

STRIKES AND THEIR REMEDIES.

*A REPORT FROM THE ANTIPODES ON CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION.**

THERE has come to us from Australia a public document which at any time would command attention by reason of its very great intrinsic interest and merit, but which possesses an extraordinary interest at the present moment in view of certain acute phases of the labour question that are agitating the public mind in the United States. The "Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes," published by the Government of New South Wales, is issued in the form of a huge volume of a thousand pages of about the same dimensions as the "Century Dictionary." So compendious is this canvas-bound tome that it seems to us a veritable library of information upon the world's experience in industrial disputes and attempts to remedy them.

The great strike in 1890 in New South Wales compelled the notice of the entire world. Sheep raising being a principal industry in that portion of Australia, the strike of the Shearers' Union, on account of the introduction of non-union men, led to strikes of union men engaged in transportation industries, who refused to handle the wool shorn by non-union workers. The proportions of the strike grew until the coal miners of the colony were involved, and until almost every kind of productive pursuit was brought into the controversy. Trade unions were highly organized, and were represented by a Trades and Labour Council having headquarters at Sydney, and holding together the associations of different trades in a strong and effective federation. Employers, on the other hand, were bound together in an association which included the representatives of almost the entire mass of capital engaged in productive industries in the great colony of New South Wales. The struggle between these two powerful and determined

bodies—the one representing almost the totality of the capital engaged in production and concerned with the employment of labour, and the other representing almost the entire body of men both skilled and unskilled who worked for wages in other than merely domestic relations—was well-nigh as disastrous and paralyzing as a state of civil war.

A COMMISSION ON STRIKES AND THEIR REMEDIES.

The injury wrought against the peace and prosperity of the colony was so serious that the Government found it expedient to appoint a Commission to investigate the entire subject of strikes and their remedies, for the purpose of making a report with recommendation of measures to be pursued by the Parliament of New South Wales. The commissioners were instructed "to investigate and report upon the causes of conflicts between capital and labour known as 'strikes,' and the best means of preventing or mitigating the disastrous consequences of such occurrences; to consider from an economic point of examination the measures that have been devised in other countries by the constitution of boards of conciliation or other similar bodies to obviate extreme steps in trade disputes, and to consider and report upon the whole subject."

A UNANIMOUS CONCLUSION REACHED.

When one remembers the extreme agitation out of which grew the appointment of this Commission, and that in its membership both sides of the controversy were fully represented, the conclusions of the report are entitled to the highest consideration in view of the significant fact that each one of its thirty-three paragraphs was, after full and careful debate, adopted with absolute una-

* We abridge this important and timely article from the September number of the *Review of Reviews*.