

This letter is fictional, but authentically represents the ideas of the historical figure. Quotations indicate statements actually made by the historical person.

Executive Office, State of Illinois, June 30, 1894

Honorable Grover Cleveland, President of the United States, Washington, D. C.

Sir: Our nation is currently facing tough economic times. What is happening here in Illinois is just an example of the difficulties working people face across the nation. There are sixteen hundred families of Pullman, Illinois who have appealed to me for assistance in their hour of need. These families are starving and I have personally already appealed to Mr. George Pullman after going to Chicago and investigating this situation myself. Mr. Pullman has for the most part ignored my pleas for him to reinstate these workers. I have requested Mr. Pullman hire back the men so that they can feed their families. Over one-thousand of these families are still not rehired and this leaves almost six thousand people, four-fifths of whom are women and children, suffering for want of food. Mr. Pullman has refused to do anything else to relieve the suffering of these needy people in this case so the people of Illinois will take up the cause of these needy families. Many of these displaced workers have worked for Mr. Pullman for as long as twelve years. The reduction in pay has gotten so bad that one man worked 120 hours and received a check for only seven cents after the firm deducted his rent and other miscellaneous expenses. Even other railroad leaders are questioning Mr. Pullman's decisions. I have been told that Vice-President Harahan of the Illinois Central Railroad said to Pullman, "You are unfit to act as president of any company...You know nothing of the actual state of affairs."

These men have gone on strike because of this unjust wage reduction by Mr. George Pullman and now I have learned that you are considering sending federal troops to force these men back to work. The state police of Illinois are more than able to take care of this problem and are willing to assist the United States whenever they are needed elsewhere. I believe that the information you have received about the severity of the strike and the violence that has taken place is over-blown and that the situation is well under control. "We have three regiments of infantry, one **battery**, and one troop of cavalry stationed in Chicago alone." The police, "When questioned, positively denied the stories", about the violence by the strikers. Police Captain Hartnett was quoted as saying, "There wasn't a railroad man in the whole outfit, but a lot of bums who thought they would have a lot of sport at the expense of the railroads. But we soon gave them a **hustling**, and I want to say this for the strikers, and by that I mean the real railroad men, they are orderly here and as quiet as possible," It is obvious that the problem was **outsiders**. Federal intervention is likely to cause even more people to be harmed. This would only lead to more hostility and violence among citizens.

"There were some instances where mail service was delayed or stopped, but that was because there were no men to operate the trains, not because of obstruction." It is not soldiers that the state of Illinois needs, but more men to operate the trains. "Local self-government is a fundamental principle of our Constitution. To ignore a local government in matters of this kind, when the local government is able to enforce the law, insults the people of this state." I hope that you will allow the state of Illinois to handle our own affairs which we can solve without federal interference.

Respectfully Yours,

Governor John Peter Altgeld

