

of gear. Because some grievance, which may be relatively trivial, is not remedied in such a manner as he deems proper, the agitator orders a strike, and the men respond without taking into consideration that their action is almost certain to be far-reaching and affect hundreds of innocent wage-earners in other localities.

It is very clear that, if the mining interests of British Columbia are to be placed upon a sound basis and if the general prosperity of the country is to be promoted, steps must be taken to prevent the dislocation of connections that are absolutely necessary to the successful prosecution of business. No one wishes to deny to coal miners that reasonable measure of protection, to which in common with everyone else they are entitled; but it is insufferable that great industries shall be brought to a standstill arbitrarily for causes, which are inconsiderable and unimportant compared to the consequences resulting from strikes. Without entering into any discussion of the labour question, as it is viewed by the miners' unions, it may be incontrovertibly asserted that the strike should be the last resort of employees who have a grievance, instead of being, as it too often is, the first to be proposed. If the laws of the country are not sufficient to secure this, they should be made sufficient. In a British country the right of an individual to refuse to work until objectionable conditions have been rectified will hardly be denied; but it is a fundamental principle of the common law that combinations may be unlawful even though the act for which they are founded might be lawful in the case of an individual. An effort on the part of one portion of the community to coerce another portion of it to a certain line of action ever was hateful to the common law, and we are drifting away from those principles, which are the foundation of our liberty, when we permit the continuance of combinations, either of labour or capital, which attempt to bring about by coercion what cannot be secured by the regular operation of the laws. The establishment of an *imperium in imperio* in Canada would be intolerable, even if it is regarded with complaisance in the United States. It is said that a prominent public man in the latter country on being ushered into the presence of President Roosevelt and Mr. Mitchell, president of the Mine Workers, grasped each of them by the hand exclaiming: "I have the honour to greet two great presidents." This sort of thing may suit the hysterical and spectacular politics of the United States, but it is certain to lead to disaster in the end. The Government of all the people must be supreme, and it is a wrong principle which puts a voluntary associa-

tion, no matter for what purposes it may be established, upon anything like an equal plane with the government of the State. Unless all men are equally subordinate to the general government; unless there is only one legislative body in the State whose mandates all the people must obey; unless there is only one tribunal recognized, either avowedly or tacitly, for the settlement of disputed questions between citizens, confusion is bound to ensue, property rights are sure to be jeopardized and individual liberty will cease to exist. The government, the legislature and the tribunal for the administration of the law may be subdued to whatever degree experience may show to be necessary, but they must all have their origin and sanction in the consent of the governed. To this fundamental principle, without which liberty is a dream and permanent prosperity an impossibility, the right assumed by labour organizations to dictate strikes, when and upon such provocation as suits the sweet will of irresponsible leaders, is absolutely antagonistic, and the safety of the State, and not less the safety of miners and other wage-earners, than of any one else, demands that the best judgment of the community shall be devoted to the discovery of a means by which the constantly recurring strikes can be prevented without doing an injustice to the wage-earning class. Than a strike there can be no more injurious course, whether the result is regarded as it affects wage-earners, employers or the community generally. The great anthracite strike in the United States proved this, and it also proved that the men, who suffered least from it, were those against whom it was directed. The miners and the wage-earning classes in the great cities and elsewhere were those upon whom the force of the blow came. Therefore in pleading for legislation that shall render strikes not only needless but impossible, we feel that we are consulting the interests not only of miners and mine owners, but of the community at large.

THE PROPOSED NORTHERN RAILWAY.

IF there is anything in indications, British Columbia is on the eve of a period of very active railway construction. Mr. James Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway, avows his intention, so it is said, of extending that system through the southern portion of the province, and the Grand Trunk contemplate the important undertaking of constructing a transcontinental line to the Coast within five years. But the project, which at the present time is attracting more attention than any other is the Canadian Northern Ry.—a line of which there is already