

There was a great hall capable of holding a thousand people comfortably. At one end of the hall was a rail and counter which separated the office from the hall, and in the office were seven desks, each of which represented a separate industrial union—construction workers, agricultural workers, and so on. The office was well equipped with files and typewriters. Each desk was occupied by a secretary and the work was going on as smoothly and as efficiently as in any corporation office which I ever visited. It was very evident that a complete change had come over the spirit of the group. The organization which I was observing could hardly be identified with its migratory parent which so few years ago had had the same name. This organization now is composed of men who are actually functioning in industry. They are, as the phrase runs, "on the job," they are workmen, not out of work, but practically engaged in industrial labor. And in that fact lies the secret of the recent conflicts throughout the West. Vast masses are feeling the urge of the new idea. The rise in prices, the shutting down of immigration, the fact that for once the job is hunting the man, have put new energy into that portion of the working class which had formerly little hope and has aroused the aspiration that was formerly crushed under the load of unavoidable and hopeless misery. What was happening at Portland was merely typical. As one of the organizers in that city remarked to me, "If you think this is anything you should see Seattle."

The spirit goes down to the very depths, that is the joy and the hope of it. It is concurrent not only with a demand for higher wages but with demands also for conditions—for better working conditions, for more human satisfaction, and, in a rudimentary form but still vitally there, for shop control and actual dictation of the conditions under which the worker will consent to labor. The cannery workers in California have shown ability to strike and to maintain their demands. The cannery workers! They have actually compelled the appointment of a state committee and have had highly respectable gentlemen before them, pleading almost with tears in their eyes that these nomads, these despised and most contemptible workers up to the present time, may allow the fruit crop of the Golden State to be preserved. If I could

only show you what is involved in a successful movement of the cannery workers and the apparent ludicrousness of the idea that cannery workers could ever have organized and ever have gained the ear of authority you would be able to gain some slight grasp of the scope and possibilities of this new Western labor movement. But I could not; you would have to live here for some years before you could appreciate. Four years ago the first clash came between the hop-pickers and the employers, and a district attorney and a deputy sheriff fell on the field as well as several workers. To-day Ford and Suhr are in jail under life sentences, but the hop-pickers have only to make demands to have them granted, and all through the hopfields the conditions have greatly improved. So that even at the remote extremity of labor organization, such as that of the migratory workers of the harvest fields and canneries, the impetus is felt. Labor is lifting its head and the conflict is proceeding. Its progress is evidenced by the opposition it is meeting and its security is testified to by the fact that in every case of conflict, the other side has been forced to the performance of illegal acts. The enemy is no longer as strong as formerly. Owing to the increasing development of the industrial power of the organization the ordinary legal process cannot so well be trusted and so the capitalist and employing groups are driven more and more to the employment of hired irregular mercenaries as they feel the actual power slipping from their fingers.

In the town from which I write there was an attack made on the I. W. W. headquarters a week or two ago. The furniture was stacked up in the street and burned and the military mob which did the trick was undoubtedly urged on to the task by interests in this community which are counter to that of the industrial unions. But there had been no industrial strife worth while here to provoke the act. The young artillerymen who carried their instructions were probably members of a company which had been organized by a former chief of police. They had no public approval such as had marked the San Diego and Fresno fights. They burned the property, the State will have to pay for it. The Colonel came over at the government's request and took an inventory. And so the matter rests, with a disgusted populace