

London would never recover from the injury brought about through this strike, so serious was its effect upon the trade of the great metropolis. This idea was no doubt overdrawn, for it takes powerful influences to draw trade from its long accustomed channels. Still, the almost incalculable disaster wrought by this strike is sufficient to show that were such occurrences repeated frequently, in time the great city would certainly be dethroned from her commercial supremacy as the world's metropolis, if not entirely wrecked. At any rate, some important trade interests which now centre there, would be driven to other ports. This is often one of the peculiar features of strikes, that the strikers, in their efforts to improve their position, often seriously cripple the very interest which gave them employment, and render it less able to support them. Sometimes they even entirely destroy the capital which provided them with work, as in the case of the great strikes of glass workers in Belgium, where works were burned and a vast amount of property destroyed.

To avert the serious consequences arising from strikes the London Chamber of Commerce appointed a committee to consider a plan of preventing such labor disturbances. This committee recommends that a permanent committee representing both capital and labor, be appointed to deal with questions arising out of labor disputes in the port of London; that in case of a dispute as to the remuneration or other conditions of labor, the committee should deliberate whether the dispute is of sufficient importance to justify its intervention in the interest of the commerce or manufactures of London; that in case of a decision in the affirmative the committee invite both parties to a friendly conference with each other; or if that should fail, to offer their mediation, in the meantime using their best efforts to prevent the occurrence or continuance of a strike until after all attempts at conciliation have been exhausted. The committee further recommends that councils of conciliation be formed among the various trades of London to be composed of employers and workmen, and that such councils be affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce.

There is no doubt but that many strikes could be averted by a better understanding between employers and employees. In fact, important strikes have been caused by a trifling misunderstanding between these two divisions. Committees representing both employers and workmen should be able to do a great deal in preventing labor troubles, and the plan proposed seems worthy of a trial.

MILLERS' ASSOCIATION.

There has been some mention occasionally of the formation of a millers' association for Manitoba, but so far any reference to the matter does not seem to provoke much enthusiasm in favor of such a movement. The milling industry of this country is rapidly becoming quite an extensive and diversified business, and there is no reason why a millers' association should prove not only of interest, but of value to millers. Millers' associations have been formed in almost every division of the United States where milling has assumed very considerable

proportions. An association was formed not long ago in the state of North Dakota, and it has already led to good results. One of the objects of the Dakota association was to arrange for the export of their flour. An agent was appointed by the association, to act for the Dakota millers in placing their flour upon the London market. A number of car lots of flour have since been shipped by the association millers, to the London agent, for disposal in that market. The Dakota millers claim superior quality for their flour, and by placing it directly upon British markets, they hope to have its quality acknowledged. The experiment will be watched with interest. There is nothing to prevent Manitoba millers from following the same system, should it appear that there would be any advantage in doing so.

Another advantage from having an association is, that it provides an organization which could take up and endeavor to effect or prevent any legislation required in the interest of, or any proposed legislation, adverse to the interests of the millers. In Dakota there are two bills before the Legislature in which the millers are interested, one of which fixes the toll on grists at one-eighth. This bill meets with the approval of the millers.

In Ontario the millers have their association, and they have adopted a number of regulations which secure uniformity in carrying on their industry. One regulation adopted has reference to the purchasing of wheat according to weight. Sixty pounds is taken as the standard for a bushel of wheat, and for wheat weighing less than sixty pounds per bushel, a reduction in price is made, according to weight. Thus, for wheat weighing fifty-eight pounds per bushel two cents less than the market price for standard weight is paid. For wheat weighing fifty-seven pounds per bushel, five cents is deducted from the market price. In the same way wheat weighing in excess of standard weight, is taken at an advanced price. Thus for wheat weighing sixty-four pounds per bushel, four cents above the market value for standard weight grain is allowed.

There are no doubt many features of this nature which could be discussed and acted upon, through the medium of an association. Uniformity of action in matters of importance to the industry, could also be attained in the same way. It is for the millers themselves, however, to decide whether the objects to be attained are worth the time and trouble necessary to organize and keep up an association.

FRONTAGE TAX.

The frontage tax proposals of the Winnipeg city council have called forth comments from papers outside the city. The *News-Advertiser*, of Vancouver, B. C., devotes a rigorous article to the frontage tax system, drawn forth by the reference in this journal to the question, in which it vigorously condemns the whole system. The *News-Advertiser* states that a system of frontage tax was tried in Vancouver in the early days, but it was found to be so unfair that it was abandoned. Now, if the frontage tax system was considered unfair in Vancouver, where it was tried at the very birth of that rising city, how much more unfair would it be in Winnipeg? Here, the city is carrying a

heavy debt, for improvements already carried out. These improvements are chargeable against property all over the city, and property owners are now paying for these improvements in the shape of principal and interest upon borrowed money. It would therefore be outrageously unfair to force citizens to pay for improvements on streets upon which they own property, by a system of frontage taxes, while they are paying for improvements previously made on other streets. If there is anything fair in the system, it would be when it is adopted at the beginning of a town, as in the case of Vancouver. Public improvements carried on in a city are as a rule for the benefit of the whole city, and not for a few residents of the place. The article in the Vancouver paper contains so many good points that it will bear reproduction. It is as follows:—

"The Winnipeg city council proposes to impose a frontage tax, whereby the cost of street improvements of every description would be assessed against the property immediately abutting on the thoroughfare where the expenditure might be made. We should have thought that the experience of other cities and the absurdities and injustices which such a tax inevitably brings with it, would be so well known to the civic rulers of every city as to prevent the people of a place like Winnipeg from repeating such an error. This frontage tax scheme was tried in Vancouver in the first year of its existence when money was urgently needed for street improvements which were absolutely necessary in order to make the roadways passable for traffic. What was the result? Simply that lots on certain streets, and especially corner lots having frontages on two important thoroughfares, were assessed so high under the plan, that a continuance of it would practically have amounted to the confiscation of the property for the benefit of other owners who did not happen to own lots so advantageously—or rather disadvantageously—situated. It is impossible in any city to apportion taxes for improvements by such a method without causing great injustice to individuals and causing serious injury to the city at large. The whole system of streets must be regarded as a whole; they are for the benefit of the entire community, and any attempt to localize taxation by means of frontage tax, individual street debentures or similar schemes will result disastrously. It is a more clumsy method than it would be to put up a toll-gate at the end of each street for the purpose of levying a charge on every vehicle that used the roadway or other improvements that had been provided. People would ridicule such a plan, yet it is a more correct and accurate way of proportioning the benefits derived from street improvements than that of imposing a frontage tax. Why should a person owning property on a street down which the main sewer of a town is laid be mulcted ten times as much as another owner who lives on a street under which a local sewer is laid? Municipal finance is no less important a subject to the people generally than national or provincial finance, and a wrong system in one city should be condemned by the people of another, as the introduction of method which if allowed to get a foothold might spread throughout the country. When, therefore, we see the city council of Winnipeg proposing a plan which has been shown to be injurious and inequitable, it is our duty to call the attention of that body to the false principles which they are about to follow, and second the efforts of the press of that city, which has already denounced the proposal. As the family is the unit of the nation, so the towns and municipalities are the important fractions of the state whole, and a faulty or injudicious action by any one of the parts must ultimately have injurious effects on the whole body politic."