

steel core. Why not dispense with this metal and concrete combination, which has admitted risks, and use fire-proof wood that would prevent intense heat being generated in a building out of fuel provided by its own framework and fixtures? Or, if flames and heat are created by the contents of a building being on fire, would it not be safer to have their "fierceness" quelled by the absence of structural fuel, than to rely upon the building being kept intact by steel and concrete which are certain to collapse under great heat?

EFFECTS OF THE COLLAPSE STRIKE.

A special correspondent of the "New York Evening Post" has contributed an article showing careful preparation on the results of the steel strike which gives emphatic endorsement to the views recently expressed in THE CHRONICLE. The strike has done enormous injury to all concerned without effecting any service whatever to the strikers, beyond enlarging their experience.

The losses of the constituent companies of the United State Steel Corporation have been very severe in the way of trade lost that cannot be made up, cost of maintenance of plants during enforced idleness when nothing was coming in, in interest for several months on a vast investment lying idle, and loss of profit that would have been made had operations continued as in normal times, included in the latter being contracts that went to independent mills, and others which lapsed by reason of the inability of the companies to fill them. The Steel Trust is estimated to have lost business to extent of \$7,500,000, a portion of which is compensated for by the advanced prices of some of its productions. That, however, means a distribution of the loss amongst the purchasers of their class of goods.

The workingmen have lost millions in the strike and gained nothing; in many cases their families are living in straightened circumstances with the winter at hand; the resources of all but a very few of the higher paid men have been exhausted, and their bank accounts depleted; the general public blame the men for going into what they term a foolish and useless struggle, and are less inclined to support the principles of trades-unionism than before the struggle. The losses of the manufacturer may be recovered if prices are maintained at the figures to which they have been artificially forced by the strike lessening the output. That, however, is unlikely, as such high prices lessen the demand, and now the mills are all running full time there is every probability of prices falling. When prices of building and constructive materials are so driven up there is a waste of capital which drains the wages fund of the country, so that

the abstinence from work of a large body of men is apt, as experience has proved, to lessen the demand for labour, thus a great strike in one trade usually inflicts a loss of wages upon those engaged in other trades. Our contemporary's contributor points out that the strike threw out of work a larger number of men than those directly engaged in the strike, men who were not desirous of being without work, men to whom the deprivation of wages has been a terrible hardship. Of this class the numbers were 60,000 who were compelled to quit work by the amalgamation men, who were the actual strikers, walking out. Every one at all acquainted with the operations of a steel mill knows that it is like a vast and highly complicated machine of which every part must either be working or be idle, just as in a watch, the smallest wheel and pinion thrown out of gear stops the entire works. The non-strikers who have been thrown out of work were in a deplorable dilemma as they were slowly recovering from the depression that lasted from 1893 to 1897, and they had no claims on the funds raised to maintain the strikers. It is calculated that the loss of wages has been at least \$7,000,000. So far as the workmen are concerned this is an irrecoverable loss, for which there cannot be any compensation. The mortality aspect of the strike has not been dealt with, but, if other previous large strikes are a reliable criterion there have been numbers of deaths and grave impairments of health caused by the anxiety and privations and irregular habits that invariably accompany a prolonged strike. As was pointed out in this journal, the tradesmen in the locality of the mills that were closed are in a difficult position. The purveyors of food will have very heavy bad debts, and the collecting of long overdue accounts will be a troublesome business even with the most honest customers. The whole of the trade relations, direct or indirect, connected with the mills that have been closed, have been disorganized. Some enterprises that needed steel products have been abandoned, or restricted owing to the difficulty of securing materials. The strike has weakened the trades unions throughout the United States by creating a strong public sentiment against these organizations, and by so completely placing the employers of labour in the steel trade in so commanding a position to resist the pressure and the tactics of unions. The fight was not for higher wages, the usual object of strikes, but solely to give the Amalgamated Association a trades union body, the power to dictate to employers whom they should employ, that is, the power to prevent an employer engaging any man not a member of that Association. Such a form of despotism established in a country so boastful of liberty as the Republic would have been not anomalous only, but a reproach to the States.