

Enormous Growth of Trades Unions and Trusts

(Copyright, 1914, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have been asked to make an interview investigation of some of the great beef-and-butter questions which are now agitating the minds of most of the men and women of the United States. These questions are those relating to the new conditions of capital and labor; the question of the big dealer swallowing the little ones, of high wages and high prices, of long or short hours, of union and nonunion, and especially whether the consumer is to be ground between the upper and nether millstones of employer and employe. These are problems which affect every man's pocketbook, his chance to work for whom he pleases, his wages if he is a laborer and his profits if he is a capitalist, and, in fact, the comfort and success or failure of every one in the country.

The interviews will be with representative men of all classes. I shall have talks with some of our chief capitalists, including now and then a millionaire or trust magnate, who will give us the benefits of organized capital, and shall have expressions of opinion from the leaders of the trade unions, who in their mighty hands wield the millions of organized labor. The nonunion mass will be represented by other thinkers, as will also the unorganized and long-suffering public, which pays all the bills and forms the very foundation of the existence of laborer and capitalist.

I wish to say at the start that these interviews are not the expression of my opinion or that of this paper. In them the man who talks may say what he pleases, and the more forcibly the better. My only aim is to give a fair show to all sides without fear or favor. If labor is denounced this week, capital may have its denunciation next. The unionist and nonunionist is here on an equal footing, and the individual establishment and the great trust stand side by side. As for me, I am only the telephonic connection between the men interviewed and my readers—a mere receiver and transmitter—my chief ambition being to distinctly convey the sound.

The present letter gives some idea of the situation and the parties at issue. The interviews will begin publication next Sunday.

In the past the United States has been great through its individual citizen. It has been the land of all others where the single man could stand alone and fight his way up through any sphere to fame and fortune. This condition is rapidly changing. We are doing things in the large. Men work in bands, and dollars in millions. The land is one of golden giants, of mighty masses of organized capital and herculean armies of organized labor.

First look at our combinations of capital. They surpass in their accumulations the wildest dreams of a Croesus, an Alladin or a Monte Cristo. It is not long since the millionaires of the United States could be counted on your fingers and toes. Now they are numbered by the thousands, and we have individuals worth more than the aggregate wealth of some of the smaller European states.

Take Carnegie! No one knows just what he has, but his \$300,000,000 of steel securities bring him in an income of more than \$15,000,000 a year, or more than \$41,000 dollars for every day of the week, including Sundays and holidays. John Rockefeller scoops in something like \$2,000 an hour all the year through from his stocks, real estate and mines, and the Vanderbilts, Astors and Goulds have proportionately large incomes. There are today a number of men in the United States worth \$50,000,000 and upward, and the organizations of capital whose stock runs into eight or more figures is legion.

We now have, in addition to the billion-dollar steel trust, which, by the way, is a little shrunken at the waist, and in addition to the gigantic Pennsylvania railroad about 850 industrial combinations, which command all told fifteen thousand millions of dollars. We have 213 industrial trusts capitalized at seven thousand millions, and more than 5,000 other corporations. These trusts are swallowing their smaller competitors. They are branching out to include all businesses of profit and in many cases are binding the hands of industry with trade regulations. Indeed, we are fast becoming a nation of pool makers, rate fixers and profit sharers, and new questions of enormous importance stare us in the face.

At the same time our working men are organizing on a gigantic scale. The trades unions are growing as never before, and they are combining into associations of enormous proportions. We have more than 20,000 unions in one federation, and these unions cover every trade and hope to control every wage earner. John Mitchell estimates that there are from 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 workmen in the various unions; and Samuel Gompers tells me there are more than 2,000,000 associated together in the American Federation of Labor. This federation has national, international, central, state and local unions, which it hopes to wield as one man on all great labor questions.

Some of the unions are very strong, and

some are piling up funds in their treasuries to use in the strikes and struggles which may arise between capital and labor. The United Mine Workers, for instance, has 300,000 workers, and it has \$1,000,000 saved up. The Cigar Makers' union has 40,000 members and it annually handles, all told, more than \$1,000,000, giving death benefits and out-of-work payments to its unfortunate members. There are many other unions of large size, but these show more or less what all are doing and the power they may wield in the future.

These trades unions do not by any means include the majority of our working men. It is doubtful if they have more than 15 per cent of them. Nevertheless they are banded together under leaders, and a well-commanded army is stronger than ten times as many individuals.

I have said there are 21,000 unions. To show their variety I give you some of those which are of a national or international character, taking them from a list which I have from the American Federation of Labor.

There are national associations of bakers, barbers, bill posters and blacksmiths. There are associations of blast furnacemen, boiler makers, bookbinders, boot and shoe workers, broom makers and those who labor in breweries.

There are brotherhoods of carpenters and joiners, of wagon workers and wood carvers, car workers and chain makers, and also of clerks and cigar makers, coopers and commercial telegraphers.

There are unions of electrical workers and electrical constructors, of coal-hoisting engineers, steam engineers and also of firemen, flour mill men and freight handlers.

There are garment workers united in a union embracing many thousands, glass workers, glass bottle blowers and glass snappers. Even the gold beaters have a national union, and also the grinders of table knives. The hatters are united. The horseshoers have a brotherhood and so have the hod carriers.

Everyone knows of the iron and steel workers, the leather workers and the longshoremen. The machinists have numerous unions and so have the metal workers and the mine workers.

There are national unions of molders, of meat cutters and metal polishers. There are brotherhoods of oil and gas men, and also of painters and paperhangers. Every householder knows of the plumbers' union, and every publisher these which deal with printers and pressmen.

There are all sorts of railway organizations, there are saw smiths and spinners, shipwrights and stage employes and unions of tailors, tinners and tin-plate men. Indeed, I might go through the rest of the alphabet and give numerous unions under every letter and include only those which are national in character and cover the whole United States.

These labor unions are better organized than ever before, and their leaders have enormous power as to the inauguration or the prevention of strikes. Their demands for higher wages and better conditions are steadily advancing and within the past few years the strikes have materially increased. According to the figures of the labor bureau here at Washington there have been more than 22,000 strikes in the past twenty years and these have involved a loss to

the wage earners and their employers of about \$400,000,000. The losses of the workmen have been more than twice those of their employers. They have amounted to over \$200,000,000, and have caused more than 6,000,000 idle workmen. During the same time the lockouts have affected more than 500,000, resulting in a wage loss of about \$60,000,000.

Of the above strikes about one-half succeeded; some were partial successes and more than one-third total failures. The strikes of the past year have been more than usually successful. Times have been good, orders plenty and the employers could not afford to stop the factories. They have given in to the men and wages have risen. Times now promise to be hard. Many establishments are cutting down their forces and some are reducing wages. Whether these changes will cause new strikes remains to be seen.

At the same time an association of manufacturers has been formed to oppose what they claim are the exactions of the unions. This is said to have a membership of 5,000 factories, each of which contributes \$50 a year toward the movement. It is rapidly increasing in size and is extending its work to all parts of the country. It has established a publication and information bureau at Indianapolis and, like the trades unions, it is doing missionary work in avocation of its principles. The head of this association is David M. Parry of Indiana, who is also president of the Chicago Industrial Association of America connected with it. These people claim that the labor union is nothing more than a labor trust, designed for the benefit of its own members at the expense of the public. They stand for the nonunion man and for the individual and especially for the rights of the employe against organized labor. They are for the open shop and against boycotts, blacklists and strikes, claiming that all differences between employers and employes should be settled by any amicable method that will preserve the rights of both parties.

Perhaps the most powerful force now organized for the prevention of labor troubles is the National Civic Federation. This is composed of prominent employers of labor, the heads of the great labor unions and a number of leading thinkers representing the public. These men meet together in conventions at certain fixed periods to discuss the differences of labor and capital and how they may be amicably settled. They have an executive committee, which tries to bring the employers and employes together whenever there is trouble, and this has already settled many strikes and prevented others. In 1902 the Civic Federation averted a strike of 60,000 workmen in thirty paper mills, and it has settled eleven coal strikes before the troubles in the anthracite fields began. Its members did what they could in the anthracite strike, but were unable to succeed. During the present year their work has been much greater, embracing labor difficulties of many kinds, a report of which, I am told, will soon be given to the public.

The Civic Federation embraces the leading thinkers of the United States. Its executive committee is divided into three groups of twelve each, one group on the part of the employers, another on the part

of the wage earners and a third on the part of the public.

The representatives of the public are such men as ex-President Cleveland, Cornelius N. Liles, August Belmont, Charles Francis Adams, Oscar Straus, Archbishop John Ireland, Bishop Potter, President Edoc of Harvard and John G. Mithurn of Buffalo.

The employers are headed by Senator Mark Hanna, and with him are men like Schwab of the steel trust, Underwood of the Erie railroad, Nixon of the United States Shipbuilding company, Marcus Marks, president of the National Association of Clothing Manufacturers; Charles H. Taylor, jr., president of the Newspaper Publishers' association; H. H. Vreeland of the street railway and others.

The labor leaders are equally strong. They are headed by Samuel Gompers of the American Federation, and have such men as John Mitchell of the United Mine Workers, Theodore J. Shaffer, president of the Amalgamated Iron and Steel association; James O'Connell of the American Machinists, Henry White of the Garment Workers and John Tobin of the Boot and Shoe Workers' union.

The president of the Civic Federation is Mark Hanna. The vice presidents are Samuel Gompers and Oscar Straus, while Ralph M. Easley is the secretary.

All these combinations are chiefly for labor and capital. Their differences are to be reconciled. What the average man wants to know is where the public is to come in. How about the consumer who pays the bills? Everybody's business is nobody's business, and while the representatives of the public in the Civic Federation are men of great force they have not the vital pocketbook interest of employer and employe. The laborers want high wages, the manufacturers can satisfy them without personal loss by increasing prices, and the public carries the burden.

Indeed, the combinations of capital as to prices are now organized as never before. Nearly every trade has its association, which meets together to stifle individual competition. There is a wholesale druggist combination which represents 90 per cent of the jobbing trade of the United States. The members of this meet and decide just how much we shall pay for our pills, powders and bitters, and especially for our patent medicines of all kinds. The combination will not permit the dealers to undersell one another. It has spies on the road to watch them, and the man who cuts the regular list is furnished no more goods.

The book sellers and book publishers have recently combined to force the retailing of books at net prices, and the book stores which give discounts are not to be supplied.

The plumbers' associations are now providing that all sorts of plumbers' supplies shall be sold only to plumbers, and the handy Yankee will no more be able to stop a leak or put in a washer or spigot for himself. He can't get the spigot without ordering it through his plumber, and if he does so the plumber will get his percentage out of the price. Indeed, it is not possible for the ordinary man to buy a section of gas pipe in many of our cities.

In this way the consumer is at the mercy

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)



Earl Laub, Leon Agnew, Clyde Elliott, Manager; Owen Porter, Everett Rowland, Earl Martin.

CENTRAL CITY HIGH SCHOOL BASKET BALL TEAM.