	88

Press 666"

1-B	1-O	1-F	1-M	2-M
90	362	54	100	60

STATE

Herald 502"

1-O	1-E	1-F	1-M	2-M
272	144	53	25	98

Press 418"

1-A	1-O	1-F	2-F	2-H	2-M
50	63	129	82	49	45

EDITORIAL

Herald 258"

1-O	1-F	*1-M
168	56	29
		5

Key:

STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 1-A Physical Conduct, Peaceful
- 1-B Physical Conduct, Coercive
- 1-C Attempts to Settle on Issue
- 1-D Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention
- 1-E Status of Strike
- 1-F Effect on Public Welfare

NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 2-A Disaster, Sabotage, Welfarism
  - 2-B Union Activities
  - 2-C Joint Union-Management
  - 2-D Community or Nation-Wide Union Activities
  - 2-E Economic Conditions
  - 2-F Pol. & Gov't Programs & Policies
  - 2-G General Gov't Policies
- (Each square represents 10 column inches. Categories with less than 50 inches have been combined under 1-M and 2-M: Miscellaneous).

Coercive tactics, was used more frequent for local stories in the Press while the Herald carried more in the Physical Conduct--Peaceful Tactics category.

In non-strike categories, the most frequent throughout the three types in both papers were, Union Activities; Joint Union-management Activities; Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor; and Government Policies -- Specific Legislation.

Interestingly, the strike category Physical Conduct, Coercive Tactics, was used more frequent for local stories in the Press while the Herald carried more in the Physical Conduct -- Peaceful Tactics category.

## CHAPTER V

### FIRST CITY-WIDE TELEPHONE STRIKE AND OTHER LABOR EVENTS IN APRIL 1947

#### Background of Period

The labor scene in April, 1947, was an extension of the post-war period described in the last chapter. Steel and auto negotiations were under way, the coal mines had been seized by the government, the telephone strike spread across the country, and a wave of anti-strike legislation mounted that was to culminate in passage of the Taft-Hartley act.

In Grand Rapids a number of small strikes took place, a jurisdictional fight broke out in a local of the United Electrical Workers, CIO, over the issue of Communist-leadership, and city telephone workers joined in a nation-wide walkout. The local labor market was reported to be among the state's tightest, and city teachers won on a pay hike.

This is the only time period in which labor coverage in both the Press and the Herald have been examined jointly. This was done primarily to observe differences in quantity and quality of treatment of the same events at the same time.

#### How The Press Covered Labor News In April 1947

Despite being about twice the size of the Herald with

nearly double its circulation (excluding Sundays) the Press, in April 1947, offered its readers roughly half as much local labor news, and close to a third less total labor news. Its policy, in short, appeared to be one of omission.

### Local News

The quantity of local labor news shrank to the lowest point of any period during which the Press was examined. There were 139 inches devoted to the local labor scene.

The quality of local reporting continued to be generalized, overly-statistical, and impersonal. What little personalization there was generally came from extensive quotations by management. There was little of the warmth, color, or man-on-the street interviewing that characterized Press labor reporting in 1911.

Excerpts from a number of stories illustrate the kind of treatment accorded labor news. The first two described the early stages of the telephone strike.

### Phone Strike Backed Here: Three Locals Ready To Join Walkout<sup>1</sup>

Three of four telephone workers' unions involving Grand Rapids operations have voted to join the National Federation of Telephone Workers strike beginning next Monday and the fourth has indicated it is "in sympathy" with the strike, although it is not under contract with the company.

Mrs. Margaret Boltier, chairman of the local board

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1. Grand Rapids Press, April 3, 1947, p. 2, 14 inches.

of Local 520 Communications Workers of America said her local has voted, 15 to 1, to follow the strike pattern set by NFTW. The CWA local formerly known as the Michigan Telephone Employees Federation, involves...operators and accounting employees in the company's Grand Rapids district.

Harold Anderson, president of Local 305 Federation of Telephone Employees said his local had voted 11 to 1 to strike, if all peaceful means fail. The FTEM is a union for plant maintenance employees,..and covers 400. Western Electric employees affiliated with ACWA have voted 15 to 1 to follow the NFTW strike plans...100 involved... It is generally believed the CTW members would not cross picket lines set up by the three other unions here if strike plans are followed next Monday.

The wage demand would result in additional annual costs of two million dollars in the company's Grand Rapids district, it was indicated here Thursday in figures supplied by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company. The Grand Rapids district comprises, besides Grand Rapids, the west Michigan town of Grandville, Hastings, etc. Computation was made on the basis of the number of telephones in the district.

For the metropolitan area covered by the Grand Rapids telephone directory, the increased costs would be \$1,400,000 it was indicated. In Grand Rapids alone it would cost \$1,300,000.

Judson Peckham, manager of the local office of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company said Thursday "nobody wants a telephone strike. It involves losses of about one million a week in the communities served by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company."

He said wages compare favorably with those for similar work in other companies in the same community. Included in the PRESENT WAGE DEMANDS IS AN ACROSS THE BOARD DEMAND FOR \$12 WEEKLY INCREASE. (caps, mine.)...

"In an effort to avert the threatened strike," Peckham said, "the company has offered to arbitrate the wage dispute before a panel of representative Michigan citizens, the action of the panel to be final. The only qualification to that offer has been a no-strike pledge on the part of the union. The offer has...been rejected.

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### 900 Local Phone Workers Out

The telephone strike clamped down on West Michigan

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2. Ibid., April 7, p. 1, 14 inches.

Monday cutting out more than 99 per cent of intercity traffic and disrupting almost completely all communications in 14 nearby town with manual-type telephones.

Of the 950 non-management telephone employes in the Grand Rapids office of the telephone company an estimated 900 were not at their posts. This included most of 48 "traffic" and 380 "plant" employes who are directly affected by the strike. Approximately 40 of the 85 "commercial" employes, whose union is not technically on strike, did not cross picket lines Monday.

Combined figures, showing management and non-management personnel at work, were released Monday afternoon by Judson Peckham, local manager. They showed: Plant department, 296 of 1,466 scheduled employes at work in the northern division; traffic, 53 of 185 at work in the district; commercial, 36 of 77 at work in Grand Rapids; accounting, 68 of 235 at work in the division.

Also out on strike here were 100 more employes of Western Electric, an affiliate of the telephone company.

#### Dial Phones Operate

Communications within the city continued uninterrupted Monday morning. West Michigan towns without dial service and dependent on operators for telephone connections include, Caledonia, Dutton, Lowell, Marne, Zeeland, Grand Haven, Middleville, Big Rapids, Trufant, Fremont, Grant, Ionia, Belding and Greenville.

Peckham emphasized that no repairs could be made to any dial equipment which becomes defective during the strike.

Subscribers who dialed the long distance operator Monday morning were connected immediately to Detroit by trunkline where a transcription continually announced: "This is a recording. We're sorry but due to a strike we're unable to have an operator answer your signals. If you have an extreme emergency call, please dial 115."

#### Take Emergency Calls

Ten of the local office's trunklines to Detroit were connected to the recorded statement. "We are getting so many emergency calls that the operators cannot handle all of them. It is absolutely necessary that only the most urgent calls be placed. Do not call for the operator

unless the call is necessary for protection of life and property," Peckham said.

Only one "incident" was reported Monday on picket lines which surrounded all telephone properties here. A woman who identified herself as a former operator was arrested on disorderly conduct charges after she reportedly tried to break the picket lines to take over a switchboard.

The above two stories are cited in full because they emphasized the service and financial aspects of the telephone company's position in the strike, and played down the point of view and reactions of the strikers. This appeared to be the policy followed by the Press throughout the 1947 period.

Even though a strike of telephone workers may not be comparable with a walk-out of a city's most vital industry, such as furniture in Grand Rapids, none-the-less it would seem that two-thirds of a column is scarcely adequate in terms of space.

In terms of content, the first story above carried one sentence in the next to the last paragraph which gave some indication of the union's wage demands. It contained three paragraphs of quotations by the local manager of the telephone company, most of them giving figures on how much the wage increase would cost the company.

..."Nobody wants a telephone strike. It involves losses of about one million a week in the communities served by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company..."

In the second story above there were two references that indicated picket lines had been established. The first, at the end of the second paragraph, noted that "commercial"

employees, not on strike, "did not cross picket lines..." The second was the last sentence of the story and had to do with a woman who was arrested on a disorderly conduct charge, "after she reportedly tried to break the picket lines to take over a switchboard." This, despite the fact that 900 'white collar' workers, most of them young, attractive women, who had grown up in the city, for the first time in their lives found themselves on the picket line.

The only picture carried on the day the telephone strike began was titled, "Two Old Timers at the Switchboard", and showed two supervisory employees busily manning a deserted switchboard.

### Local Estimates 80 Phones Quit<sup>3</sup>

An estimated 80 to 100 telephones in Grand Rapids have gone out of service since the start of the telephone strike Monday morning, Judson Peckham, manager of the local office, said Tuesday.

In addition, 250 to 300 more telephones have developed "troubles" although still in service, Peckham said.

Effect of the flood on telephone equipment has not yet been determined, Peckham said, because those customers most likely to be affected have evacuated their homes. Only when the flood subsides and subscribers return to their homes can the full effect be determined he said.

Peckham appealed to subscribers again to make long distance calls only in emergencies. The local situation is complicated by the volume of out of town long distance calls which are routed through this city, he said.

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3. Ibid., April 8, p. 1, 10 inches.

Eighteen west Michigan towns and villages have no operator service, and all calls to operators reporting trouble, long distance, and requests for assistance, must be handled by the small long distance crew in Grand Rapids.

Telegrams Up 75 Per Cent  
Phone Strike Increases Wire Business<sup>4</sup>

Western Union business in Grand Rapids jumped by more than 75 per cent in the first two days of the telephone strike, Clifton W. Press, superintendent of the Western Union Telegraph Company office, said Wednesday.

The overall national increase has been reported at 25 per cent, Press said.

By adding to its labor force and by lengthening working days the local office has been able to handle the increase in business. Press indicated service has been maintained at almost normal standards...

Tuesday business was noticeably heavier than that of Monday, probably because many potential telephone users had deferred long distance calls, Press said. Traffic is expected to increase for several days if the strike should continue, he estimated.

A growing optimism among strikers here became apparent Wednesday as reports from state and national headquarters indicated a settlement appears imminent.

The above two stories, also cited in full, made the front page. The first was devoted to statistics on the number of telephones out of order and an appeal by the manager of the local company to cut down on telephone calls. It was exclusively a management story. The second dealt with a side-light of the telephone strike, the increase in business it brought the Western Union company. It was based on an interview with the local head of the Western Union company. The last

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4. Ibid., April 9, p. 1, 5 inches.

sentence mentioned "a growing optimism among strikers."

On April 11 the Press carried a two and a half inch box on page one, "Elements Quiet 400 Telephones." The first sentence dealt with the effects of a flood, the second paragraph cited more statistics on the number of telephones out of order due to the strike.

There was no further mention of the phone strike locally until April 21, ten days later, when the 12 inch story below appeared on page two.

Phone Strike Meet Called. One Dispute Here Ends.  
Others Continue.

A mass meeting of 1200 striking Bell Telephone employees in the Grand Rapids district has been called for Tuesday morning in the Civic auditorium black and silver room, spokesmen for the striking unions said Monday afternoon.

Walter Schaar, president of the Federation of Telephone Employees of Michigan, will address the employees, giving a summary of negotiations and union activities in the first 15 days of the Michigan strike.

Charles Bachelder, member of the state council of the National Federation of Telephone Workers and president of the Commercial Telephone Workers Association of Michigan, came here from Detroit over the weekend to urge local commercial department workers to observe picket lines more strictly.

A general tightening of picket lines and of picket line observance has resulted, union spokesmen said Monday. "There are fewer commercial workers on the job today than last week."

Judson Peckham, manager of the telephone company here, said that 60 per cent of the commercial department workers were at their jobs Monday, compared with an average of 66 per cent last week. He indicated however that he was "in no position to speculate on the reasons for failure of some employees to appear."

Other developments in the local telephone strike Monday included the filing of unemployment compensation

claims by 50 telephone company commercial employes.

The commercial department is not on strike, but union members in the department have refused to cross picket lines. James J. Dark, principal claims examiner at the Michigan Unemployment Commission local office said a decision on the applications would be made by the Detroit office.

"All cases where unemployment is due to a labor dispute are referred to our labor dispute desk at state headquarters," Dark said. He said he could make no statement on the possibility of paying the claims.

As the telephone strike went into its fifteenth day Monday, one industrial dispute here was settled, a second was newly reported and a third went into its 13th day.

Back at work Monday were 40 employes of the Teesdale Manufacturing Company, 427 Market Ave. NW, pump manufacturers. Clyde H. Teesdale, president, said an agreement had been reached with UAW-CIO representatives after a dispute arising from the layoff of 22 men last week.

Newly closed by a walkout is the York Band Instrument Co., 1800 Division Ave. S., whose 150 employes are demanding higher wages. The dispute has been given to federal conciliators who have scheduled a meeting Tuesday between management and representatives of Local 911 UE-CIO.

Still on strike are the 75 employes of the Grand Rapids Cabinet Co., 40 Alabama Ave. NW. The walkout came after a breakdown in negotiations with local 415 Upholsteres International Union AFL.

A second story describes the mass rally of the strikers held to give them a "summary of negotiations and union activities in the first 15 days of the Michigan strike."

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#### Strikers Stage Demonstration

A half hour mass demonstration and picket line around the telephone building here followed a meeting of telephone strikers Tuesday in the Civic auditorium at which the belief was voiced that conciliators would

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5. Ibid., April 22, p. 1, lower left half of page, small head.

call the company and the union into bargaining sessions Wednesday or Thursday.

The speaker was Mrs. Helen Berthelot of Detroit, secretary of the Michigan central strike committee of NFW. Walter Schaar of Detroit, president of the Federation of Telephone Employees of Michigan, was scheduled to talk but was detained in Detroit.

Judson Peckham, manager of the phone company here, announced Tuesday that "in order that the strike not jeopardize the long-term security of employes and their families, the Michigan Bell Telephone Co. has arranged to advance payments for the next premium period, normally met by payroll deductions for employes life and hospitalization insurance to the extent necessary for protection of affected employes.

At York Band Instrument Co., 1600 Division Ave. S., whose 150 employes struck Friday in a demand for higher wages, a conference was scheduled Tuesday afternoon among federal conciliators, management and representatives of Local 911 United Electrical Workers CIO.

The strike of 75 employes of the Grand Rapids Cabinet Company...started on April 9, was continued Tuesday by members of Local 415 Upholsters International union AFL, with no settlement.

The last reference to the local telephone strike in April appeared on page two of the April 24 issue of the Press. It occupied two inches.

#### Phone Strikers Set Meet Friday

A second mass meeting of striking employes of the local offices of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company will be held at 10 a.m. Friday in the black and silver room of the Civic Auditorium. Norman DeGood of St. Joseph and Edward Fitzgerald of Ann Arbor, members of the state executive committee of the National Federation of Telephone Workers, will report to the group on the strike situation in other cities. Approximately 800 strikers in this district are expected to attend.

In the story headed Strikers Stage Demonstration there were a number of questions which the Press readers might have

expected to find answered. What was the status of negotiations in the state-wide picture of the telephone strike? What were major union activities? Were picket lines holding up? Was there any violence? What were the chances of a settlement? In Grand Rapids, what was the picture?

None of these questions was answered. Aside from knowing who the speaker was, the reading public learned nothing of the status or issues of the telephone strike or what took place at the mass rally. There was a long quote from the manager of the phone company. The headline of the story put all the emphasis on a short demonstration that took place after the meeting. Tucked away at the end of the story were brief references to three other strikes in Grand Rapids.

The following three items are cited as representative of local labor news carried in the Press, unrelated to the telephone strike. In terms of size and placement they were not impressive.

MASON UNION CHIEF LAUDED <sup>6</sup>  
PRAISED FOR URGING MORE APPRENTICES

For urging local unions to admit as many new apprentices as are needed to meet future building needs, instead of restricting the number of new men to a quota, Roy A. Shipley, president of the Structural Clay Products Institute, Saturday, commended Harry C. Bates, president of the Bricklayers Masons and Plasterers International Union of America.

6. Ibid, April 12, p. 11 (Building News), 5 inches.

"Your far sighted action in strongly urging your locals to make sure a sufficient number of bricklayers' apprentices is trained is an example that might well be followed by leaders of all unions in the building trades," Shipley said.

#### STRIKE CLOSES PUMP FACTORY<sup>7</sup>

Teesdale Pump Manufacturing firm was closed Tuesday by a walkout affecting all its employes.

Clyde H. Teesdale, president, said 62 men had been employed by the firm prior to a 22 man layoff Monday which precipitated the strike.

Patrick Ryan, assistant regional director for the UAW-CIO said the union had no contract with the firm but that many of the employes were members.

A meeting of union officials and management of the firm was scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

A strike at the Grand Rapids Cabinet Company plant was in its 7th day Tuesday with no sign of settlement, according to Edward M. Fritz, president and general manager.

Fritz said none of 75 employes was working. The walkout came after a breakdown in contract negotiations with local 415 Upholsters, AFL.

#### LOCAL CIO GIVEN CHECKOFF FUNDS<sup>8</sup>

....Judge...approved terms of settlement of litigation involving \$10,353 held by American Seating Company in checkoff of union dues between July 1946 and January 1947. Under the settlement local 415 UFWA and Local 415 Upholsterers Union AFL, the UFW receives the dues checkoff funds. The UFW recently won an NLRB election at the American Seating Company and was certified as bargaining agent.

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7. Ibid, April 15, 1947, p. 1, 5 inches.

8. Ibid, April 17, 1947, p. 2, 2 inches.

Aside from a few stories on the employment situation and labor market in Grand Rapids, a number concerned with pay increases for city employes, and a brief item concerned with a meeting of postal clerks, members of the AFL, the material cited above was the extent of local labor news in the Press.

### Summary

Out of a total of 139 column inches devoted to local labor news in April 1947, 70 per cent dealt with strikes. Less than half was placed on page one. The majority of stories were coded as neutral or pro-management. The major strike category was Status-of-Strike; non-strike, Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor.

### Editorial Content

Locally written editorials were a very small percentage of editorial content in April 1947. The largest amount of space was given to 10 large advertorials run by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company.

The chief topic of locally written editorials was industry-wide collective bargaining, particularly in coal, steel and auto industries.

There was one mention of the telephone strike. This was in a letter to the editor. It is cited below because it expressed a point of view not found elsewhere in the Press

during this period. It told why the local telephone workers were on strike.

Editor of the Press: Telephone strike? Isn't it terrible. Yet all we have to do is look at the wages that the telephone company was so eager to publish in your paper to try and make the public believe they were angels of light as far as wages were concerned. Among them their starting rate for truck drivers was \$29 per week and their top rate is \$53 per week. Are they trying to tell the public that a truck driver must go for nine years before he gets the top rate? His family could starve on a rate like this.

There is no one I am sure that would believe that phone bills would have to go up a dollar and fifty cents a month if they gave what the workers demanded. And here is a good one; according to the Press, they give a janitor a starting rate of \$35 per week, while a truck driver is given only \$29 as a starting rate. May I ask the telephone company on what they base these figures?

Why should the union arbitrate locally when this strike is on such a broad scale? Their talk does not make sense. 17 year old boys can go into most any factory and beat the starting rate of the phone company. I was surprised to learn through your paper that the phone company paid such low starting rates for I have always been given to understand that it was one of the highest paid industries in the community, but live and learn is my motto.

I am for longer and better strikes until labor is paid a living wage which can secure comfort for his family.

Robert C. Frary Sr.

Among the local editorials on wage talks among major industrial groups were these:

One that opposed the Nathan report filed by the CIO in the Big Steel case, in which the Press cited David Lawrence's column.<sup>9</sup>

Another that commented on a General Motors, United Electrical Workers, CIO, agreement for a 15 cent an hour

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9. Ibid, April 4, p. 14, 14 inches.

wage boost and about its affect on the prices of autos.<sup>10</sup>

One that said a suggestion by the coal mines' administrator that the union and operators resume collective bargaining "seems an eminently sound suggestion to us."<sup>11</sup>

Another titled "The Big Steel Formula," speculated about its probable effect on prices.<sup>12</sup> "If the new 'big steel' formula is to be adopted in framing wage contracts in other industries it should be with the understanding that it will solve nothing if it does not promote a high degree of cooperation between labor and management to bring production costs down."

None of these were very startling or couched in very strong language. They did not condemn industry-wide collective bargaining or organized labor. In fact, only the first one was coded as, anti-labor; and two others as balanced.

After some telephone wires were cut during the telephone strike in Michigan, a state law was proposed outlawing strikes in public utilities and the Press ran an editorial, "Not an Anti-Labor Measure."

...(It) is a piece of legislation designed to protect the public interest in disputes involving public utilities. Specifically it makes it a felony to pull electric switches, break gas, steam, or watermains or otherwise cut public utility services wilfully...While it is probably true that existing laws are adequate to deal with such cases, a separate well-publicized one which will specifically fit them can be expected to have far more of a deterrent effect.

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10. Ibid, April 16, p. 1, 4 inches.

11. Ibid, April 21, p. 10, 6 inches.

12. Ibid, April 22, p. 10, 6 inches.

This again is a mildly couched commentary. At the same time it lent approval to a law that organized labor regarded as a potential threat to its existence.

Only two editorials rapped labor somewhat sharply. One dealt with the then governor of Michigan, Kim Sigler's statements regarding Communist domination within the United Auto Workers, CIO.

### THE PUBLIC'S CONCERN ALSO <sup>13</sup>

Walter Reuther, president of the UAW-CIO takes the rather strange position that Gov. Sigler's testimony relative to Communist activities in the UAW represents "interference" in the union's internal affairs. That amounts to saying that it is nobody's business but labor's if the Reds actually are in control or are influential in the unions--a conclusion that very few persons outside labor's ranks are likely to support.

In view of the tremendous economic power wielded by numerous international unions...Communist control is a serious thing...We would agree that it is up to labor to put its own house in order...But despite the efforts of Reuther and other labor leaders who appear genuinely interested in purging labor's ranks of Communist influence, little headway has been made in that direction. It is not interfering in union affairs to call attention to the failure; nor is it meddling on the part of a public official when he attempts to make clear to all the people--union members included--exactly what they are up against.

The other editorial commented on John L. Lewis' attitude concerning the death of 111 coal miners in Centralia, Illinois, in one of the worst mine disasters in that industry's experience.

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13. Ibid, April 1, p. 4, 8 inches.

The nation has been shocked and saddened by the deaths of 111 coal miners in Centralia, Ill. in the worst mine disaster in 20 years. A full inquiry into the causes of the catastrophe has been promised by Congress...Lewis however rather obviously is intent on making the most of the disaster....<sup>14</sup>

In both instances, the above editorials criticize labor leaders, not in any obvious, all-inclusive manner, but subtly. Reuther is castigated for objecting to a Republican governor's testimony that Communists infiltrate the UAW and suggesting that the UAW cannot clean up its own household. The objective here, as the Press presents it, is to get rid of Communists, something everyone agrees is a good thing. By innuendo Reuther is pictured as unwilling to accept outside aid in this talk, and doubt is cast on his ability to do the job adequately alone.

The editorial on the Centralia disaster, too, appeals to public sentiments that no one could quarrel with. "The nation has been shocked and saddened....A full inquiry has been promised by Congress...." But again the villain of the piece is a leader of the coal miners' union who is making political capital out of the event, according to the Press' implication.

A somewhat longer editorial that appeared on April 9 began: "Michigan's best known and most useful citizen is dead." It was a 14 inch eulogy of Henry Ford.

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14. Ibid, April 3, p. 18, 6 inches.

Advertorials in the Press, paid for by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company, are worth noting. The titles and dates on which the ads were run included the following:

- April 2 - SHOULD THERE BE A PHONE STRIKE?
- April 4 - THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR A TELEPHONE STRIKE
- April 8 - WHY WON'T TELEPHONE UNIONS ARBITRATE LOCALLY?
- April 11 - WHY SHOULD TELEPHONE WORKERS STRIKE CONTINUE?
- April 18 - DO TELEPHONE WORKERS GET GOOD WAGES?
- April 19 - WAGE RATES: (listing allegedly current rates and union demands, side by side.)
- April 21 - HOW MUCH DOES A TELEPHONE OPERATOR GET?
- April 22 - TELEPHONE UNION DEMANDING A LOT MORE THAN \$12 A WEEK INCREASE
- April 25 - TELEPHONE EMPLOYEES ARE WELL PAID

### Summary

Out of more than 500 column inches devoted to editorial matter, only 81 inches were locally written editorials. The bulk of space went to the paid advertorials.

The direction of most locally written editorials was divided between anti-labor and balanced.

### National Labor News

Three major stories dominated the national labor scene during this period. One was the Centralia mine disaster and the six day protest strike of coal miners. Another was the

nation-wide telephone strike to which the Press devoted 23 stories. The third dealt with drastic labor curbing legislation under consideration by the national congress and efforts to counteract it by organized labor and members of the administration.

#### Summary

Statistically, about half of all labor content in the Press was national--some 543 inches. About 73 per cent of this was strike news, and about 66 per cent was placed on page one. The two largest strike-categories were Attempts to Settle on the Issues; and Status-of-Strike stories. The largest non-strike category dealt with Specific Legislation under Government Policies.

#### State News

The content of state news was relatively diversified. Only seven stories related directly to the telephone strike. A number of others had to do with anti-strike legislation pending at Lansing. The majority dealt with UAW and a variety of wage talks with General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler companies, chiefly.

#### Summary

Labor news at a state level represented about 22 per cent

of all labor content, a considerable drop from 1945 during the General Motors strike, when it stood at 31 per cent.

The largest categories were in the non-strike group. They included Specific Legislation (union curb bills) and Joint Union Management Activities (wage talks in the auto industry). In the Strike group the largest category was Status-of-Strike.

#### General Summary of Press Coverage in April 1947

The total quantity of labor content in the Press declined from a peak of 1,970 inches in the 1945 period, to 1,450 in 1947.

Local labor news dropped to the lowest point for any period examined in either paper.

The press appeared to follow a dual policy in its treatment of labor news at this time. Editorially, it adopted an apparently reasonable, well balanced attitude about organized labor. The principle of collective bargaining, even to an extent industry-wide bargaining, in effect was accepted.

At the same time local news stories were extremely brief and devoted much more space to citing management than labor spokesmen. As a case in point, on April 7, 1947, when the first city-wide telephone strike occurred, the Press carried a two-thirds column story on page one and quoted a management spokesman almost exclusively. Union leaders were cited only

as to the number of employes on strike.

As noted earlier, the phone strike was not as significant locally as one that closes down a major local industry. Nevertheless, it seems pertinent to observe that almost exactly 37 years earlier, on April 19, 1911, the date of the furniture walkout, the Press gave it three full columns, most of them on page one, and cited the opinions of the furniture workers exclusively.

#### How the Herald Covered Labor News in April 1947

The Herald carried more labor news at this period than in any other examined for either newspaper.

It had approximately a third more total labor content than the Press and about twice as much local news. There were a number of local stories that appeared in the Herald which received no coverage in the Press.

On the whole, the same objectivity that characterized Herald Labor reporting during the time of the General Motors strike was true of this period. It was not the impersonalized, generalized, statistical type of reporting that made the Press labor coverage a dull affair at best. Nor did it tend to over-emphasize the point of view of either labor or management. It was fairly lively, sometimes warm, and consistently objective reporting that gave the impression of "knowing what the score was" in labor relations circles.

Local News

The Herald carried more local labor news in April 1947 than in either the 1946 or 1921 periods, but less than in 1937 and 1911. As noted previously, this was due, in part at least, to the fact that local city-wide furniture strikes are of more news value in Grand Rapids than participation by relatively few workers in national strikes.

The Herald coverage of the telephone strike was considerably less than its reporting on other labor news. There were seven stories on the phone workers, and 19 on other events.

Two stories preceded the phone strike. The first was coded pro-labor, and second, pro-management, because over 50 per cent of the first story described labor unions involved, and over 50 per cent of the second was devoted to citing management spokesmen.

GRAND RAPIDS DIAL SERVICE WILL CONTINUE<sup>15</sup>

Dial service in Grand Rapids and other communities of the Grand Rapids district of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company will continue, but disruption of long distance service and other non-dial service is in prospect in event of a telephone strike next Monday.

The unions also have indicated they will maintain what they describe as emergency service for calls requiring an operator, but definition of an emergency call has yet to be disclosed.

Hundreds of employes of the Bell Company, and its affiliate, Western Electric Company, are expected to

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15. Ibid, April 4, p. 1, 14 inches.

remain away from their jobs here if the strike call becomes effective. They are enrolled in unions acting together as the National Federation of Telephone Workers. Four unions which represent telephone workers in the Grand Rapids district are: Communications Workers of America, Local 502; Mrs. Margaret Boltier, chairman. This union is expected later to embrace other telephone unions but now includes only the former Michigan Telephone Employees Federation taking in hundreds of operating employes here.

Federation of Telephone employes of Michigan, Local 305, Harold Anderson, president, taking in construction and maintenance workers. Association of Communication Equipment Workers, Local 38, covering Michigan employes of the Western Electric Company including 100 in Grand Rapids, Henry F. Vonk heads the Grand Rapids unit.

Commercial Telephone Workers Association with around 125 employes in Grand Rapids headed by Beatrice Kroodsma. This is the only union which has not voted to join the pending strike, but even so, its members may decide not to cross picket lines of the other unions.

BELL SETS UP COTS IN OFFICE: EMERGENCY CALLS TO BE HANDLED: DIAL SERVICE UNAFFECTED<sup>16</sup>

With all concerned voicing belief that a nationwide telephone strike will go through at 6 a.m. Monday on schedule, the Grand Rapids office of Michigan Bell Telephone Company has laid in a stock of food and is setting up cots at the Grand Rapids central office, the company disclosed Saturday.

The supplies will be used for employes who will provide emergency service if the strike takes place.

Late Saturday Richard Glass, a member of the Association of Communications Equipment Workers named as spokesman for the telephone unions in Grand Rapids, said "hundreds of workers here" are prepared to join the strike.

Local dial service will continue but long distance calls and others requiring an operator will be hit by the strike.

Judson Peckham, commercial manager here for the company, said plans call for an automatic answering system for patrons who dial the operator or try to place a long distance call.

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16. Ibid, April 6, p. 1, 14 inches.

This system, similar to time and weather reporting facilities, will inform subscribers the company will be unable to provide an operator because of the strike, Peckham explained.

Emergency service will be given calls involving fire, police, sickness, injury, death or loss of property, Peckham added. However, he said the extent to which the company can furnish such emergency remains in doubt.

Unions representing 18,000 telephone workers throughout Michigan are making final plans for the walkout.

The AP said conferences between the unions and the company with federal and state labor conciliators on hand are planned right up to the deadline.

At Detroit, W. C. Patterson, Bell vice president, said about 2,000 non-union employes, mostly supervisory workers, are expected to remain on duty but may not be able to handle all emergency calls.

The strike will not affect 164 independent Michigan telephone companies but they represent only about 10 per cent of the state's telephone subscribers.

James Maentz, coordinator of the American Radio Relay League in Grand Rapids, said more than 100 "ham" radio operators in Michigan have offered their services to Red Cross and police agencies in the event of the strike.

On the day the strike opened, the Herald gave it a column on page one with a picture of attractive young women on the picket lines carrying signs reading: "The Voice With the Smile is Gone for Awhile."<sup>17</sup> The story was coded as balanced.

The first day of the telephone strike saw manual service in the Grand Rapids district of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company come to a virtual halt.

An estimated 20,000 subscribers in the 14 localities having manual equipment were affected. Automatic dial service continued in Grand Rapids and vicinity but long distance calls could not be placed.

Phone company district officials and supervisory help sought to provide emergency service. However, so

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17. Ibid, April 8, 1947, p. 1, 21 inches plus picture, about 21 inches more.

many phone users tried to make emergency calls that the service broke down and Judson Peckham, Grand Rapids manager for the company, made a plea to limit emergency calls to those involving protection of life and property.

Grand Rapids callers, dialing long distance or signaling the operator heard recordings advising them emergency calls should be made on another number. Because of the deluge of calls considered emergency, the emergency number was almost continually busy.

However, dial service enabled phone users to communicate with the police, sheriff and fire departments.

At 6 a.m. Monday a score of pickets took up stations around the central office of the telephone company at Division Avenue and Fountain Street NE. They carried signs with such slogans as: "A.T. and T. won't talk so we must walk."

A.T. and T. refers to the American Telephone and Telegraph Company with which the Bell system is affiliated.

Information clerks and cashiers reported for duty at the central office and many subscribers crossed the picket line to pay bills or carry on other business. The pickets did not interfere.

There was no disturbance except in the early hours when a woman passerby was arrested on a disorderly charge to prevent a disturbance on the picket line. Police said she was intoxicated.

Throughout the day downtown crowds watched the pickets, mostly young women, and some paused to chat with them.

The pickets assigned from union headquarters in the Morton Hotel relieved each other after short shifts at carrying signs.

Top officials of the district office of the phone company took their place at the rows of long distance switchboards along with chief operators, their assistants, and other telephone company employes.

On Monday afternoon, for 102 positions on the long distance board of the Grand Rapids central office, only 15 operators, mostly officials, were on duty, while of approximately 36 positions normally in use to answer information calls and give dial assistance, only eight were filled.

An estimated 1,200 employes represented by three independent unions have joined the strike in the Grand Rapids district. Phone company officials said only 25 per cent of the 1,600 men and women scheduled for work throughout the district came on duty, mostly officials and supervisory help.

(Lists localities affected in the Grand Rapids area.)

The cutline for one picture accompanying this story is worth noting. Captioned "The Voice With the Smile is Gone for Awhile," it read:

Grand Rapids telephone operators said "hello" on a picket line in front of the Michigan Bell Telephone Company's central office at Fountain Street and Division Avenue. It was good weather and pickets chatted with passers-by.

Directly below was another picture of one man at a switchboard. The cutline for this one read:

Below the filled headset rack, which would be nearly empty on a normal day, shows why service was snarled. District officials went to work as operators on long distance and dial information board. L. H. Eggleston, assistant plant engineer, is taking a head set from the rack.

The first of the three stories above gave a fairly complete description of the unions involved in the strike, their memberships and leaders. The second story described some of the activities of management in setting up cots and laying in a supply of food in case the strike should take place. It noted how much telephone service might be available and described the automatic answering service to be installed in case operators struck.

The third story told of the opening day of the strike, of service curtailment, and described the pickets and signs they carried. It was illustrated by separate pictures of management at the switchboard and of smiling girl pickets displaying signs. It made the strike seem alive and composed

of human beings rather than statistics and telephones.

"Throughout the day downtown crowds watched the pickets, mostly young women, and some paused to chat with them" --

"Top officials of the ...phone company took their place at the rows of long distance switchboards...."

There were only a few more stories on the telephone strike carried in the Herald. One of these received two-thirds of a column on page one of the April 9 issue with the lead: "Grand Rapids strike leaders Tuesday awaited possible word from Detroit instructing them to restore telephone service here because of the flood emergency." The story said the governor might request restoration of phone service because of the flood.

On April 12 a short story (four inches) on page four described an incident of violence on the picket lines.

#### PHONE PICKETS REPORT FRACAS

Striking phone workers reported disturbances in front of Grand Rapids central office caused by five young men who disappeared after it. Richard Glass, Grand Rapids spokesman for the phone unions, said the men took picket signs and tossed them around and one of them became belligerent but no blows were struck.

Meanwhile Judson Peckham, manager for the phone company, said 150 phones are out of commission and 400 have gone dead....

A full column on page one of the April 13 issue had this lead:

The Michigan Bell telephone company moved Saturday

to relieve subscribers of charges for telephone service disrupted by the strike....

Ten days later on April 22 the Herald carried an eight inch story on page four.

BELL STRIKERS PLAN MEETING: HEAD OF MICHIGAN UNION  
WILL SPEAK THIS MORNING

Striking Grand Rapids telephone workers are due to hear reports of Detroit union leaders at a mass meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. Tuesday in the Civic Auditorium.

There was no follow-up story on the meeting, perhaps due to the fact that the Herald was a morning paper and the meeting was held in the morning, perhaps due to the fact that the chief speaker did not show up. On the next day, however, the Herald carried a front page story on phone sabotage.

BELL POSTS REWARD OFFER: \$1000 IS LISTED FOR  
INFORMATION BUT NO CRIME REPORTED HERE

The story described cutting of telephone wire and stated that Walter Schar of Detroit, union head scheduled to speak at the Auditorium "today", had been held in Detroit for questioning by police.

This appeared to be the extent of the Herald's coverage of the local telephone tie-up. But it was far from the extent of its coverage of other local labor events.

Prior to the beginning of the phone strike it carried a continuing series of stories on an internal fight within a

local of the United Electrical Workers, CIO, beginning with a page one, column long description, April 1.

FIRE SANFORD, UNION DEMANDS  
CIO OFFICIAL REPLIES TO STATEMENT BY GRAND RAPIDS LOCAL PRESIDENT

Officials of Lear, Inc. Monday declined to comment on a reported demand made by John T. Gojack of Fort Wayne, Indiana, an official of the CIO United Electrical Workers Union, that L. Carlton Sanford, president of the Union's local 911, be summarily dismissed under a union shop clause of a union contract in effect at the Lear plant.

The only comment obtainable from Lear officials was that "the matter is under study."

Gojack, who supervised distribution of handbills at three Grand Rapids plants, issued a statement listing reasons for the action of the union's district nine convention at Richmond, Indiana...which over the weekend ordered the life-time suspension of Sanford from union membership....

In a blistering attack Sunday following his return from Richmond Sanford declared the union's charges were trumped up and accused the district officers of being under Communist influence.

He offered to furnish any "proper" government official...information to back his charges of Communism. (The story goes into detail over the allegations back and forth between Sanford and Gojack and a former Lear union steward, Richard Wright, who brought charges against Sanford, dismissed by the Grand Rapids local, but subsequently acted on by the district convention. The last paragraph of the story follows.)

The International News Service obtained the following explanation for Sanford's expulsion from the union's Fort Wayne headquarters. "Carlton Sanford was expelled for life from the CIO-UE at a convention in Richmond, Indiana last Saturday. Action was for conduct unbecoming a union member, for 'denying democratic rights under the constitution to a union member (Wright) and working in collective agreement with companies with which the union had contracts'."

The next day the Herald ran an 11 inch story on page 14 with this lead:

Fireworks are expected at a membership meeting of

Local 911 CIO-UE called for Wednesday night in the CIO hall. L. Carlton Sanford, ordered barred for life from membership in the union by a district convention Tuesday, said he is confident the membership will support him in his fight with higher union officials....

A follow up story on April 3 that got seven inches on page one began:

Without a dissenting voice many hundred members of the Union's local 911 Wednesday night voted to defy leadership of the CIO-UE union and back up its president L. Carlton Sanford in his fight with other union officials.

The Sanford case was a lively and timely piece of local news at a time when the Communist issue was beginning to split CIO ranks wide open. In addition to its coverage of this event the Herald ran five stories on local strikes; four on activities of organized labor unconnected with strikes; two on a local teachers' pay hike; and two on employment; and two on miscellaneous subjects.

The Herald's method of reporting a local strike, while brief, generally gave most of the pertinent facts involved, as the following excerpts indicate.

#### GRAND RAPIDS CABINET WORKERS STRIKE<sup>18</sup>

An estimated 75 production employes of the Grand Rapids Cabinet Company walked off their jobs Wednesday following a meeting called by the AFL Upholsteres International Union, Local 415.

Negotiations for a union contract have been in progress for several weeks. The strikers formerly belonged

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18. Ibid, April 10, p. 4, 2 inches.

to the CIO United Furniture Workers but chose the AFL union at an election earlier in the year conducted by the NLRB.

#### STRIKE SHUTS TEESDALE PLANT<sup>19</sup>

A walkout Tuesday closed the Teesdale manufacturing company affecting approximately 60 employees. The company manufactures pumps. Clyde Teesdale, president, said he was informed that the issue of the strike was the discharge of 20 men Monday including union committeemen. He said the union had no contract with the plant but that negotiations were in progress when the walkout occurred.

#### LABOR DISPUTE TIES UP FREIGHT AT MUIR PLANT<sup>20</sup>

Movement of freight came to a halt Thursday at the manufacturing plant of Muir Cut Rate Drug stores because of a dispute with the AFL Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers. Boyce K. Muir, president and treasurer, said there was no strike but the union tied up entry into the plant resulting in lay off of 25 warehouse employes.

Thomas Burke and Peter McGavin of Detroit, union representatives, said the union recently won an election conducted among Muir warehousemen by the NLRB and wants recognition.

Muir said the company would not deal with the union until NLRB certifies the election results. He asserted Muir employes receive the highest hourly rate for warehouse work paid in Grand Rapids, vacations with pay, full pay for national holidays, and experience no seasonal layoffs. The union spokesmen denied the claim on warehouse wages and asserted the company seeks to thwart the desire of the employes to be represented by the union.

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19. Ibid, April 16, p. 4, 3 inches.

20. Ibid, April 25, p. 4, 6 inches.

A representative of the U. S. Conciliation service Monday reported that an agreement has been reached in a dispute which last week closed the plant of the Teesdale Manufacturing Company, pump manufacturers. He said the company and the CIO-UAW are expected to sign an initial contract on Tuesday providing a flat hourly increase of 10 cents, a return of strikers, and rehiring on a seniority basis among other provisions....<sup>21</sup>

CLERGYMEN CONDUCT VOTE HERE IN  
UNION ELECTION AT GR BRASS<sup>22</sup>

Two Grand Rapids clergymen conducted a union election among 150 employes of the Grand Rapids Brass Company Friday. They did not discuss the count.

Mrs. Frances Francisco, president of Local 734 formerly affiliated with the CIO International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, said the vote was in favor of the Provisional Metal Workers Council CIO made up of a number of local workers which she said have withdrawn from the MMU....

(The story goes on to cite the company attorney and union president.)

Rev. Joseph Walem, director of charities for the Grand Rapids Catholic diocese, and the Rev. Thomas E. Pollard, pastor of Valley Avenue Methodist Church, presided at the election....

Because of disruption in the Mine, Mill, Smelter Workers union a national CIO committee is studying its affairs.

The Herald also carried a story on back dues payment by the American Seating company to two unions and another on a libel suit by a former CIO leader who sued the United Furniture Workers of America, CIO, in a \$25,000 damage suit.

On April 19 the paper carried a picture CIO DIGS IN TO BOOST CANCER FIGHT, with a cutline beginning, "CIO members are

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21. Ibid, April 22, p. 3, 6 inches.

22. Ibid, April 12, p. 4, 10 inches.

digging down for contributions to the cancer drive." The picture showed local CIO leaders, smiling and contributing to the drive.

### Summary

The number of stories and diversity of subject matter in labor news coverage in the Herald at this period showed a real attempt to cover major activities in Grand Rapids labor circles. The stories on the Sanford case and the picture and outline concerned with the CIO's contribution to the cancer drive were interesting because they were not concerned with labor-management disputes or strikes. They were among the stories omitted by the Press.

Statistically, local stories ran to 259 inches or 13 per cent of total labor coverage in the Herald. Less than half dealt with strikes, while more than half the local stories were placed on page one. The majority of local news was coded as balanced. Status-of-strike and Union Activities were the two largest categories.

### Editorial Content

The editorial content in the Herald hit a high for all periods in both newspapers in April 1947. In addition to the paid advertorials by the Michigan Bell Company which took up almost 80 per cent of total space, there were ten locally

written editorials, one letter to the editor and a labor columnist's comments.

All of the local editorials were consistent with the past pattern of commentary in the Herald.

One of these criticized "monopoly" negotiations by unions on an industry-wide basis. On April 8, when the telephone strike began, the Herald printed an editorial "Strike Against the Public," containing these words:

Again on Monday the nation found itself in the grip of a monopoly power recklessly used...The patience of America is wearing thin."

When the House of Representatives passed the Hartley bill, "to regulate labor relations", the Herald hailed it as, "a long step back toward the American ideal of the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness and freedom of the individual."

When telephone wires were cut during the strike, the Herald ran an editorial, "Bow to Sabotage", in which it noted:

Sabotage of public utility property and service goes beyond ordinary offenses in injuring the public generally. It may, as it has in some communities in the past fortnight, endanger lives and prevent the safeguarding of other property against loss or damage.

On April 30, an editorial on the telephone strike appeared:

#### IT SHOULD BE THE LAST

The telephone strike now in its fourth week has demonstrated one thing. That is that it must be the

last whether in communications or in any other essential public utility...With still another object lesson before it there is no reason for Congress further to delay.

Another editorial titled, "Not by Bread Alone," cited a report on the need for more adequate wages for school teachers. Three editorials gave industry-wide agreements in steel and auto industries rather backhanded approval. In the case of the GM "wage pattern for 1947", the Herald wrote that the best that could be said of the GM contract was "it is better in a number of ways than it might have been."

Earlier it wrote of a General Motors and United Electrical Workers agreement, "it may be inflationary but it means uninterrupted production..."

The advertorials printed in the Herald were much the same as those carried in the Press. The dates on which they were run are interesting. Only three or four appeared in the early stages of the strike but as the month wore on they were used more frequently.

### Summary

Editorial content in the Herald came to more than 700 inches in April, 1947, and represented 36 per cent of total labor content. The great majority of space was occupied by paid advertorials.

The telephone strike was officially declared over in Detroit on May 13. Whether or not the use of paid advertorials

was a factor that speeded the close of telephone negotiations, it is not possible to judge. But it is interesting to note that toward the end of the month local coverage of the strike declined steadily, while the use of advertorials was stepped up. Thus, the reading public had before it almost daily a continuing barrage of company statements, with little to fill in on the union's side of the case. (There was only one union advertorial at the end of April titled "Telephone Company Is Not Attempting to End Telephone Strike.")

Directionally, locally written editorials were coded predominantly anti-labor, balanced, and pro-management.

#### National Labor Coverage

The same major labor news stories carried by the Press appeared in the Herald, but the coverage was greater. There were 24 stories on the telephone strike, nearly one a day. There were 13 on strike-curb legislation pending in Washington, D.C.; there were 10 stories on the Centralia coal mine disaster and the "mourning" strike of coal miners; and seven stories on steel negotiations. In addition there were stories on a Supreme Court ruling on foremen's rights to join unions, coal wage talks, and a miscellaneous group of national stories. On April 7 the Herald carried a front page, nine inch box titled "Strike Facts," stating "340,000 to leave jobs, 617,154 out...."

### Summary

The largest amount of labor news stemmed from national coverage at 749 inches, representing 37 per cent of all Herald labor content. The bulk of national stories fell into two strike-categories; Status-of-Strike and Attempts to Settle on the Issues. The biggest non-strike category was Government Policies-Specific Legislation.

Seventy-four per cent of all national labor news dealt with strikes, and 61 per cent was placed on page one.

### State Labor News Coverage

State labor news concentrated on the telephone strike; on anti-strike legislation being drafted at the state capitol in Lansing; and on collective bargaining negotiations in the auto industry. There were 10 stories on General Motors-UAW wage talks, largest single group of related items.

Only four stories dealing with the state-wide telephone strike were noted; and four on the labor curb legislation. The latter were nearly all a full column in length and described some fairly sizzling committee and floor discussions on strike-curb proposals at which charges and counter charges were hurled by representatives of organized labor and some of the legislators.

Summary

Labor news emanating from the state dropped about a third from what it had been in 1946 during the closing days of the General Motors strike. There were a total of 285 inches of state news in 1947, about 14 per cent of all labor content in the Herald for April.

A little better than half dealt with strikes and approximately the same amount was placed on page one.

The two largest strike-categories were Attempts to Settle on the Issues and Status-of-Strike. Major non-strike categories were Government Policies-Specific Legislation, and Joint Union Management Activities.

General Summary of Herald Coverage, April 1947

This was the peak period of total labor coverage for all periods examined on both papers. National news was highest, editorial content second, state news third, and local news last.

The Herald covered nearly twice as much local labor news as the Press, despite being a considerably smaller newspaper. Labor news reporting continued to be objective but not impersonal; factual but not dully statistical; and neglected neither management's nor labor's points of view. It was, in short, handled as a "beat" in the sense that business, civic or church news is handled.

The increased use of paid advertorials by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company and the comparatively small number of stories concerned with the telephone strike were also characteristic of this period.

A Comparison of Press and Herald Labor News Coverage in April 1947

As noted earlier, this is the only interval when both papers were examined simultaneously. It should be possible therefore to obtain a more representative picture of any differences and similarities that exist in the two newspaper's coverage of local, state, and national news at this time.

At the same time it should be borne in mind again that the Press is an evening paper with a much larger weekday circulation than the Herald's; and that the latter is a morning paper, with a Sunday edition. The Press is nearly twice the size of the Herald, and consequently has more total news space available.

Bar charts are used to compare how the two papers handled labor news in the spring of 1947.

CHART I. PROPORTION OF ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD BY MAJOR TYPES OF STORIES, IN COLUMN INCHES, APRIL 1947.

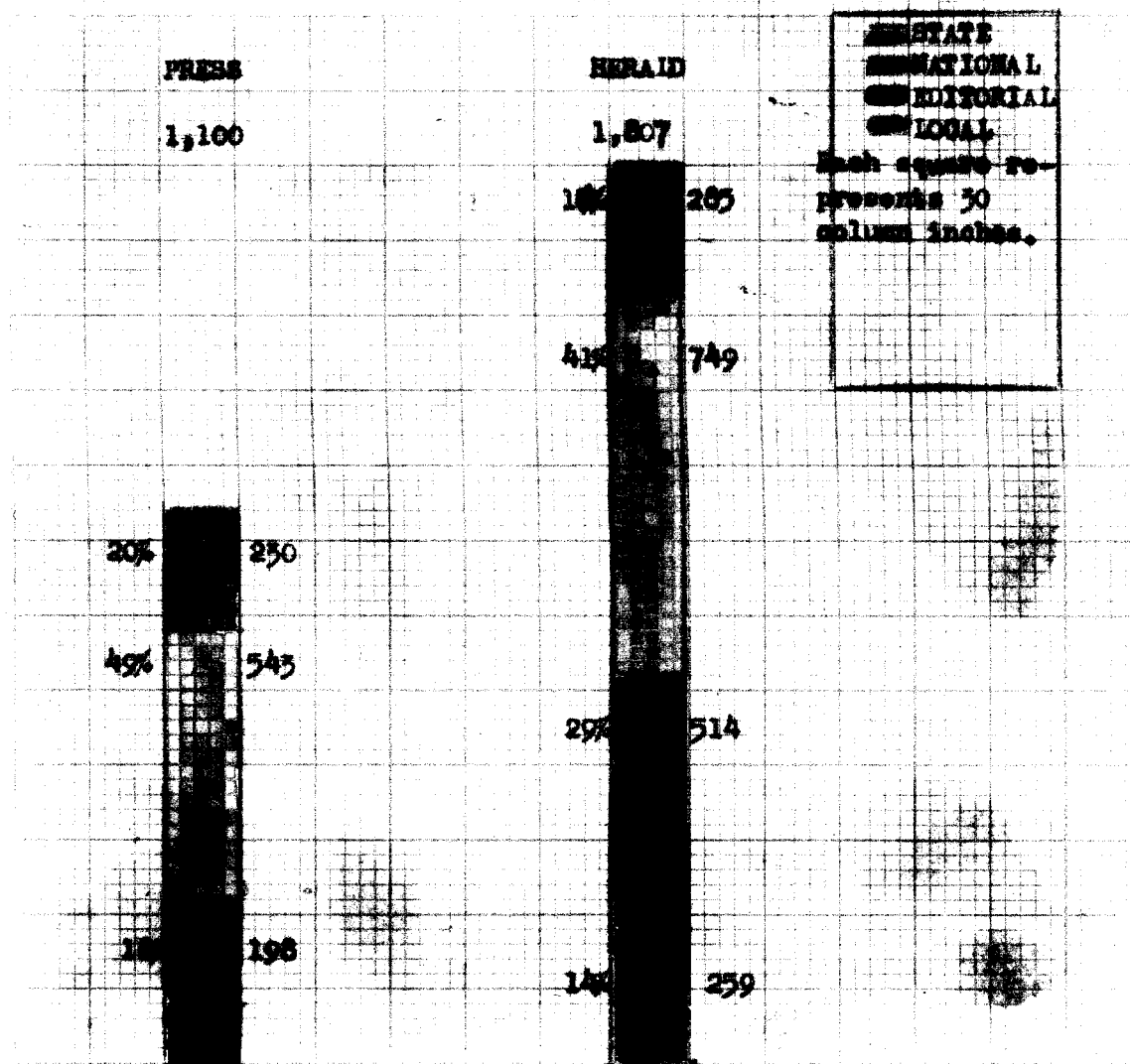


Chart I shows that the Herald had about a third as much total labor content as the Press and roughly twice as much local news.

The two papers carried roughly equivalent amounts of national, state, and editorial content. The big difference lay in local coverage. Paid advertorials ran the editorial content way up for both papers.

CHART II. PROPORTION OF STRIKE TO NON-STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIALS IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, BY MAJOR TYPES OF ITEMS, IN COLUMN INCHES, FOR APRIL 1947.

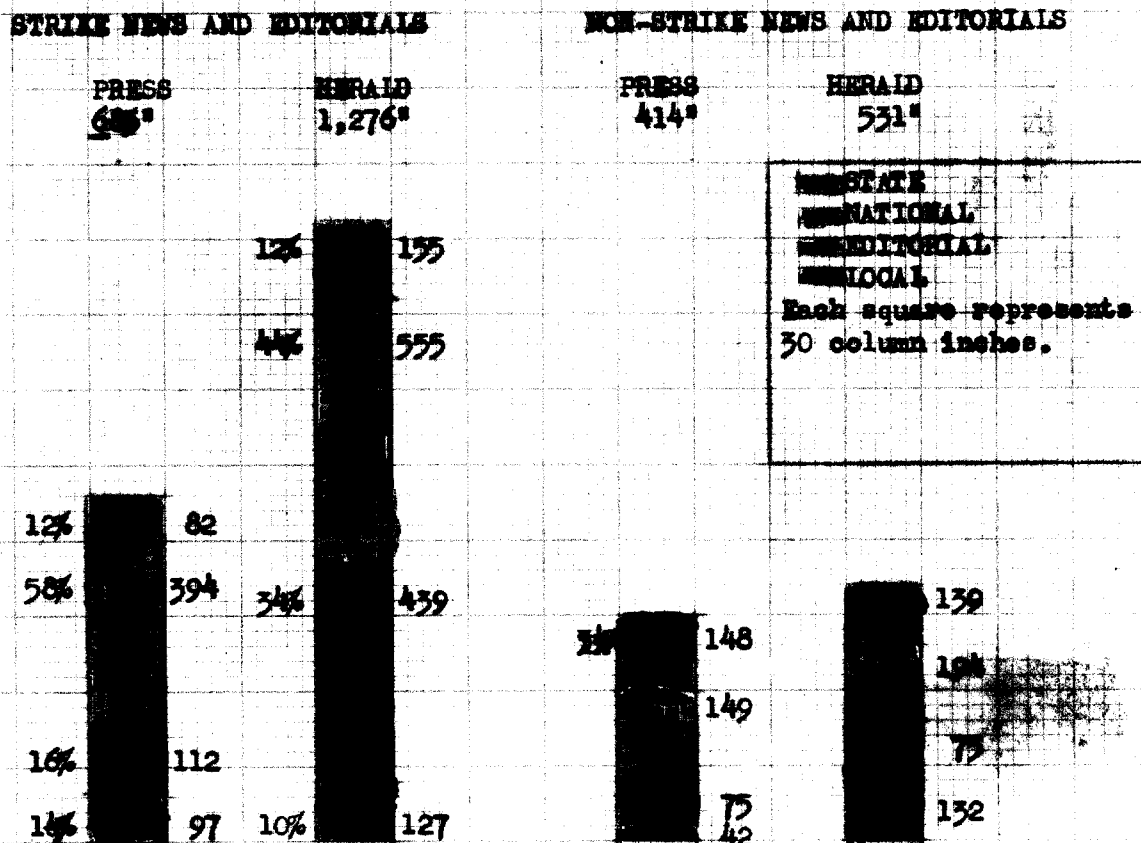


Chart II shows that the Herald carried nearly a third more strike news than the Press. The amount of strike news and editorial content was greater in all four divisions on the Herald: local, editorial, national, and state.

CHART III. PROPORTION OF PAGE ONE STORIES TO OTHER THAN PAGE ONE ITEMS IN COLUMN INCHES, FOR THE PRESS AND HERALD, IN APRIL 1947

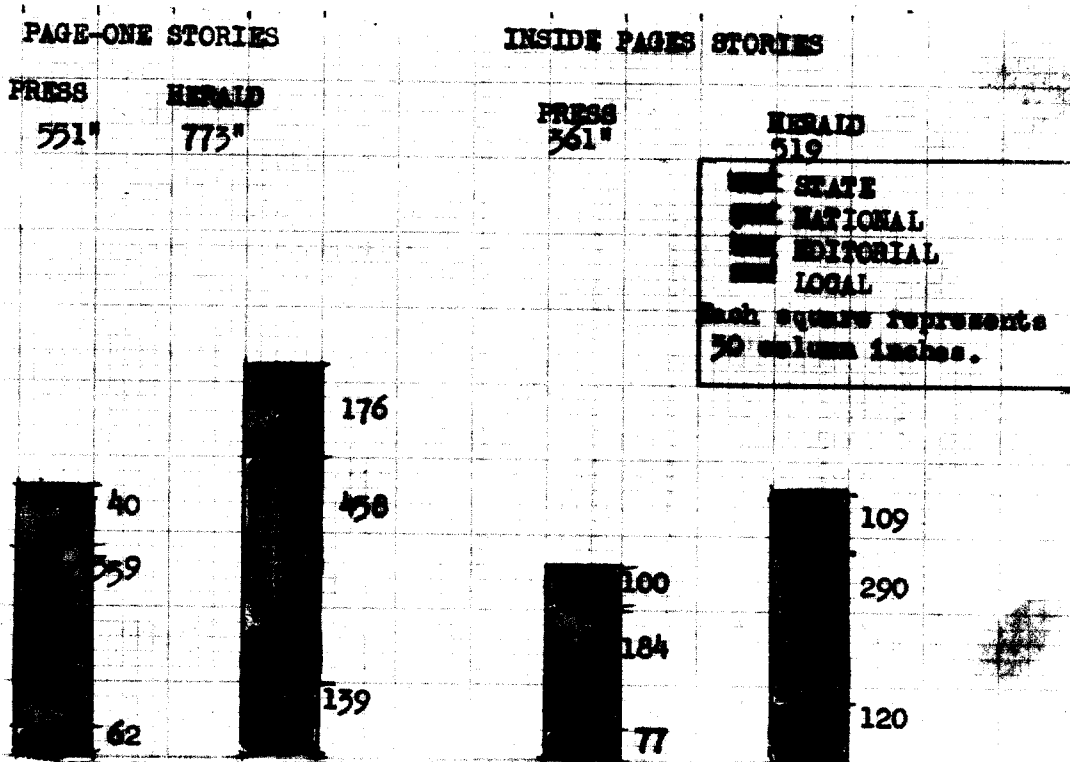


Chart III shows that the Herald put about a fourth more labor news on page one than the Press, which is logical since it carried more total labor content. However, the Herald placed twice as much local labor news on page one as the press.

CHART IV. DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, IN COLUMN INCHES, APRIL 1947.

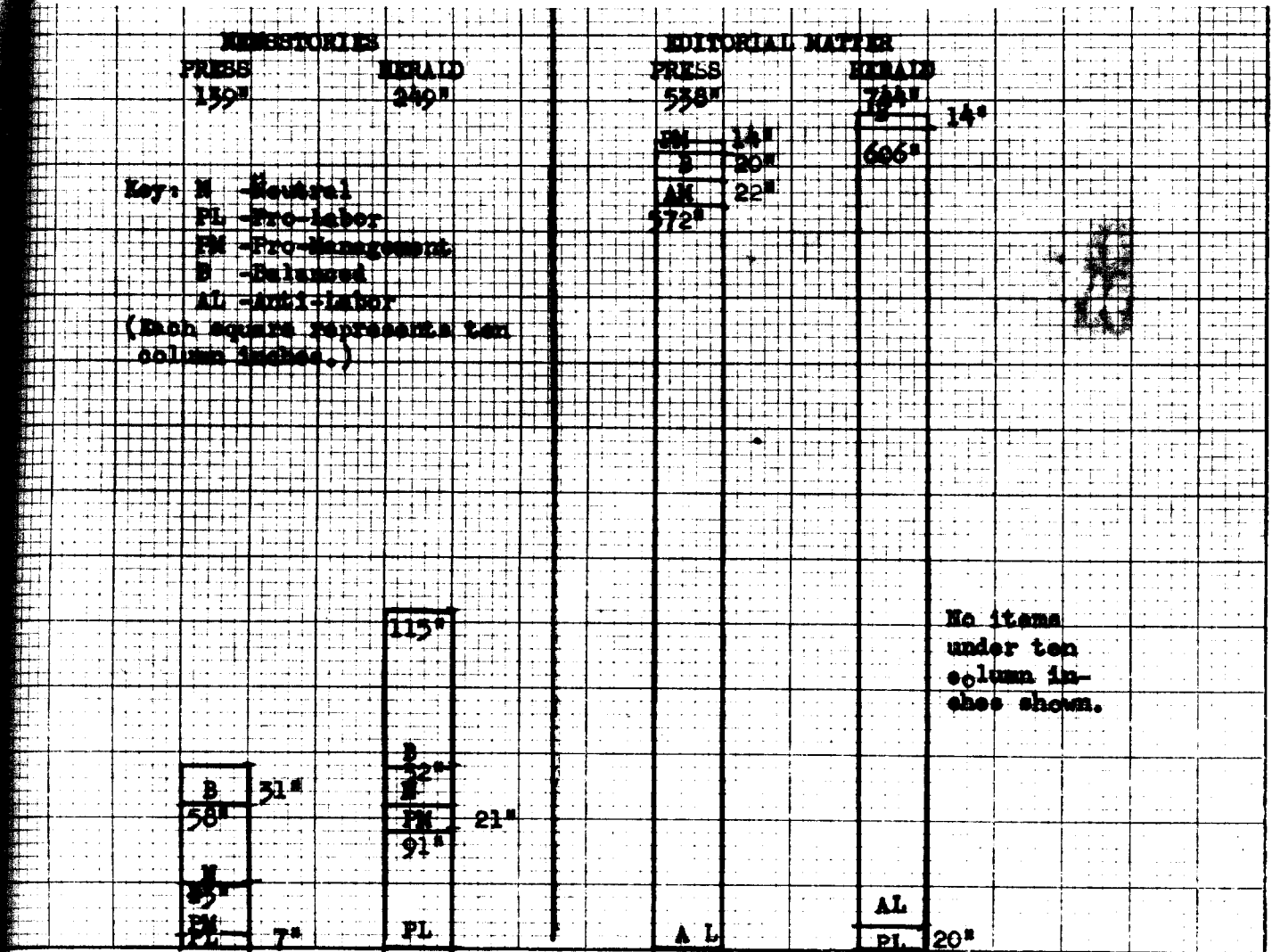
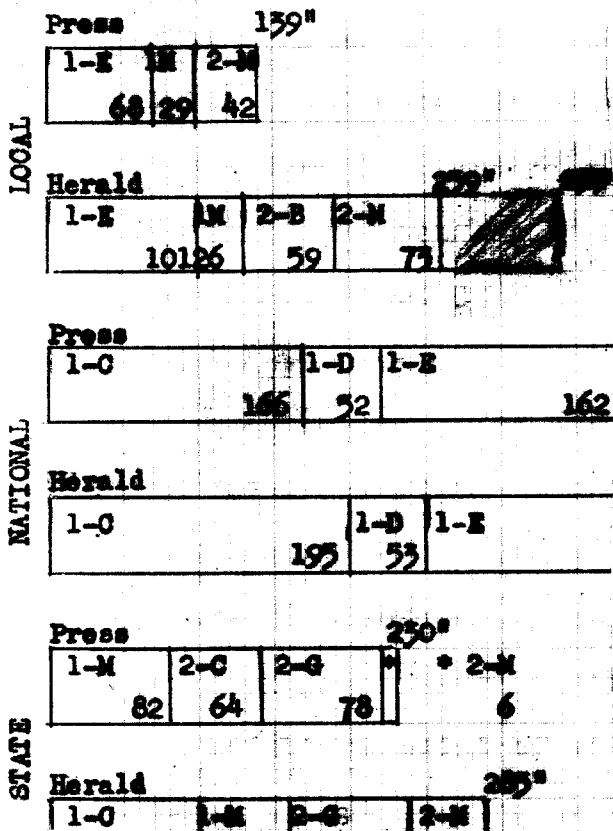


Chart IV shows that the direction of local news stories in the Herald was predominantly balanced and pro-labor; in the Press, neutral and pro-management. It also shows that editorials in the Herald and Press were predominantly anti-labor.

The advertorials contributed to the increased space given to anti-labor editorial content for both papers. This was the major direction in editorial material for both papers.

CHART V. PROPORTION OF SPACE IN MAJOR STRIKE AND NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, IN COLUMN INCHES, FOR APRIL 1947.



1947  
 APRIL 1947  
 CHART V  
 PROPORTION OF SPACE IN MAJOR STRIKE AND NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES IN THE PRESS AND HERALD, IN COLUMN INCHES, FOR APRIL 1947.

Chart V shows a similarity in distribution of major category groupings for both strike and non-strike news, characteristic of both papers in all intervals, but most pronounced in the 1947 period.

139"

1-E	1-M	2-M
68	29	42

239"

1-E	1-M	2-B	2-M
10	26	59	73

543"

1-0	1-D	1-E	2-M	*1-M
166	52	162	102	47
14				

749"

1-0	1-D	1-E	2-G	2-M
195	53	284	96	98

250"

1-M	2-C	2-G	*2-M
82	64	78	6

285"

1-0	1-M	2-G	2-M
99	56	80	50

538"

1-0	2-M	*1-M
458	73	6

736"

1-0	1-F	2-M
606	63	67

Key:

STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 1-A Physical Conduct, Peaceful
- 1-B Physical Conduct, Coercive
- 1-C Attempts to Settle on Issue
- 1-D Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention
- 1-E Status of Strike
- 1-F Effect on Public Welfare

NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES

- 2-A Disaster, Sabotage, Welfarism
  - 2-B Union Activities
  - 2-C Joint Union-Management
  - 2-D Community or Nation-Wide Union Activities
  - 2-E Economic Conditions
  - 2-F Pol. & Gov't Programs & Policies
  - 2-G General Gov't Policies
- (Each square represents 10 column inches. Categories with less than 50 inches have been combined under 1-M and 2-M Miscellaneous).

Summary of Highlights in Press and Herald Coverage in  
April 1947

The Herald reached a peak in total labor coverage that outstripped all other intervals examined for both papers. With more than 2000 inches devoted to labor topics, the Herald had a third more total content than the Press and about twice as much local news.

Among stories covered in the Herald but omitted by the Press were the series on the Sanford case, involving an internal factional fight within a CIO union; an AFL teamsters' dispute that tied up freight shipments at the Muir Drug Company; a strike vote at Grand Rapids Brass Company, conducted by two clergymen. Perhaps the most important story from a public relations point of view was a cut-line and picture of CIO members contributing to the local cancer drive.

The quality of Herald reporting continued to be balanced and objective, and supplied readers with rather complete and detailed background as well as current information on labor events. The Press reporting was sketchy and frequently quoted management almost exclusively. Neither newspaper gave very extensive coverage to the local telephone strike. However, the Herald carried pictures of the strikers and quoted labor leaders involved. The Press gave almost all its space to extensive quotes from management on the cost of the strike and the curtailed phone service.

Paid advertorials by the Michigan Bell Telephone Company

shot the editorial content of both papers way up. There was more national and state news in the Herald than the Press although the stories covered were similar.

The positions of the two newspapers would appear to be reversed in 1947 from what it was in 1911, with the Herald leading the Press in total and local coverage. It should be borne in mind that both newspapers covered the opening of a strike in 1947; and that the Herald has about half the amount of total news space available as the Press.

## CHAPTER VI

### COMPARISONS ACROSS THE YEARS

A series of tables and bar charts that tell the story of quantitative coverage of labor news across the years for The Grand Rapids Press and The Grand Rapids Herald is included in this chapter. They answer some of the questions raised in the Introduction.

Before turning to these, however, it might be helpful to reemphasize a few points related to the comparative sizes of the two newspapers and the periods during which they were examined.

#### A. The Grand Rapids Herald

The Grand Rapids Herald has always been a morning daily with a Sunday edition. Circulation for the daily, today, runs about 55,205; for the Sunday paper, 70,968.

It has always been a smaller paper than the Press. In 1911 the Herald averaged about 10 pages a day with seven columns to the page. The Sunday edition was about 32 pages in length.

Today it averages 20 pages a day, eight columns to the page; the Sunday editions, about 120 pages.

Based on a ratio of about 55 per cent advertising to 45 per cent news space in 1911, the Herald averaged approximately 32 columns daily for non-advertising content.<sup>1</sup> Of this

1. Advertising ratio based on estimates checked against 30 issues in 1911 and the same number in 1947.

amount labor news averaged 4.2 per cent for the month of April. Local labor news represented 1.5 per cent of all non-advertising content.

In 1947, based on a ratio of 55-60 per cent advertising to 40-45 per cent non-advertising space, labor news for the month of April represented about 4.5 per cent of non-advertising space. Local labor news was approximately .05 per cent of non-advertising space. (These estimates are exclusive of the Sunday editions.)

The periods in which the Herald was examined included the end of the 1911 furniture strike and of the 1946 General Motors strike, the beginning of the 1937 furniture strike and of the 1947 telephone strike. One month in 1921 was examined covering the period including Labor day. Approximately 30 issues were examined for each period.

#### B. The Grand Rapids Press

The Grand Rapids Press has been an evening newspaper since 1892. In 1911 it averaged about 18 pages daily, seven columns to the page.<sup>2</sup> Based on a ratio of about 60 per cent advertising to 40 per cent non-advertising content, the Press in April 1911, devoted approximately 4.8 per cent of all non-advertising space (about 50 columns daily) to labor news. Local labor news constituted 3.3 per cent of all

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2. Based on 30 issues April 1911.

non-advertising space.

Today the Press averages around 41 pages a day, eight columns per page.<sup>3</sup> The June 1953 figure for advertising content was 65 per cent of total space. Applying this ratio, and an average of 41 pages a day to the period of April 1947, the Press spent about two per cent of non-advertising space (around 114 columns daily) on labor news. Local news represented about two one-hundredths of one per cent of non-advertising space.

The periods during which the Press was examined included the beginning of the 1911 furniture strike, the beginning of the 1945 General Motors strike, and the start of the 1947 telephone strike, plus the close of the 1937 furniture strike. In addition one month in 1922 that included Labor Day was examined. About 30 issues were checked for each period.

### Comparisons

In 1911 the Press had approximately 50 columns daily given to non-advertising content, the Herald about 32 columns. In 1947 the Press had about 114 columns of non-advertising content daily, the Herald about 72 columns.

Thus the Press, from the 1911 period to the present, has had roughly over one and a half times more news space available than the Herald.

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3. Based on a week's issues in July 1953.

At the same time the Herald, proportionately, has given more space to labor news. In the 1947 period for example, when both papers were examined simultaneously, the Herald gave four and a half per cent of its non-advertising space to labor news; the Press, two per cent. Local news was a small fraction of non-advertising content in the Press; one half of one per cent in the Herald.

By contrast, the Press in 1911 spent five per cent of its non-advertising space on labor news; and three per cent on local labor news. The Herald spent 4.2 per cent of non-advertising space on labor news; and 1.5 per cent on local labor news.

It is obvious that there is no way of judging whether the ratio of about twice as much total and local labor news in the Herald today is fairly constant. The use of a selected sample, rather than a representative one was explained in the Introduction. It might be quite possible to pick a modern period when the ratio between the two papers would be reversed. How much total labor news there is frequently depends on events that happen on the national scene.

But the gradual shrinkage in local labor news on the Press between 1911 and 1947 and a corresponding increase in local labor coverage in the Herald, particularly from 1937 to 1947, would probably be borne out by further study.

Questions Raised in the Introduction

How much total labor news was there in each paper during the selected intervals?

Of this, how much originated locally, how much nationally, how much from the state, and what proportion was given to editorial content?

How much of the labor content dealt with strikes, how much with non-strike events?

What proportion of labor news was placed on page one, what proportion inside?

What were the chief directions of local stories and of editorial content?

What were major categories of labor news for each period?

The answers to these questions are summarized in the attached tables and charts.

## TABLE I AND BAR CHART I

## ALL LABOR NEWS

This table and chart summarize all labor content in both papers for all time periods examined. Data for the Press is placed on the left, for the Herald on the right, in each period, on both table and chart. Corresponding bar charts are placed directly beneath each table.

The grand total for all labor news, not shown, on the attached table is as follows:

<u>Total Items</u>	<u>Total Inches</u>	<u>Grand Rapids Press</u>		<u>Grand Rapids Herald</u>	
		<u>Total Items</u>	<u>Total Inches</u>	<u>Total Items</u>	<u>Total Inches</u>
1,315	14,802	691	7,110	624	7,692

Thus the Herald carried more total space on labor news than the Press. At the same time, it had fewer items. Thus the average length of stories in the Herald averaged 12 inches, in the Press, 10 inches.

As noted previously, this varied greatly from interval to interval, and is most significant in the area of local stories. For example, the Press averaged 20 inches per local story in 1911; eight inches in 1947.

Looking at bar chart I it can be seen that there were two peak periods of total labor coverage; for the Herald in 1947, for the Press in 1945-6. It is also apparent that these

did not correspond with peak periods for total labor news, namely 1911 for the Press, 1937 for the Herald, both periods covering the opening of city-wide industrial strikes.

Editorial content was highest for both papers in 1947, chiefly due to the inclusion of paid advertorials by the Michigan Bell Telephone company. Locally written editorials on labor matters were highest in the Herald in 1937.

State labor news was almost non-existent in periods examined before 1922 and reached its greatest height during the period of the 1945-46 General Motors strike.

National news remained relatively heavy for each period and for both papers. Highpoint was during 1922 in the Herald at the time of nation-wide coal and rail strikes.

Perhaps the most obvious and significant observation that can be made from Chart I is the shrinkage in local labor content in the Press, and the growth of it in the Herald. While the decline in Press coverage is more startling, the Herald carried more local news in the 1937 and 1947 periods than the Press, an equivalent amount in 1922 and slightly less in 1946.







TABLE I WHAT PROPORTION OF ITEMS AND INCHES OF ALL LABOR NEWS, IN SELECTED MONTHS, 1911 WERE DEVOTED TO LOCAL NEWS, TO EDITORIAL MATTER, TO NATIONAL, AND TO STATE NEWS

ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER BY ITEMS AND INCHES

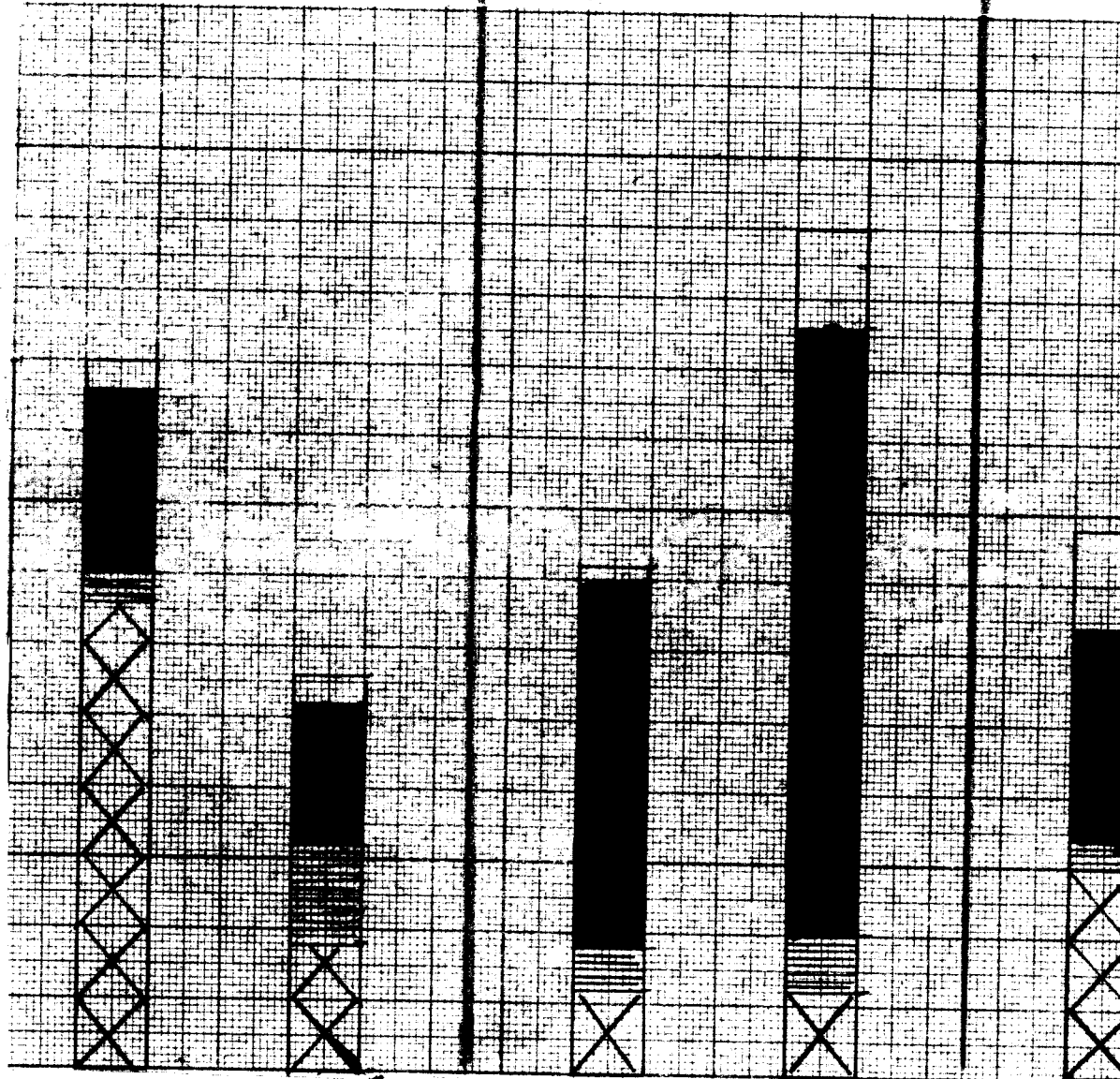
	1911 (April) PRESS		1911 (August) HERALD		1921 (Sept.) PRESS		1922 (Sept.) HERALD		(Oct.) PRE
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	
LOCAL	48	995 69%	25	262 31%	19	139 17%	20	181 10%	47
EDITORIAL	12	73 5%	11	223 37%	10	92 9%	11	131 7%	6
NATIONAL	25	322 22%	31	293 35%	59	772 71%	98	1,315 72%	70
STATE	$\frac{12}{97}$	$\frac{52}{1,442}$ 4%	$\frac{7}{74}$	$\frac{61}{839}$ 7%	$\frac{6}{94}$	$\frac{30}{1,083}$ 3%	$\frac{20}{149}$	$\frac{216}{1,843}$ 11%	$\frac{34}{157}$

BAR CHART I ILLUSTRATING TABLE I SHOWING ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN

Key to Bar Chart

- Local 
- Editorial 
- National 
- State 

Each bar represents the total number of items and inches of labor news in each subdivision. Percentages figures tell proportion of total labor news within each sub-division.

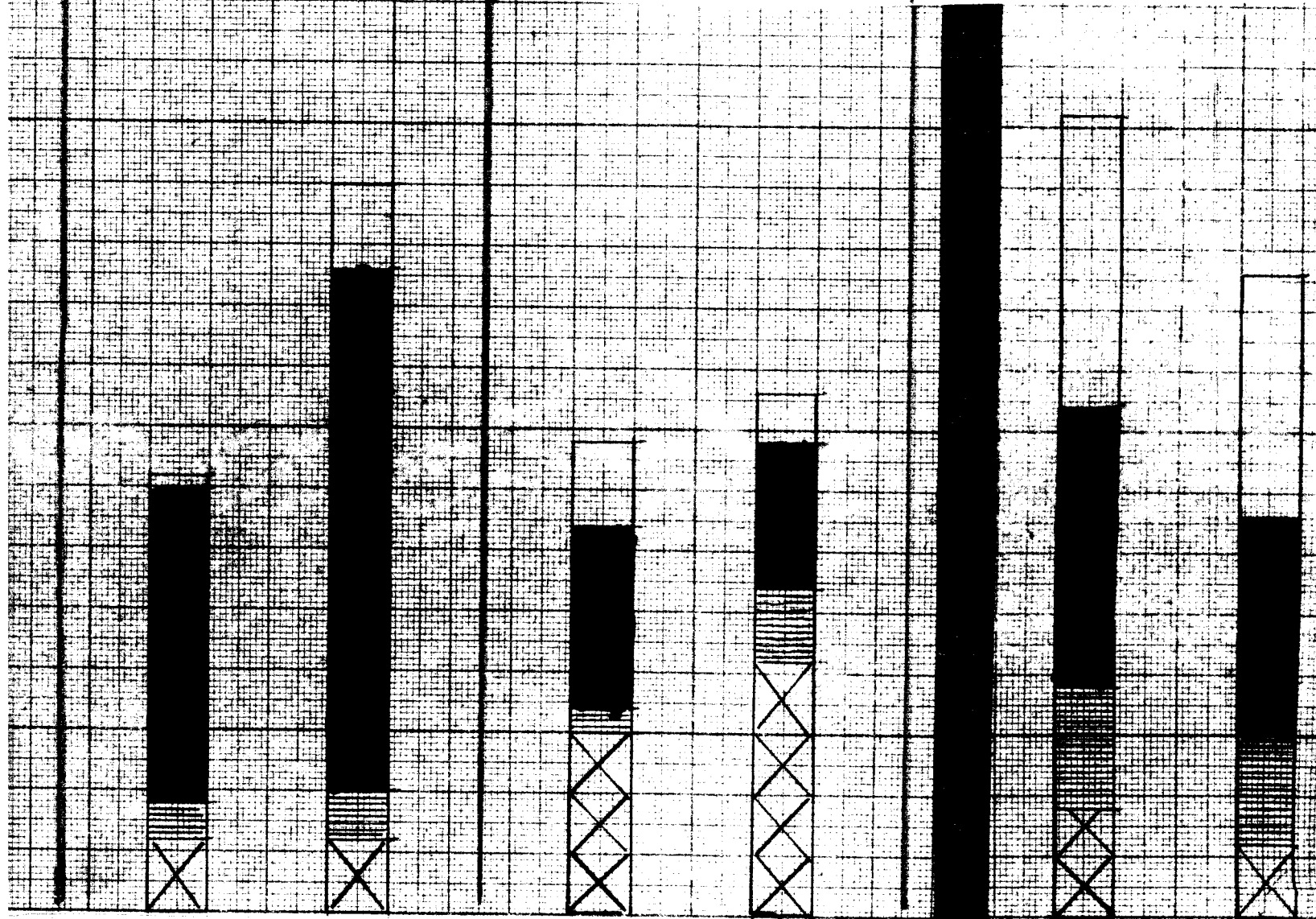


INCHES OF ALL LABOR NEWS, IN SELECTED MONTHS, 1911-1947, IN THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD AND THE GRAND RAPIDS EDITORIAL MATTER, TO NATIONAL, AND TO STATE NEWS?

LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR PERIODS AND PAPERS INDICATED

Percent	1921 (Sept.) PRESS		1922 (Sept.) HERALD		1937 (Oct.) PRESS		1937 (Sept.) HERALD		1945-46 (Nov. Dec.) PRESS		1945-46 (Feb. March) HERALD	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
31%	19	189	20	181	47	458	35	618	35	267	16	178
37%	10	92	11	131	6	51	16	185	37	418	13	258
35%	59	772	98	1,315	70	453	38	453	76	620	63	556
7%	6	30	20	216	34	203	25	132	58	666	48	593
	<u>94</u>	<u>1,083</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>1,843</u>	<u>157</u>	<u>1,165</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>1,388</u>	<u>207</u>	<u>1,971</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>1,585</u>

SHOWING ALL LABOR NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN INCHES FOR PERIODS AND PAPERS INDICATED

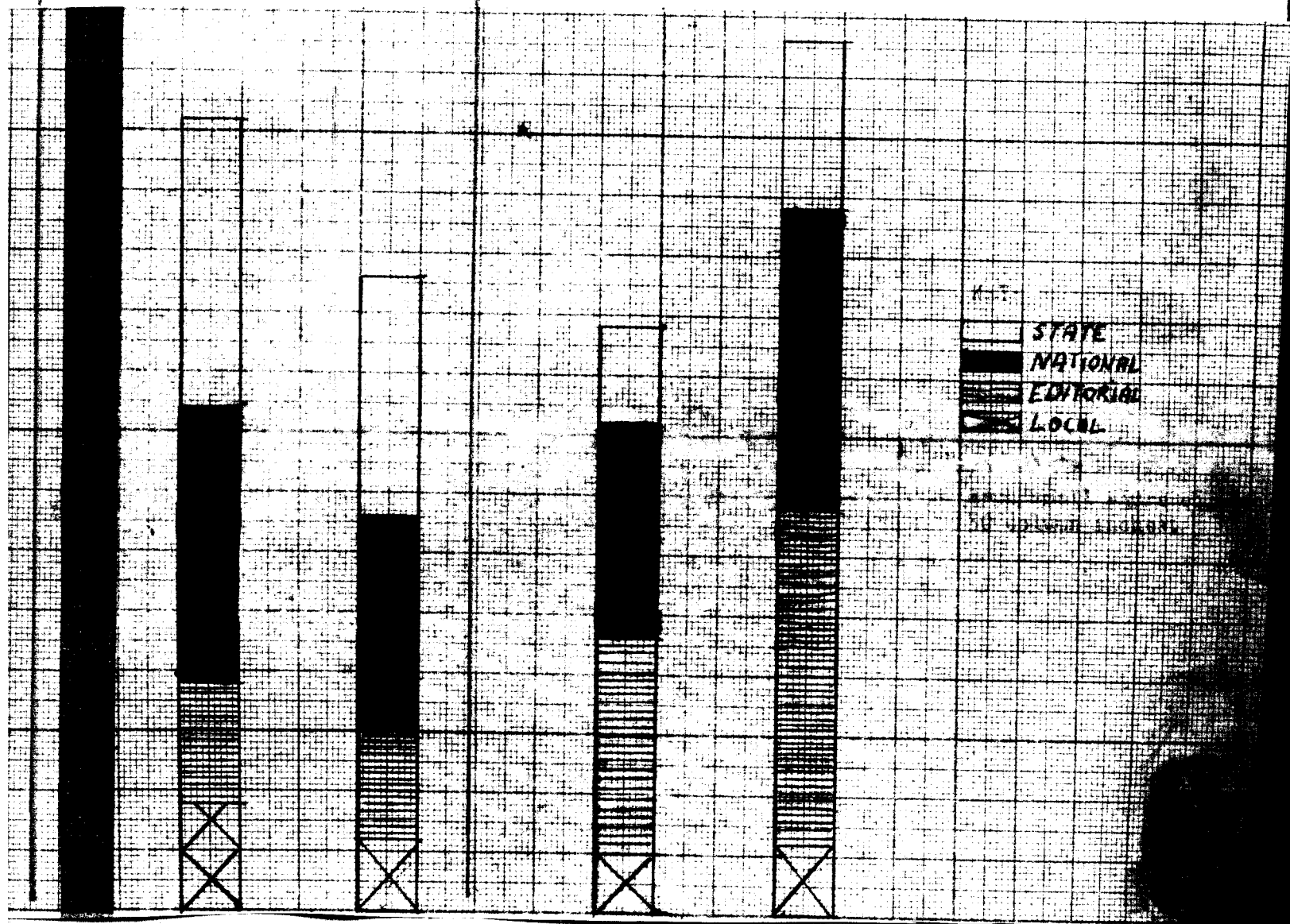


RAPIDS HERALD AND THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS,

ARTICLES INDICATED

PERCENTAGE	1945-46				1947			
	(Nov. Dec.) PRESS		(Feb. March) HERALD		(April) PRESS		(April) HERALD	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
4%	35	267	16	178	16	139	26	259
3%	37	418	13	258	20	538	22	744
3%	76	620	63	556	68	543	76	749
0%	58	666	48	593	34	230	23	285
	207	1,971	140	1,585	136	1,450	147	2,037

PAPERS INDICATED



## TABLE II AND BAR CHART II

## PROPORTION OF LABOR NEWS DEVOTED TO STRIKES

Several observations are apparent in chart II.

First, the local labor coverage was greatest in both papers at the time of local strikes. There was much more news during the two local furniture strikes than in the periods when Grand Rapids unions joined in two national walk-outs, the General Motors strike of 1945-6 and the telephone strike in 1947. There was no local strike news in the 1921 period examined for the Press.

Second, national strike coverage was high in all periods except those in 1937 and 1911. Its peak came in 1922 during coal and rail tie-ups.

Third, editorial content related to strikes was lowest in the 1937 period, and highest in the 1947 interval. Strike news originating in the state remained low throughout all periods until 1945-6 when it rose sharply during the GM strike.

## TABLE II A PROPORTION OF NON-STRIKE NEWS

A glance at this table shows that strike news always took precedence space-wise over non-strike, in all periods.

Interestingly, there was more non-strike news in all four main subdivisions in 1947 in the Herald, than in the Press. The greatest part of it was national in origin.

More interesting is the fact that the greatest amount of non-strike local news was carried by the Press in 1911. A good deal of it had to do with efforts of local school teachers to get a pay raise. The largest amount of non-strike state news was carried by the Press in the 1947 period, and was related primarily to UAW-CIO wage talks.

TABLE II

	1947		1947		1947	
	(March) LD	(April) PRESS	(April) PRESS	(April) HERALD	(April) HERALD	(April) HERALD
	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Inches</u>
LOCAL	113 12%	12	97 9%	13	127 9%	
EDITORIAL	239 17%	20	452 44%	18	669 44%	
NATIONAL	419 32%	47	394 39%	52	555 37%	
STATE	495 39%	16	82 8%	15	155 10%	
	266	95	1,025	98	1,506	

BAR CHART

Key to Bar Chart:

Local  
Editorial  
National  
State

Each small square equals 30 col. inches

Percentage figures tell proportion of total labor news within each subdivision.

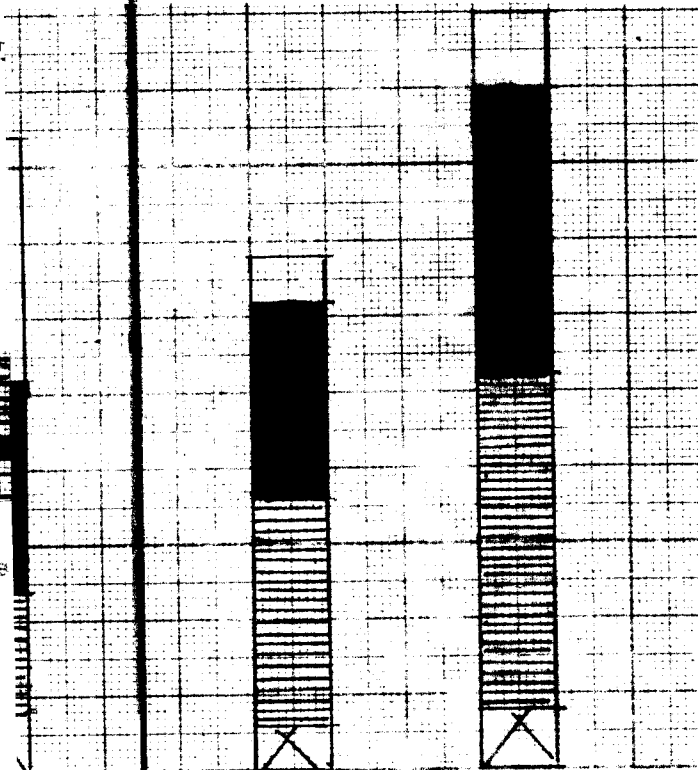


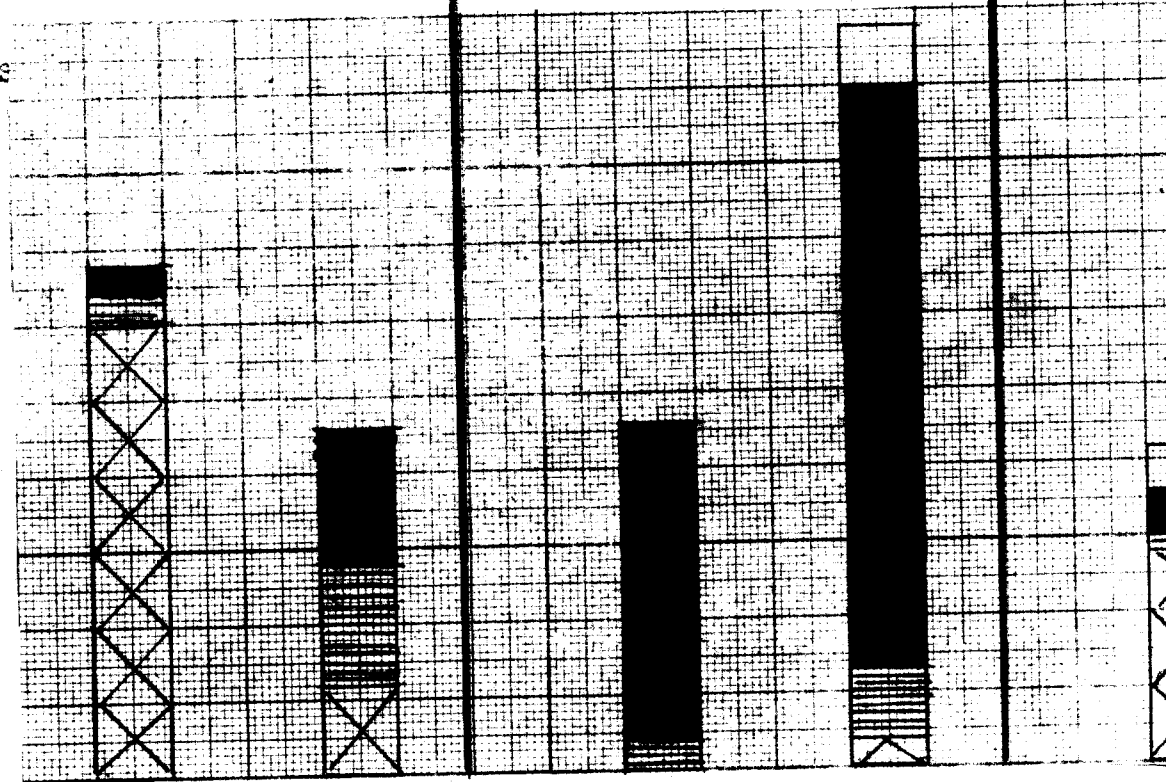
TABLE II

WHAT PROPORTION OF ALL NEWS AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN THE GRAND R  
WERE DEVOTED TO STRIKE NEWS BY ITEMS AND INCHES F

STRIKE NEWS BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR PAPERS AM

	1911 (April) PRESS			(August) HERALD			1921 (Sept.) PRESS			1922 (Sept.) HERALD			(Oct.) PRESS	
	Items	Inches	%	Items	Inches	%	Items	Inches	%	Items	Inches	%	Items	Inches
LOCAL	35	895	90%	17	186	27%	0	0		7	71	5%	42	429
EDITORIAL	8	55	6%	11	223	32%	4	54	8%	10	125	8%	2	20
NATIONAL	9	39	4%	28	276	40%	40	635	92%	81	1,149	78%	22	79
STATE	$\frac{2}{54}$	$\frac{4}{993}$	0%	$\frac{2}{58}$	$\frac{6}{691}$	1%	$\frac{1}{45}$	$\frac{2}{691}$	0%	$\frac{13}{111}$	$\frac{132}{1,477}$	9%	$\frac{25}{91}$	$\frac{103}{631}$

BAR CHART II

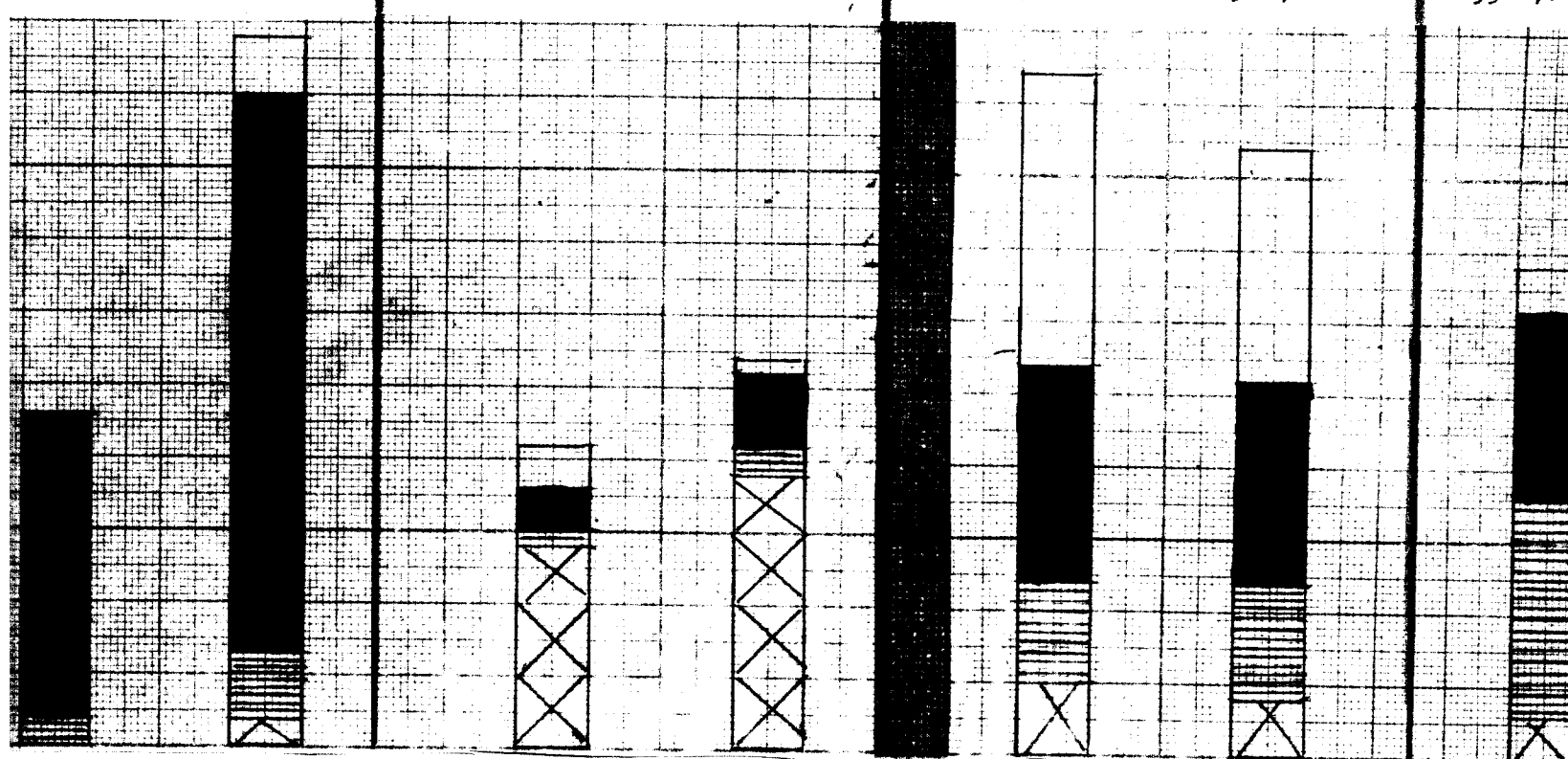


Key to Bar Chart:  
 Local  
 Editorial  
 National  
 State  
 Each small square equals 30 col. inches  
 Percentage figures tell proportion of total labor news within each subdivision.

5 AND EDITORIAL MATTER IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD  
 TO STRIKE NEWS BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR PERIODS INDICATED?

NEWS BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR PAPERS AND PERIODS INDICATED

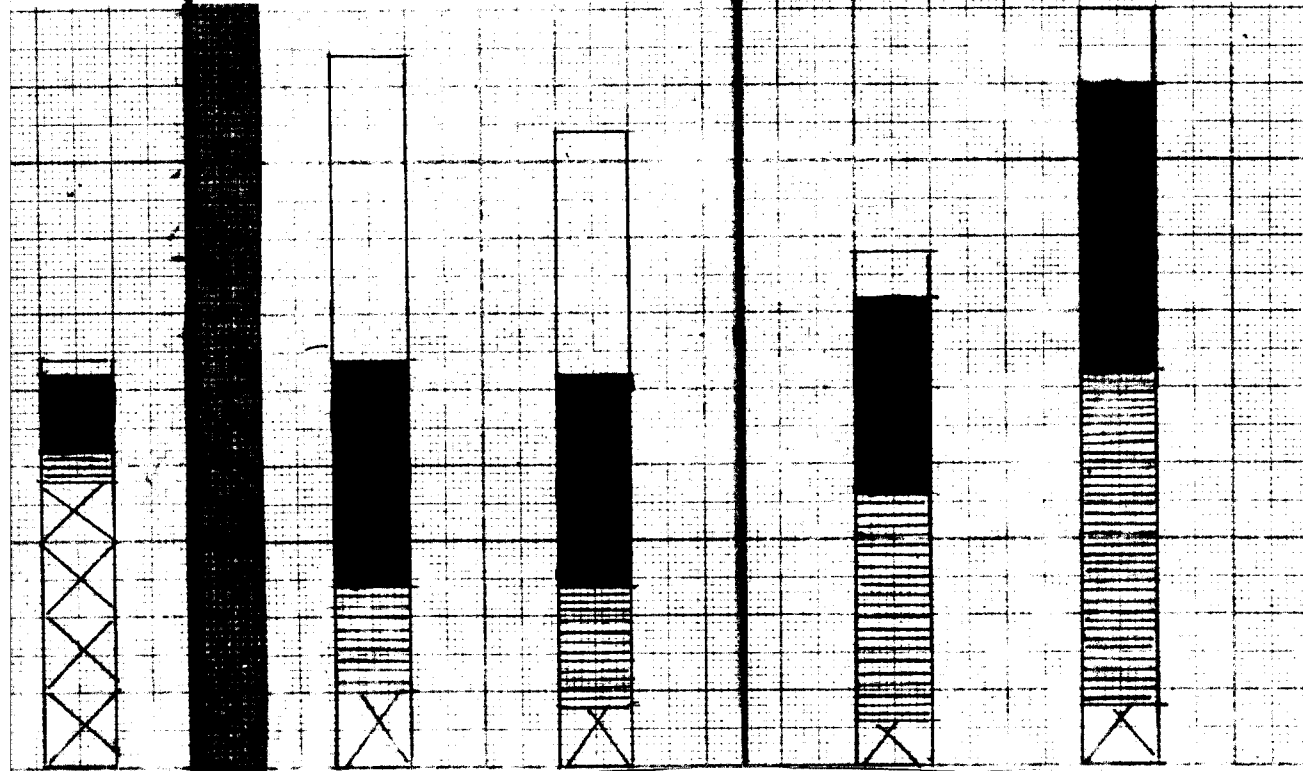
1 t.) SS	1922 (Sept.) HERALD		1937				1945-46 (Nov.-Dec.) PRESS		1945-46 (Feb.-March) HERALD		(April) PRESS	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
0	7	71 5%	42	429 68%	28	562 69%	20	146 11%	12	113 12%	12	9
54 8%	10	125 8%	2	20 3%	6	69 8%	19	242 13%	9	239 17%	20	45
635 92%	81	1,149 78%	22	79 13%	15	147 18%	49	424 30%	51	419 32%	47	39
2 0%	13	132 9%	25	103 16%	11	36 5%	49	606 46%	38	495 39%	16	8
691	111	1,477	91	631	60	814	138	1,418	115	1,266	95	1,028



AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD  
INDICATED?

INDICATED

(Sept.) HERALD	1945-46				1947				
	(Nov.-Dec.) PRESS		(Feb.-March) HERALD		(April) PRESS		(April) HERALD		
ns	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
8	562 69%	20	146 11%	12	113 12%	12	97 9%	13	127 9%
6	69 8%	19	242 13%	9	239 17%	20	452 44%	18	669 44%
5	147 18%	49	424 30%	51	419 32%	47	394 39%	52	555 37%
<u>1</u> 0	<u>36</u> 814 5%	<u>49</u> 138	<u>606</u> 1,418 46%	<u>38</u> 115	<u>495</u> 1,266 39%	<u>16</u> 95	<u>82</u> 1,025 8%	<u>15</u> 98	<u>155</u> 1,506 10%



## TABLE III AND BAR CHART II

## PROPORTION OF ALL LABOR STORIES PLACED ON PAGE ONE

Chart III shows that more local labor news made the front page during the Press coverage of the 1911 furniture strike than in any period examined since. Second to it was the Herald's placement of local news on page one during the 1937 furniture strike.

The Herald placed more than twice as much local news on page one during the 1947 period than the Press. Again in 1937 the Herald placed almost twice as much local labor news on page one as the Press. However, the Press had slightly more on page one during the beginning days of the General Motors strike and over six times as much on page one in April, 1911.

Front page news emanating from the national scene was highest in the Herald in 1922 but pretty consistently high for both papers throughout all periods.

State labor news on page one was non-existent until 1922 when the Herald carried a small amount; there was practically none for either paper in 1937, a small amount in 1947. The peak for state stories was the 1945-6 period of the GM strike. Interestingly, the Herald coverage of the end of that strike had more front page news than the Press. In fact, the Herald state labor coverage placed on page one was consistently larger than that of the Press.

TABLE III

WHAT PROPORTION OF LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL STORIES IN THE GRAND INTERVALS, 1911-1947, WERE PLACED ON PAGE

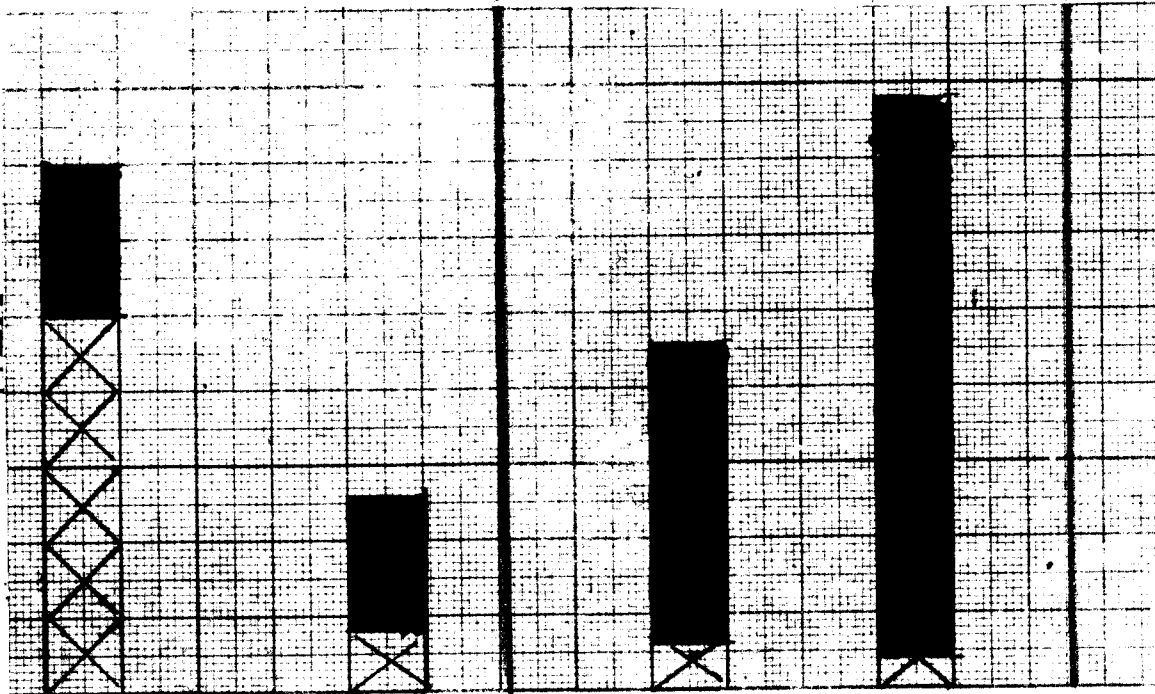
PAGE ONE STORIES BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR

	1911 (April) PRESS		(August) HERALD		1921 (Sept.) PRESS		1922 (Sept.) HERALD		Items
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	
LOCAL	21	761 72%	8	118 30%	5	78 1%	5	52 4%	28
NATIONAL	19	296 28%	25	277 70%	37	608 99%	85	1,155 87%	16
STATE	1	3 0%	0	0 0	0	0 0	10	120 9%	5
TOTALS	41	1,060	33	395	42	686	100	1,327	49

BAR CHART III SHOWING PROPORTION OF LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL STORIES ON PAGE

Key for Bar Chart:  
 Local  
 National  
 State  
 Each small square equals 30 col. inches.

Percentage figures tell proportion of total labor news within each sub-division.

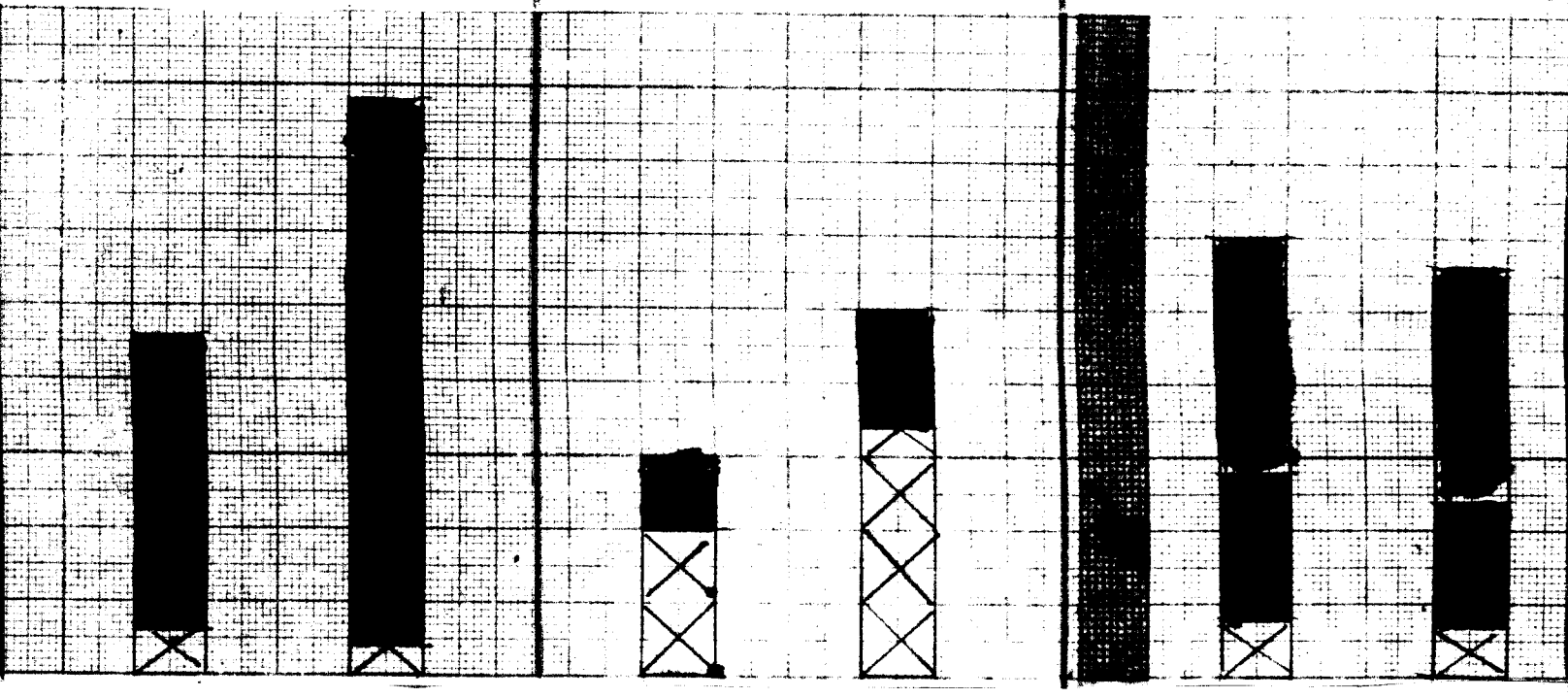


STATE, AND NATIONAL STORIES IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD AT SELECTED INTERVALS, 1911-1947, WERE PLACED ON PAGE ONE?

PAGE ONE STORIES BY ITEMS AND INCHES FOR PERIODS AND PAPERS SHOWN

1921 (Sept.) PRESS		1922 (Sept.) HERALD		1937 (Oct.) PRESS		1937 (Sept.) HERALD		1945-46 (Nov.-Dec.) PRESS		1945-46 (Feb.-March) HERALD	
Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
5	78 1%	5	52 4%	28	286 64%	22	517 69%	12	108 12%	5	91 11%
37	608 99%	85	1,155 87%	16	110 25%	19	233 31%	30	325 36%	22	275 31%
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> 0	<u>10</u>	<u>120</u> 9%	<u>5</u>	<u>49</u> 11%	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u> 0	<u>30</u>	<u>467</u> 52%	<u>33</u>	<u>493</u> 58%
42	686	100	1,327	49	445	42	753	72	900	65	864

CAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL STORIES ON PAGE ONE IN THE PRESS AND HERALD FOR PERIODS INDICATED IN INCHES.

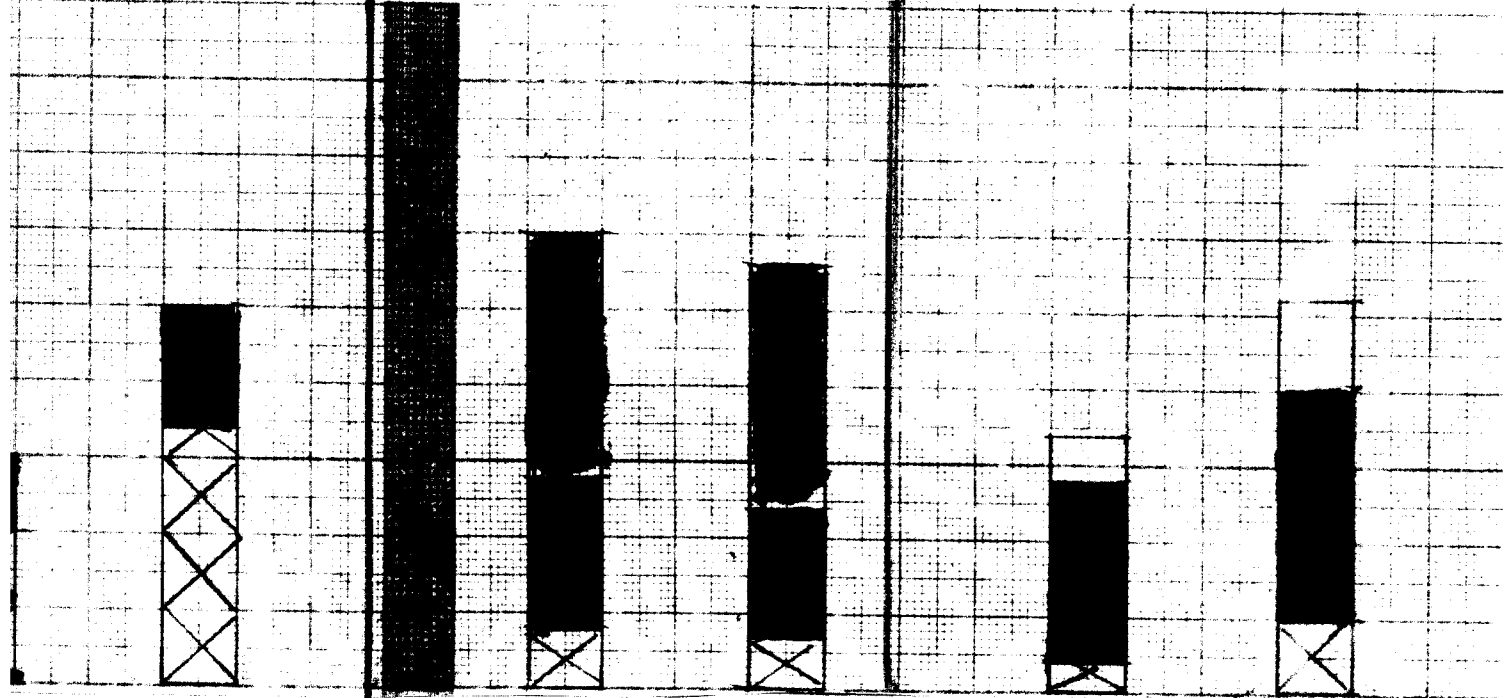


IDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD AT SELECTED

IDS AND PAPERS SHOWN

1937			1945-46				1947			
(Sept.) HERALD			(Nov.-Dec.) PRESS		(Feb.-March) HERALD		(April) PRESS		(April) HERALD	
Items	Inches	%	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
22	517	69%	12	108	5	91	7	62	10	139
19	233	31%	30	325	22	275	35	359	37	458
1	3	0	30	467	33	498	21	130	12	176
42	753		72	900	65	864	63	551	59	773

IN THE PRESS AND HERALD FOR PERIODS INDICATED IN INCHES.



## TABLE III A

## PROPORTION OF LABOR NEWS ON OTHER THAN PAGE ONE

The chief observation apparent from this table is that the Press, after the period of the 1920's, consistently carried more labor news on inside pages than the Herald, except for 1947 when the Herald carried more news on page one and inside pages together than the Press due to its peak total labor coverage.

TABLE IIA WHAT PROPORTION OF ALL NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT IN THE GRAND RAPIDS  
1911-1947, WERE DEVOTED TO NON  
NON STRIKE NEWS AND EDITORIAL CONTENT FOR

	1911		HERALD		1921		1922		1937	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
LOCAL	13	100 23%	8	76 52%	19	189 48%	13	110 30%	5	29 5%
EDITORIAL	4	18 3%	0		6	38 10%	1	6 2%	4	31 6%
NATIONAL	16	283 64%	3	17 11%	19	137 35%	17	166 45%	48	374 70%
STATE	10	48 10%	5	55 37%	5	28 7%	7	84 23%	9	100 19%
TOTALS	43	449	16	148	49	392	38	366	66	534

TABLE IIIA WHAT PROPORTION OF LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL STORIES IN THE GRAND R  
INTERVALS, 1911-1947, WERE PLACED ON O

	1911		HERALD		1921		1922		1937	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
LOCAL	27	234	17	145	14	111	15	129	19	172
NATIONAL	6	25	6	16	22	163	11	158	54	342
STATE	<u>11</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>155</u>
TOTALS	44	307	30	222	42	304	36	382	101	669

CONTENT IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD IN SELECTED INTERVALS 1911-1947, WERE DEVOTED TO NON-STRIKE EVENTS?

AND EDITORIAL CONTENT FOR PERIODS AND PAPERS INDICATED

1922		1937				1945-6				1947										
HERALD		PRESS		HERALD		PRESS		HERALD		PRESS		HERALD								
ems	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches							
13	110	30%	5	29	5%	7	56	10%	15	121	22%	4	65	19%	4	42	10%	13	132	25%
1	6	2%	4	31	6%	10	116	20%	18	176	32%	4	29	10%	8	75	18%	8	75	14%
17	166	45%	48	374	70%	23	306	53%	27	195	35%	12	137	41%	21	149	36%	24	194	36%
7	84	23%	9	100	19%	14	96	17%	9	60	10%	10	98	30%	18	148	36%	8	130	25%
38	366		66	534		54	574		69	552		30	329		51	414		53	531	

EDITORIAL STORIES IN THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD AT SELECTED INTERVALS 1911-1947, WERE PLACED ON OTHER THAN PAGE ONE?

1922		1937				1945-46				1947			
HERALD		PRESS		HERALD		PRESS		HERALD		PRESS		HERALD	
ems	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches
15	129	19	172	13	101	23	159	11	87	9	77	16	120
11	158	54	342	19	120	46	358	41	281	33	184	39	290
<u>10</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>241</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>95</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>109</u>
36	382	101	669	56	350	98	758	67	463	55	361	66	519

## TABLES IV AND V

## DIRECTION OF LOCAL STORIES AND EDITORIALS

Recapitulation

It might be well at the outset of any discussion dealing with directional coding to redefine the meaning of the four basic designations; pro, anti, neutral, and balanced.

It should be understood that the terms neutral and balanced as defined in this thesis have almost opposite meanings.

The term neutral implies no real interpretation of news; and a deadpan type of reporting that relates a bare minimum of facts in an impersonal style. It also may be used for stories which devote less than 50 per cent of total space to quoting opinions; and in instances where the play, position and size of an item deemphasize its news value. It is also used for run-of-the mill wrap-up stories, as in a continuing strike situation where there is little change.

The term balanced as used herein implies both fairness and objectivity and a background knowledge of issues. Its value is most apparent in stories concerning two or more conflicting opinions, as between labor and management, or in describing incidents of violence on the picket lines, or internal factional disputes. The term balanced has not been applied to stories that simply contain an equal number

of quotes from two sides to a dispute. It involves an ability to sift through available statements and select pertinent information. Balanced reporting insists on portraying both sides to a dispute with sufficient knowledge to evaluate and discard statements that are a rehash of previous stories or which overemphasize a minor point.

Pro stories spend over half the space and generally devote the lead to citing one side in a favorable context.

#### TABLE IV

The chief observation apparent from looking at Table IV, describing the directional coding of local news stories for each period, is a transition in Press reporting from pro-labor to neutral.

In 1911 the great majority of Press stories fell in the pro-labor classification. By 1947, the majority were neutral with pro-management running a close second.

The Herald, on the other hand, appeared predominantly pro-labor in its 1911 coverage, and balanced in the 1947 period.

In 1937 both papers were coded most heavily in the neutral direction and the changeover appears to have taken place after this period, the Press tending more and more toward neutral reporting, the Herald to balanced.

TABLE IV

## WHAT WAS THE DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES?

DIRECTION OF LOCAL NEWS STORIES, BY ITEMS AND INCHES, F

DIRECTION	1911		HERALD		1921		1922		1937		HE
	PRESS (April)		(August)		PRESS (Sept.)		HERALD (Sept.)		PRESS (Oct.)		(O
	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.
	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>
Pro-Labor	32	871	11	144	12	150	4	40	8	82	10
Pro-Mgt.	5	49	2	8	1	2	7	65	5	56	5
Anti-Labor	0	0	1	9	0	0	3	18	4	33	2
Anti-Mgt.	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	8	50	9	67	5	27	3	12	21	158	14
Balanced	<u>2</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>4</u>
	48	995	25	263	19	189	20	181	47	458	35

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ITEMS, BY ITEMS AND INCHES, FOR PERIODS AND PAPERS INDICATED

1922 HERALD (Sept.) Col. <u>Inches</u>	1937		1945		1946		1947					
	PRESS (Oct.)		HERALD (Oct.)		PRESS (Dec.)		HERALD (Feb.)		PRESS (April)		HERALD (April)	
No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	No. Col.	
<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u> <u>Inches</u>	
40	8	82	10	137	10	95	3	102	2	7	10	91
65	5	56	5	91	1	18	0	0	4	43	1	21
18	4	33	2	68	1	5	-	--	0	0	-	--
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	21	158	14	201	22	145	3	12	7	58	4	32
<u>46</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>129</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>115</u>
181	47	458	35	618	35	267	16	178	16	139	26	259

## TABLE V

DIRECTION OF LOCALLY WRITTEN EDITORIALS IN THE  
PRESS AND HERALD

A study of the Press editorials shows that nearly all the pro-labor commentary took place before 1937. Thereafter it became increasingly anti-labor and pro-management.

The Herald remained consistently anti-labor and pro-management throughout all intervals examined.

Both newspapers carried anti-New Deal editorials during 1937, and the Herald continued to do so in the 1946 period. The Herald had slightly more space given to balanced editorials. Both papers were about even on the amount of space given pro-management editorials. The Press was three to one on amount of pro-labor content but as indicated above, this was concentrated in the pre-1937 period.

TABLE V\* DIRECTION OF LOCALLY WRITTEN EDITORIALS IN THE PRESS AND HERALD BY ITEMS AND INCHES AT SELECTED INTERVALS  
1911-1947

YEAR	A. THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS						Totals	
	DIRECTIONS						Items	Inches
	Anti-Labor	Balanced	Pro-Management	Pro-Labor	Anti-New Deal	Neutral		
Items	Items	Items	Items	Items	Items	Items	Inches	
1911	0	3	0	5	42		8	60
1921	1	3		3	34		7	78
1937	1	1		1	14	2	5	46
1945	3		4	1	11		9	97
1947	$\frac{3}{8}$	$\frac{25}{10}$	$\frac{1}{5}$	$\frac{10}{58}$	$\frac{14}{101}$	$\frac{2}{12}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{8}{37}$

\*1937 anti-labor editorial was really anti-CIO, not AFL.

\*\*1945, only anti-management editorial was one by Bishop Haas criticizing Press, run in full by them.

B. THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD

1911	1	26	2	35	1	3		4	64
1922	5	61	5	54	1	6		11	131
1937	6	84	2	28	1	16	2	11	156
1946	6	51		1	8	3	17	10	76
1947	$\frac{4}{22}$	$\frac{56}{278}$	$\frac{3}{10}$	$\frac{32}{121}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{8}{32}$	$\frac{5}{45}$	$\frac{10}{46}$	$\frac{116}{543}$

\*See Appendix for complete directional breakdown on all editorial content.

## MAJOR CATEGORIES

Because of the detailed presentation, tables showing the chief category groups for each period and paper, by each major subdivision, local, editorial, national and state, have been included in the appendix.

Before comparing the categories it might be helpful to state the meaning of some whose titles may not be clear.

The strike category titled Physical Conduct is divided into two subdivisions, peaceful and coercive. Peaceful strike conduct includes activities at strike headquarters, peaceful picketing, meetings to plan strategy. Coercive strike conduct includes violence, strike breaking, mass picketing, sit-down strikes.

Attempts at Settlement By Resolving the Issues includes direct negotiations between the parties, mediation or arbitration, and presentation of its case by one party to a dispute, through paid advertorials, or getting a paper to reprint a verbatim statement by one side.

Attempts at Settlement by Direct Intervention includes court actions such as injunctions or government seizure.

Status of Strike stories are those which place major emphasis on the opening or ending of strikes, or wrap-up stories on continuing strikes when there is little or no change in news.

The meaning of the non-strike categories are more apparent from their titles. The Miscellaneous category includes disaster stories such as mine explosions; sabotage or acts of violence unconnected with specific strikes such as the McNamara bombing; and welfarism, generally acts of employers toward their employes, such as gifts, improved work conditions etc.

The category Government Programs and Policies of Concern to labor is subdivided into Specific Legislation, such as wages, hours, or labor curb laws; and General Policies, such as the New-Deal, Fair-Deal or Socialism.

A. Categories most characteristic of Local stories.

The peak periods of local labor news were 1911 and 1937. In 1911 the predominant categories were, in this order: Status-of-Strike; Attempts to Settle on the Issues; Physical Conduct-Peaceful Tactics; and Physical Conduct-Coercive tactics.

In 1937, the Status-of-Strike category was likewise the largest, but Attempts to Settle by Direct Intervention superceded Attempts to ~~St~~ttle on the Issues; and Physical Conduct-Coercive Tactics took precedence over Peaceful Tactics.

In 1922, the Herald carried five stories that fell into the category Effect of Strikes on Public Welfare, larger than any other period for either paper. During the 1945-6

General Motors strike, the Press carried most stories in the category Attempts to Settle on the Issues, the Herald in the Status-of-Strike category. In 1947 both papers concentrated on the latter classification.

Non-strike local stories for the Press in the 1911 period were concentrated in Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor; in the Herald in Nation-Wide or Community-Wide activities of labor.

In 1921 the Press showed most space in two categories, Union Activities, and Nation-Wide or Community-Wide Activities of Labor. The Herald, on the other hand, in 1922, concentrated most of its news in the category, under Miscellaneous, of Welfarism, with community and Nation-Wide Activities, second.

During the 1945-6-7 periods Union Activities was heaviest for both papers with Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor second.

#### B. Categories Most Characteristic of Editorial Content

The major strike category that showed up consistently in both papers for all periods was Effect of Strike on Public Welfare. In addition, the Herald, in 1911 carried a sizeable number of editorials that fell under the category Physical Conduct-Coercive Tactics. During the 1940's, the paid advertorials swelled the category Attempts to Settle on the Issues. They were classified under this

because all of them attempted to sell the public directly on the issues as the employers saw them.

Editorials in non-strike categories were most heavily concentrated for all periods and both papers in Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor, and Government Policies-Specific Legislation.

In 1937 the Herald ran the gamut of all non-strike categories, beginning with Union Activities and continuing through to Government Policies, of Importance to Labor. The Press in 1945 and both the Herald and the Press in 1947 concentrated on Economic Conditions of Concern to Labor.

C. Categories Most Characteristic of National Labor Stories

Since quantitatively national labor news outstripped all others, all categories showed up most heavily in this area of news.

Heaviest periods for both papers were the 1920's and the 1940's. The 1911 and 1937 intervals were relatively light on national strike news.

The three largest categories under Strike News for both papers and all periods were, in this order: Status-of-Strike; Attempts to Settle on the Issues; and Physical-Conduct-Coercive Tactics.

The Press had more news in Physical Conduct-Coercive Tactics than the Herald, but the latter outstripped the

Press in Attempts to Settle on the Issues and had more than twice as much in Status-of-Strike.

National stories that fell into non-strike categories showed greatest concentration in the areas of Union Activities, Government Policies-Specific Legislation, and Miscellaneous Sabotage.

D. Categories Most Characteristic of State Labor Stories

There were next to no state stories prior to the 1937 period. From this point on, they grouped themselves most heavily in the following categories in this order:

Strike categories -- Attempts to Settle on the Issues; Status-of-Strike; Effects of Strikes on Public Welfare.

The three largest non-strike categories, for both papers, in all time periods were in this order, Government Policies--Specific Legislation; Union Activities; and Joint Union Management Activities.

## CHAPTER VII

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## Some Questions and Answers

This thesis was primarily an exploratory study designed to examine the evolution of quantity and quality of labor content in two daily newspapers, through peak periods of labor history in an average sized industrial community.

Its purpose was to provide a rough quantitative map and at the same time to draw from material in each period some insights into important differences in quality of reporting.

For the writer the richest part of the study lay in its qualitative aspects; the purpose of the quantitative analysis was mainly to provide a background for the other. This was due in part to the use of selected time periods rather than a random sample, in part to the possibility of error in excerpting all quantitative material from numerous rolls of microfilm.

What has this study shown about labor coverage in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is it of significance outside that particular community?

One of the most obvious trends revealed in the preceding chapters was the shrinkage in local labor news from 1911 to 1947, in both newspapers.

A second trend related to the transition in quality of local reporting. On the Press the change was from a predominantly sympathetic, detailed treatment to neutral, non-interpretive writing. The Herald, on the other hand, appeared to undergo an almost opposite type of transition. In 1911 its coverage, while fair to the furniture strikers in the sense of quoting their statements adequately, generally placed management's position in the lead, and tended toward quoting management sources more often than union. In 1946-7 Herald labor news was reported with a kind of balanced objectivity that neither over-played or under-played the issues or favored one side over the other. At the same time many of the local stories were written so as to recreate an incident or episode and make it live. They appeared to be written by reporters who understood the framework of collective bargaining, from the power politics at a union hall to the problems of the front office in a major industrial concern.

A third trend appeared in the direction of editorial treatment given labor. The policy of the Herald was consistently critical of the coercive tactics of organized labor with a predominantly pro-management outlook. The Press, on the other hand, shifted from a policy of openly sympathizing with organized labor to a more subtle one of appearing to support collective bargaining but at the same time advocating restrictive labor legislation.

This brings up the question, pertinent to any analysis of labor coverage, regarding the relative importance of news columns vs. editorial comment. Do the editorial pages or the news columns of a newspaper receive most attention? From readership surveys it would appear that news columns are much more widely read by the average person, than editorials. For this reason, the Press policy, in 1947, of omitting some local stories and treating others in a neutral, colorless fashion, would seem to be more important to its 100,000 readers than any editorial comments.

By the same token the Herald's consistently pro-management editorial page, would appear to be more than balanced by its objective and more complete coverage of local labor news in the period of the 1940's.

It might be pertinent at this point to cite a few cases to illustrate the change in emphasis in local labor coverage by the Press and Herald.

A comparison of the treatment given the opening of the 1911 furniture strike by the Press, with its handling of the 1945 General Motors strike is a pretty good example of the transition in quantity and quality.

The lead paragraph in 1911 read:

At exactly 9 o'clock this morning the exodus from the factories throughout the city began. The men quietly laid aside their aprons, gathered their tools and just as if they were leaving for their evening meal marched in an orderly fashion from the rooms in which some of them have spent a quarter of a century.

The story continued for three columns, describing most minute details of strike strategy, comments of the men and of their leaders.

On the day before the furniture strike, the Press carried a complete statement of the issues, reported by the commission of inquiry. A photostat copy of this is attached as a sample of the complete type of background information the Press supplied its readers.

By contrast, the lead paragraph on the opening of the General Motors strike in 1945, read:

The two local General Motors plants, Grand Rapids Stamping division of Fisher Body and Diesel Equipment division were closed Wednesday at 11 a.m. by the strike of 3,300 employes, members of the UAW-CIO who joined the national strike.

This story was about 14 inches in length and devoted most of the space to a description of the number of men involved in the strike. Despite its being of considerably less scope locally than the furniture walk-out of 1911, it would seem to have merited more space and more information than it received.

The Herald report on the close of the same strike in 1946 gave the local event three columns with two separate front page stories. One of these, cited earlier, was a human interest feature story which ran for a column and began:

No smoke from factory stacks, no noise from the plants, a thin line of pickets where streams of men should be hurrying through the gates during shift change hours.... These are the obvious marks of a strike but the real ones are elsewhere.

# Statements That Preceded the Strike of the Furniture Workers

## WHAT THE COMMISSION SAYS TODAY

G. R. Press,

Apr. 19, 1911

The commission of inquiry was appointed to investigate the causes of the existing labor agitation. It was not in any sense a board of arbitration.

Its functions defined by its uses were: First, to obtain the statement from the workers; second, to present this statement to the manufacturers; third, to consider the subject matter presented to it by the respective parties thereto, to summarize the same and determine therefrom what each party is or is not willing to do; fourth, to make such further independent investigation of manufacturing conditions and workers' conditions in the furniture industry here or elsewhere as may be necessary for the sole purpose of verifying allegations in either of said statements.

The commission herewith submits to the public the results of the work which it has done thus far; namely, a statement of the workers and the answer of the manufacturers to the allegations and requests contained therein.

Alfred W. Wishart, Secretary.

## THE PROPOSALS OF THE FURNITURE WORKERS

To the Furniture Manufacturers of Grand Rapids:

Gentlemen—The commission of inquiry, of which you approved, appointed to investigate the causes of the existing labor agitation in this city, begs leave to submit to you the following statement, which is a compilation prepared by us from a mass of testimony presented to the commission touching the grievances of your operatives.

Statement of grievances and proposals presented to the commission of inquiry by the furniture workers and their representatives:

### Straight Nine-Hour Day.

First—They desire instead of the ten-hour day and the half holiday under which they are now working to have a straight nine-hour day. They claim that it is not necessary to recite many social and physiological reasons for this preference, for the present hours of labor unfit the man to go to his home as a social being, to have proper intercourse with his family and undermine his constitution. The general tendency in this country in all branches of industry is toward a shortening of the hours of labor. They claim that in many lines eight hours is an accepted day's work and that it is conceded by all experts that in the long run the workers are more efficient when not overworked each day; hence they prefer the straight nine hours to the ten hours and half holiday. They say that 90 per cent of the total number of workers who participated in a recent vote expressed a preference for a nine-hour day.

### The Question of Wages.

Second—Wages. They desire a 10 per cent increase over and above the present rate per day and time and one-half to be charged for overtime and double time for legal holidays. To take a concrete case: If a man receives now 20 cents,

an hour at ten hours a day, the men want 10 per cent increase or 22 cents an hour, making \$2.20 a day for nine hours.

They allege that no material general raise in wages has occurred in the last five years in some instances, and except also last July when trimmers and packers were raised from 3 to 4 per cent.

They further allege that in many instances of individual values the increase was given to pacemakers and not to the rest of the crew; and at times one or more men were laid off when the increase was made.

### Not a Reasonable Proportion.

They allege that the present average wage is not a living wage and does not enable the workers to maintain a normal and decent standard of life. They maintain that there is no reasonable proportion between the high salaries of officials and the wages of men who furnish both labor and brain.

They allege further that while there has not been a general increase in wages there has been a general cut in wages at different times. If, they say, it is possible to make a general cut in wages, they do not see why a general increase is either unreasonable or impossible.

They allege that they have been informed through a newspaper report and by other sources that the selling price of furniture has been raised 10 per cent at three different times within the last five years.

### As to Outside Competition.

They say that when it is urged that Grand Rapids furniture manufacturers cannot increase wages on account of outside competition, on the contrary, Grand Rapids manufacturers dominate the market and can raise wages regardless of outside manufacturers.

They give the following figures showing the wages paid in a cabinet making department by a local manufacturing concern and claim that these wages are as high as any paid in Grand Rapids for day work:

One at \$1.73, three at \$1.63, one at \$1.93,

one at \$2, one at \$2.10, two at \$2.15, two at \$2.20, three at \$2.25, eight at \$2.35, one at \$2.40, one at \$2.45, ten at \$2.50, one at \$2.65, and ten at \$2.70.

They furnish the following figures of wages paid finishers:

Sandpaperers, \$1.25 to \$1.50 per day.

Fillers, \$1.40 to \$1.60 per day.

Stainers, \$10 to \$10.50 per week.

Shellacers, \$9.50 to \$10.50 per week.

Rubbers, \$10.50 to \$12 per week.

They claim that finishing certain classes and styles of furniture costs 40 per cent less today than it did four years ago, and yet there has been no increase in wages for this kind of work.

### Object to Piecework.

Third—Piecework. They desire that piecework shall be dispensed with, and a minimum wage scale on an hour basis be established. They say: "As to the abolition of piecework, anyone who has the slightest acquaintance with this feature of furniture work knows that the moment an industrious pieceworker is turning out more work than the shop expects him to get out, he is told either to go slower, or he is given some additional work on his pieces so as to render the work more difficult, or an arbitrarily lower price is put on the next lot of piecework assigned. Hence the pieceworker, no matter how industrious, cannot rise above a certain wage."

They say, if their request is granted, the pieceworker would, generally speaking, receive the average day wage he is now receiving as a minimum wage.

### The Carvers' Request.

The carvers request the straight nine-hour day and say they are willing to waive any request for more wages in favor of those who make such a request.

We hope you will give the foregoing statement of the workers' case your serious consideration and that at the earliest possible moment you will kindly send your committee or representatives to confer with our commission for the purpose of discussing the statement herewith. According to our understanding of the rules governing us, we were to submit a statement of grievances to you for your consideration, you to reply to this statement and to grant us an interview before publication of any of these proceedings.

### The Question of Blacklists.

The commission has received a number of complaints, some in the form of definite charges against certain manufacturers, to the effect that men have been discharged on account of their affiliation with the union. So numerous have been these complaints that the commission is inclined to believe that there is a general belief in the truth of these charges. It is alleged that such discharges are a violation of the published declaration of the manufacturers that no worker should be discriminated against on account of his connection with any labor organization. We hope that these charges are not true; but if they are, in our judgment such discharges should be stopped unless the manufacturers desire to nullify the whole work of the commission, which we cannot believe.

The commission has also received a number of complaints with some definite documentary evidence tending to show that a list of employes is kept with a record of their efficiency and labor or-

ganization affiliations, for the purpose of obtaining a blacklist to be used against men who may be regarded as undesirable. The men allege that even good men, dissatisfied with their wages, are prevented from freely selling their labor. Men are afraid to ask for higher wages or to quit, in view of this list.

**THE MANUFACTURERS' STATEMENT IN REPLY**

In answer to the statement by the commission as to the men's grievances the furniture manufacturers submitted the following reply:

To the Commission of Inquiry: Before undertaking to reply in detail to the list of grievances and proposals presented to your honorable body by the furniture workers we felt it incumbent upon us to outline somewhat in detail the actual conditions that underlie the furniture business, particularly those pertaining to the manufacture and sale of our products.

We desire to call attention to the fact and to emphasize it that the furniture business is one of absolutely open competition. There are no trusts or price agreements controlling the selling prices of our product. Success or failure in the business depends absolutely and alone upon the general business judgment of the management together with an ability to manufacture and sell the product upon conditions that are at least equal with those of the competition.

**Competing with the United States.**

The thousands of different designs that go to make up the lines of furniture made by the Grand Rapids factories, to say nothing of the thousands of patterns made by outside manufacturers, would make impossible any question of price agreement or a schedule of prices to be maintained even though there was a disposition to work along such lines. The fact of the matter is that no arrangements or agreements of this kind are in effect and in the nature of the case could not be and it is for this reason that we make the statement that the business is absolutely open and competitive.

The manufacture of furniture is not confined to any few sections of the country and this is evidenced by the fact that there are over 278 manufacturers making standard lines of case goods in the United States outside of Grand Rapids. There are over 125 factories manufacturing extension tables, to say nothing of the hundreds of others manufacturing chairs, upholstered furniture and other characters of furniture that are made in Grand Rapids.

The Grand Rapids manufacturers, in the sale of their furniture, compete to a greater or less degree with the majority of the factories in the United States, and the prices which they can procure for their product is governed absolutely by the prices asked by their competitors outside of this city.

**Not a Controlling Factor.**

The statement that the Grand Rapids manufacturers are a controlling factor in setting the prices of furniture is absolutely without foundation in fact. We attach herewith, marked "Exhibit A," a list of the manufacturers of bedroom and diningroom furniture, not including extension tables and chairs, showing the approximate output of each factory. This list comprises 278 factories with a total yearly output of approximately \$42,022,000. We also attach, marked "Exhibit B," a list of the Grand Rapids factories manufacturing the same goods, which shows an approximate yearly output of \$4,510,000. These lists show that the output of the Grand Rapids factories, in these particular lines, is less than 10 per cent of the total output of all bedroom and diningroom furniture in the United States.

It seems to us that these figures present a self-evident fact that Grand Rapids manufacturers are absolutely subject to the competition of the entire United States, and the place and prestige that they have gained for this city in the furniture world has been won in the face of what would appear to be insurmountable odds.

**No Local Advantages.**

Grand Rapids has absolutely no advantages as a manufacturing point for making furniture, in the matter of obtaining its raw material, nor has it any advantages in the matter of transportation, which is so important to marketing light and bulky goods of this character.

In the manufacture and sale of our product we are in direct competition with factories located at Rochester, Birmingham, Syracuse and Jamestown, N. Y.; Cincinnati, O.; Evansville, Ind.; Chicago and Rockford, Ill. and several Michigan points, as well as a great many places in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Because of its geographical location Grand Rapids is at a disadvantage in shipping to points south of the Ohio river in competition with manufacturers located at and more adjacent to the Ohio river crossings and at the same disadvantage in shipping to western territory in competition with factories located at Chicago and Rockford, Ill., or other points more adjacent to the Mississippi river. In shipping to the east Grand Rapids is at a similar disadvantage in competing with factories located at Jamestown, N. Y., and various other points closer to the eastern markets. Because of the fact that north of Grand Rapids there is no territory in which there is a demand for furniture the manufacturers of this city possess no natural compensating advantages for their disadvantages in other directions and must therefore market their product east or west in competition with the manufacturers located at points enjoying a more desirable and favorable adjustment of freight rates.

**Tell of Freight Rates.**

The same is true in the purchase of raw materials and supplies, with the exception of such lumber as may be purchased in the northern part of Michigan and Wisconsin. The greater part of the lumber used in the manufacture in this city comes from the south and east and nearly all the points in which our competition is located enjoy a lower freight rate on this material.

Grand Rapids suffers a great disadvantage in its freight rates to the Pacific coast territory, as blanket rates apply equally from all points east of the Missouri river to the Pacific coast territory, therefore Grand Rapids possesses no advantages in shipping to the Pacific coast over manufacturers further east or more remote from that territory; for example, the rate on furniture from Jamestown, Rochester and other eastern points, is exactly the same to Pacific coast points as from Grand Rapids. On the other hand, in the matter of reaching the eastern markets these points enjoy the differential to which their geographical location entitles them. Shipping facilities and the cost of transportation are each year becoming a more important factor in the marketing of furniture, owing to the light and bulky character of the product with the corresponding high cost of transportation.

**Rates at Other Places.**

All other things being equal, the dealer will, naturally, make his selections from the lines produced by the manufacturers located at points from which he can secure the most favorable freight rates and the most satisfactory transportation service. Such natural advantages as Grand Rapids should possess in marketing its product in northern and northwestern territories,

because of its geographical location, are denied to us owing to the adjustment of freight rates which places competing manufacturers at points in Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania on the same basis of freight rate adjustment as is given to Grand Rapids; for example, rates on certain articles of furniture from Cincinnati to St. Paul are but 3 cents higher than from Grand Rapids, and to some northwestern points are even lower than the rates from this city.

Chicago manufacturers can ship to New York and eastern points at from 1 to 5 cents per hundred pounds more than is paid by Grand Rapids manufacturers, while on the other hand the rates to the west are 2 1/2 cents per hundred more than from Chicago. Manufacturers in Southern Ohio and Indiana can ship to points south of the Ohio river at rates ranging from 43 to 86 cents per hundred pounds less than the rates applying from Grand Rapids, while on the other hand the rates from these points to the north and northwest are very nearly the same as the Grand Rapids rate.

**Competition That Comes Here.**

We desire to call attention, in connection with our claim that the manufacture and sale of furniture is on an open and competitive basis, to the competition that comes to our very doors twice a year, during the furniture season. There were exhibited in this market last season the lines of 165 factories (Exhibit C). Grand Rapids manufacturers are in direct competition with a large portion of these lines as well as many others that are exhibited at Chicago, New York and other points. The total yearly output of the factories represented at the Grand Rapids exhibitions twice a year is over \$22,000,000, divided as follows: Bedroom and dining room furniture, not including tables and chairs, \$9,220,000; fancy tables, \$3,845,000; chairs, \$3,615,000; upholstered goods, \$2,275,000; miscellaneous lines, \$3,755,000. The total actual shipments of thirty Grand Rapids factories, covering the first three lines mentioned, for the year 1910, was approximately \$7,000,000.

The total shipments of extension tables were \$394,421.10, whereas the output of the United States is nearly \$7,000,000. (Exhibit D). Grand Rapids makes less than 4 per cent.

The total shipments by Grand Rapids factories of other goods, for the same period, as as follows:

Chairs	\$1,331,262.87
Library furniture	915,834.00
Fixtures	1,537,013.05
School, opera and church furniture	1,015,889.52
Office furniture	1,701,133.75
Upholstered furniture	179,353.69

**Must Not Exceed in Cost.**

These figures are based upon the actual shipments of thirty-two factories, comprising all of the large institutions in the city.

It will be readily seen from these figures that the output of the factories which compete with us in our own city twice a year is far in excess of the output of the local plants, and that in every line of furniture we make there is but a very small proportion of the total amount manufactured in this city.

The buyers who come to this market each season to purchase furniture are men experienced in their work. They are better posted on the value of furniture than the average manufacturer because they have access to all lines that are exhibited, which gives them every opportunity to make comparisons in prices. These buyers care not where the goods are made. The only motive that actuates them in their purchases is the question of value for the least money. There is absolutely nothing about the Grand Rapids name which gives the local manufacturers advantages in the sale of their furniture that would in any way offset a difference in price.

Under the conditions which exist, as we have outlined them above, we have endeavored to make plain to you that the Grand Rapids manufacturers can only hold the place which they at present occupy in the furniture world, providing they can produce their goods under equal conditions in the matter of cost of manufacture.

#### Deny Any Maximum Wage.

The Grand Rapids manufacturers have maintained in the past the same open, free market conditions for labor that they have had to contend with in the sale of their goods. Many charges have been made that the manufacturers have an understood maximum wage for different classes of work; that they maintain a list of employes of the different factories with prices paid; that the workmen are not free to sell their labor in this market in any factory without restrictions. Every one of these charges is absolutely false. The furniture manufacturers of this city, while refusing to treat with their men as an organization, have not in any way acted collectively against their interests.

In view of the many public charges that have been made that the Grand Rapids manufacturers maintain a record of employes in the various factories, together with a "black list," we desire to present to you full information in reference to the labor bureau conducted by the association.

#### Gave Up Card Enrollment.

In June, 1904, the manufacturers organized a labor bureau, the idea being to provide a clearing house whereby the men, by applying at a central point, could be made aware of the positions that were open in the city, thus avoiding the necessity of going from one factory to another in search of employment and to provide a means whereby factories could have men sent to them when they were required.

During the first two years of the operation of this bureau a system of enrollment, together with the prices paid at the various factories to the different employes, was maintained to a greater or lesser extent. It was found within that time that the system was impracticable and it was absolutely abandoned. Since July, 1906, the only record that has been maintained by the association in any form whatever, or by the labor bureau, acting for the association, or by any other person or persons acting for the association or for the manufacturers of Grand Rapids, is the application blank which is filled out by the applicant and placed on file at the labor bureau at 21 Fountain street. (See "Exhibit E").

It is the practice of this bureau to call up the various factories and other employers of labor each day, asking them if they require any additional help. If any is needed the applicant is given a card, similar to the inclosed, marked "Exhibit F." This introductory card, which is given to the applicant, is supposed to be returned to the central office so that the application of the party may be taken from the files, but in practice there is not one of these cards out of a hundred returned to the central office. Applications for positions are kept on file for fourteen days and at that time destroyed. Absolutely no other record of any kind in reference to the men is maintained by this office. It is a labor bureau or clearing house for labor, pure and simple.

The object of this bureau, in addition to supplying the requirements of the factories, has been to find work for all men who apply and in this connection has not confined its efforts to members of the association. It is used by other employers of labor to almost as great an extent as by the members of the association.

#### Ask for Investigation.

We attach hereto, marked "exhibit G," the figures showing the record of the operation of this bureau. In addition to the record of the number of men

## SOME POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

### BY THE MEN.

Grand Rapids dominates the furniture market.

Grand Rapids can raise wages regardless of outside competition.

The present average wage is not a living wage.

There has been no general increase in wages.

There has been a general cut in wages at different times.

Finishing certain classes of furniture costs 40 per cent less than four years ago.

Give figures showing low average wage.

Ask that piecework be dispensed with.

Desire a minimum wage scale on an hour basis.

List of employes kept for purpose of maintaining a blacklist.

Charge that men have been discharged because of affiliation with unionism.

sent out, could probably be added on an average of from six to ten a day who are employed at the office by employers who come there in person, or send their representatives. No record is kept of the number of men thus employed.

This bureau is maintained wholly at the expense of the manufacturers of the city and we believe that it has done a great amount of good by finding positions for men without the loss of time that would otherwise be necessary.

In view of the fact that the maintenance of such a system as has been charged would show that the manufacturers were working as an organization in restraining the workmen from selling their labor in the open market, we respectfully ask your commission to make a thorough investigation of this matter, that this question may be settled once and for all.

#### Deny Wage Cut.

There is absolutely no arrangement or understanding of any nature, whatsoever, among factory owners, that they will not employ each others' men, therefore every man in the city of Grand Rapids, working in a furniture industry, is free to sell his labor wherever

### BY THE EMPLOYERS.

Grand Rapids produces but 10 per cent of the output.

Owing to unfavorable freight rates, etc., Grand Rapids is absolutely subject to competition.

Wages compare favorably with same class of workmen in other cities.

There has been an average wage increase of 28½ per cent in ten years.

There has been no general wage cut. Maintained wages during 1907.

No general reduction in finishing. Some costs more and some less.

Say the average wage today is \$2.03.

Piecework is scientifically correct and should be continued.

Great variety in quality of goods makes minimum wage scale impossible.

Old card enrollment plan abandoned some years ago.

Deny that men have been discharged because they belonged to unions.

offers employment to a great many boys, to a large amount of unskilled labor and to a still greater amount of semi-skilled labor that cannot be classed as trained mechanics, who have served an apprenticeship to learn a trade.

#### As to Wages Today.

The fact that furniture building is of such a nature as to furnish employment to this class of labor, which may prove to be one of a low average wage, is a condition for which the manufacturers of Grand Rapids are in no way to blame. It is incidental to the business and the same condition will be found to exist in all furniture manufacturing plants in the country.

We believe that we can demonstrate the fact that the manner in which the labor situation has been handled in this city is absolutely just and fair. The records will show that there has been, in the last ten years, a steady advance in the wages paid and the advance is commensurate with the advance in the selling price of furniture.

#### Deny Understanding About Men.

The statement that there has been a general cut in wages at different times is denied.

Following the panic of 1893, when the business of the country was paralyzed, the furniture manufacturers of Grand Rapids, in common with all other lines throughout the United States, made a reduction in wages to adjust their condition to that of their community this was not a horizontal cut. In the panic of 1907, when there were many reductions made in wages in many other lines, Grand Rapids manufacturers did not make a reduction as was done by some furniture manufacturers in other cities. While they were unable to run their factories full time owing to the business conditions they did maintain the same standard of wages during that period, when men could have been obtained for less than the factories were paying.

#### Low Average Wage.

The claim that there has not been general advances of wages in this city in the last five years except trimmers and packers, who were raised 3 or 4 per cent, and to pacemakers, which was offset by laying off men, is absolutely untrue, as applied to the average wages paid.

It is true that there have been no horizontal advances made because the employes cannot be dealt with collectively in this industry.

### THE FACTORIES INVOLVED

The strike extends practically to all the fifty-nine factories of the city that are engaged in the manufacture of furniture in some form, but the larger factories are, with a single exception, confined to the thirty-six who signed the statement to the citizens commission.

he can obtain the most for it, absolutely unrestricted. In the matter of the employment of our labor we are in competition not only with the different furniture manufacturers, but with other industries in this city, and the very fact that we have been able in this industry to obtain in past years sufficient help with which to man our factories is an evidence that we are paying wages that compare favorably with other lines of work.

In considering the average wages paid to the furniture workers it must be taken into consideration that that industry

One is the milling crowd of men at union headquarters, tight lipped and not very happy.

One is the presence of hundreds of families whose income has been shut off and who are wondering where their next meal is coming from.

It would seem logical now to ask why did the change in quantity and quality of local labor reporting take place in Grand Rapids? A number of considerations are involved in the answer.

First, it is apparent that more coverage was given to local city-wide industrial strikes than to participation in a nation-wide tie-up by a few local unions. This accounts, in part at least, for the greater space given to the 1911 and 1937 periods by both newspapers, than to strikes examined in the 1940 periods.

Second, the position of organized labor has changed greatly today. In 1911 the workers were the under-dogs. It was a period of exploitation and a good share of the public looked with sympathy at the efforts of workingmen to better their conditions. In Grand Rapids the three newspapers, the city council, and a number of religious leaders, particularly the Catholic Bishop Joseph Schrembs, were openly sympathetic with the aims of the 1911 furniture strikers and critical of the attitude of the furniture manufacturers.<sup>1</sup>

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1. See appendix for photostat of articles in 1911 issue of The Michigan Tradesmen criticizing Bishop Schrembs for his activities in the strike.

By 1947, however, organized labor was no longer regarded as an under-dog in need of support. Labor was looked upon as a powerful, well organized pressure group. The public sympathy that had characterized large segments of society in 1911 had turned to indifference, in some cases to open hostility.

Third, the competition introduced in Grand Rapids advertising circles by radio and television, and the shift in industry from furniture to auto parts, made for a very different publishing climate than that of 1911.

In 1911 the daily newspapers had little competition from other news media and were not dependent on the furniture manufacturers for advertising revenue. Today metal working is the leading industry and many more persons are employed in making automotive parts than furniture. The newspapers are dependent on large concerns like General Motors, and other car manufacturers who are big advertisers, and who can, if they wish, cut off newspaper advertising and still get public notice on radio and through television.<sup>2</sup>

It is extremely difficult to judge in what ways and to what extent the influence of advertising affects the editorial staff and policy of a paper. The chances are that it is probably much less than press critics believe and considerably more than a good many news men realize.

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2. In the July 28, 1953 issue of the Press alone, for example, there were more than 15 large advertisements related to the car industry.

A reporter, for example, may not even be consciously aware of indirect pressures that bear on his treatment of a story involving a large advertiser-friend of the publisher.

A further question, indirectly related to the above, concerns the influence of advertorials on a paper's news columns during a strike. Was the situation that seemed to occur in Grand Rapids typical of other communities with strikes going on? In Grand Rapids, as the use of full page and half-page advertisements by one or both parties to a labor dispute were stepped up, the news columns concerning the dispute fell off.<sup>3</sup>

A fourth factor that may well have had some bearing on the smaller size of local labor stories in the period of the 1940's particularly, was the shortage of newsprint that occurred immediately after World War II. As a result of this, most news editors were forced to shorten all copy.

A fifth factor, possibly the most important insofar as the Press treatment of local labor news is concerned, was the influence of publisher Edmund Booth, during the first quarter of the century. For the shift in quantity and quality occurred after his death in 1927.

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3. Both of these questions, the influence of advertising and of paid advertorials on a paper's news policy, might be fruitful subjects of further investigation in an area of sociological research.

What sort of man was he and what were the reasons that led him to openly espouse the cause of the strikers?

As a practical matter he faced the competition of two other newspapers, one of which, The Daily News, openly sought the support of working class subscribers to boost its circulation.

But it was more than practical considerations that governed the life of Edmund Booth.

For 15 years before taking over the management of the Press, he devoted himself to work in the YMCA, first in Detroit, then Albany, New York, and finally New York City. Here, according to his wife, who today lives with her daughter in Grand Rapids, Booth wore himself out by raising a million dollars to build a new YMCA. The family were greatly relieved at the move to Grand Rapids for the sake of the publisher's health.

In Grand Rapids as in New York, he became a builder of men, both personally and through the Press, which during the period of his guidance acquired the most highly intensive circulation of any newspaper in the country.<sup>4</sup>

Variously known as "The People's Paper," the "Newspaper With a Backbone," and the "Newspaper That's a Neighbor," each of these descriptions is grateful public tribute to its publishers qualities of sympathy and conscientious fearlessness.

Through newspapers he expressed the ideals to which his life was dedicated, and the Press at all times stood for civic uplift, social betterment and political reform.

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4. Grand Rapids Press Obituary file on E. W. Booth.

A booklet gotten out after his death by his co-workers and friends, preserved by his family, shed further light on Booth's portrait.

He was above all a man of sympathy, kindness and understanding. His most interesting book was the book of life; his most absorbing interest the interests of mankind. His heart was responsive to the problems of those near to him and to the causes far and near which had to do with the betterment of humankind.

"He used to tear up some editorials and tell his staff, 'you have the words, but not the idea,'" Mrs. Booth commented in an interview with the writer last spring.

"He was very courtly, very much a gentleman of the old school, and always wore a wing color and carried a cane," his daughter added.

"The position he took in the 1911 furniture strike made him quite unpopular with some of the business men in Grand Rapids," Mrs. Booth recalled. "One of them stopped him during the strike and said, 'you didn't need to make all this trouble.'"

It would appear therefore, that the mind and spirit of Edmund Booth unquestionably had a profound influence on the attitude of the Press toward organized labor for a quarter of a century.

These then, are some of the factors that point to an explanation of why local labor coverage has declined in Grand Rapids.

Does explaining them justify their decline however? Has the labor movement in Grand Rapids for instance, undergone a similar decline so that there actually is less labor news today than there was in 1911?

Today Grand Rapids is the second industrial city in Michigan. Its labor movement has grown much larger with the advent of the metal working industry. Conservative estimates place the total union membership of Grand Rapids at around 25,000. In 1911 there were about 8,000 union men. Adding in the wives and children of organized workers today it is safe to estimate that 50,000 people's lives are directly affected by what goes on in labor relations circles. This is roughly a fourth of the city's total population.<sup>4</sup>

The current labor policies of the two newspapers were explained briefly to the writer last spring by two executive staff members.

A spokesman for the Press commented that it was against that newspaper's policy to write up news stories about the signing of local collective bargaining agreements, "because there are just too many of them." He indicated that it made little difference whether a company or union requested publicity of this kind. Speaking from his own experience as a former reporter the Press executive stated that one of the big problems in handling labor news was in getting

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4. The 1910 census reported a population of 112,571. The 1950 census reported a population of 176,515.

information from union groups. He stated that it was a firm rule on the Press always to check with both sides involved in a labor dispute.

A member of the executive staff of the Herald listed a number of points regarding modern labor coverage.

"We seldom go into labor management disputes unless they reach the stage of a strike," he said. "We develop background stories only on strikes involving power or public utilities. We don't cover routine meetings of the CIO or AFL any more than we cover routine meetings of the Chamber of Commerce. But if unions adopt a policy that is of importance to the public we do cover it. We always report both sides of a dispute or indicate that one side refused comment in all labor stories," he concluded.

It may be recalled that the Preface of this thesis contained a comment concerning the responsibility of the press, namely,

....to examine the way labor is treated in the newspapers of a given community over a period of time, means also to examine the extent to which the press bears its responsibility now and in the past...

It would seem appropriate at this stage to ask just what is a newspaper's responsibility with regard to local labor coverage?

A report issued by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, titled A Free and Responsible Press, published in 1947, makes some pertinent observations about the responsibility

of the press in modern society, that are worth citing. (Although critics may not agree with conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the Commission, few people would disagree with the philosophical and sociological truths that underlie its report.)

....He (the average citizen) is dependent on the quality, proportion, and extent of his news supply, not only for his personal access to the world of events, thought, and feeling, but also for the materials of his duties as a citizen and judge of public affairs. The soundness of his judgment affects the working of the state and even the peace of the world, involving the survival of the state as a free community. Under these circumstances it becomes an imperative question whether the performance of the press can any longer be left to the unregulated initiative of the few who manage it.

The moral and legal right of those who manage it to utter their opinions must remain intact; this right stands for the valid kernel of individualism at the heart of all social life. But the element of duty involved in the right requires a new scrutiny; and THE SERVICE OF NEWS, AS DISTINCT FROM THE UTTERANCE OF OPINION, ACQUIRES A NEW IMPORTANCE. (caps are writer's)<sup>5</sup>

The news is twisted by emphasis on firstness, on the novel and sensational; by the personal interests of the owners; and by pressure groups. Too much of the regular output of the press consists of a miscellaneous succession of stories and images which have no relation to the typical lives of real people anywhere. Too often the result is meaninglessness, flatness, distortion, and the perpetuation of misunderstanding among widely scattered groups whose only contact is through these media.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Commission of Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press, pp. 17.

6. Ibid., pp. 67-8.

Today a further question of public responsibility in the use of freedom is raised in view of the extent to which the function of the press is affected by a public interest. Not only positive misdeeds but omissions and inadequacies of press performance have now a bearing on general welfare. Freedom to express has hitherto included freedom to refrain from expressing; for the press this liberty is no longer perfect.<sup>7</sup>

Does any of this apply to Grand Rapids? It would appear to.

In 1911 the Press covered labor news with enthusiasm and vigor. It gave column after column of its pages to a detailed portrayal of the activities of the 1911 furniture strikers and it commended them in its editorial columns. At that time, the Herald gave considerable news coverage to the strike but lent its editorial space to a series titled, "Inside the Furniture Factories," which portrayed management's point of view.

In 1946-47 the Press local labor coverage had declined markedly in quantity and become uninterpretative and unsympathetic in quality. It omitted some local labor stories entirely.

The Herald, on the other hand, gave more space to local events and did a much more thorough job of interpreting and explaining the issues. It was not the almost sentimental type of sympathy toward labor displayed by the Press in 1911. It was a more seasoned kind of writing that was objective and balanced and which would appear to be in line with the

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7. Ibid., p. 124.

type of reporting which the Commission on the Freedom of the Press advocated in the citations above.

One of the reasons for the kind of reporting that typified Herald labor coverage in 1940 was a practical one. The Herald reporters were learning about collective bargaining first-hand by active participation in a union of their own, namely the American Newspaper Guild. They were getting a picture of a union framework as participants. And when they went out to cover a story in a union hall or picket line they understood that framework.

Have the two local newspapers in question fulfilled their responsibility to the reading public of Grand Rapids insofar as local labor coverage is concerned?

It would appear that in 1911 the Press fulfilled more than its share of responsibility in this regard, but that in later years, after the period of the 1930's particularly, it failed to do so.

The Herald, while giving considerably more space and a more balanced type of reporting to local labor news in the 1940's, still by its own admission, generally covers labor management disputes only when they reach the point of a strike.

What about this question of news values in peaceful collective bargaining negotiations? Is there no news in the fact that representatives of two powerful and in many instances, cooperative, groups sit down across a table for

hours on end and work out contract provisions that may well affect the lives of thousands of people in a community?

University of Wisconsin Journalism Professor Grant Hyde, writing in a new text, had this to say:<sup>8</sup>

#### LABOR NEWS IS NOT ALL STRIKES

The news possibilities of trades unions and organized labor in general deserve careful study in newspaper offices, especially with a view to shedding outworn traditions. In earlier years, labor news was largely composed of strikes, conflicts, controversies, reflecting a rather general public antagonism to organized labor.... All this has changed...between two World Wars, resulting in a modern attitude that accepts labor organization as a legitimate aspect of American economy.

But newspapers, while honestly trying to reflect that new attitude of the public...have not entirely shed the old newsroom traditions. Not until they do will union labor cease to consider newspapers with suspicion.

#### OTHER KINDS OF LABOR NEWS

Analysis of all aspects of the problem suggests one outstanding fact -- labor news is no longer confined to strikes and conflicts....

Professor Hyde then lists half a dozen sources of other than strike labor news including, social affairs of labor unions, organizational news, contract negotiations, athletic activities, political activities and interviews with labor leaders.

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8. Grant Hyde Newspaper Reporting, p. 528.

It would seem to the writer that Grand Rapids is a community that would be particularly rich in news of these types, because of a membership of some 25,000 union men and women from a variety of national, religious and cultural backgrounds.

A final question that may be appropriate for this thesis to consider briefly, is just what makes for sound labor coverage? What are the elements that go into good labor reporting?

The writer holds strongly to the view that labor news should be given the same treatment as other beats, such as business, church or civic news and that the reporter assigned to a labor story should give it the same attention he gives any other assignment.

However, as noted by the spokesman for the Grand Rapids Press it is sometimes difficult to get labor news from union members. At the same time companies frequently have public relations specialists who supply numerous and lengthy handouts to the news room. It is particularly unfortunate when a beginning reporter is rebuffed by a union group at the first try and from then on gives up any attempt to get the union side of the picture.

Another problem a reporter may run into is back in the city room, where he is warned by the powers that be not to "stir up trouble." As a result in handling a controversial story he gives the sketchiest possible treatment to the

issues and strives for a completely impersonal manner. Because he makes no attempt to supply background information or to write as though his characters were human beings, he loses one of the basic criteria for sound news writing, the possibility for the reader to identify with the people in the story.

In conclusion, it appears to the writer that a community the size of Grand Rapids, with a labor movement representing a substantial segment of the population, deserves more adequate coverage of local labor events than it is receiving today.

A study of the past indicates that at one time it did receive a much richer and more complete kind of coverage at a time when a much smaller section of the public belonged to the ranks of labor.

There are three elements that logically govern a newspaper's policy in regard to any type of coverage; reader demand, the newsworthiness of a given event, and the competition of other news media in covering it.

Within the limits of these three factors, the writer believes it is part of a newspaper's responsibility to cover local labor news as fully as any other type.

The writer believes even more firmly that adequate handling of local labor news is an essential criteria for determining a good newspaper.

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15. Following are the issues and dates for which the Grand Rapids Herald and Grand Rapids Press were checked:

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HERALD, August 1 - 31, 1911

HERALD, August 6 - Sept. 10, 1921

PRESS, August 17 - September 29, 1922

HERALD, September 1 - 30, 1937

PRESS, October 1-30, 1937

PRESS, November 21 - Dec. 21, 1945

HERALD, February 20 - March 20, 1946

PRESS, April 1 - 30, 1947

HERALD, April 1 - 30, 1947

16. 1910 U. S. Census Report

17. 1950 U. S. Census Report

## APPENDIX A

### STATEMENT ON OWNERSHIP OF THE GRAND RAPIDS PRESS AND GRAND RAPIDS HERALD

The Press was bought by George R. Booth in 1892. Booth subsequently acquired newspapers in seven other Michigan cities operating under the name of Booth Newspapers, Inc. with headquarters at Detroit. The other Booth papers are at Muskegan, Kalamazoo, Jackson, Ann Arbor, Flint, Saginaw, and Bay City. Ralph H. Bastien is currently president of Booth Newspapers, Inc. Earl R. Chapman is manager of the Press and Lee M. Woodruff, is editor.

The Grand Rapids Herald started as the Morning Telegram in 1884. It was combined with a weekly called the Herald in 1886 and has been a morning paper ever since. The paper is owned by Federated Newspapers, Inc. formed in 1928. Also included in this chain are the Battle Creek Enquirer and Lansing State Journal, as well as radio station WELL of Battle Creek, and the Newspaper Engraving company of Grand Rapids. A. L. Miller, Battle Creek publisher, was president of Federated until recently. His son, Robert B. Miller succeeded him in July 1953. Louis A. Weil Jr. is vice president and general manager of the Federated. Miller has devoted himself to the Enquirer and Weil has been general manager of the Herald.

## APPENDIX B

### CATEGORY LIST AND DEFINITIONS

#### I. STRIKE STORIES

##### PHYSICAL CONDUCT OF STRIKE

###### Peaceful Tactics

- a. Picketing
- b. Activities at Strike Headquarters
- c. Human Interest
- d. Union meetings to plan strategy (includes mass meetings)
- e. Strike relief

###### Coercive Tactics

- a. Violence
- b. Strike breaking (1) Importation of and use of strike breakers, private deputies, and scabs  
(2) Use of state militia and local police
- c. Sit-downs
- d. Mass picketing
- e. Lockouts and boycotts
- f. Investigations of violent uprisings as Herrin and West Virginia coal cases
- g. other

##### ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT BY RESOLVING THE ISSUES

Presentation of case by one party only, or both, independent of 2,3,4, below. (Includes prepared statements, paid advertisements etc.)

Direct Negotiations between the Parties

Mediation or Arbitration by government or public panels or commissions

Presidential Fact Finding Boards

##### ATTEMPTS AT SETTLEMENT BY DIRECT INTERVENTION (COURTS, UNIONS, GOV'T.)

Court actions -- injunctions, arrests, etc.

Government seizure

Intervention of unions to stop wild-cats, sit-downs, jurisdictionals

Conducting of strike votes, elections, hearings by NLRB.

#### STATUS OF STRIKE

Strike is declared

Strike is ended a. Back to work moves, b. Withdrawal of leadership

Strike is threatened

Wrap-up stories on continuing strikes, when there is little or no change

#### EFFECT OF STRIKE ON PUBLIC WELFARE

Threat to public interest of city-wide, nation-wide, industry-wide strikes

Advocacy of compulsory arbitration

Responsibility and reasonableness of labor

Irresponsibility and unreasonableness of labor

Monopolistic power of labor

Humanitarian objectives of organized labor

UnChristian rituals of unions

Exploitation of workers by employers, morally wrong.

Cost of strikes to labor, management, the public

Other

## II. NON-STRIKE STORIES

### MISCELLANEOUS

Disaster Stories

- a. Mine explosions
- b. Factory Fires
- c. Other

Sabotage and Violence by radical groups as IWW,  
McNAMARAS, independent of major union strike conduct.

Welfarism

- a. By labor
- b. By government
- c. By management

#### UNION ACTIVITIES

Organizational meetings, drives, conventions, elections

Political action

Educational Activities

Lobbying

Internal Union Disputes

- a. AFL-CIO Split
- b. Communists
- c. Other

#### JOINT UNION-MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Peaceful bargaining that may result in signed contracts

Cooperative efforts to promote harmony and greater  
production

Recreation programs

Question of opening the union or company books

Other

#### COMMUNITY OR NATION WIDE UNION ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Labor Day

Community Chest and War Bond drives

L-M prod. comm.'s

Cooperation with other agencies on civil rights,  
housing, education, etc.

Recognition of labor leaders and 'friends' of labor  
on death, promotion, government offices, -and public  
speeches

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO LABOR

Unemployment  
Full employment  
Droughts, floods, farm relief  
Cost of living  
Migratory and prison labor  
Housing shortages  
Local government and teachers pay raises  
Profit sharing plans  
Wage-price spirals and inflation  
Other

POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES OF CONCERN TO LABOR

Specific pieces of Legislation

- a. Wages-hours
- b. Workman's Compensation
- c. Unemployment Compensation
- d. Safety laws
- e. Wagner Act
- f. NLRB
- g. UNION CURB LAWS
- h. Social Security
- i. Health and Welfare legislation
- j. Child labor
- k. Other

General Government and Political Programs and Policies  
of Concern to Labor

- a. New Deal, Fair-Deal Administration in general
- b. Socialism-Communism
- c. Free Enterprise system
- d. Other

APPENDIX C

PHOTOSTAT OF "THE FREE PRESS," JUNE 24, 1911

# THE "FREE" PRESS

FREDERICK

By The Furniture Manufacturer and Artisan.

"Light is Antiseptic, and an Evil Silence the Worst Enemy of Progress"

Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 24, 1911

## THE REAL CONDITIONS IN THE STRIKE SITUATION

More Experienced Workers Being Added to the Factory Forces Daily.

Exhibits for the Sales Season in Good State of Preparedness for Next Monday.

This is the situation in the strike at this writing: The factories have more experienced help than at any previous time during the strike, and some of the factories have really almost as complete crews as they ordinarily run during the summer months, when business is slack.

New men are being added daily, the number the first three days of the week totalling one hundred and seventy-two.

There are sufficient finishers now at work in all the factories being operated for all requirements, and some of the factories are turning away finishers.

It is now simply a matter of time when every factory will have all the men it requires, and of good quality too. Outside workmen are coming in daily, and the slack condition of business renders it easy to pick up good, experienced cabinetmakers and machine hands.

An inspection of the showrooms of the local factories next Monday will not indicate that a strike is in progress, or that there has even been one. The exhibitions are in excellent shape.

On the other hand, the strikers, what is left of them, are intermittently highly optimistic and deeply depressed. At their daily meetings addresses are made by the experienced labor leaders, who have been through so many strike campaigns, and who consequently know just how to instill confidence in the men. The burden of the words of the strike managers is, as MacFarlane expressed it one day, "Just keep it up a little while longer—something is sure to burst soon, and it will be the manufacturers."

Again, he quotes the decision of the Supreme Court against Post's suit to compel the Buck's Stove and Range Co. to run an open shop, and says: "We've got 'em, and we're going to have the same thing in Grand Rapids."

He encourages the men to stick by saying that the headquarters has paid out too much money in this strike to yield now, and that they will stick it out to the very last.

The local leaders, with some exceptions, naturally are not always so cocksure. McOwen, of the Carpenters and Joiners Union, as far back as the 12th, expressed the belief that the strike was lost, and would be over in a week or ten days. Secretary Mosher, on the other hand, positively, if profanely, replied: "Like h... it will; it won't be settled until fall."

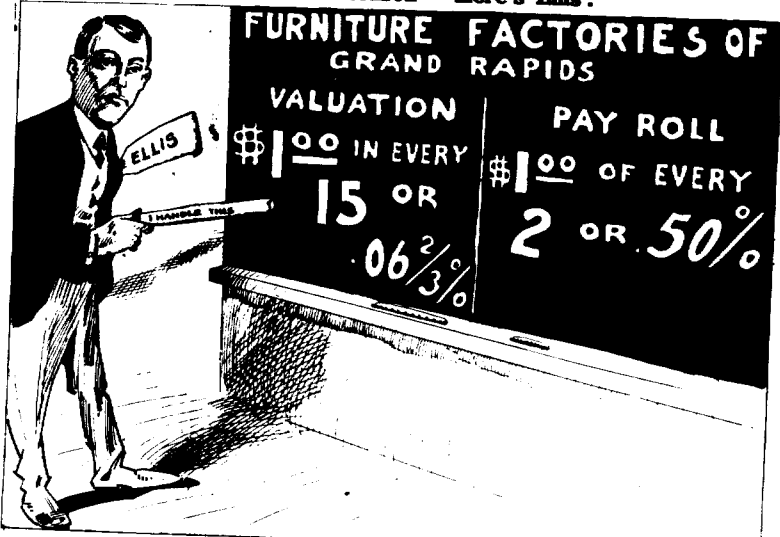
But, as we said last week, it is the manifest purpose of the leaders now to inflict the greatest possible injury on the manufacturers, admitting, as they do privately, that the strike itself is lost.

In pursuance of this plan, they have decided to hold two demonstrations, one next Monday, the 26th, the date of the formal opening of the mid-summer sales season, and the other July 4, when President Gompers of the Federation is again billed as the big gun. It is the expectation of the strike managers that a good many buyers and dealers will be here by then, and that they will be duly impressed by the "demonstration," and abstain from placing orders with the local factories.

It was also the original plan to have the demonstration of next Monday take the form of a parade of the strikers, with their wives and children, all of them to be attired in the most dilapidated and ragged clothes that could be obtained, to convey the idea that the workers ordinarily live in squalor, with tattered and ragged clothing, barely sufficient to cover their nakedness. Whether the Board of Police and Fire Commissioners—complainant as they have thus far been to Mayor Ellis' instructions—will permit such an exhibition on the streets of Grand Rapids, and shame the city, remains to be seen.

It seems hardly credible any body of five men—even men who would consent to hold office at the pleasure of George E. Ellis—would give their official sanction to such humiliation of a prosperous, thrifty city—but we shall see what we shall see.

"There's A Reason"—Here's Ellis'.



According to Mayor Ellis, the furniture factories of Grand Rapids pay only one out of every fifteen dollars of the city's taxes. HE HANDLES THE TAXES. But, the furniture factories and kindred industries of Grand Rapids pay nearly, if not quite, 60 percent of the total wages paid in Grand Rapids. THE MERCHANTS HANDLE THE WAGES, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY.

### What's The Matter With Grand Rapids?

"What's the matter with Kansas?"—that epigrammatic query, and its answer, by William Allen White, of Emporia—is credited with awakening the Sunflower State as nothing else could.

What's the matter with Grand Rapids? Is civic pride dead? Has the city no regard for its biggest individual industry—the industry that has literally made the city famous?

Would the business men and merchants of Grand Rapids welcome the destruction or removal of our furniture factories? Have they no regard even for the good name of the city as law-abiding?

When the strike of street car men was on, twenty-odd years ago, there was some trouble, and a wheel-pin was blown up by strike sympathizers. No lives were lost, or really threatened, and the property loss was but a few hundred dollars.

The next day there was a meeting of the leading business men of the city, and ringing resolutions were adopted, denouncing the lawlessness.

In this year of grace, and in this very month, a riotous mob attacks peaceable workers in our factories, and for hours hold the police at bay and engage in what the daily papers designate as the worst riot in the city's history.

And not one civic organization in Grand Rapids has sufficient patriotism to meet and pass resolutions denouncing the rioting and demanding a cessation of lawlessness.

What IS the matter with Grand Rapids? Is it completely under the hypnotic influence of George E. Ellis—and prepared to go the length he is, to rule or ruin the furniture industry in Grand Rapids?

Is THAT what's the matter with Grand Rapids?

### "Talk To The D— Dog."

We haven't noticed any account in any of the local dailies of the eloquent appeal made to the strikers by General Organizer Flood, of the American Federation of Labor.

"In groups of four or five," said Mr. Flood, urging the workers to dissuade those at work from continuing, "call at the men's houses; talk to the men's wives; if you can't talk to their wives talk to the men's children; if you can't talk to the men's children, talk to the d... dog!"

Of course, this is strictly in accordance with the strikers' "constitutional rights," as Legal Adviser Wessels will no doubt put it—but how about the "constitutional rights" of the men at work, and their wives, and their children—and, yes, of the "d... dog?" Even the canine would seem to have some rights—if his license is paid.

### Working for the Closed Shop.

On June 3 a committee of four from the striking upholsterers called on MacFarlane's strike committee, and informed them that they had been offered a nine-hour day with nine-hour pay, and that they were inclined to accept it.

What did Organizer MacFarlane do—urge the acceptance of the offer?

This is what he did: He took the four men aside and pleaded with them NOT TO ACCEPT THE OFFER—as it would mean "ruination to the balance of the men on strike."

Oh, this strike isn't for the closed shop—of course not—if you let the daily papers and Mayor Ellis and Sybrant Wessels tell it. But, all the same, William B. MacFarlane will never assent to a settlement that does not recognize the union, and in effect the closed shop.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THAT, you business men and you merchants, big and little, who are encouraging Mayor Ellis and the poor, misguided but well-meaning workmen who are walking the streets, relying on the promises of MacFarlane and Ellis to feed and clothe and house them and their families next winter.

### The Theory And The Fact.

It is stated that during the last few days committees of the workmen have met with the proprietors of five or six factories, but nothing came of the meetings. Organizer MacFarlane declares that these committees waited upon the manufacturers in response to the often repeated statement that they would be received.

"The men merely were told to come back to work under the old conditions. No conference was granted and no sign of concession made."—Evening Press.

That listens as if the manufacturers were rather unreasonable, and unsympathetic, and unrelenting, and undiplomatic, doesn't it? BUT—here are the facts:

These committees are appointed at strike headquarters by the strike committee, who select one member to act as secretary, to report back, NOT TO THE WORKERS OF THE INDIVIDUAL PLANT, but to the STRIKE COMMITTEE.

They are a part of the plan of campaign of Strike Manager MacFarlane and his board of strategy—not intended to effect individual settlements with individual factories, but to "get the manufacturers in wrong with the public."

No, little one, the furniture manufacturer's association hasn't contributed even "three cents" to The "Free" Press. Incomprehensible to you, isn't it? That an institution or group of individuals should go down in their pockets for the propagation of a principle seems absurd to you, doesn't it?

APPENDIX D

BASIC CATEGORY TABLES SHOWING TOTAL ITEMS AND INCHES  
UNDER EACH MAJOR STRIKE AND NON-STRIKE CATEGORIES  
BY FOUR MAIN SUBDIVISIONS: NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL,  
AND EDITORIAL. A SEPARATE TABLE IS PRESENTED  
FOR EACH SUBDIVISION.

NATIONAL	PRESS (April)		1911 HERALD (August)		1921 PRESS (Sept)		1922 HERALD (Sept.)		1937 PRESS (Oct.)		1937 No.
	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	
	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	Items	Inches	
<b>I. STRIKE STORIES</b>											
<b>A. PHYS. CONDUCT</b>											
1. Peaceful							1	3			
2. Coercive			8	95	18	441	12	143	9	25	
<b>B. ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE ON THE ISSUES</b>											
			3	42	7	70	14	216	3	9	
<b>C. ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE BY DIR. INTERV.</b>											
	2	10	3	32	3	21	13	156	3	8	
<b>D. STATUS-OF-STRIKE</b>											
	7	29	14	107	10	72	29	426	7	37	
<b>E. EFFECT ON PUBLIC WELFARE</b>											
					2	31	12	205			
---											
<b>II. NON-STRIKE STORIES</b>											
<b>A. DISASTER</b>											
	6	43½	1	6			2	13	1	11	
<b>B. SABOTAGE</b>											
	5	208	1	5			3	32			
<b>C. WELFAREISM</b>											
	2	8									
<b>d. UNION ACTIVITIES</b>											
	1	6			4	15	3	39	32	246½	1
<b>E. JT. UN-MGT</b>											
							1	10			
<b>F. COMMUNITY OR NATION WIDE UNION ACTIVITIES</b>											
	1	10			2	20	4	36	3	22	
<b>H. ECONOMIC CONDS.</b>											
	1	7	1	6	10	70			2	10	
<b>I. POLITICAL AND GOV. PROGRAMS &amp; POLICIES</b>											
<b>A. SPECIFIC LEGISL</b>											
					2	6	3	36	10	85	
<b>B. GENL POLICIES</b>											
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>											
	25	322	31	293	59	772	98	131	70	453	3

1922 HERALD (Sept.)		1937 PRESS (Oct.)		1937 HERALD (Oct.)		1945 PRESS (Dec.)		1946 HERALD (Feb.)		1947 PRESS (April)		1947 HERALD (April)	
No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.
<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>
1	3					2	36	2	24	1	2	2	10
12	143	9	25	7	82	5	15	5	59	1	8	2	10
14	216	3	9	3	14	15	200	17	132	16	166	15	195
13	156	3	8	2	14	3	16	1	7	6	52	27	284
29	426	7	37	1	6	20	130½	26	197	22	162	27	284
12	205			2	31	4	27			1	4	1	3
<hr/>													
2	13	1	11					1	6	1	10	1	26
3	32									1	3		
										1	18	1	21
3	39	32	246½	13	116	2	8	4	49	2	9	6	30
1	10			1	6	9	62	2	9	1	2	3	14
4	36	3	22	4	50	1	6	1	8				
		2	10	4	28	2	21	1	42			2	24
3	36	10	85	1	6	13	98	2	18	14	102	10	96
								1	5	1	5	1	3
<hr/>													
98	131	70	453	38	353	76	620	63	556	68	643	76	749

LOCAL	1911		1921		1922		1922		1922	
	PRESS		HERALD		PRESS		HERALD		PRESS	
	(April)	(April)	(August)	(August)	(Sept.)	(Sept.)	(Sept.)	(Sept.)	(Oct.)	(Oct.)
	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.
	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>
<b>I. STRIKE STORIES</b>										
A. PHYSICAL CONDUCT										
1.	Peaceful Tactics	4	188	2	17					1
2.	Coercive Tactics	4	64	2	12		2	14	6	
B. ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE BY DIRECT INTERVENTION										
				1	3				15	
C. ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE ON THE ISSUES										
		14	295	1	14				5	
D. STATUS-OF-STRIKE STORIES										
		12	346	9	123				14	1
E. EFFECT OF STRIKES ON PUBLIC WELFARE										
		1	2	2	17		5	17	1	
<b>II. NON-STRIKE STORIES</b>										
A. DISASTER										
B. SABOTAGE										
		1	14							
C. WELFARE										
		1	5			2	12	6	62	
D. UNION ACTIVITIES										
						7	110			2
E. JOINT UN-MGT										
		1	1	2	13½					
F. NATION-WIDE OR COMMUNITY-WIDE UN. ACTS										
		1	4	4	57	6	43			
H. ECONOMIC CONDS. OF CONCERN TO LABOR										
		8	69			2	6	1	5	2
I. POLITICAL AND GOV. PROGRAMS & POLICIES OF CONCERN TO LABOR										
		1	7	2	6	1	10			1
A. SPECIFIC LEGISL.										
B. GENERAL POLITICS										
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>										
		48	995	25	263	19	189	20	181	47

1921 PRESS (Sept.)	1922 HERALD (Sept.)		1937 PRESS (Oct.)		1937 HERALD (Oct.)		1945 PRESS (Dec.)		1946 HERALD (Feb.)		1947 PRESS (April)		1947 HERALD (April)	
	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.	Col.	No.
<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>Inches</u>
			1	5	3	31	10	76	2	32	2	18	1	8
	2	14	6	79	9	159	1		1	14			2	12
			15	99	3	122			1	6	1	2		
			5	67	5	66	7	49			1	4	1	6
			14	172	8	184	2	16	8	61	7	68	9	101
	5	17	1	7			1	5			1	5		
<hr/>														
													1	8
12	6	62			2	12	1	13					1	10
110			2	7			6	48			1	5	6	59
							1	6	2	16				
43					3	28	2	14	1	14			1	10
6	1	5	2	11	1	5	5	40	1	35	3	37	4	45
10			1	11	1	11								
<hr/>														
189	20	181	47	458	35	618	35	267	16	178	16	139	26	259

APPENDIX E

THREE ARTICLES FROM THE MICHIGAN TRADESMAN OF 1911  
CRITICIZING BISHOP JOSEPH SCHREMS

# MICHIGAN TRADESMAN

DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTERESTS  
OF BUSINESS MEN.

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E. A. STOWE, Editor.

July 12, 1911

## THE BISHOP'S OPPORTUNITY.

Why does not some good friend of the laboring men tell the striking factory hands to get back to work, and as soon as they can? Can it be that labor has no such friends in Grand Rapids or that such friends, if they do exist, lack the nerve to speak out? Everybody knows that the strike is broken, that the strikers have been beaten and that no good purpose can possibly be served by holding out longer. Then why does not some friend of labor say so and say so with an emphasis that will command attention? The political demagogues, the professional friends of labor, the grafters and those who find their profit in disturbance and discord are urging the men to hold out, and by taunt and menace and threat are compelling many who would gladly return to work to remain in idleness, and the disposition seems to be to let this element rule. That this should be the disposition is not creditable to the city. The time has arrived, if it is not long past due, when somebody should speak out. There is none in the city in a better position to do this than Bishop Schrembs. He was one of the advisers of the strikers in the struggle. He should be one of their advisers now. He knows that the strikers can not win. He knows that to prolong the struggle will increase the number of unemployed in Grand Rapids the coming winter, and this will mean distress and suffering. He knows that many of the strikers, if they return to work now, will be able to get jobs, while if they put off longer there will be no jobs for them. Then why does he not speak out? Why does he not talk earnestly and honestly to the men and tell them that it is time to quit fighting and go to work? It may take courage on the part of Bishop Schrembs to do this, but he helped the strikers into their trouble; he should now help them out of it, instead of leaving them to the guidance of the wolves who seem to be in control.

The semi-annual furniture sale is now in its third week. The buying has not been liberal. A tendency to conservatism has been the predom-

inating feature. Trade was exceedingly dull during the spring. The prospects are that the fall trade will be slow and light. The country is already anticipating the depression which always comes in a presidential year. Good times can not be looked for until after the election, and the election is more than a year away. With this as the condition, the factories in Grand Rapids will not be run to capacity this winter. Light forces and short hours will be the rule. It will be a job hunt instead of a man hunt in the labor market. Many a man with wife and children to care for and with home unpaid for will be without work. The men themselves know this, but the leadership thus far has been to hold out, to fight on, to make it a last ditch contest and as disagreeable and hard for the manufacturers as possible. With coal bills and warmer clothing for the children only sixty days away it is time some other leadership appeared—a leadership that will be honest and sincere and courageous; that will lead to wisdom and not to folly; to peace and not to a continuance of violence.

## FRIENDS OF LABOR.

The recent furniture strike in this city, which is now largely a matter of history, naturally developed a number of so-called friends of labor who evidently acted from different motives and touched the strike from different viewpoints.

One of the earliest self-confessed friends of labor was A. W. Wishart, the eloquent and talented pastor of the Fountain Street Baptist church. Dr. Wishart came to Grand Rapids some years ago from Trenton, New Jersey, bearing with him voluminous credentials from the labor unions of that city as to his friendship for labor and his interest in the trades union affairs. He voluntarily assumed a prominent part in the initial stages of the strike and became a member of the Commission which undertook to solve the problem. The task was entirely self-imposed and the result was as might be expected. The Commission found that the charges of the union labor leaders were not sustained and as soon as Mr. Wishart got his bearings, he published a communication in the daily papers, advising the strikers that their demands would not be complied with and that the best thing for them to do, under the circumstances, would be to secure their old positions and return to work. History has shown that this advice was the best possible advice that any man could offer at that time, yet the union labor leaders resented it as impertinent and joined with Bishop Schrembs in reviling Dr. Wishart and saying nasty things that ought not to be said by any man who pretends to wear the mantle of Christianity and uphold the dignity and decency of Christ. Mr. Wishart bore up under the ordeal without flinching, because he knew that time would demonstrate the correctness of his conclusions and the sincerity of his motives.

Another self-appointed friend of the down-trodden working man was Deacon Ellis, the erstwhile Mayor of Grand Rapids. Deacon Ellis' friendship for the laboring man is purely personal and absolutely selfish. All he cares for the laboring man is his vote. He plays a game of hide and

seek from start to finish. He debauched the good name of the city and is wholly to blame for permitting the riots which will forever disgrace the name of Grand Rapids. He is a crafty and insincere adviser and why the laboring men should pin their faith to such a demagogue and shyster is more than the Tradesman can understand.

Another man who posed as a friend of the laboring man was Andy Fyfe. Like our distinguished Mayor, his interest was purely personal and selfish. He sought to use the labor unions as a club to force William Alden Smith to give him a Government appointment and succeeded in accomplishing his object. Whenever you hear about the labor unions going into politics, you can make up your mind that somebody in the background is looking for a job and is using union labor as a club to secure it. He usually succeeds and from that time on the office holder becomes a political boss, boastfully proclaiming that he carries the laboring vote in his vest pocket.

Another self-seeking friend of the labor unions was Bishop Schrembs. He jumped into the game without invitation or request and stayed in long enough to muddle things up generally. He threatened and cajoled and browbeat. He said nasty things about the furniture manufacturers and uttered untruths which would place a less prominent man beyond the recognition of candid and careful men. His interest in the strike was wholly selfish and personal. He plunged headlong into the vortex of the contest without keeping his feet on the ground, depending upon the lofty position he holds to carry him through in safety. He failed in every attempt. Many utterances and acquisitions he made against the manufacturers were unfounded and proven untrue. Instead of taking a broad view of the situation, as Dr. Wishart did, and advising the men to secure their old places while they were still open to them, he proved to be the worst possible enemy the laboring men could have by encouraging them to remain out on strike. One word from Bishop Schrembs would have ended the strike before the city was disgraced by riots and anarchy. He would have been justified in saying that word, because he could see, as plainly as any man could see, that the strike was futile and that his connection with it was a blunder and an embarrassment. Instead of seeking to bring peace and order out of chaos and arraying himself on the side of good order, he improved the opportunity to widen the breach between employer and employe and the result was the West Side riots, which will, necessarily, result in depriving the firey Pole of permanent employment by any manufacturer in Grand Rapids. Bishop Schrembs invariably cries wolf when any one questions his motives and hides behind the mantle of the Roman Catholic church, which he has persistently disgraced and whose traditions he has cast to the winds. He impugns the motive of every Protestant and seeks

to place any one who questions him and his methods in the position of opposition to his church. In other words, he assumes that he is as infallible as the Pope claims to be, and that any one who questions his methods or refuses to accept his judgment is an enemy of the church which he so wretchedly represents.

## Why Political Priest Was Relegated To Obscurity.

Father Ponganis, who formerly presided over the destiny of the big Polish church on the West Side, undertook to assume the authority of a Czar—commercial, political and religious. Of course, he made a failure of all three, because he undertook altogether too much. Whenever a priest gets the political bee in his bonnet he ceases to be useful to his congregation. Whenever he thinks he can run other men's business and encourages his parishioners to go out on strikes and lock-outs and riots, he soon finds himself at variance with his church and is very apt to be transferred to some insignificant parish in a remote portion of the diocese.

Father Ponganis went so far as to make deals with politicians for the delivery of the Polish Catholic vote. He also encouraged his parishioners to strike for higher wages, so that they might contribute more liberally to the up-building of his church. On one occasion he ordered twenty Polish Catholic girls to cease work in a certain factory and then peremptorily called on the manager to adjust the difficulty. The manager met him quietly and remarked somewhat as follows:

"Father Ponganis, I understand you are a mighty poor poker player and a wretched politician and an unsuccessful business man. You may be a good preacher, but I doubt it, because I think you are giving too much attention to poker and politics and other men's business to have any time left to preach. The girls you ordered out of my factory can never come back and two more girls who belong to your church will get their walking papers at noon. There is the door and if you ever cross my threshold again I will boot you out into the street. You are beneath the contempt of decent men, because you are a sneak and a schemer."

Ponganis' methods eventually were brought to the attention of Bishop Richter and, as a result, he was transferred to a little parish in a remote district of Northern Michigan, where he is buried in obscurity. The real facts regarding his transfer have never before been told in public print, but the Tradesman has the facts from headquarters and knows whereof speaks.

It is not unlikely that a certain bishop in a certain diocese not very far from Grand Rapids may also be cast from the powers, but because of the late furniture sale in this city over-stepped the bounds and got deep water and he himself and destroyed his church. The Roman Catholic church does not tolerate sort of interference on the part of princes and politicians. It maintains that they must get out of politics and remove themselves, so far as possible, from the business life of community. The church does move fast, but it moves in time, mills of the God grind slowly, they grind exceedingly sure.

APPROVED: Charles E. Higbie

DATE: August 14, 1953