

## STRIKES.

The recent strike of the printers of Winnipeg, and the threatened turn out of the carpenters of the city a few weeks ago, proves, that while labor is in demand beyond the available supply, and mechanics have more or less of a power of dictation to employers, the city is not yet beyond the reach of those disputes between employers and employees, which so often bring great loss to both, and create annoying interruptions to the ordinary current of industrial pursuits.

In the case of the threatened strike of carpenters it seems that each mechanic acted to a great extent on his own account, and judged, whether wisely or not, that the state of the labor market in his particular branch allowed an opportunity for his securing a higher price for his labor, and in this action each and every man possessed that right of selling at the best market. Their selection of opportunity proved good, and their demands were acceded to by their employers, and no bitter feeling so far as can be learned now exists. In the case of the printers the case was totally different. Individual rights were ignored, and the whole action of the mechanics shaped and ordered by the dictates of a trades union. As stated, individual opinions were ignored, and in the strike which ensued, more than one artisan obeyed a mandate, which his better judgment told him was unwise. It has ever been so with trades unions whether they are formed by employers or employees. Individual opinion is never allowed to be acted upon, and in the interim the weak ones are the sufferers. The weak ones among employers may be set down as those possessing least financial resources, who are compelled to stand out and make sacrifices for a gain in which their share will certainly be smallest; while the weak ones among employees are those whose mechanical skill is inferior to others, but who are nevertheless compelled to stand out for an indiscriminating equality in remuneration. It stands to reason that in the event of success, the stronger of either parties will be those who will profit most, although the sacrifices are equal.

There is another light in which trades unions occupy a rather undesirable position, and this is particularly so in connection with workmen's unions. These associations are represented by their members as being organized for mutual benefit, and yet there is not a workman's union in Canada or Britain, or probably in the United States reserving to itself the power of fixing remuneration for labor, which is chartered, incorporated or registered, as the case may be, according to law, and is capable of suing and being sued in any civil court. The commercial laws of the different provinces of the Dominion and most of the United States cannot allow of their being chartered; and even the Friendly Societies Act of England, which exempts societies of a mutual benefit nature from all direct taxation, and offers unusual encouragement for the formation of provident societies among the working classes, does not admit of such unions being registered under its provisions. In a contest therefore with such an organization an individual employer is placed at a great disadvantage. He has to contend with an association not re-

cognized by law, and which cannot be bound by any agreement verbal or written. In a word irresponsible in every respect, while the members composing the union can hold him by law to any agreement which he makes with them. Under such circumstances it is not at all wonderful or even unreasonable, that employers should combine to break up an union, even by the questionable means of adopting the tactics of their opponents.

It is only to be expected that Manitoba will yet have the labor troubles of older countries, and they will occur until individual judgment is recognized as an unquestioned right in the labor as well as other markets; and the societies connected with trades fall into line as law-recognized organizations, enjoying the advantages which every well governed country possesses for the nurture of providence by means of co-operation. Such a state of affairs can never be wholly secured by legislation, although much can be accomplished in that way. The only way in which such an end is to be gained is by a growth of feeling of mutual interest between employer and employee.

## Irresponsible Correspondents.

There is no limit to the amount of complaint that has been made by society in every country where a free press exists, against the anonymous correspondence which appears in newspapers, and the irresponsible persons from whom some newspaper managers receive and publish letters, which often cause great injury to individuals, and leaves the injured ones no redress as a rule, or if any be left it is through a process of law, which requires both means and persistent courage to secure. In short there is no means by which more cowardly and unjustifiable injuries are inflicted than through anonymous newspaper correspondence. The evils thus inflicted are not confined to individuals alone, as cities and even whole countries are often made to suffer by the flippant scribble of some irresponsible scribe who has no interest in what he writes, further than the satisfying of a vanity which such individuals have in seeing their productions in print. There is no country in the world which has suffered more in this way than the Canadian North-west, and no city more than Winnipeg. It is always the case that a new country will be misrepresented more or less by the press of other and older places, for the simple reason that many people are, as a rule, interested in the spreading of such misrepresentations. The North-west has had for three-fourths of a century parties so interested, and will doubtless have more or less of this evil to contend with for many years to come, and the residents thereof are to some extent satisfied and prepared to contend with such disadvantages. The irresponsible and disinterestedly flippant correspondent, however, is an animal capable of a great amount of mischief, which is all the more mischievous on account of its being unnecessary, and its procuring no benefit to any one. Among the thousands of new arrivals in the North-west are numerous parties who have no direct connection with the press of the East, but who are anxious to express their opinions or impressions

of the new country through some country newspaper at their former home, and as a rule the less able they are to give correct impressions of the country the more liable they are to supply the same, and unfortunately too many newspapers are prepared to publish such correspondence. Like the Cockney who made his first trip to Scotland, and is prepared to certify to the semi-savage habits of the people of that country, and the relics of barbarism still remaining there, although his experience has been confined to sampling smoky flavored whisky and lolling around some remote hamlet. So many of the verdant visitors of the North-west have scarcely arrived in Winnipeg until they know thoroughly all about the country they have come to, and the letters of John Smith or Tom Jones to the *Mudburg Foghorn*, or the *Gutterville Squeaker* are published as a record of actual facts regarding a great country whose undeveloped resources are only beginning to be known by those who have resided many years in the same. Only the newspaper man whose business necessitates the perusal of a long list of eastern exchanges can fully comprehend the quantity of nonsense that is published about the North-west, much of which gives good cause for merriment, were it not that it accomplishes considerable evil.

There is a latitude to be allowed to newspapers in dull eastern towns, where stirring news is scarce, and a very good fund to draw from to fill the want is the North-west. Even the leading journals in large cities have to draw upon the same at times, and more than one of these have sadly misrepresented the Prairie land and its business affairs, while the Manitoba capital, and its sanitary affairs, health and other matters have been made subjects for misrepresentation and unqualified falsehood by a few. These cases are not numerous, as such journals usually employ experienced and responsible correspondents. The country press of the East, however, are not always able to secure such, and these would do well to confine themselves to actual news regarding the North-west, which only requires the use of the scissors to secure from the papers published in the country itself. To those who must have correspondence on the subject, it will not be a great breach of professional secrecy to say to them, "manufacture a little." The imaginations of a reasonable country editor will be much more sensible reading, and do less injury to the North-west, than the senseless scribbling of an amateur correspondent, whose only qualifications are his literary obtrusiveness and consummate vanity.

The world seems to be growing smaller every day, if we are to judge by the rapidity with which the people in far separate portions of it can communicate with each other. Telegrams can now be read in Winnipeg an hour or two later in the day than they are written in Liverpool, that is taking the sun time at both points, thus making fact out of a most outrageous bull. Expedition in regular mail matter is also making rapid advances, as is evident from the fact that the *Liverpool Journal of Commerce* of October 25th was in the office of THE COMMERCIAL on the morning of Nov. 8th.