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Since the end of the sympathetic strike which swept Western Canada in May and June of last year, the business public have had little opportunity of judging of labor conditions because of the utter dearth of information in the Canadian press concerning labor movements and the general trend of activities within labor organizations. It must be borne in mind that the business public cannot assume that radicalism in labor circles is dead because of the severe defeat which it sustained on that occasion. The One Big Union, the I.W.W. influence and general radical Bolshevik tendencies are exercising still a potent influence among the rank and file of labor unionists and those at the head of those various forms of radicalism are biding their time awaiting a more favorable opportunity to attack the existing order of things.

As instances of this radical tendency it may be pointed out that it seems on reliable information that the loggers union, which has in it a very strong radical element, had intended to call a strike among the camps on the Coast some time last June, but the depression in the lumber market during the previous month and the heavy surplus of logs which was then foreshadowed would promptly result in the shutting down of the lumber camps because of those conditions. Hence the probable success of a strike at that time was not propitious. On the other hand the One Big Union in the Interior has called a strike of metal miners, which at the present writing is still in force, but is gradually losing its force since it has not affected coal mining nor smelter treatment operations, nor working of many of the big mines.

At the recent convention of the American Federation held in Montreal, representing the labor unions of the United States and Canada, the radical element put up a severe fight for control of the organization and the carrying out of their programme. This was defeated by reason of the sober influences exercised by the present leaders of labor and many of the old line labor unionist delegates. But the strength of the movement was demonstrated in a disconcerting way to those in control of the present organization. Any growth of this tendency at the Convention next year may sweep the conservatives out of power and may land the Federation in a position committed to a more or less radical programme.

What has tended to keep the country more or less free of strikes has been the fight within labor unions themselves between the so-called conservatives and the radicals, and this struggle, while proceeding, has not admitted of any concerted attack on capital with general inconvenience and loss to the public which would therein ensue.

It is generally thought that labor disturbances would tend to decrease as general commodity prices reached the top and began going down hill. There is a more or less defined trend for reduction in commodity prices, operating first in one line and being sympathetically affected in another, but still not having a perceptible influence on food prices which perhaps cannot be expected to decline until the harvests of 1921, and then only if the crops are large. It is generally thought that as the pressure for commodities relaxes and the world reserves of stocks on hand have been increased, as is generally occurring, then industry can get back to a competitive basis, both nationally and internationally, until which time the prices of labor can be maintained at the present rate, and perhaps as efficiency increases, due to pressure of competition, will not need to be decreased. But so long as the present level of general commodity prices continues to operate, there is a tendency for labor disturbance and the field is ripe for radical propaganda.

But the dearth of news in our Canadian press is permitting the general public to pass this important question by in the gauging of conditions and trends of business and industry in the general problems that must be settled from day to day. It is therefore necessary for the press of Canada to present labor information from day to day as events take place so that public opinion might be formed as to the justice or injustice of the general labor programme and be able to act accordingly.

The Western sympathetic strike of last year was the open programme of the radicals for eighteen months prior to its outbreak, and yet at the time of the outbreak Western Canada, at least, was of the opinion that it was of an overnight consideration and one in which all conditions of the occasion formed in its favor almost immediately.

The problems of labor have not yet been settled and will not be settled until labor can see its way clear to co-operate with capital for their mutual benefit. This still involves some sacrifice of accepted right on the part of capital, and it also involves a spirit of co-operation with the recognition of certain rights by labor toward capital. Until some system of mutual co-operation has been worked out we can depend upon it that labor disturbances will be ever recurrent and must be handled by the general public, who are the chief sufferers through a continuous effort rather than through sporadic action at the time of crises. This continuous effort can only be brought to apply to the problem through an enlightened public opinion, formed from information presented at the breakfast table or the dinner table through the daily press.

There can be little doubt that throughout North America and perhaps in all the Allied countries, the radical elements have taken great heart with the military success of the Bolshevik on the Polish frontier, and today industry and business in general is greatly concerned with what occurs on that front. It has already had an important influence on international finance, which is unsettled and may involve war-like activities on the part of the Allies to defend Eastern Europe from a Red invasion.

The Red programme in Russia is held together and gains its entire force through its military activities, either on the offensive or the defensive. Peace would rapidly disintegrate the system since it cannot exist permanently through the play of sheer economic action. We anticipate renewed efforts on the part of the radical elements to revive their activities and to double their propaganda because of these Bolshevik successes, and it is the duty of the business man to keep himself informed on the activities of these radical associations, so that he may be able to handle them persistently and quietly as the occasion demands.