

and an I. W. W. which has gained immeasurably in the public estimation as a result. This is cited because as a single isolated instance it contains all the elements of the present situation throughout the entire West. The stars in their courses appear to fight for the organization and every act adverse to it so far appears to react in its favor.

In a short article it is quite impossible to give anything like a detailed account of the activities on the Pacific Coast; neither can it be attempted. The main facts in the individual conflicts must be sought elsewhere. Here it is only possible to point to the general tendencies which the facts appear to illustrate.

A few weeks ago I was in the district of the lumber strike. This is a matter of great importance to the government as there are certain woods which must be had for the making of aeroplanes. As one of the organizers remarked, the government will be in a difficult position unless terms are made with the workers, for they certainly cannot get the larch while the men are on strike and if they are driven back to work, well, perhaps the larch might not be adaptable to the government purposes. There may be different views as to the reason of the success of the strike so far. I have heard it said that the lumber owners are not averse to the strike as they have stocks on hand and are anxious to keep up prices. But the fact is that there were about fifty-five thousand workers out in the State of Washington, that the lumber industry was working only to about fifteen per cent. of its normal capacity, and that the whole strike was carried on with a discipline and a good order very ominous indeed for the capitalist and employing element. The demands were for an eight-hour day and for certain conditions which appear to include bedrooms with a limited number of beds instead of the dirty, lousy bunks which were formerly supplied. The lumber worker wishes to stop being a migratory with a pack on his back. Shower baths are also demanded as well as decent tables where food can be put on properly instead of presented in the disgusting and savage manner in which the worker is to-day fed.

These demands are unquestionably approved by large numbers of people outside the organization and in the States where woman suffrage prevails acquire a great deal of feminine support. The

notable thing is that the I. W. W. has control in a number of the lumber camps closely approximating to that which the Western Federation of Miners used to exercise. The strike has produced much ability and has been conducted admirably from every point of view as far as appears to an outsider who has had, however, some experience in such matters. What is going to happen? Are the lumber employers going to yield to the I. W. W. and thus admit a defeat in a great industrial conflict? Are they going to treat with the I. W. W., hold conferences and arrive at decisions? If so, the result will be incalculable; the effect upon the whole of the Western labor field will be the most stupendous in the history of modern labor. It will mean no less than the substitution of the syndicalist conception for that of the old trade unions, a complete revolution in working class thought. And suppose the employers do not come to terms, what is to happen? The lumber industry is so vital that the government may, in default of the ability of the present proprietors to settle things, take it over into its own hands. I discussed this matter with strike leaders. The reply was illuminating. The government may take it over, and we should be quite as willing to work for the government as for any other employer, but government or no government we must have our terms or we do not work.

In the lumber districts, owing to the remoteness of the camps and the general conditions, the employers would find it much more difficult to employ those irregular forces of gunmen and provocateurs which they have used in other industries. So far the conditions have been peaceable and the strike, considering its size, the immense amount of territory which it covers, and its duration, has been almost a model.

An examination of the other strikes where violence has been more obvious and where the industrial overlords have resorted to the use of their condottieri shows the same undercurrent, the same general trend. Take Butte, for example, where Frank Little was hanged and the industrial Bashi Bazouks put themselves on record. The older trade unionism had failed, the new industrial unionism was trying to make headway, and the extent to which it was progressing is evidenced by the revenge which the enemy took. It was a cheap revenge and as futile as it was cheap, one