

# BOULDER DAM CREATES SERIOUS LABOR PROBLEM

*Editor's Note: This is the first of four stories describing actual conditions at Boulder Dam.*

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LAS VEGAS, Nev.—The party is over for this desert city in the heart of the Boulder Dam country.

The first flood of enthusiasm which accompanied the start of work on Boulder Dam eight months ago has ebbed and Las Vegas has been left with its headache, a dangerous labor situation and the problem of how to wrest from the project some of the profits it had hoped it would get. Hope of employment brought hundreds of men to the city. Despair has left them apathetic.

The wind from mountains stings

through their tattered clothing but they find the gambling room warm. There a man can sit a comfortable hour playing keno for a few cents, or if he has \$5 or \$10, he can risk it at other games.

If lucky he sleeps in one of Las Vegas' "stag hotels." He can buy good bootleg whisky for \$2 a pint, and along the highways for as little as 50 cents. A licensed red light district is in operation.

Moneyless, the drifter may seek the empty shelter of brush lands which close in about the town. But Las Vegas police will drive him either further into the desert or back to the streets.

Officials fear radicalism. The army of idle is kept moving.

I. W. W. organizers are in the city. Their literature is seen frequently thrust into torn pockets or discarded in gutters.

Working conditions at the dam have been described as "like slavery" in the radical press. Demands have been made for senatorial investigation. Wages are claimed to be contrary to the spirit of the prevailing wage law.

Las Vegas is attempting to care for the idle and fighting for business profits from the dam. A Red Cross chapter will feed men who are willing to work at odd jobs.

Streets are crowded not alone with jobless. Tourists are many. Stores are busy. Restaurants are filled. Gambling houses prosper and pay \$12,000 yearly in city

taxes. It is when Las Vegas looks across the desert to Boulder City that the memory of the last eight months becomes painful.

To look upon the Six Companies solely as the builders of Boulder Dam is to overlook its importance in this desert land as the retailer of goods to its workers. The company already sells groceries, clothing and personal necessities to the workers. It runs its own laundry, its own time-payment furniture store—even sponsors its own poker game contrary to Boulder City regulations as laid down by the government.

**Next: Working Conditions at the Dam.**