Severe Arraignment of Steffens

Argonaut Calls Him "Hysteriac" and Says 'Tis Merciful to Assume He is Mentally Wrong

One of the most severe arraignments ever given a man in any publication appears in the *Argonaut* and its object is Lincoln Steffens, author and also guardian angel of the self-confessed murderers, the McNamaras. What the *Argonaut* has to say is based on Steffens' testimony on the witness stand in the Darrow trial. Steffens said that the blowing up of the Los Angeles *Times* building was a social crime, that in the negotiations leading up to the pleas of guilty by the McNamara brothers, he tried hard to save J. J. McNamara and that the community would not have its problem solved by the punishment of the two men.

Among other things the *Argonaut* says that the part played by Steffens "stinks" and that it is an insult to good government and to the law. It declares that it is merciful to assume that Steffens is mentally warped and it concludes by saying that it is no wonder that courts lose respect when they permit "hysteriacs", like Steffens, to use them as a convenient forum for anarchy. The *Argonaut* says in part:

There is only one extenuating circumstance that can be urged for Mr. Steffens. It seems merciful to assume that he was mentally diseased. He proclaimed his conviction that the McNamaras ought not to have been punished at all for the confessed murder of over twenty people and for the implication that naturally followed the commission of some eighty other dynamite outrages throughout the country. It seems hard to believe that a man of education should be so lost to the obligations of civilization, indeed of mere common decency, as to offer such a contention as this. But the fact is upon record. Mr. Steffens said this, according to the report, and the court heard him say it without protest. The crime of the McNamaras, says Mr. Steffens, was a "social crime". The conditions that caused it should have been treated, and presumably the murderers should have been respectfully notified that the points at issue would be immediately adjusted.

The further we go in the "evidence" of Mr. Steffens, the more amazing does it become. If some I. W. W. orator had said half as much at San Diego, it would be easy to understand that the tar bucket or the lunatic asylum would be the only alternatives. But no I. W. W. ever talked like Mr. Steffens. No I. W. W. would dare. Not satisfied with this maudlin plea for two particularly cowardly murderers, Mr. Steffens went on to explain why, in his opinion, the prosecution of the McNamaras had been undertaken. That it was undertaken because a score of people had been brutally murdered and because there was every reason to believe that the McNamaras were the murderers had apparently never entered his head. No. The McNamaras were prosecuted because orders for two "victims" had been received from certain eastern interests. And this opinion, be it remembered, was voiced by Mr. Steffens a week ago and in face of the fact that the McNamaras confessed and are now in prison. In the eyes of Mr. Steffens these men are still "victims", the prey of insatiate corporation revenges, martyrs to the great cause of social justice.

There is only one way to describe the part played by Mr. Steffens from first to last in these proceedings. It stinks. It is an insult to good gov-

ernment and to the law. Mr. Steffens had no legal standing in the McNamara trials. He had no more right to interfere or to a hearing than any other private person in the country. And yet one might have supposed that he owned Los Angeles, owned the prisoners, owned the courts. His was the one voice externally audible. His admonitions, pieties, scriptural tags, beseeching and threatening filled the air. He seems to have had a perpetual passport to the prison on one side and the judge's chamber on the other. And now we are informed, and in a court of justice, too, that all these hysterical hurryings and scurryings were undertaken on behalf of two men whom he knew to be murderers; that murder ceases to be a crime if undertaken for "social" ends, and that the McNamaras are being punished, not for killing over twenty people, but because certain corporations had demanded two "victims". Is it any wonder that our courts should be losing the respect of the country when they allow hysteriacs like Mr. Steffens to use them as a convenient forum for anarchy?

McNamara Defense Fund

A recent dispatch shows the distribution of the McNamara defense fund. The dispatch reads:

All labor unions which contributed to the McNamara defense fund will receive copies of an 82-page pamphlet setting forth a detailed statement of the uses to which the fund was put and showing a balance of $8,286.54. Seventy-four pages of the pamphlet are devoted to detailed statements of contributions to the fund and two pages to expenditures, the largest of which were to Clarence S. Darrow as chief attorney for the defense. The statement shows that $236,105.25 was contributed to the funds, of which exactly $200,000 was paid to Darrow. Indianapolis attorneys, Leo. M. Rappaport and Henry Seyfried, received $11,000 and $2,500, respectively. Other principal expenditures are for buttons, $1,225; tickets, $457.75; printing and mailing literature, $2,623.50; arranging for production of exhibition of McNamara films, $3,142.19, and many other items of less importance.

The largest single contribution to the fund was by the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, which paid $25,000 on Aug. 4, when assessments of $5 on each member were being collected.

This organization, of which the McNamaras were members, made several other contributions, two in excess of $5,000 and one of $3,000.

Law Works Badly

It is reported from New York state that the workmen's compensation and employers liability law, which have been effective in that state since September 1, 1911, impose new risks upon employers and are proving to be radical and one-sided. Several of the defenses of the employer are modified by the liability act, the general result of which places upon the employer a heavier burden than formerly.

The workmen's compensation act applies only to certain so-called dangerous employments, such as the building trades and railroading. It provides for recovery in certain limited amounts, irrespective of the employers' negligence. It is optional with a workman injured in these employments, whether he will claim under the compensation or the liability act. If he has a strong, clear case, he will probably claim under the latter, as the chances are greater for larger damages. If the employer plainly be not liable under the liability law, claim will then be made under the compensation act. Hence, the employer is compelled to insure under both statutes. In the building trades, general contractors are held liable for injuries to workmen employed by their subcontractors.

Because of multiplied risks, liability companies have raised their rates in New York state. The New York law, imposing upon employers of that state undue penalties, while trying out the compensation principle in this country, is uneconomic.