

## Compulsory Arbitration.

The Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire, held in London, adopted a resolution relating to labor troubles, declaring it desirable in the best interests both of employers and employes that the readjustment of rates and conditions of labor should be brought about without the wasteful results of strikes and lockouts, and recommending the foundation of boards of labor, conciliation and arbitration in all important centres of industry. This is a measure which has long since commanded the approval and advocacy of labor reformers. While we realize that no possible improvement or modification of the wage system can secure full justice to the worker, inasmuch as it is beyond the power of the employer to give labor its due under capitalism, it is none the less advisable to resort to every method by which the evils of industrial warfare can be mitigated and the conditions of the worker somewhat improved. While organized labor has, as a rule, been ready to resort to arbitration as a means of settling difficulties, it is noticeable that employers—and more especially large corporations, have steadily refused to meet their employees on this ground. When arbitration has been proposed by bodies of workmen on strike or third parties anxious to bring about an amicable settlement, the reply has almost invariably been an arrogant refusal. It may be different in England, but here at least the larger employers, and the great railroad monopolies more particularly, feel themselves so far independent of public opinion and masters of their situation that they can carry matters with a high hand and afford to treat with contempt all suggestions looking to any settlement except on their own terms. If arbitration is ever to amount to anything as a means for avoiding strikes on a large scale, it must be made compulsory. The Imperial Commercial Congress is not a body that can by any stretch of the imagination be supposed to sympathize with the cause of labor reform. Their resolution, therefore is significant of the growing sense of the general business community that it is time to put a stop to the continual interruptions to traffic and disarrangement of business resulting from frequently-recurring labor troubles, caused by the insolence and injustice of great capitalists. If the recent large strikes in England have been failures so far as their immediate object was concerned, they have at least done something by the loss and injury and prostration of business to educate the English public and bring home to them the fact that, when a plutocrat asserts his privilege "to do as he likes with his own," it involves the general interest. A few more big railway, shipping and mining strikes, whatever the immediate result, would force the people as a matter of protecting their own interests to demand some measure of government control, some limit to the arbitrary power of capitalism to punish the whole community every time that its wage-serfs revolt against injustice. Compulsory arbitration would be an important step in the direction of the nationalization of industries.—Journal of the Knights of Labor.

### A DISASTROUS YEAR.

If the remaining six months of this year shall duplicate, or even approximate to the record of disasters which have occurred in the first six, the year of 1892 will be set down as the most fatal to life in the United States that has ever been known. Fires, floods, explosions, mine casualties, cyclones, windstorms, lightning—all the elemental forces, indeed, seem to have combined with human agencies to destroy life and to present an aggregate of great disasters in comparison with which ordinary terrible events seem

to lose their significance or attract personal attention only.

Since January 1 there have been four destructive windstorms, killing nearly 200 persons, viz.: April 1, Missouri and Kansas, 75; May 16, Texas, 15; May 27, Wellington, Kan., 53; June 16, Southern Minnesota, 50. In the same period there have been four great floods, viz.: April 11, Tombigbee river, 250; May 18, Sicux City, Ia., 35; May 20, Lower Mississippi, 36; June 5, fire and flood, Oil Creek, Pa., 196. There also have been four mining disasters, viz.: January 7, McAllister, I. T., 65; April 20, Minersville, Pa., 12; May 10, Roslyn, Wash., 44; May 14, Butte, Mont., 11. Three fires have been unusually disastrous to life, viz.: January 21, Indianapolis Surgical Institute, 19; February 7, Hotel Royal, New York, 30; April 28, theatre, Philadelphia, 12.

Besides these were on March 21 an explosion at Jordan, Mich., by which ten lives were lost; June 13, the explosion of the Mare island navy yard which killed 13, and June 15, the fall of the bridge over Licking river by which 32 lives were sacrificed. These are the principle disasters of the year thus far and they involve an aggregate of 960 lives. Adding to this total the sum of losses by minor accidents we have the following sad and unusual record: By fire, 876; by drowning, 1,364; by explosions, 313; by falling structures of various kinds, 267; by mine disasters, 308; by windstorms, 340; and by lightning, 120; grand total, 3,588. The total loss of life by these causes during the whole of last year—and 1891 was one of the most destructive years on record—was 5,762. So it is evident that 1892 will far surpass its predecessor. It is a sad and appalling record this of great disasters, following so closely upon each other's heels. It recalls the days of the war, when one took up the morning paper only to read the list of killed and wounded in the previous day's battle, and with the same result then so now, namely: That the great battles as overshadowed the smaller ones that little attention was paid to the latter. So how, the great catastrophes so far eclipse the smaller ones that the latter, though they would be considered as shocking, and exceptional in any ordinary time, are now hardly an hour's wonder.

### THE RICHEST NATION ON EARTH.

The provisional estimate of the wealth of the United States, issued by the census office, suggests comparison with some statistics compiled by Mr. Giffen, the English statistician, with relation to the United Kingdom, says the New York Sun.

It is, of course, understood that for 1890, as for 1880, the basis of the computation made by our census takers is the value assessed in the several states for taxation, which, except in Massachusetts, is very much below the true value. In 1880 the census office undertook to correct the assessed values, which made the wealth of the United States only \$16,902,000,000, and substituted the much larger figures, \$43,642,000,000. If the same correction factor is applied to the returns from 1890, the true value of all property represented in the census of the United States will be not \$24,651,000,000, as reported, but \$63,648,000,000. Even the latter estimate falls far short of the truth, because in about half of the United States railways are not included in the property taken account of by our census.

In the absence, however, of exhaustive data, let us for the purpose of comparison assume that \$63,648,000,000 represents the aggregate wealth of the United States. Now in 1885 Mr. Giffen entered into an elaborate series of calculations, in pursuance of which he fixed the wealth of the United

Kingdom at \$50,000,000,000, all railways and every other species of property being included. It follows that of the two countries the United States is the richer by more than thirteen thousand millions of dollars. The excess in our favor is really much greater because, as we have said, the value of the railroads in about half of our states is not reckoned.

As Great Britain is universally acknowledged to be richer than any other European state, we are warranted in describing our own people as the richest in the world. That is to say, our aggregate wealth is greater; but if we accept provisionally the figures \$63,648,000,000 as correct, our wealth per head of population is less than that of the United Kingdom. Mr. Giffen reckoned that in the latter country at the date of his computations (1885) the divisible share of each person in the national wealth was \$1,350, whereas about \$1,000 would be the divisible share of each person in the United States. It should be further noted that according to Mr. Giffen the wealth of the United Kingdom increased by \$130 per head in the ten years preceding 1885, while in the decade between our two last censuses the wealth of our own country increased at exactly the same rate.

### OBITUARY.

The many friends of Mr. Joseph Corbeil who has, for a lengthy period held the office of treasurer of the Central Trades and Labor Council, will learn with regret that he has suffered a sad bereavement in his family. Mr. Corbeil's little girl, an interesting child four and a half years of age, has been called away, and her parents feel their loss keenly, at the same time they have the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that they have the sincerest sympathy of Mr. Corbeil's colleagues in the Council.

Jeremiah Bassett, who was accidentally drowned on Thursday while at work on the Allan steamer Numidian, was a native of Portland, Me. The body was conveyed from his late residence to the depot, and thence to Portland, where it will be interred. "Jerry," by which name he was more familiarly known, was an exemplary, well conducted young man, and very popular among those with whom he associated. He was a member of River Front Assembly, K. of L. The funeral cortege was followed by his brother Knights and a large number of sorrowing friends.

### Workingmen Attention.

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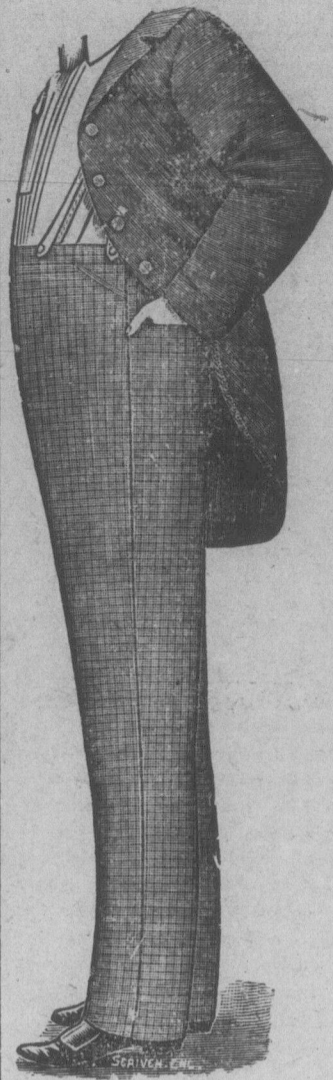
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