THE REVOLT OF LABOR

One of the most remarkable situations in the history of the American labor movement was that caused by the recent revolt of the Boston telephone girls. As a consequence of the bitter dispute by their low wages and working conditions, 2,000 of these girls decided to strike if their demands were not granted. The telephone company, realizing the situation of the girls and their power to paralyze Boston's industrial life by a strike, took most vigorous steps to break up the strike. While sparing time for meals of conferences, etc., they sent hasty calls for scabs to their offices in surrounding cities. By means of threats and promises, many of the girls operators in other cities were induced to become scabs. They were loaded into special coaches, all properly equipped with extra telephones bound to Boston. They were then lodged at the most fashionable hotels, and generally made much of during the several days they awaited the performance of their heroic functions as scabs. Meanwhile the Boston telephone girls received concussions from their employers, and the threatened strike was averted. The strike, however, led to the formation of new unions, which are now stronger than ever before. Vast numbers of them, in various industries and at different times, have submitted their grievances to the arbitration board. And all with the same result: a defeat for the workers. Soon the workers will learn that they have nothing to hope for from the arbitration board, and that the only way for them to secure concessions is to build up powerful labor unions, and with whom they wring these concessions from their masters by brute force; or, as suffices in many cases, by displaying a thorough willingness to use force. Once the workers have such military and powerful unions, they can coerce "justice" from every arbitration board, however constructed, and until they are in a position to evict the workers from their "salient treatment." By making no efforts to finish the marble work, or by changing the specifications and permit the use of other material than marble, they hoped to break the strike when the marble work would be completed according to the original specifications. And in the damages in these terms, the other building trades unions decided to declare general strikes on every building reaping marble work. Accordingly, the contractors were completely tied up, the various craft unions, in spite of their alleged handicap of autonomy, striken as a whole. The Boston strike was similar to the struggle in 1869 between the Boston Steel strike and the silk manufacturers, and they satisfactorily settled the marble-workers' difficulty.

At the end of March the A. F. of L. had 2,000,000 members, the largest membership in its history, and an increase of about 30,000 since the convention last November. The increase is to be ascribed to a number of causes, chief of which is the organization of local unions. The A. F. of L. under win recently, the intense organizing campaigns being carried on by the various international unions, and the organization in this country is known as the "Labor Forward Movement." Judging by the new spirit prevailing in the A. F. of L., it will be too little to say that it will add another million to its already huge hosts.

Trouble is looked for in 1915 in the Chicago building trades, as the bosses are making all contracts to expire at that time. It is believed they are preparing for a general lockout in the hope of thus crushing the aggressively militant Chicago building trades union. From the temper of the letter, it is safe to prophesy that the bosses will have a merry job on their hands in 1915.

The great Belgian strike for manhood suffrage has been in progress for a few days. Several towns are now almost at a standstill, but according to press reports the settlement was reached upon the vague promise of the government to appoint a committee to consider electoral reforms.

The big I. W. W. strike of Patterson silk workers is developing into a second Lawrence affair. At present writing preparations are being made to ship several thousand of the strikers' children to neighboring cities to be cared for until the strike leaders are being thrown into jail on trumped-up charges.

In its six weeks of existence the new A. F. of L. lumber workers' union organizing in the Northwest has secured 12,000 members. A mass agitation is being carried on throughout the lumber districts, and judging by the results being achieved, undoubtedly before the winter sets in the lumber workers, for the first time, will have a substantial union organization.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

BE IN THE VAN OF PROGRESS.

To the National Brotherhood of Operative Printers.

Brothers:—For some years past, the International Federation of Pottery Workers has spoken to the N. B. of O. P. a Union that has been...