

## Letter detailing developments in a strikes of engineers

This very detailed letter is from William Strong to Thomas Nickerson, President of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, Boston, Massachusetts. Strong informs Nickerson of the developments in the engineers strike. Strong was using letterhead from the "Office of the Vice President and General Manager" in Topeka, Kansas. Strong describes various incidents and also indicated the men/engineers that organized the strike. He also describes effort to keep the trains running when possible.

Creator: Strong, William

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### ATCHISON, TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILROAD CO.

A. T. & S. F. . . . .	470.10
P. & A. V. . . . .	148.93
K. C. T. & W. . . . .	66.00
P. H. & D. S. . . . .	44.50
F. E. & W. V. . . . .	31.00
W. & S. W. . . . .	27.25
Total . . . . .	787.11

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER.

Topeka, Kas.,

April 5<sup>th</sup> 1878

— 2<sup>nd</sup> M<sup>on</sup>day, —

Thos. Nickerson, Esq,  
Pres't, A. T. & S. F. R. R.,  
Boston

Strike of Engineers.

Dear Sir,

On Tuesday of last week, 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., I left here for Pueblo, where I arrived at three o'clock on Wednesday, without delay, or signs of any kind of trouble. On Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> inst., at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the engineers left their engine, by evidently a concerted action, but finishing their run, even if it brought them in somewhat after their hour prearranged for quitting their work.

On receiving intelligence of the strike, Cal. Morse issued a circular, warning the men to avoid taking any action which they might afterward regret, and calling upon them to reflect before bringing trouble upon themselves and family. I enclose a copy of this, and other circulars, and  
obligation

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2.  
obligation which it is proposed to have every  
employee, who runs on an engine, sign, be-  
fore being entered in the company's service.  
On Thursday, the train arriving from  
the east were deserted by their engineers  
and firemen, and the train from the west was  
given up at Emporia, but was afterward  
brought in by a temporary engineer, arriving  
several hours late. The train for Atchison  
came out of Topeka only two hours be-  
hind time, under the protection of the  
sheriff and two deputies, and reached its  
destination in due time. The train for  
Kansas City was made up, and left here  
in the evening after arrival of the train  
from the west. At half past six p.m. the  
train for the west left Topeka, in the  
midst of some excitement and threats, a  
man from the shop on as engineer, and  
a passenger from the train acting as a  
fireman. This train had eight full  
coaches, containing a large party of  
settlers from Leicestershire. It got as far  
as Reading, where the fire and water  
gave out, and as there was trouble at  
Emporia



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3.  
Emporia, it was thought best to remain where they were. At ten p.m., the train from Kansas City having gone forward with the eight coaches; another train was started, under charge of Mr. Gilman, the fuel agent, Mr. Gunn, Div. Supt., and shop men to run the engine and fire. It got as far as Scranton, and, it having been ascertained that machinery had been tampered with, and that there was probable danger in approaching Emporia, they laid up for the night. When this train left Opeka, several shots were fired near the track, with what purpose has not transpired.

On Friday and Saturday, and yesterday, matters were quiet, on the whole. The strikers concluded to let the mail trains pass, but declared that freight should not be moved. At Kansas City and Atchison there was no trouble; here, there were some attempts to injure men, who wished to do their duty, while at Emporia, three engines were derailed, some headlights broken, the water-tank emptied, &c. There was a meeting of

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4.  
of the strikers at Emporia, called to dis-  
claim any intention to burn railroad  
property, as was rumored there. This meet-  
ing was addressed by two or more of the  
strikers, and it is said that the citizens  
applauded their speeches. - No freight has  
been run since Thursday morning, but  
there is no trouble on the west end, the  
men there being ready to work. -

On Friday, one of the ring-leaders  
was arrested at Emporia, and last night  
two more, who were brought to Topeka to-  
day, charged with conspiracy, and ob-  
structing the mails. -

I arrived at Topeka Saturday after-  
noon, and after taking in the situation, I  
set about applying a remedy. By my tele-  
graph instructions, the men striking,  
were discharged, and every new man is  
to be required to be a "non-union" man,  
and to give ten days notice to the Co. of an in-  
tention to leave. - I saw Gov. Anthony, and as  
usual, found him promptly on the side of  
law and order, and by last night we  
had things in shape, two companies of  
troops



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5. troops ordered from Leavenworth and Independence, special police sworn in here; and the sheriffs of the different counties ordered to hold themselves in readiness to act; and I propose to open this road, for both passenger and freight traffic, at nine o'clock this morning, if there be power enough in the State of Kansas to do it, by affording protection to our new men; of whom we have plenty, and, pretty good ones, and many more offering from all directions, than we can use.

There has been some rumor of a premeditated union of the railroad strikers, with the coal-mine strikers at Osage, &c, but I hope this will not amount to anything, altho' they appear to be in communication. The miners are said to number five or six hundred, and are an ugly set of men. They might cause great trouble.

As to the cause of the trouble; setting aside all stories of the different newspapers, there was no warning given me, of any strike being in prospect, and no complaint, of any kind. The pay of freight engineers and

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6.  
and firman has not been changed, in any way, since January 1877. - On Mich 1st '78, the pay of passenger engineers was equalized on the several divisions, as was proper and right, and this met no complaint at any time.

The strike appears to have been precipitated thro' the efforts of three men. Thieters is an engineer who gave us a great deal of trouble, constantly stirring up broils with the men, and appearing to be the head of the brotherhood on this line. He finally was convicted of using abusive language to his superior officers, and was summarily discharged, Col. Morse refusing to have him hang on the road. -

Farsley, an engineer, and a member of the brotherhood, was found asleep on his engine, and his firman also, by the conductor of the train, and at the next division point, telegraphed his resignation to the Div. Supt, which was accepted. - This man Farsley is a ready and fluent speaker, and a dangerous character to have on a road. If, as in his case, inclined to make trouble, his resignation after such a flagrant



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7/2.  
flagrant offence, was cheerfully accepted.  
Bailey, the third man, got into a dispute with the Conductor, and, thinking that there was not another engineer at Newton to take the train on, he telegraphed Mr. Pettibone that "the conductor of this train propose to run both ends of this train, and I propose to let him, - I shall leave my engine at Newton, and want my place filled," - or words to that effect. - His place was filled, - for good, and another man put on his engine at Newton.

These three men have now, according to the best information we can get, incited this striking business, in order that the Co. may be forced to reinstate them in their positions. - They do not appear to complain of their pay; they sent no committee representing the men now out; and gave the Co. not a moment's warning.

If things had gone along smoothly, I presume the cloak of the brotherhood would never have shown itself; and that I should have noticed it as an element of evil only, but now that the  
issue



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8.  
issue is forced upon me. I propose to go  
thorough, and clear the whole thing off  
the road, even, if it takes time and a  
good deal of inconvenience, to do it. - They  
made it almost a personal matter  
against me, when I was with the C. & O.,  
ascribing to me the threat of breaking the  
brotherhood up; when I had the disposi-  
tion only. - I have the same mind now,  
and propose to fight it out on that line. -  
Will advise you again as matters  
progress. -

Yours truly  
(M. B. Strong)

W. C.