



"MERRY CHRISTMAS— UNEMPLOYED!"

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WESLEY EVEREST by JOHN DOS PASSOS

When Wesley Everest came back from overseas and got his discharge from the army he went back to his old job of logging. His folks were of the old Tennessee and Kentucky stock of woodsmen and squirrelhunters who followed the trail blazed by Lewis and Clark into the rainy giant forests of the Pacific slope. In the army Everest was a sharpshooter, won a medal for a crack shot.

(Since the days of the homesteaders the western promoters and the politicians and lobbyists in Washington had been busy with the rainy giant forests of the Pacific slope, with the result that

ten monopoly groups aggregating only one thousand eight hundred and two holders, monopolized one thousand two hundred and eight billion, eight hundred million,

(1,208,800,000,000)

square feet of standing timber, each a foot square and an inch thick . . . enough standing timber . . . to yield the planks necessary (over and above the manufacturing wastage) to make a floating bridge more than two feet thick and more than five miles wide from New York to Liverpool;

— wood for scaffolding, wood for jerrybuilding residential suburbs, billboards, wood for shacks and ships and shantytowns, pulp for tabloids, yellow journals, editorial pages, advertising copy, mailorder catalogues, filingcards, army paperwork, handbills, flimsy.)

Lumberjacks, loggers, shingleweavers, sawmill workers were the helots of the timber empire where the I. W. W. put the idea of industrial democracy in Paul Bunyan's head; wobbly organizers said the forests belonged to the whole people, said Paul Bunyan ought to be paid in real money instead of company scrip, ought to have a decent place to dry their clothes wet from the sweat of a days work in zero weather and snow, and an eight hour day, clean bunkhouses, wholesome grub; when Wesley Everest came back from making Europe safe for the democracy of the Big Four, he joined the lumberjack's local in Centralia to help make Washington State safe for the workingstiffs. The wobblies were reds.

(To be a red in the summer of 1919 was worse than being a hun or a pacifist in the summer of 1917.)

The timber owners, the sawmill and shinglekings were patriots; they'd won the war (in the course of which the price of lumber had gone up from \$16 a thousand feet to \$116; there are even cases when the government paid as high as \$1200 a thousand for

spruce); they set out to clean the reds out of the logging camps; free American institutions must be preserved;

so they formed the Employers Association and the Legion of Loyal Loggers, they made it worth their while for bunches of ex-soldiers to raid I.W.W. halls, lynch and beat up organizers, burn subversive literature. But Paul Bunyan was a husky, not a thing in the world Paul Bunyan's ascares of.

On Memorial day 1918 the boys of the American Legion in Centralia led by a group from the Chamber of Commerce wrecked the I.W.W. hall, beat up everybody they found in it. Some of the boys they jailed, the rest of them they piled in a truck and dumped over the country line,

burned the papers and pamphlets and auctioned off the fittings for the Red Cross; the wobblies' desk still stands in the Chamber of Commerce.

The loggers hired a new hall and the union kept growing. Not a thing in this world Paul Bunyan's ascares of.

Before Armistice Day, 1919, the town was full of rumors that on that day the hall would be raided for keeps. A young man of good family and pleasant manners, Warren O. Grimm, had been an officer with the American force in Siberia; that made him an authority on labor and Bolsheviks, so he was chosen by the business men to lead the 100% forces in the Citizens Protective League, to put the fear of God into Paul Bunyan.

The loggers consulted counsel and decided they had a right to defend their hall and themselves in case of a raid. Not a thing in this world Paul Bunyan's ascares of.

Wesley Everest was a crack shot; Armistice Day he put on his uniform and filled his pockets with cartridges. Everest was not much of a talker; at a meeting in the Union Hall the Sunday before the raid, there'd been talk of the chance of a lynching bee; Wesley Everest had been walking up and down the aisle with his O. D. coat on over a suit of overalls, distributing literature and pamphlets; when the boys said they wouldn't stand for another raid, he stopped in his tracks with the papers under his arm, rolled himself a brownpaper cigarette and smiled a funny quiet smile.

Armistice day was raw and cold; the mist rolled in from Puget Sound and dripped from the dark boughs of the spruces and the shiny storefronts of the town. Warren O. Grimm commanded the Centralia section of the parade. The exsoldiers were in their uniforms. When the parade passed by the Union Hall without halting, the loggers inside breathed easier, but on the way back the parade