

BUILDING TRADE UNIONS NEED UNITED ACTION TO FIGHT THE RENEWED OPEN SHOP CAMPAIGN

By ARNE SWABECK.

The Chicago building trades workers have won a victory. The announcement came just before Labor Day that two big construction jobs now under way, the De Wolfe building and the Jewelers' building, were ready to finish these jobs with union labor. The jobs had been struck on August 23 and 28, respectively, and the announced settlement shows that the so-called "citizens' committee" to enforce the Landis award failed in its pretentious promise to furnish enough scabs to replace the strikers.

Must Look Ahead.

This means a further setback to the "citizens' committee" which has suffered many reverses since the memorable day of the mighty demonstration against the Landis award on April 30, 1922. But it is also well to remember that with the slackening of the building boom, the powers of this "open shop" outfit may again increase while the most complete solidarity of the building trades workers will be necessary to maintain their gains made.

The Chicago Building Trades Council has at last begun to function. During the critical days following the issuing of the Landis award it failed completely. The majority of the smaller trades became pledged to the Landis award, while the Building Trades Council ceased all functions. For a considerable period it even held no meetings.

An Open Shop Move.

The Landis award was the first gun in the determined campaign of the bankers and manufacturers to completely crush the building trades unions. The so-called "citizens' committee" became organized immediately thereafter and inaugurated its policy of bringing scabs to the city and placing them on the jobs under gunmen and police protection.

When the council failed, the rank and file of the local unions demanded action. The Building Trades publicity committee was organized, composed of delegates directly from the local unions. The publicity committee immediately sounded a note of unity, against the attempt to smash the unions and demanded to maintain the right of sympathetic strike. The progressive elements took the leadership and a splendid demonstration was organized at which 140,000 workers turned out in parade against the Landis award.

International Officers Reorganize Council.

Later the international officials of all the building trades unions came to Chicago, but with one exception could recommend nothing but compliance with the Landis award. They came to Chicago a second time and finally succeeded in reorganizing the Building Trades Council.

However, with the carpenters still outside and the bricklayers, under the control of Pete Shaughnessey, the carpenters and building laborers even later signed an agreement identical with the Landis award containing the clauses of:

1. No restriction of use of any raw or manufactured material except prison made.
2. That no union men have the right to stop work individually or collectively because of nonunion men of other trades being employed.

Progressives Led Struggle.

The progressives continued to demand a united fight against the "citizens' committee" based on the slogans of "closed shop," no use of non-union material and a uniform agreement for all trades to expire at the same time. Only the building boom existing ever since the Landis award prevented the success of the union-smashing endeavors of the "citizens' committee."

Thus summer several trades entered into new agreements with only the carpenters and the marble setters retaining the "closed shop," while other trades, for instance the carpenters and structural iron workers having been promised wage increases to take effect October 1st. The Iron League in agreement with the various employers' associations, fought for this post-

ponement of wage increase. Evidently the employers are preparing for a fight, but postponing the date to gain further strength, expecting that a slackening season may weaken the unions.

Boom Slackens.

The building boom is now slackening. All authorities agree that a period of the former normal demands for buildings have been reached. In Chicago during the first four months of the year there was a drop of 5 per cent in building compared to the same period the year before.

July and August show a further falling off particularly in residential buildings both from previous months this year and from the same months last year. This is the estimate made by the "Engineering News Record" which is generally quite reliable, despite attempts of juggling with figures being made by some so-called authorities.

Bosses Hopeful.

Undoubtedly the bosses are eager to regain the opportunities which at one time were offered by the situation created by the Landis award. The bankers and the industrial capitalists are not only their solid supporters, but even taking over the direction of the fight. The important question is: "Do they feel themselves strong enough by October 1st or will they seek a further postponement?" There can be no doubt that they are looking for a complete showdown. Even during the time of this recent strike, machine guns were mounted in the De Wolfe building structure, while heavy cars were manned by thugs and gunmen.

Unity of Action Urgent.

The very life of the building trades unions makes necessary that the issue of the closed shop be put squarely and that the greatest amount of unity of action be established amongst the various trades. Much precious time has been lost. The time of the building boom should have been the real opportunity to make all Chicago building jobs union jobs and it is to be hoped that the Building Trades Council does not permit any further delay.

The fight cannot be avoided, and it is necessary to establish the solidarity required. The building trades unions must insist upon uniform agreements with the right to sympathetic strikes, the elimination of nonunion made material and the agreements to expire at the same time together with the organization of the men employed in the building material manufacturing shops.

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RAIL UNIONS' STRENGTH WHY ARBITRATION "SOMETHING,"

By LELAND OLDS.

A general advance in the wages of many railroad executives, according to New York Times financial section. The strength of the unions and the prospect of granting of something."

Here is admitted that the mere just standard does not determine the decisions, according to the Times, hold wage increases unjustified but that the strength of the unions will help to influence the arbitration board.

The executives apparently have a pretty good idea of the coming increases. They tell the Times that they expect an addition of at least \$100,000,000 to the railroad payrolls. This would mean a little over \$1.2