

Why Not Get Together?

The strikers have constantly and consistently tried to get in touch with the employers since the strike began. Now, "Why not get together," wails one daily editor. The answer in the main is because the committee of one thousand prevents this. That self-constituted body of would-be autocrats has adopted the indefensible position that while the cause of this dispute is unknown to them, and is none of its business, it will not allow any settlement until the sympathetic strike is broken. It openly boasts that its position has been endorsed by the Federal, Provincial and Civic governments. The controlled press is following the dictates of its masters. It was at the suggestion of the one thousand that the various governments thundered forth their ultimatums which failed in their criminal purpose of intimidation and rallied the workers round the banners of freedom. It was at the suggestion of the one thousand that Winnipeg's loyal police force, whose only crime was that it upheld law and order without fear or discrimination, was locked out in spite of a signed agreement between the police commission and the Policemen's Union that there should be neither strikes nor lock-outs before May 30th, 1920.

It was this last dastardly attempt to break the strike, followed by the Cossack-like methods of the special police, which caused the rioting last Tuesday. All the breaches of law and order and the personal injuries that have resulted therefrom were caused by the nefarious tactics of the one thousand.

When this dispute was only a few days old the strike committee placed in the hands of Mayor Gray a letter containing the terms of settlement:

- (1) The right of collective bargaining;
- (2) Recognition of the Metal Trades council and the Building Trades' council;
- (3) Reinstatement of all employes on strike.

Mayor Gray got the iron-masters together and asked them to consider those terms. The iron-masters said they would not open negotiations because the committee of one thousand had requested them not to do so. That was why employers and employes did not get together at that time.

ANOTHER FIASCO.

Hoping, no doubt, that by keeping the running trades out of this dispute the back of the strike might be broken the international officers of those trades were encouraged to attempt mediation. Despite a protracted effort on the part of the mediators those men were at last forced to say "It is no wonder the men went on strike." The attitude of the employers resulting from the veiled dictation of the one thousand is another reason why we cannot get together.

ATTEMPTS TO GET TOGETHER.

The strike committee has persistently tried to get together with some body of men willing and able to effect an honorable settlement. Mayor Gray, Premier Norris, Senator Robertson, the City Council, the Provincial government, and a number of supposedly independent employers have been approached in the hope that some way of getting together might be found. On each and every occasion the strike committee's efforts in this direction have been foiled by the open or concealed influence of the one thousand.

A GANG OF IRRESPONSIBLES.

It is known that there are members of the committee of one thousand who are opposed to the criminally foolish attitude it has adopted, but these men are powerless because the committee is controlled by a gang of irresponsibles, intoxicated with exaggerated ideas of their own importance, who wish to either rule or ruin the community.

The time has come when all sober and responsible citizens should throw the weight of their influence against this gang of irresponsibles and remove them from the self-erected pedestal upon which they have perched too long. Governments must be made to realize that they were elected to serve all the people and not to endorse the anti-labor position of any self-appointed committee of one thousand.

THE CAUSE OF THE TROUBLE.

The present deadlock has arisen because a number of persons with their faces toward the past have determined to deny the workers of Winnipeg that freedom of association guaranteed by the peace conference and endorsed by all enlightened employers in the civilized world. This minority, insignificant in numbers but possessed of peculiar influence, is attempting to force its purely selfish desires upon a whole community. It has by vilification, misrepresentation, and intimidation attempted to defeat the just and moderate demands of the strikers. While this goes on there can be no getting together. The strikers realize that the principles for which they are fighting are righteous and will refuse to be bulldozed into submission no matter what desperate tactics may be used against them. Prussianism will never quell their determination to win for themselves and their brothers that 'freedom of association' which is at present

denied. Whenever our duly constituted authorities, or the employers involved in this dispute, are prepared to brush aside the arrogant irresponsibles in control of the committee of one thousand and meet the chosen representatives of the strikers in an honest effort to reach a fair settlement we can get together. Unless, and until that is done, the workers will continue to increase the economic pressure until it overcomes the resistance to their just demands.

Street Railway Men's Reply

A. W. McLimont, Esq.,
Vice-President and General Manager
Winnipeg Electric Railway,
City.

Dear Sir:—

Your letter addressed to me as President of Division 99 A.A. of S. & E.R.E. of A. received and contents noted.

The same was submitted to the Employees in Mass Meeting this afternoon and given the most careful consideration. We regret that we are unable to comply with your request that we appear for work at 8 o'clock on Thursday morning to operate cars.

We would be very pleased to do so if the question that caused the suspension was eliminated, but instead of it being eliminated, other complications have been added that make in our opinion operation of cars a serious mistake at this time.

We are hopeful with your co-operation that the time of operation will be extended until the matters in dispute are satisfactorily adjusted to all concerned.

We appreciate the spirit in which your letter is couched, and we hope that in the very near future we will be able to resume our former positions, and continue our past amicable relationship, and we would request that you use your good offices with the many other influential interests that are working with the object in view of restoring to our fair City of Winnipeg that spirit of good fellowship and brotherly love that should permeate every man and woman that has the welfare of the community at heart.

Try with us to again establish the spirit "Do to others as we would have them do to us."

Yours respectfully,

PRESIDENT DIV. 99

Suppression versus Correction

Nothing could more clearly reveal the gap between the government and Labor than their different actions during this strike.

The government says, "Crush it," while Labor says "Remove the cause."

The government, true to its motto, sends armored cars and machine guns to the city, and has regiments of soldiers standing to, and accepts thousands of volunteers, and wires the returning soldiers in mid-ocean, asking them to defer discharge so that they may be used to break the strike. It sends Meighen and Robertson to Winnipeg to find means to crush the strike. The latter says the strike must be called off before he can settle it. The former makes his flank attack in the House against the strikers by dismissing all striking postal employees. Then officers galore wearing the uniform line up with the opponents of Labor to complete the ring of steel.

Opposed to these tactics is the fundamental position of Labor. It carried on for three weeks what was without doubt the most orderly strike on record. Before the strike was called, Labor tried for months to negotiate with the employers. After the strike was called, Labor went to the Premier and asked for such legislative action as would solve the problem for the present time. It asked the City Council to find a way to remove causes. It stands always for the same thing.

Labor does not believe in the methods of force to gain its demands. It depends on political action combined with the withdrawal of its economic power from the labor market. The strike emphasizes the importance of Labor to the world's work. Labor always asks for a removal of the causes of unrest. The government always seeks for a way to crush.

CADETS RESIGN AS PROTEST.

Owing to the fact that Captain K. Hawker, 510 Beresford avenue, of St. Alban's cadets, has signed up with special constables, boys went down in a body to hand in their uniform as they didn't wish to work with a man that had no principle regarding the present situation. These cadets number about 75 boys. When Captain Hawkes saw the boys coming he knew their purpose, and got away on his motor cycle.

It is up to the Running Trades to trump the trick. That would hasten victory.

Don't be stamped. Take an extra day for the Victory Parade.

Collective Bargaining Under Modern Industry

GIDEON ROBERTSON IN A CLEFT STICK

It is generally conceded among those in the Labor movement who have given any thought at all to economic questions that a general or sympathetic strike could not be successful over a mere matter of wages or hours of work. It is only when a principle, a basic issue, is at stake that such action can be taken with any hope of success.

The workers of Western Canada today are standing firm for two things: The right to Collective Bargaining and the re-instatement, without discrimination against any one man, of all Government and Civic employes now understood to be discharged.

However, it is on the question of Collective Bargaining that we desire to ask one or two questions:

First:—Does Gideon Robertson really mean by Collective Bargaining the mere principle he enunciated when in Winnipeg, that each particular craft must alone and unaided as far as their fellows are concerned, only carry on negotiations with their employers, and not take into consideration their fellow workers in other crafts, although in the same industry?

OR

Second:—Does Gideon Robertson mean by Collective Bargaining the actual practice endorsed by himself, under the name of the Robertson Agreement, between the Vancouver Metal Trades Council and the Vancouver Shipyards?

If Robertson means to stick by his actions of some months ago in Vancouver he must of necessity recognize the correctness of the claim of the Winnipeg Metal Trades Employees that they negotiate their questions jointly through their Metal Trades Council. This was the original cause of the dispute, and, if Mr. Robertson and his associates would find a cure for the situation in Winnipeg today, perhaps we might suggest that the first method in curing any effect is to find the cause and remove it. We humbly ask that they apply their energies to the removal of the cause of the present situation in Winnipeg, i.e.: Shall the workers of Winnipeg have Collective Bargaining as practiced by Senator Robertson, and as enjoyed by the workers of Vancouver? If not, then we are driven relentlessly to the conclusion that Mr. Robertson has two faces and presents his worst one when dealing with disputes between the Metal Trades Employers and their workmen in the City of Winnipeg.

A World Labor Charter

The Free Press cannot ignore the World Labor Charter, which has just been made known in its entirety. Unfortunately for the opponents of Labor that charter backs the demands of the strikers to the hilt. Hence there must be made an attempt to becloud the clear issues.

The vital issues of the strike are:

- 1.—The right to collective bargaining.
- 2.—A living wage.

Both are clearly upheld in sections two and three of the Labor Charter, but that does not matter. The strikers must be proven wrong, so the Free Press tackles the job.

It begins by suggesting that collective bargaining is a term little understood, so a definition that is authoritative must stand over until the international labor conference meets.

That Britain, France, Italy, the U. S. A., Canada, Australia, etc., have for decades had a clear understanding of collective bargaining matters not. The Big Three have a definition of their own that differs from that of the whole world of labor, so the international labor conference must settle it. In the meantime the Free Press would likely suggest that the strike be called off.

The other point of the Free Press editorial is really rich. It says: "Another point emerges. The lack of interest in the Labor Charter on the part of the Local Leaders. The fact that so powerful an organization had been provided to look after Labor's interests, and that the International conference had been empowered to deal judicially with Labor issues and have its decisions enforced by the machinery of the League of Nations, made no appeal to the men who guided labor into this disastrous struggle."

Had they been even reasonably sympathetic to reform along evolutionary lines they could hardly have failed to grasp the gain which Labor had made when the Labor Charter was established in the covenant of the League. Instead of that, however, what we have today is the strike, and the city on the verge of riot and insurrection."

We should like to ask the Free Press why Britain, and France and Australia and South Africa and Italy, etc., have not availed themselves of this Labor Charter? The Free Press knows very well that there is at this hour no body in existence to put this charter into motion, and that months must elapse before the convention to elect that body can be assembled.

In the meantime, we would inform the Free Press that the right to a living wage, and the principle of collective bargaining, both fundamentals to that charter, are denied by the employers in this city. This should surely bring that paper over to the side of the strikers. But, this is impossible, it must obey its master's voice.

Mackenzie and Papineau were denounced as traitors and rebels in their day, but it was through their efforts that we obtained the ballot with which to scourge unfaithful public servants.