

Testimony from Hum Fay concerning the Boycott of Chinese and Japanese Businesses in Butte

Hum Fay, a witness on behalf of the complainants, after being first duly sworn by the Examiner, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY COLONEL SANDERS, of counsel for the complainants:

Q: How old are you, and what is your name and where do you live?

A: My name is Hum Fay, age 33, and live in Butte, Montana.

Q: For how many years last past have you lived in Butte Silver Bow County, Montana?

A: The last thirteen years.

Q: In what business have you been engaged the last two years?

A: I am a restaurant keeper, and buying and selling Chinese and Japanese fancy goods. . .

Q: Are you of Chinese descent, and were you born in the Empire of China, and are you a subject of the Empire of China?

A: I am born in China.

Q: Of Chinese descent?

A: Yes sir.

Q: And a subject of that Empire?

A: Yes sir. . . .

Q: What if anything do you know with reference to the establishment or carrying on in Butte, Silver Bow county, State of Montana, of boycotts against the Chinese?

A: The first part in 1897; of course I saw the newspaper as this general boycott against the Chinese by order of the Silver Bow Trades and Labor assembly. . . .

I have got the paper here. The witness produced a copy of the . . . notice . . . [It] reads as follows:

“BOYCOTT.”

“A general boycott has been declared upon all Chinese and Japanese restaurants, tailor shops and wash houses, by the Silver Bow Trades and Labor assembly.

All friends and sympathizers of organized labor will assist us in this fight against the lowering Asiatic standards of living and of morals America vs. Asia, progress vs. retrogression, are the considerations now involved. American manhood and American womanhood must be protected from competition with these inferior races and further invasions of industry and further reduction of the wages of native labor by the employment of these people must be strenuously resisted

By order of the Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly

P.H. Burns, President,

G.B. Walters, secretary.” . . .

Q: Now Mr. Hum Fay, what was the amount of business that you did in that restaurant for the first six or seven months after you did business there from April to November, 1896, I will say?

A: At that time I do a big business.

Q: In the winter of 1896 and 1897, did you continue to do a big business, or did it fall off?

A: After the last part of 1896, and the first part of 1897, the business fall off.

Q: How much did it fall off?

A: Pretty near fallen all off.

Q: What was the amount of business per day that you did say in the last part of January, 1897, in that restaurant?

A: In 1897 do you mean?

Q: Yes?

A: Well about January, February, March and up to April 15th, at that time, sometimes I only sell four or five dollars a day, that is all.

Q: In 1896, during the summer, what was the extent of your business some days?

A: In the summer of 1896 I sold three or four hundred meals a day.

Q: Received fifty to a hundred dollars some days would you?

A: A hundred and fifty dollars do you mean?

Q: No, fifty dollars?

A: Oh sometimes more than that; sometimes more than a hundred.

Q: Now if there was any other reason for this falling off that you know of, or any part of it, tell the court what it was?

A: Because in the first part in 1897, these delegates stand in front prevent customers from coming in there; stop them.

Q: How many delegates stood there at any time?

A: Sometimes one and two, and sometimes three or four.

Q: How long would they stand there an any one time?

A: Stood there all day. . . .

Q: What would these men do there that stood in front of your restaurant, or in its immediate vicinity?

A: Why approaching customers and preventing them from going into my place, and they stopped them and did'nt let them come in and told them this Chinese house was boycotted, and dont you go in there, and then would come and hold conversations, and I would'nt know all of it.

Q: Did you see them at any time take hold of persons that came in there?

A: Yes sir.

Q: How frequently—how often?

A: Almost every day. . .

Q: These things continued during the winter of 1896 and 1897?

A: Yes the first part of 1897.

Q: What if anything did you ever see as to anybody taking hold of persons who had got into that restaurant, and pulling them out?

A: Charley Slayton, he came right back in the counter, and pulled a customer out once or twice. . . .

Q: What did you do at any time as to asking Mayor Thompson, or the Chief of Police for protection?

BY COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENDANTS:

We object to that for the reason that it is incompetent irrelevant and immaterial and does not call for any facts or circumstances that would in any way be binding upon the defendants in this case or either of them, and further for the reason that it is hearsay.

A: Last year I think in the first part of the year, the delegates make trouble; and also make trouble in my front, and sometimes make trouble and noise with the customers; I saw that trouble and then I run up to the City office, and told the Chief of Police Tebo, and C.C. Darrow, Assistant attorney. I told him those delegates make trouble in my front. . . . Told Darrow because I pay my license and taxes, I do business, and because of the walking delegates my business get so bad, and I asked him, what you going to do about it with those fellows; and the city attorney, Darrow told me to go back and attend to your business and I will try to

stop them. That is the first time I see him. A few days I never see the officer and never do nothing, and the City attorney and Mayor never do nothing, and those delegates stand there all the same, and stop people to come in. . . .

Q: What if anything was done by the police or the county attorney or the city attorney, or the Mayor trying to prevent those people from standing in front of your restaurant and interfering with your customers; did they do anything the Mayor, the City attorney, Chief of Police Tebo, did they do anything toward keeping these people away from the front of your restaurant?

A: No. . . .

Q: Are you still keeping your restaurant on 37½ West Park street, and your store?

A: Yes sir.

Cross-Examination waived.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this day of April, 1898.

Examiner in Chancery.

Source: Testimony from Hum Fay. *Hum Fay, et al. vs. Baldwin, et al. Records, 1898. Manuscript Collection 43* [box 1 folder 3]. Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives.