

ing the great labor organization of which he was chief, behind the Government. It is immensely to the honor of American labor that it has recognized the patriotism and the wisdom of Mr. Gompers' course and, under his able leadership, has given its best efforts to the support of the Allies' cause.

There are labor men who look with suspicion upon any one of their number who exhibits a disposition to unite with representatives of other classes for any purpose. It is too often assumed that loyalty to the cause of labor requires isolation from, if not hostility to, other causes. Mutterings of that spirit have occasionally been heard from the extreme sections of laborism or socialism in the United States. Fortunately for Mr. Gompers, and for the great cause which he has so warmly espoused, the mass of the labor classes of America have refused to sympathize with such a spirit. Mr. Gompers has felt that loyalty to his country, and loyalty to labor must go hand in hand.

The historian who writes the story of the war will have to say much in honor of the part played in it by American labor under the wise leadership of Samuel Gompers. And when the war is over, and the new order of things which the war will create begins to shape itself, the claims of labor for larger opportunity and better conditions than have prevailed in the past, will be all the stronger, all the more certain to meet with recognition, because of the part labor has taken in winning the victory for the world's democracy.

A New Divorce Court

FROM Winnipeg comes the surprising news that the Judges of a Manitoba court have held that they have the power to grant divorces. Divorce is one of the subjects assigned by the British North America Act to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Dominion Parliament. It is clear enough, therefore, that only that Parliament can now make laws respecting divorce. It has been held, however, that the divorce courts in existence in several of the Provinces before the union were not touched by the B. N. A. Act, and that consequently their authority remained. Under this law divorce courts have been in operation in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia. In Ontario and Quebec—formerly the old Province of Canada—there were no such courts. The prairie Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, were organized under Acts of the Dominion Parliament, which contained no mention of divorce. In these Provinces it has been assumed that, as in Ontario and Quebec, applications for divorce must be made by petition to the Dominion Parliament. Many such petitions have been presented, and many divorces granted through this very inconvenient troublesome machinery. Now, however, it has been brought to the notice of the Manitoba court that, though apparently the Dominion Parliament did not so intend, it really did provide for a divorce court in that Province. An Act of 1888 "respecting the application of certain laws to the Province of Manitoba" declared that "the laws of England relating to matters in the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada, as the same existed on July 1, 1870, were thereafter in force in Manitoba, so far as the same are applicable to the said Province." The

effect of this, it is now held, was to authorize the courts of Manitoba to deal with divorces as an English court would. If this be held to be good law, nobody need regret the discovery. The system of granting divorces by the passing of an Act of the Parliament of Canada is tedious, costly, and open to very grave objections. If Manitoba comes under the judicial system existing in the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia, the result should be beneficial to the best interests of the community.

The Navy at Work

THERE are people who have but little appreciation of things that are done quietly. Only that which thrusts itself into the public eye commands attention and esteem. Consequently there have been occasional manifestations of impatience because the British Navy has not of late been more distinctly in evidence in the great war story as it has come before the public, from day to day. "What's the Navy doing?" "Why don't the Navy do something?" These questions have sometimes been heard. Fortunately those who ask them have not been numerous or influential. Those people who have given serious attention to the war know that the splendid service of the Navy—most of it done silently and unobtrusively—has been the very backbone of our great war organizations. On the few occasions when open-sea fight was possible the British ships and crews have fully maintained the reputation of the Navy. But the greatest service rendered has been in directions less likely to attract public notice—in the transportation of troops and munitions, in the conveying of supply ships, in the protection of the mercantile marine against the enemy's attacks. Only efficient service of this character by our sea forces made the heroic work of our soldiers possible. No sensational action was necessary to prove to the thoughtful observer the untiring work of the navy, of which every British citizen is justly proud. It is, nevertheless, gratifying to find more striking evidence of this in the attack of last week on Ostend and Zbrugge.

When the Germans invaded Belgium, they hastened to possess themselves of the North Sea ports—Ostend, Zbrugge and Antwerp. Antwerp was commercially the most important, but its use as a naval port was restricted by the fact that the channel through which Antwerp obtained access to the ocean was partly in Holland. Ostend and Zbrugge became the rendezvous of such German vessels as were able to operate in that region. Ostend was a port of considerable importance. Zbrugge, though a minor port, proved useful as a base for submarines, which were able to use the canal connecting the port with the old city of Bruges. The attack made on these ports by the British ships was a daring one, worthy of the best traditions of the navy. In the case of Zbrugge, at least, the object of the British raid seems to have been achieved to such an extent that the German submarine operations there will for a time be crippled, if not wholly stopped. The record of this attack on the Germans in the Belgian seaports will form a bright page in the glorious history of the British Navy.

Trade Unions and Police

A QUESTION has arisen in Ottawa police affairs which is of more than local interest, for it may easily arise in any of our cities. A number of members of the city police force took steps towards the formation of an association to be affiliated with the organized trade unions of the Dominion. The Chief of Police, disapproving of the movement, warned the men against proceeding further. In the face of this warning the movement was continued, and the first stage in the formation of the society was taken. Thereupon, the Chief of Police dismissed twenty-five men who had joined the union. Some of these men have withdrawn from the union and been reinstated. The majority, however, are still off duty. The Police Commissioners have endorsed the action of the Chief of Police. The trade union leaders have rallied to the support of the police union. The Minister of Labor, in response to appeals to him, strongly endorsed the police union, and insisted on the right of the men to organize in the same way as men engaged in any other occupation. The Police Commissioners and the Chief of Police remain firm in their objection to the police union, and hold that the case is not one that falls within the scope of the laws respecting the settlement of disputes by the Labor Department.

The question is one of much importance which, we may hope, will be settled by friendly conference.

The right of any body of men to organize for mutual benefit will not be questioned. A police union for social and benevolent purposes is an eminently proper thing. But the affiliation of such a society with the trade unions of the country in a manner which would make the policemen subject to the will of the central labor organizations is a very different thing. The police force of a city is a semi-military body, which should stand for the protection of every citizen and should not come in any way under the control of any section or class in the community. A military body affiliated with the representative organization of any particular class, whether of labor or of capital, would be regarded as something not to be allowed. A police force should be equally independent on or subject only to the authority under which its members hold office. That the police force of a city should be required—as it might be—to participate in a "sympathetic strike," to lend itself to the cause of some trade union which has a difference with employers, is an unthinkable thing. The police force, the military organization and the courts of the country are all part of the machinery for the preservation of order, and the administration of justice. All these bodies should be so constituted as to serve the whole community, and to that end should be kept apart from any organization which represents any special interest. By all means encourage the policemen everywhere to have their associations for social and benevolent purposes. But a police force in any city as a branch of a trade union, a force which might at any moment receive orders from Montreal, Toronto or New York to go out on strike, leaving the city unprotected, would be an extraordinary departure from all ideas of good government that have hitherto prevailed.