

**Convention of the Trans-Mississippi Congress.**

The Trans-Mississippi Congress (vol. xi., p. 686), which met at Denver on the 17th with 2,000 delegates in attendance, was addressed on the 18th upon the subject of President Roosevelt's policy of conservation of public lands, by Gifford Pinchot, who had thrown the question of water-power land grabbing into the Irrigation Congress at Spokane (p. 797) the week before. Among the resolutions adopted by the Denver congress was one relating to this question. As offered by ex-Senator Patterson, it called upon Congress for a law providing for separation of agricultural, mining and forest lands for entry, and was adopted on the 20th with the following explanatory clause:

Resolved, That the Trans-Mississippi Congress hereby indorses the general policy of the government of the United States in the control and conservation of the resources of the nation, and urges the various States to co-operate with the Federal government in promoting in every legitimate way the conservation and perpetuation of forests within their respective borders.

Other resolutions were adopted advocating—

the income tax, a tariff commission of experts, a law regulating the use of grazing lands, a Territorial legislature for Alaska, a law preventing the collection of Federal liquor revenue in prohibition territory, and subsidies for American shipping.

One of the speakers at the Congress, Governor Hadley, of Missouri (a Republican), called railway rebating the mother of trusts, instead of the tariff, and said that while he was not in favor of government ownership of railroads he would prefer this to railroad ownership of the government.

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**The Labor Troubles at McKee's Rocks.**

Charges of peonage were made on the 19th against officials of the Pressed Steel Car Company at McKee's Rocks (p. 801) and the State constabulary. Two men, Fred Rieger and Mathias Stephany, both of New York city, stated that they had escaped from the company's stockades, where 1,000 strike-breakers were confined; that these strike-breakers had been imported from New York and Philadelphia under false pretenses, and those of them that have tried to get away and failed have been beaten and shot at by the armed guards. The story of their own experience was reported in newspapers of the 20th as follows:

We were stopped on the street in New York on last Saturday and asked by a strange man if we wanted work at \$2 a day. We told him yes, and he said he'd give us jobs working on a railroad near Pittsburg. He gave us contracts calling for railroad work, and late that night we were put on an Erie train with forty others and taken to Youngstown, O. When we got there we were hustled out of the train and made to give up our contracts. Then, at the muzzle of guns held by guards, we were put into

a box car and locked up. When the door was opened we were in the Pressed Steel plant. There we found that our job was to break a strike.

Another witness to the allegations of peonage was Frank Taylor, a laborer imported from Philadelphia, who was arrested on the 20th for breaking windows at the plant. He told the Sheriff that he had smashed the windows because he had been forced to remain in the plant. Further confirmation was noted also on the 20th in the finding, just outside of the stockade, of a brick supposed to have been thrown from the inside, to which was attached a note, only part of which is reported. The part reported reads:

We want to get out of here. Can't you help us?

Criminal proceedings were instituted on the 21st before a United States Commissioner at Pittsburgh by the Austrian Consulate, and also by attorneys for the strikers, under the peonage laws of Congress. The charges are against Frank N. Hoffstot, president of the Pressed Steel Car Company. The Austrian Vice-Consul had gone that morning to McKee's Rocks to ascertain if any Austrian workmen were held in the stockade against their will, and been refused admission to the works. Upon information derived from Albert Vamos, an Austrian, he thereupon instituted the criminal proceedings, charging that 50 Austrians and Hungarians are unlawfully imprisoned in the McKee's Rocks strike-breaking stockade. Vamos swears that he himself was brought to the stockade from New York to work on a railroad job and that he was held a prisoner for two days. When he attempted to escape he says he was beaten. He was just out of the hospital when he made his complaint. The Austrian Vice Consul notified the Governor of Pennsylvania on the 21st.

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Meanwhile fresh boat loads of strike-breakers on their way to the stockade had been fired upon. News dispatches of the 19th stated that the firing was by alleged strike sympathizers, several thousand of whom were lined along the Ohio River bank, and that each volley was discharged at the command of an unknown foreign woman who carried a baby. Over 100 shots are reported to have been directed at the steamer; but no one was injured. By the time the steamer reached the shore near the plant a squad of State constabulary, mounted, had ridden into the crowd, scattering men, women and children in all directions. Under heavy guard, the imported men were taken to the works. During the firing the troopers and other police remained inside the mill, orders having been issued to take no action unless the strikers attempted an entrance to the plant. Strike leaders explained the shooting as in their opinion having been for the purpose of bringing the constabulary from the plant so as to give the new men an opportunity to escape, but most of the troop-