

various branches of the service. The larger, stronger and more representative, the better it is. The better the organization, the more likely it is to bring out the best men in it. The stronger the Federation, the more responsible it becomes and therefore the more likely to carry out its policy in a moderate and reasonable way."

This is one side of the situation. The other side has been enacted in France in a way to arrest the attention of the world. The story is worthy of recital, both for its inherent interest, and on account of the inevitable bearings it will have upon the policy of other nations.

Under the law of March 21, 1884, teachers, postal employees, telegraphers, bureau clerks, government architects, engineers and mechanics organized mutual benefit associations. In 1894 one of these bodies, the *Syndicat de Fonctionnaires Marins*, struck at Brest. M. Clemenceau then argued in the public press for the right of employees of the national defense to organize, but not to strike. As minister of the interior, however, he failed to take the same position with reference to other public service employees. Now as premier he is faced with the problem of having the entire civil service, including even the prison wardens, and numbering over one-half million employees, organized as constituent parts of the *Confederation Generale du Travail*.

The strike of the French postal employees thus made possible will make March, 1909, memorable as the month in which the most impressive evidence of the solidarity of labor was given to the European world. The occasion for dissatisfaction was the attempt to substitute a test of merit for that of seniority for promotion in the postal service. The employees charged that it introduced personal favoritism

and political preferment to the demoralization of the service. Because of his strict adherence to the new method M. Simyan, under secretary of posts and telegraphs, became the object of bitterest attack. His dismissal from the service was demanded, despite the fact that when under a previous ministry, he had officially urged the recognition of the postmen's right to strike, he was supported by the present minister of labor.

Hostilities began with a small local strike of telegraphers. This led the general association of government telegraph employees to declare a strike on Sunday, March 13. By Tuesday, Paris and most other cities were cut off from communication with each other or the outside world. The English telegraphers' union wired \$5,000 to support the strike. That very day sympathetic strikes began and spread like wildfire through different departments of public service. Railway mail clerks, telephone and postal employees and letter carriers joined in rapid succession. When the firemen at the general post office in Paris and 5,000 linemen went out, the combination was complete. Before the end of the first week, the inter-communication and most of the business of the country were paralyzed. Even the Paris police and the prison wardens offered the strikers sympathy and financial help.

The disturbance was promptly seized upon as a supreme opportunity for propaganda, both by the royalists and the revolutionary radicals, in the most inimical spirit toward the republic. This brought from the striking trade unionists an expression of their patriotism in assigning expert telegraph operators to the government foreign service, in view of the Balkan crisis.

The government at first stoutly re-