

facturers' Association by the use of its funds hope to inform the public about union methods better than they are kept informed by the newspaper press? There is no necessity to raise or to spend a million and a half dollars, or even one dollar, for a 'campaign of education' upon labor union methods. The federation of labor unions naturally suggests a federation of employers. If that policy were carried out there would be no little danger that the analogy of the vicious 'sympathy strike' might be followed. It would not be consistent, nor would it be sensible, to resort to methods that have been so unsparingly condemned by employers. There are bad unions, just as there are bad corporations, and the good must inevitably suffer from the wickedness of the bad. The mere raising of a fund will not put a stop to the abuses of the boycott, the causeless strike and the violence of 'entertainment committees,' nor will it check the spirit of unreason that possesses so many labor agitators. We know of no better cure for these evils than public opinion, the sense of fairness and justice, that pervades average humanity. Its working is often discouragingly slow, but it is sure to be reasonably effective."

This idea, as expressed by the Times, was dwelt upon in these columns a few weeks ago at the time of the organization of the so-called "Labor Party" in Toronto. It scarcely follows that a federation of employers necessarily involves resorting to methods "that have been so unsparingly condemned by employers." For purposes of self-protection it is high time that Canadian employers get together on some such scheme as has been undertaken by the National Association of Manufacturers. If they hesitate too long they may find themselves ere long confronted by an organization of labor whose compact ranks will prove unassailable. Small combines of employers, or unsatisfactory "understandings" of manufacturers, are not the only methods of opposing trades unionism, and the sooner that fact is recognized in Canada the earlier will the present feeling of uncertainty that pervades the building industry in this country give place to a clearer understanding between employer and employe.

Not long since we received from a large Ontario manufacturer a communication in which appeared the following:

"Labor unions combine and by strikes, boycotts and other means, are constantly endeavoring to force employers to pay certain rates of wages, whether they may be able to do so or not, or whether the wages demanded are reasonable or not; but the public press do not appear to deal with this feature of the so-called 'combines,' although we believe it is one of the principal reasons why manufacturers are practically driven, in many cases, into arriving at some understanding with their competitors in order to enable them to get a living profit upon the goods that they produce. We believe that if many of them did not do this they would very shortly be unable to pay their liabilities.

"We think, in many cases, there are much stronger combines or understandings contrary to the public interests amongst some contractors than almost any other class in the community, with the exception of the labor unions, whom we consider have the strongest combine of all, and while we are not parties to any-

thing of the kind we are very much of the opinion that understandings upon the part of all concerned to maintain reasonable prices that would net a fair profit would really be in the interests of the general public."

The tone of this confession is typical of that of so many Canadian capitalists in speaking of the condition of affairs in this country. Almost invariably labor has been able to gain its ends in the past, not so much because of its superior organization as because of the lack of unity among employers. Whether or not the scheme of the National Association of Manufacturers will be productive of good results time alone can tell. It is in any case a step in the right direction, and shows that some unanimity of feeling and effort is manifesting itself among employers with regard to the important question of dealing with labor.

#### Canadian Slums

The attention of the Health Committee of Montreal was recently called to the unsatisfactory conditions of certain of the poorer parts of that city. There are several reasons why the problem of housing the poorer classes is a more serious one in Montreal than elsewhere in Canada. It is a port at which during the summer a continual stream of immigrants is being landed. Those who go on to other cities generally have a more or less definite idea of where they wish to go and why, but there remains a class willing enough to merge itself in the first community ready to absorb it. In addition to this, the population is liable to be swelled at certain seasons of the year by a swarm of laborers whose sojourn in the country is temporary, as in the case of Italian harvesters. These people, during their short stay, are crowded into lodgings in a way which nature would not long endure. Besides these difficulties, Montreal is a city old enough to have considerable districts originally well and substantially built, but which, in the course of a century and a half of varying fortunes, have become insalubrious and sometimes ruinous, and the complaint is made that slums of the worst type are being developed. That this calamity has overtaken some of the larger cities of the United States, in a form as virulent as in the case of the oldest cities of Europe, is a circumstance that should put our Canadian municipalities on their guard against these malignant growths. The cause of slums is largely the desire to make property pay without large initial outlay, but the eventual cost to the community must be disastrous. The preventive of readiest application is a scheme of by-laws aiming at a fair standard of sanitary building and officers of inspection with powers to see that the spirit of such by-laws is not transgressed. A severe application of such a system might result in so large a condemnation of existing methods and conditions that houses for the poor would become too scarce, and it would not pay to build new ones to conform to a high standard of excellence. Architects are sometimes called on to solve the problem of how to accommodate most people in least space. This is, of course, to aggravate and not to solve the difficulty before the community. The question seems rather to offer an opportunity to the builder who can arrive at the cheapest manner of building houses which shall at the same time be good and durable.