

THE REVOLT OF LABOR

According to recent press reports, the I. C. and Harriman strike is approaching an end. The officials of the I. C. have had a conference with the officials of the System Federation and offered an agreement in which the System Federation would be recognized. (This recognition was the chief demand of the strikers.) The System Federation officials, however, refused to make any settlement that would not include the Harriman strikers. The committees of the Harriman roads and the Harriman System Federation will meet in the near future to discuss terms of settlement. From all indications, the historic strike (which marked the epoch of the system form of federation) will soon come to a close. The action of the I. C. System Federation in refusing to jeopardize the interests of their fellow workers on the Harriman roads is in line with the rare solidarity shown by the striking unions throughout the eighteen months' strike. Though they have been sorely pressed, (the strike has long been considered utterly lost by most rebels), they have steadfastly refused to yield to the bosses' blandishments and make individual contracts. They have stuck to their System Federations through thick and thin. It is to be hoped that their perseverance will finally be crowned by victory.

President Carter of the Brotherhood of Railroad Firemen and Enginemen has recently somewhat startled railroad unionists by advocating a nation-wide federation of the various railroad brotherhoods. There is a profound discontent in the rank and file of the railroad unions at the way these organizations are being played one against the other by the wily railroad managers. Unless something is done shortly to allay this discontent by placing the organizations upon a more modern footing, a big revolt of railroad workers against their union officials can be looked for. Indeed, this revolt is already afoot, and is rapidly spreading. The principle manifestation of it is the Railroad Men's Nonpartisan Political Association. This is a general organization of railroaders of every category, "from the section hand to the engineer," having the avowed purpose of combating legislation inimical to railroad men. It is already exerting a tremendous influence on the internal affairs of the various railroad unions. The Railroad Men's Nonpartisan Political Association (in spite of its name) is the most important development among railroaders since the A. R. U. In a later issue we will give more details regarding it. President Carter of the B. of L. F. and E. is one of the far-sighted ones who can see the coming storm and are taking constructive measures to avoid its fury.

Two Chicago unions (machinery movers and pile drivers) have just obtained charters from the International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers. Speaking of the affiliation, President Ryan somewhat naively says: "There are many unions whose work overlaps that of another. This was the case with the machinery movers. The building trades department of the A. F. of L. has adopted a policy favoring the amalgamation of trades that conflict with each other in order to prevent jurisdictional strife. In line with that policy the machinery movers joined our international." Many wise theorists say that the craft autonomy of the A. F. of L. unions precludes all possibility of any settlement of the jurisdictional quarrels between them. They overlook the fact that similar quarrels prevail in lesser degree between similar craft unions in every labor movement in the world, and that one sure specific—amalgamation—has been found for them. It is not surprising that this specific is also coming to be recognized and applied in the A. F. of L.

In a vote soon to be taken, it is authoritatively stated, the bricklayers will decide to affiliate with the A. F. of L. The bricklayers number 85,000 members. Their craft is one of the strongest organized and occupies one of the most strategic positions of any in the country, yet they are confessedly being forced to get into closer touch with the labor movement. The same forces that are propelling the reluctant bricklayers into the A. F. of L. will also compel the A. L. of L. unions to come into closer relations with each other. They will compel these unions to gradually federate and amalgamate until they approximate the industrial form of organization.

The long expected general strike in Belgium is now scheduled to begin April 14. The government has categorically refused to grant the workers the ballot de-

manded, and, as a consequence, the strike seems inevitable. The labor movement of the whole world is awaiting this strike with intense interest. Never was a general strike so thoroughly and deliberately planned. Never was it so popular with the workers. And never did one so nearly have the support of the whole revolutionary movement—Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists are all working together in preparation for the strike. Great things can be looked for from Belgium next month.

The amalgamation movement in England, to which the Syndicalists are devoting great efforts, goes on apace. The five largest unions in the garment trades are now voting on the proposition of fusing into one union. The transport workers' unions are also greatly influenced by the movement for greater solidarity. Their representatives recently met and favorably considered the propositions of consolidation. Details are now being worked out. A similar consolidation is also being voted on by the building trade unions. It is high time that an organized amalgamation movement be started in this country.

At its recent meeting the executive committee of the A. F. of L. instructed President Gompers to "encourage the federation of all organizations whose members are employed in kindred and closely allied trades, and to encourage the amalgamation of unions where it is mutually agreeable to them." Thus, the reactionaries in the A. F. of L., while openly combating the avowed industrial unionists, even in the A. L. of F., recognize the trend towards industrial unionism and are gradually falling in with it.

By a majority of 60,000 the British miners have declared in favor of a five-day week. The proposition is also being voted on by the miners in the various other countries, having been submitted to them last year at the international congress of miners in Amsterdam. The coming convention, next year in Vienna, will probably take definite action on the matter.

Two of the most important strikes now on are those of the Akron rubber workers and of the Paterson silk workers. Both strikes have settled down into grim tests of endurance, the workers pitting their solidarity and ability to suffer privations against their masters' pocketbooks, brutality, and cupidity.

According to recent official figures, the membership of the A. F. of L. at the end of January was 1,979,420. This is the largest in the history of the A. F. of L., and an increase of 204,660 since the Rochester convention. At this rate it may take the A. F. of L. several years to die out.

The difficulties of the 5,000 Chicago switchmen have been referred to a sort of temporary arbitration committee. A strike still threatens.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

SOCIETY NOTES.

The first principle of the saboter is not to get caught.

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Where you expend one penny and cause the boss to loose a thousand is considered good sabotage.

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A copper nail driven into the heart of a tree will cause it to gradually die. Many trees were so treated in San Diego during the free speech fight. They are beginning to "ripen off."

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A mouse in a loaf of bread was the direct cause of Health Commissioner Young of Chicago closing a bake shop. The owner said the presence of the mouse was due to spite on the part of his employes.

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Golf club houses and the very newest and most up-to-date railway stations in England are still being assisted skyward, and the suffragettes are making no protest.

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During the present rubber strike at Akron the sheriff had his nose smashed with a brick. Did he not know that rubber manufacturers sell a rubber nose guard for the protection of rough house football players?

J. A. JONES.

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