

decision and promptness he displayed in a very difficult position. His action will, in all probability, constitute a precedent for guidance in the future, should similar outbreaks occur. But their recurrence is doubtful. It will not be surprising should public opinion, now so thoroughly aroused, compel the adoption of some stringent legislation for the prevention of "sympathetic strikes" in the future. This it will be very difficult to do, without subjecting labour organizations to great hardship, if not positive injustice. But it seems to be characteristic of a Republic that, once thoroughly provoked by the inconvenience and loss which are the outcome of too great laxity of administration, they will sometimes go to the other extreme, and pay less regard to abstract principles of justice and liberty than would be done under such a government as that of England. The President, it is true, with a readiness which did him honour, consented to the request of the unions to appoint a commission of arbitration, but it seems doubtful whether, in view of the absolute refusal of the Pullman Company to submit the question between themselves and their employees to arbitration, and in the absence of any law compelling such arbitration, anything can be done.

It is pretty evident, however, that the question between such firms and their employees cannot be allowed to rest on the principles which seem to the managers of that company so obvious, and which, in the excitement and resentment of the moment, a very large proportion of the press and people of the United States seem ready to accept as self-evident. The Pullman Company says, in substance: "The question whether we should raise the wages of our employees when to do so would mean an absolute loss to ourselves on every car we build, is one which cannot be submitted to arbitration." And a multitude of newspapers all over the land cry out in chorus: "That is right. The assumption that a firm of business men shall not be permitted to conduct their business in their own way is one which cannot be admitted for a moment." Now it is not necessary to accept without reserve all the stories which are current with regard to the wonderful profits which have been derived from the operations of the Pullman Company in past years, in order to see that there is another side to such questions, and that peace cannot be established on a permanent basis between capital and labour until this is fairly recognized. Assuming, for argument's sake, the truth of the current report that this Company has put aside within the last few years twenty-five millions of dollars, and that it had last year a clear profit of over six millions, it can require no great penetration to see that the workmen whose labours are the chief factor in the production of this wealth, are, in simple justice, entitled to some better treatment than the cutting down of their wage

in order to compel them to bear the whole loss, so soon as the business takes an unfavourable turn for a season. Any legislation which could be enacted to prevent such injustice might be too socialistic, but it would be a great additional hardship should the State decide to tie the hands of the workmen, in the struggle, by forbidding them to consolidate their forces with those of other labourers, liable to similar treatment, in order that they may help each other in case of need by sympathetic strikes, the only possible way, so far as they can at present see, of putting themselves to some extent on an equality with their opponents. Of course, we are not advocating or defending such strikes, but simply trying to put ourselves, for the moment, in the place of the employees, to see how the thing looks from their standpoint. There must be some way of serving the public interests without doing grievous injustice to the weaker party in this great industrial war.

CANADA MAKING HISTORY.

The sitting of the International Conference, the ratification of the French Treaty, and the voting of an annual subsidy of three-fourths of a million of dollars for a fast Canadian Atlantic steamship service, in a single week, make up a tolerably ambitious record for a colonial capital. It is not improbable that each of these events may mark an epoch of some importance in Canadian history.

The general bearing and significance of the Conference have already been treated of pretty fully by our contributors and ourselves. No official record of its proceedings is yet before us, from which to frame a forecast of the immediate practical effect of the Conference. The attendance was, we think, remarkably good under the circumstances. No room is left for doubt as to the thoroughly representative character of the delegates. The banquet served a good purpose in promoting mutual acquaintance between some of the foremost men of our sister colonies and an influential section of the Canadian public. From this time forth the colonists who live on opposite sides of the globe will feel to be better acquainted with each other than before. The statesmen of each will understand better the chief characteristics and commercial capacities of the other colonies, and will be helped by the knowledge to work advisedly for the promotion of such interchanges as can be made with mutual profit. If the electrical communication to which the Conference has unequivocally committed itself shall become a fact accomplished in the near future, this interchange will be greatly facilitated. But, historically, the chief significance of the Conference will, in all probability, be found in the fact of its being the first of a series of such conferences, originating with the colonies and meeting in a colony. Thus it will constitute a new departure in colon-

ial history. It is not necessary to be sanguine as to the possibility, or even the desirability, of an imperial federation in order to see that nothing but good can result from the closest practical drawing together of the colonies in commerce and in cousinly good feeling.

While Canada is to be congratulated on the fact, which stands out so clearly on the face of the French Treaty, that her right to make her own commercial bargains is now practically conceded, it is unfortunate that her first essay in this direction should be so little adapted to arouse enthusiasm. The hostility to the provisions of this treaty on the part of those interested in the manufacture of Canadian wines, on the one hand, and the advocates of prohibition, on the other, is scarcely more disparaging in effect than the faint praise which was accorded it by the Minister to whom it fell to introduce the treaty in the House, and others who supported it, some of them on the doubtful ground that Parliament was in honor bound to ratify it. Nor can one shut his eyes to the fact that the large majority given for it by the French members was due to sentimental rather than to commercial considerations. The general, or at least a widely prevalent opinion seemed to be that our first attempt at treaty-making had resulted in our giving a good deal in return for a very little. While we cannot concur in that view, seeing that we are unable to regard the cheapening of any really useful commodity for our own citizens as an act of generosity to those from whom that commodity is procured, it cannot be considered otherwise than unfortunate that a commercial bargain should have the appearance of being glaringly one-sided. But now that the thing is done, we can but hope that the event will prove it so useful in promoting trade with France that its beneficial effect upon our commerce will countervail any apparent inequality in the terms of the arrangement which opens the way for such increase.

One principle involved in one of the arguments in support of the treaty, which is above referred to, and which was pressed upon the floor of Parliament, seems worthy of fuller consideration. The question suggested is whether the negotiation of a treaty by the Canadian High Commissioner, or any other agent accredited by our Government, does or does not bind Parliament in honor to ratify the agreement. In other words, is the reservation of such a treaty for the ratification of Parliament a real condition, or a mere empty form? The difference of opinion which obtained in regard to this point must have been embarrassing to any among the supporters of the Government who did not at heart approve the treaty, but who would not wish to put the Administration in an awkward predicament. There is certainly much to be said in favour of the British and European practice, which makes the signature of the plenipotentiary representing the Government binding. It