

## Social Unrest

**N**EVER in the history of the industrial world has there been a parallel to the class war that is being waged at the present time. Capital and labor so long antagonistic are now at sword points. Arbitration is rejected by both sides as no longer an effective means of adjusting difficulties and lockouts and strikes are daily occurrences. Conciliation has given way to force, with its inevitable accompaniments—revolution and anarchy.

The extent to which this industrial disturbance has affected Canada can hardly be estimated. We are face to face with an enormous federal debt and for years to come there will be an annual charge of thirty or forty million dollars to provide pensions for our gallant soldiers and for the dependants of those who have fallen. Production should, therefore, be stabilized and accelerated in order to enable us to compete successfully in the world markets and to preclude the possibility of an adverse balance of trade. In spite of this obvious necessity, however, production is checked and development hampered by an industrial war.

It is not necessary to search very far for the underlying cause of all this turmoil and the strife between the two great bodies of the body politic. It has its origin in that blindness of human nature which is the source of all intolerance—that inability to see into others' lives and to appreciate their aims, their needs and their aspirations. There is a feeling of suspicion and distrust and a lack of frank recognition on the part of each as to the rights of the other. Labor has always regarded itself as an exploited class, while capital even when inclined to be sympathetic has

always regarded labor with a certain distrust from fear of an arbitrary use of power or a misguided restriction on production. If the representatives of capital and labor sit down together at conference it is the old story of the lion and the lamb. Each regards the other as the lion and there is a mutual fear that he will walk off as he did in the fable with the lamb inside.

The project of bringing these antagonistic factions into harmonious agreement involves the foundation of a new industrial code as a basis of procedure in adjusting future relations. We are not credulous enough to think that a panacea can be found for all our evils but we believe that the recognition of certain Christian principles would go far towards laying a sure foundation for industrial peace. Any proposed remedy must rest on the principle that there can be no permanent or satisfactory development that is not founded on the welfare of the labouring population that maintains it. It must recognize the sacredness of human personality and the regard for human life, however obscure or deformed, as more important than all other considerations. It must recognize a fundamental difference between material accumulation and the purposes of human existence which material things are intended to serve. It must draw inspiration from the gospel of the brotherhood of man and must guarantee equal educational facilities not only to the holders of stocks and bonds, but also to the multitudes of workers whose identities are obliterated in the industrial process amid which their years are spent.

As long as this industrial question is regarded from an economic and not a human viewpoint, as long as industry is regarded as an institution of purely

material significance, and personality as an abstraction, just so long will there be industrial turmoil and strife with all its concomitant evils. No permanent solution can be found, until both capital and labor realize that industry stands for service to the whole of humanity and that all have a right to free access to everything that goes to make a full-orbed existence, and to promote the happiness and well being of mankind. Let labor and capital unite under the ideal of social service. Let them realize that they are interdependent and inseparable and that their mutual agreement results in happiness and order; their perpetual conflict produces anarchy, inhumanity and barbarism.

Among the measures of remedial legislation that would help towards the solution of this all-important industrial problem we would suggest the following: (a) Child labor should be abolished and such limitation imposed on labor of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education and their proper physical development. (b) A minimum wage law should be enacted in all the provinces, having for its object particularly the protection of women and young persons from the greed of industry. A law of this kind would provide not only a living wage but also a guarantee against want during periods of enforced idleness because of unemployment, sickness, or invalidity and during old age. (c) An eight hour day should be adopted throughout Canada with the exception of certain industries such as farming and fishing where the operation of a law would be impracticable. (d) The labor laws of our dominion and provincial legislatures should be unified and co-ordinated so as to establish a uniformity in our industrial relations. (e) The government should take steps



towards providing proper facilities for the housing of our people, as a great deal of industrial unrest, economic loss and social suffering has resulted from poor and insufficient housing. The high price of land and of building material have made it almost impossible for the labourer to provide himself with a home, and the only hope of a satisfactory solution seems to lie with the government. Would it not be a practical scheme to build cottages at or near the large industrial centres and to sell these, along with fair sized lots, to the labourers, allowing the payments to extend over a number of years? This would not only provide a comfortable and sanitary environment but would also encourage private ownership as opposed to the fundamentally unjust and irrational socialistic idea of common ownership. (b) A final and by no means unimportant requisite to a permanent and satisfactory solution of this industrial question is the adoption of some system of co-partnership. It must be more than profit-sharing, because labor is very suspicious of bonuses and premiums and is inclined to regard them as alternatives to wages and attempts to reconcile the recipients to otherwise unsatisfactory conditions. A real partnership must involve a share in the property and a voice in the management. This would be a stimulus to greater interest and efficiency and would at the same time prevent industrial strife by bridging over the chasm that now separates capital and labor. It is only by the fostering of a community of interest that industry can render most service to humanity and provide an atmosphere for the unfolding of spiritual capacities which is the sole end of existence.