Our English Page

The organization of social work in Sweden.

The organization of the Swedish employers is somewhat younger than that of the work-ers, and was originally more in the nature of a defensive alliance against the growing power of the trade unions. A political general strike which broke out in 1902 is considered to have been one of the great factors in removing the apprehensions against submitting to an organization which previously beset many of the employers. Of the many associations of employers — which to begin with competed amongst themselves — started in this and the following year, the **Swedish Employers' Association**, originally intended for the manufacturing industries, has now become the dominating one. This association consists, as does national workers' organization, of a number of industrial associations, some of which have preciously been independent organizations Its members total just over 2.000 employing together about 260.000 workmen.

The statutes of the Swedish Employers' Association invest the Board with extensive determinative powers in the disputes between the employers and their workmen, and each member has to shoulder considerable economic obligations towards the association. Centralization is much more developed in this respect than on the labour side, where the separate trade unions have a decidedly more independent position in regard to the central organisation. A result of the heavy demands which the Employers' Association lays upon the financial solidarity of its members has been that associations within what may be called handicraft trades (bakers, tailors, painters, etc.) have not as a rule been able to join, or at any rate have not been able to retain their membership for any length of time. Similarly the claim of the association that members, when necessary, should be obliged to participate in lock-outs has prevented employers from joining within such trades where aggressive action of that nature would — for technical or economic reasons — be precluded, or would at any rate be calculated to create great inconvenience (farmers, newspaper publishers, private railways, shipping companies, etc.). The Swedish Employers' Association, however, co-operates with the medium of a committee, the **Swedish Employers' Associations' Confidentiol Committee**, set up for this purpose. The association is also in close co-operation with the employers' associations in the other northern countries and is also, like these, a member of the **International Employers' Association**, formed for the purpose of concerted action at the International Labour Conference.

A special position amongst the employers' associations is held by the **Negotiating Organization of Swedish Towns**, which, as the name indicates, is an organ of the municipal labour association. About 40 municipalities permanently employing about 14.000 workmen belong to the organization.

Collective agreements and Labour conflicts

A result of the vigorous development of organization among workmen and employers is the widespread use of the collective form of agreement. In Sweden as well as in other countries, the earliest and greatest expansion of this form of agreement took place within the manufacturing industries and the building and transport trades, where the employers abandonded their position to this form of agreement at an early stage. At present the employers associations are just as interest. as are the workers organizations in regulating labour conditions by means of these agreements, and in many cases the employers have declared a lock-out in order to force a fresh agreement where upon exspiration of an agreement, they have not been able to come to terms in respect of a fresh agreement and the workmen have been prepared to work on for the time being without a collective agreement. By degrees the collective form of agreement has also gained a foothold in agriculture, commerce, and similar fields of activity, where the suspicion on the employers against this form of negotiation, however, have not yet been entirely overcome. Within agriculture the domination of the small farmers has had a deterrent effect upon the introduction of collective agreements as well as upon the development of organization in generak. Right up to 1926 there existed in this field of activity legislation regarding contracts of labor, antiquated in many respects, but still enforciable to a certain degree ("Legostadgan" — Contract of service) the existence of which in a certain measure rendered collective wage and working agreements more difficult of realization. The system of collective agreements has also been adopted in respect of workmen in public service, especially for municipal work; in the public services the institution of this form of agreement has been limited by giving even the lower officials the status of civil servants.

In the years before the Great War agreements were usually made for longer periods, 3—5 years, subsequentually the great fluctuations in the value of money and cost of living necessitated a reduction of the contract period to one year as a general rule. During recent years a tendency has appeared to increase the contract period to at least two years. Usually the agreements also contain a clause for automatic prolongation, unless notice has been given by either party before a certain day to terminate the agreement.

By reason of this prolongation the validity of the agreement is actually often much longer than was originally agreed upon.

One result of the marked centralisation which distinguishes the system of organization on the employer's side, is that the collective agreements to a great extend take the form of national agreements. Nearly 40 per cent of collective agreements come the workers affected by the under such agreements. In order to regulate simultaneously the labor conditions within as many industries as possible, the employers have attached great importance to synchronizing the time of expiration of the agreements, preferable with the turn of the year. Even where a simultaneous time of exspiration has not been stipulated, the organizations have often reserved to themselves the light, in case of conflict within a certain industry, to involve other branches in the conflict, for most of the agreements contain a clause which gives the parties the right to cease work, if the head organization so decides, even during the period of the agreement, but on the condition that no claims for an amendment of the agreement are involved. According to swedish practice, which has also been accepted by the High Court of Justice, sympathy strikes and lock-outs are permitted as a fighting measure even during a period og agreement except in such cases where stipulations in the agreements expressly prohibit this.

Most agreement stipulate a certain form of negotiation for settling disputes arising during the contract period, which usually means that the dispute is referred to negotiation between the organization of the parties to the dispute. It has further been stipulated within certain branches of labour that disputes regarding the interpretation or application of the agreements — so-called **rights disputes** — should be referred to arbitration. Most industries, however, have refused to accept compulsory arbitration, and have stipulated for negotiation as the only form of settlement. which, however, does not prevent the organizations from agreeing, in certain cases, to refer the dispute to arbitration, eventually by applying to the special arbitration organs established for this purpose.

There have at times existed cellective agreements within certain categories of labour, especially railwaymen and municipal workers which stipulate for arbitration also in cases of **"interest disputes"** between the parties. At present, however, there are probably no arbitration agreement that go so far — except for the telephone and the railway clerks — and the parties to an agreement are free to resort to strikes or lock-outs upon the expiration of the agreement, if the terms of the new agreement cannot be settled amicably. To illustrate the extent of labor conflicts during recent years, we give the following average number per year for the period 1917—1926.

Average per year	Suspension of work.	Workmen affected	Days lost
Strikes	348	40.661	1,522,300
Lock-outs	11	20,646	548,600
Mixed conflicts	17	16,587	1,079 600
Total	**376**	77,894	**3.150.500**

If we take into consideration the loss in working hours caused by the suspension of work, we get the highest figures during the period under consideration in 1920 and 1923, with respectively 9 and 7 million working days lost. If we go back still further, 1909 stands out as the great year of strife on the Swedish labor market. That year the labor conflicts, which culminated in the so-called general strike, involved altogether over 300,000 laborers and caused a loss of about 12 million working days.

It is calculated that during the years for which there are official statistics (1903 — 1926) about 52 million working days were lost through cessation of work.

To this is added the loss caused by conflicts which have not culminated in actual strikes. To this category belong in the first place the measures taken by the trade unions to prevent an employer from obtaining labour (blockade). The blockade is a normal result of strikes and lock-outs, but it is also employed to bring pressure upon employers against whom, for som reason or other, a strike cannot suitably be declared. Such blockades are often proclaimed openly, for instance when wage movements are being prepared or contract negotiations are proceeding, but they may also be secret, so that only the members of the organizations receive instructions to boycott the place.

Certain trade unions have set up as an organ for this kind of action a so-called **system of registration** under which the members are obliged, before accepting employment, to obtain information from register of employers kept by the organization as to whether there is any objection to their accepting employment from the intended employer, or, of this is not the case, what conditions should be stipulated for in case of employment. This system is strongly developed in the syndicalistic organizations, which are in principle against entering into firm collective agreements that are binding for a certain period, and as a rule, therefore, have not written agreements with their employers, Similar tactics, however, have been started during recent years by some organizations of a different type, amongst others by the printers and the metal workers unions. In this as well as in other trades, disputes regarding the workman's wages are not precluded even while the agreements are in force, as the wages fixed in the agreements are generally more in the nature of minimum wages and more highly qualified workman can thus claim higher wages than those laid down in the agreements.

(To be continued.)

Parents

For parents to hope everything from the good education they bestow on their children is an excess of confidence; and it is an equally great mistake to expect nothing, and to neglect it. — La Bruyere.

*

Words.

Say not, thy words were idle. Not a word has passed thy lips, but that its import was for evil or for good. For speech is but the audible expression of the will.

*

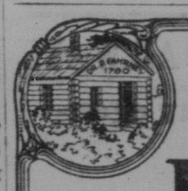
Goodness.

We can have no dependence upon that instinctive, that constitutional goodness, which is not founded upon principle. — Johnson.

*

Contralto is a low kind of music sung only by women.

ZAM-BUK
ANTISEPTISK TVÅL
ÖRTSALVA OCH
Komplett huskur för rötsår, benskador, eksem, inflammationer, skaplåkemmer etc.
Salva 50c. Antiseptisk tvål 25c.


"Den är annorlunda"
är vad folk säger om
DR. PETERS
KURIKO
Den är ett örtbotemedel med erkända företräden. Den har varit i ständigt bruk i mer än hundra år och har bringat hälsans solsken in i tusentals hem.
FÖRSÖK DEN BLOTT EN GÅNG — när er matsmältning är dålig, — när er avföring är oregelbunden, — när er sömn är orolig, — när plågor ansätta er kropp, — när ni känner er trött och utsläpad.
Den kan ej erhållas på apoteken. Den tillhandahålles av speciella agenter eller direkt från laboratoriet av
DR. PETER FAHRNEY & SONS CO.
2501 Washington Blvd. CHICAGO, ILL.
(Levereras tullfritt i Kanada)