

THE REVOLT OF LABOR

The railroad firemen have won a point in their controversy with the railroads. They have compelled them to agree to arbitrate the difficulty under the Erdman Act. Their victory is somewhat similar to that of the Chinaman sentenced to death by torture who succeeded in getting the executioner to kill him quickly and thus avoid a lingering death. For arbitration of any kind is death to the worker's hopes and demands. The only point in favor of arbitration under the Erdman Act over the ordinary brand of arbitration is that it is swifter, as the award must be made within thirty days, whereas under the usual procedure workers sometimes have to wait as much as a year until the leisurely arbitration board decides to bring in an award. Meanwhile discouragement and disorganization creeps into their ranks, and they are forced to accept whatever sops are thrown to them. Eight months ago the street car men of Chicago, both surface and elevated, were ready and willing to tie up Chicago with one of the greatest strikes it has ever known. Their difficulties were referred to an arbitration board which hasn't brought in an award yet, nor is it showing any signs of doing so. Meanwhile the workers have lost their strike fever and it would be next to impossible to re-arouse them whatever the board's decision. At least the firemen (who voted 9 to 10 to strike) won't have utterly forgotten their grievances by the time their Erdman Act board brings in its awards.

* * *

Of late there has developed a considerable agitation in the Order of Railroad Telegraphers for the adoption of the territorial agreement instead of the agreement by individual roads. If we are to have agreements at all the territorial agreement is far better than the individual road agreement. Practically all the brotherhoods have adopted the territorial form. By it the workers on all the roads in a certain district (for instance, the eastern district contains fifty-four roads) make common agreements with their employers. Thus at least a portion of the union isolation is avoided. The next step will undoubtedly be for all the districts to make common agreements.

Naturally the officers of the O. R. T. are fighting the proposed betterment. The Mrs. Partingtons never die.

* * *

The features of the past two weeks in the West Virginia coal strike were the flooding of the districts with trained assassins, better known as the militia, and the arrest of Mother Jones. The sending of the troops needs no comment. The arrest of Mother Jones was made under the pretense that she advised the striking miners to capture the state capitol. Had she advised them to do this in the "civilized" way 10,000 years hence, via the ballot, her advice would have been laudable. But as she advised them to do it now in the only possible way—by direct action—she must be thrown in the bastille as a dangerous agitator. Mother Jones has been released on bond. With the miners in their present ugly mood, to keep her in custody might be very dangerous.

* * *

The revolt of the garment workers is still on. In addition to the great New York strike there are 40,000 workers on strike in Philadelphia, Boston, Rochester and Buffalo. In Chicago the bosses have staved off strikes only by refusing to do any of the scab work, and by granting improved conditions to their workers. In New York there are still about 65,000 workers on strike, some 60,000 having had their demands granted. The strikes in other cities have helped the New York strikers materially. The bosses have been unable to send their work to these cities, as heretofore. As a consequence they are hard hit by the strike. Their associations are crumbling, and a complete victory for the heroic strikers seems inevitable.

* * *

The A. F. of L. now has under advisement the proposition of organizing the shop men on all railroad lines in the eastern territory. A remarkable feature of the plan is that it is proposed by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen. This organization is beginning to realize that it is almost impossible for it to organize if the shop men and other railroad workers are unorganized. This mutual dependence upon each other is the factor

that forces labor unions to federate, amalgamate, etc., and the one that will eventually compel the railroad brotherhoods to join the A. F. of L.

In all probability the Federation of Federations (western shopmen) will soon be extended to the eastern territory.

* * *

The three principal unions of railway workers of Great Britain have been merged into one federation. These unions have tried the old methods of sectional unionism and have found them wanting. Hence the new federation. A feature of fusion (which some American trade union rebels might profitably note) was that some of the men most active in forming the new federation are also the most active opponents of the Syndicalists, who have labored long and assiduously to bring about this very federation.

* * *

We offer the following, not because of its intrinsic value—as it has been reiterated time and again by rebels—but because of its source: "As soon as I know a strike is lost I recommend that it be called off. I do not believe in keeping men out of work after they have lost a strike. I found that to do so embitter them against the union. The best policy is to admit defeat, go back to work and keep the members in the union."—Pres. W. D. Mahon of Street Railway Employees.

* * *

At their convention the miners in the Illinois district of the U. M. W. of A., numbering 82,000 members, adopted a resolution condemning war and calling for a general strike of miners in case war is declared by or against the United States. The resolution will be presented for endorsement at the coming U. M. W. of A. convention. This resolution is but one of the many evidences of the new spirit of progressivism and revolt that is permeating the A. F. of L.

* * *

A proposition is now being agitated in England to fuse the co-operatives and the trades unions. The former number 2,750,000, the latter 2,225,000 members. Should the fusion be accomplished, the capital brought together will be the greatest of any concern in England. Not to mention the millions of the trades unions, the co-operatives have an aggregate capital of some \$280,000,000. During the past year they did a business of \$580,000,000.

* * *

C. B. Dowd, dynamiting conspirator (?), just released on bail from Fort Leavenworth federal prison, is helping the metal workers in Rochester in their general strike for a 10% wage increase. An attempt will be made to extend the strike locally, as far as possible, in all the metal trades.

* * *

In the Akron strike of 15,000 rubber workers the I. W. W. and A. F. of L. are co-operating. Is this the calm before the storm?

* * *

Scores of girls at Wellesley College have gone on strike for the right to entertain their male friends.

* * *

Demands by Boston & Maine station employes for a wage increase have been granted.

W. Z. FOSTER.

SOCIETY NOTES.

The McNulty faction of electrical workers on strike in Chicago have been injunctionized by the Postal Telegraph Cable Co. The parties of the second part insist that the party of the first part is using an ax on its wires.

* * *

A fresh first, second and third coated job of varnish can be highly decorated in an approved architectural manner by the judicious distribution of dry aluminum bronze powder in the air currents that waft to and fro.

* * *

Kew Garden Pavilion went up in smoke. A suffragette remarked, "Perfectly lovely," as she and her partner lammed the judge with a varied assortment of law books.

* * *

A discharged waiter picked up a dead dog. Went back at noon and said to the proprietor as he laid it on the counter, "Here's another! Two bits more, please!" Weinies?

* * *

New York's gangsters are using maxim silencers to silence their opponents.