

Either as a direct result of their efforts or as an indirect result of their agitation, much legislation has been passed which has raised the standard of life of the British nation and indirectly of those nations who have followed her example. This ameliorating legislation includes the franchise Acts, Factory Acts, Truck Acts (forbidding the compulsion exercised by employers upon their workpeople to force them to buy their food and domestic supplies at the mill stores at exorbitant prices), and Acts dealing with Education, Employers' Liability, Unemployment Insurance, Minimum Wages, Old Age Pensions, and other questions.

In 1874, the Unions decided to take a direct part in politics. They sent 13 candidates to the polls of whom 2 were elected to Parliament. They also secured the election of many of their representatives to seats upon local school boards.

To secure remedial action through legislative bodies is proverbially a slow process. In the early eighties, a considerable body of workers, developed much dissatisfaction at the delays attending this process, and demanded more energetic action directed to wider aims such as nationalisation and community ownership of industry. Their demand was strengthened by the influence exerted by Henry George's book "Progress and Poverty" which, then, had a wide circulation in Great Britain.

In the late eighties, the unskilled workers previously neglected by the skilled trades, became active in organisation and demands for shorter hours and increased pay. Some striking victories were won by the workers, notably in the case of the dockers.

The new spirit of energy displayed by the workers and characterised as the New Unionism resulted in a great increase in strength. One writer says "The leaders sought to bring into the ranks of existing organisations,—the Trade Union, the Municipality, or the State,—great masses of unorganised workers who had hitherto been either absolutely outside the pale or inert elements within it. They aimed, not at superceding existing social structures, but at capturing them all in the interests of the wage earners."

Shortly before the war, the supporters of direct action were gaining ground. Its advocates proposed to secure their ends, whether directly concerned with an improvement in wages and hours in their particular craft, or with obtaining wider changes such as nationalisation, by the use of the strike—the general strike, if need be.

Direct action is, per se, the antithesis of revolution, for it means passivity or a ceasing of work more or less general, not activity or the adoption of revolutionary measures.

The situation created by the war called for the temporary relinquishing on the part of Labor of many of their cherished rights obtained only after a long struggle. On the whole, with isolated exceptions, their response to the demands of the nation upon them was generous, and their record compares not unfavourably with that of the employers.

The war, with its emphasis on the value to the State not only of the common soldier but also of the worker, directed attention to the necessity for meeting the demands of the workers, both soldier and civil, that the conditions of the Reconstruction period should be an improvement on those prevailing before the war. It was determined in many quarters that efforts should be made to create a world brighter and better for the ordinary and common people than that existing before the war.

The British Labor Party issued a manifesto entitled "Labor and the New Social Order" which laid down in clear terms the high ideals which the Labor Party would follow. Described as the four pillars to the new structure, their aims were summarized as:

- (a) The Universal Enforcement of the National Minimum.
- (b) The Democratic Control of Industry.
- (c) The Revolution in National Finance.
- (d) The Surplus Wealth for the Common Good.

These principles may be elaborated as follows:

The National Minima comprise health, subsistence, education, housing, sufficiency and security of income and insurance.

The Democratic Control of Industry predicates the progressive assumption of the control of Industry by Labor and calls for much immediate nationalisation.

The Revolution in National Finance aims at direct and graduated taxation, excluding, as much as possible, taxation upon the necessities of life, and throwing the burden upon those who have a surplus over the necessities.

The Surplus Wealth for the Common Good is to be secured by nationalisation, municipalisation, and steeply graduated income and inheritance taxes.

The British Government was also conscious of the necessity for providing some reorganisation of industry in order to meet, in part at least, the demands of labor for a larger and more responsible share in the determination of the conditions under which the work of the industry should be carried on. It therefore charged the Committee now known as the Whitley Committee:

"To make and consider suggestions for securing a permanent improvement in the relation between employers and workpeople."

"To recommend means for securing that industrial conditions affecting the relations between employers and workmen shall be systematically reviewed by those concerned with a view to improving conditions in the future."

The recommendations of the Committee, in brief, were to the effect that all the employers in their respective industries should be organised, and should appoint, through their organizations, representatives to a central council for each industry; that the workpeople should be similarly organised into their separate trade unions, and that each trade union in a particular industry should also appoint members to the central council; that the numbers of representatives of the workers and of the employers upon this Council should be equal on both sides, and that the joint council thus formed should govern the particular industry so far as wages, hours, and conditions of work are concerned. Provisions were also made for District Councils and works committees based upon the same principle of organisation.

In April 1919, it was stated that Whitley Councils, Interim Reconstruction Councils, and Trade Boards, constituted upon the principle of the Whitley Report, were in operation in more than 70 national industries in Great Britain, controlling the conditions of work of more than five millions of workpeople.

Similar Councils are in operation in certain industries in the United States and Canada, but they differ from the Councils of the Whitley type in that the representatives are elected by the secret ballot of the employees, whether they are members of unions or not. This system therefore, while not actively discriminating against Trade Unions which are the basis of whatever strength and power of negotiation the workers possess, does not make organisation the preliminary of the Joint Council, and, therefore meets with the disapproval of the organised workers as likely to effect a decline in organisation and thereby to place the workers again at the mercy of the employers.

Of late years a new type of Unionism has been gaining ground. This is called Industrial Unionism. It differs from Trade or Craft Unionism which is based upon the organisation into one union of all the workers engaged in a particular occupation or craft, for example, bricklayers,

boiler makers, or machinists, irrespective of the many industries in which their services may be used. Industrial Unionism is based upon the principle that all the workers, skilled or unskilled engaged in a particular industry such as the building trade, or the metal trades, shall be federated together.

There are two ways in which this may be achieved. The first is by an extension of the Trade or Craft Union and is secured by the formation of a Trades Council such as the Building Trades Council to which the various Trades Unions engaged in the Building Trades, for example, the painters, carpenters, bricklayers, plasterers, etc., send delegates. This Central Council, instead of the individual Trades Unions as formerly, is the body with which negotiations are carried on by the employers.

The other plan for achieving the same end is that of the One Big Union curiously reminiscent of the effort of Robert Owen in 1834 above mentioned. It consists in the organisation into one body of all workers, unskilled and skilled of whatever craft. Each particular industry is supervised by a Committee.

A bitter conflict between the advocates of the two systems of industrial unionism has taken place recently in Canada. According to the situation now prevailing it appears that the old Trade Unions have maintained their ascendancy by reason of their having, at the last Trades Union Congress held at Hamilton in September 1919, agreed upon a definition of collective bargaining. It may be mentioned incidentally that the absence of a clear definition of this term was a point of difficulty at the last Industrial Conference at Ottawa. The present definition of Collective Bargaining by the Trade Unions of Canada is embodied in a resolution passed at the Hamilton Congress. It runs as follows:—

"That this congress go on record as being in favor of the right of collective bargaining: our interpretation of same being on the lines of Metal Trades and Building Trades Councils, with strict organised labor representation."

Early in 1919, a Royal Commission on Industrial Relations was appointed by the Dominion Government. The terms of reference submitted to it were the same as those put before the Whitley Committee already referred to although the scope of the Enquiry made by the Commission was much wider. Among its recommendations were the following: that legislation should provide for minimum wages for women, girls and unskilled labor; that the maximum work day should be 8 hours; that immediate enquiry should be made into state insurance against unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age; that suitable Government action be taken to establish a bureau to promote Industrial Councils; and general recommendations were made as to collective bargaining and upon other matters.

Each country and people is, of course, concerned primarily with its own industrial problems, but as these are now international in their nature and influence, no one can afford to neglect the developments taking place in countries other than one's own. It is by reason of the international character and influence of the Trade Union movement that much attention has been paid to Great Britain, for the steps taken there are watched very closely and often imitated in other parts of the world.

The international extent of the movement is reflected in the Labor provisions of the Peace Treaty, and in the results of the International Labor Conference held recently in Washington where agreements were reached between the representatives of the various nations present upon the questions, among others, of the eight hour day and the minimum wage, to both of which Canada is committed so far as her Federal Constitution will permit.

Continued on page 23.