

necessary to prevent the repetition of such a disastrous struggle as that of last summer the Commission makes a variety of recommendations. It would have a permanent strike commission appointed, which should have full powers of investigation and might act as a permanent board of conciliation. It would authorize the courts to compel the railroads to obey the recommendations of this commission without any delay pending appeals. On the side of the workmen it would secure obedience to its decisions by making it unlawful for the men to quit employment at such times without giving thirty days' notice. This requirement, the Commission urges, would amply enable the railroads to secure new men and prevent any injury to their service. The proposition that the higher grades of the railway service should be licensed the Commission recommends to the consideration of the public, without distinct indorsement. The Commission believes that Government ownership may be inevitable, but rejects it as a present remedy for strikes, urging, most sensibly, that we must advance a step at a time, and that the line of development is to protect the rights of employees by methods similar to those already employed to protect the rights of shippers.

"Under our laws an American can buy and obtain absolute ownership of anything made in any country on the face of the earth, except counterfeit money, indecent goods, and a ship"—such is the terse statement of the Philadelphia "Ledger." In 1861 our foreign trade was valued at \$585,000,000, and for the carrying trade we had a marine of nearly 2,500,000 tons. By 1890 our foreign trade had increased to \$1,733,000,000, while our shipping had declined to 982,000 tons. As is well known, two views are taken of the situation; one being that this country has not been able to withstand the subsidy which Great Britain in certain cases pays to ship companies. A bill for bounties to American vessels which would be available as auxiliaries to our navy in case of war was presented not long since, but defeated. Following the Ocean Mail Bill, the admittance of the Paris and of the New York to American registry by a special act of Congress is fresh in the minds of all. This transfer involved an obligation on the part of the Inman Line (now the American Line) to construct ships of equal or greater tonnage in our own yards, an obligation now being fulfilled in the building of the St. Louis and her sister ship the St. Paul. This is the net result of the first policy.

As to the other view, it is well stated in the President's courageous speech at the launch of the St. Louis, which has pleased not only free-traders but some protectionists as well, even the Philadelphia "Ledger" remarking:

"His contention was, pure and simple, for free ships, for the unquestionable right of the American citizen to buy his ships in that market in which he can buy them most cheaply, to the end that he may thereby compete successfully, under his country's flag, with his foreign rivals. His assault was upon the navigation laws of the United States, which deny the citizens of this country the privilege of buying a foreign-built ship at any price, and receive an American registry for her, or the right to fly his country's flag at her peak, or of claiming, even in our own ports, the protection of his Government for her."

The right to buy in the best market is indeed unquestionable, and certainly our mercantile marine, wherever bought, should be defended by our own navy. Many protectionists admit that it is a poor policy which has shielded our ship-builders but has ruined our ocean commerce. Instead of doing our over-sea carrying trade for ourselves, foreigners have it in their hands, and it costs us every

year over a hundred million dollars. It is no wonder, therefore, that the President says:

"I am not able to see why Americans owning ships, navigated by Americans and carrying American cargoes, should in any case be driven to the protection of a foreign flag, and it seems to me that the stars and stripes entering a port of the United States and spread over Americans and American property should never be frowned upon and repelled by American officials acting under the mandate of our navigation laws. In the interest of a revival of American commerce, so much needed, and for the honor of our flag, so dear to us all, I am willing that the defense of our Government and flag shall be accorded to all ships of American ownership, wherever built. Make our flag a more familiar sight in the ocean carrying trade, and thus remind our citizens that a large share of the carrying trade of the world is due them, and we need have no fear that our ship-builders, under laws giving them a fair chance, will suffer from foreign competition."

The Outlook has made a careful investigation of the Richard Borden Mill tenements in Fall River, the account of which by the Rev. William Bayard Hale in the current "Forum" has stirred up so much controversy. A special correspondent of The Outlook has made a visit to the tenements, and his report leads us to believe that Mr. Hale's description of the tenement courtyard, quoted in The Outlook two weeks ago, is a truthful one, although it is somewhat impulsive, and in minor details may create a false impression. Certainly the photograph of the courtyard which we have caused to be taken for our information, and which lies before the writer of this paragraph, presents a scene no worse than a hundred similar ones in this city—more's the pity. But although local pride and other considerations are bringing out some wholesale denials, The Outlook's correspondent found a general sentiment, among the more unbiased citizens familiar with the place, that Mr. Hale's description was a just one. In fairness to the city (our correspondent adds) it should be said that Mr. Hale, in describing these tenements "entirely without selection," stumbled upon the worst place of the kind in the city, though there are others only a degree better. The manager of the Richard Borden Company, in answering Mr. Hale's assertions, says that all of the tenements are supplied with city water, that many of them are connected with the sewer (those on one side of the court are), that most of the passageways have been freshly painted within a year, that there is no street in the factory grounds that is not fifty feet wide and graded, that the pump mentioned by Mr. Hale is no longer in use, though the water had been pronounced pure by the Board of Health, that the yard is thoroughly cleaned once a fortnight, and that, while the tenants differ in their habits, there is nothing in the surroundings to make it impossible to substitute clean floors and furniture for dirt. Against this, though in no way discrediting the intention of the corporation managers, must be placed the statements of some of the tenants (nearly all are French-Canadians), who told The Outlook correspondent that the yard was sometimes cleaned every week or so, and sometimes five or six times a year. The fresh paint is nowhere visible from the outside, but everything in the way of refuse, kitchen-emptyings, and the like, described by Mr. Hale, is there in abundance, though it is probably putting it too strongly to say, as Mr. Hale does, that it is the universal rule to pour the kitchen-emptyings out of the window. The worst features of these tenements are that they are built upon a swamp, making it necessary to take a long roundabout to enter the yard, or to wade over the ankles deep in water, and that the stench, even in these cool days, is sickening. It appears to us that in such a case as this it is not enough for the landlord to make cleanliness possible or even convenient. He ought to make it compulsory. It ought not to be possible for

one or two tenants to demoralize and discommode all the rest of the tenants by their own disregard of the laws of decency. Rather singularly, the sickness and death-rate are reported to be below the average. It is doubtless true that the blame for the condition of things often rests as much upon individual families as upon the corporations, and not least upon the city's health officials, but this does not weaken Mr. Hale's main point as to the responsibility of the churches. It simply broadens the scope of the work that is needed. The Fall River ministers have been looking into the matter since Mr. Hale's article appeared, and it is understood that a rejoinder is to be published by one of their number. We print on another page a defense of the condition of the mill tenements from a citizen of Fall River.

The Tenement-House Committee, of which Mr. Gilder, of the "Century," is Chairman, held an interesting session on Friday of last week respecting tenement-house fires. A map had been prepared showing the location of all the fires in this city during the year ending in June. In the well-to-do and middle-class districts the dots marking fires were singularly few; but in the most crowded tenement-house district—the Russian Jewish district—the map was fairly black with them. The witnesses examined agreed that the chief causes of these fires, and especially of the deaths resulting from them—which average one every two or three weeks—were defective flues, direct connection between the main hallways and the cellars (where so many fires originate), transoms between rooms and hallways (so that those escaping are suffocated by the smoke), the ignorance of the tenants regarding fire-alarms, and, finally, the reckless use of kerosene. For the prevention of defective flues a better and a larger force of building inspectors was demanded—a force also which could not be suspected of bribery to waive necessary requirements. To secure a safer construction of cellarways and partitions a modification of the law was urged. To lessen the ignorance of the tenants regarding the sounding of the alarm no suggestion was made, though the Chief of the Fire Department testified that for the most part the alarms are not given until the flames attract the attention of policemen or other passers-by. General ignorance is not to be got rid of at a blow by any amount of law or any number of fire-alarm boxes. A teaching force in the schools wide awake to the practical needs of the scholars, and perhaps the increased responsibility of landlords' agents to explain such matters to all their tenants, seem to furnish the only means of curing this evil. As to the fires which come from the use of kerosene—more than five hundred a year out of twenty-five hundred—one witness testified to the general conviction of insurance men that these fires are in large measure incendiary, and urged that the law make it a misdemeanor for any tenant to leave a kerosene stove or lamp burning in his apartment when he takes his entire family away. At first blush the recommendation seems drastic, but those familiar with tenement life are convinced that, if something cannot be done to prevent the over-insurance of household goods, some drastic measure must be adopted to prevent the astonishing repetition of kerosene fires in apartments from which the occupants (and the more valuable goods) are temporarily absent. Whatever comes of the investigations of the Committee, its formation is indicative of the new spirit of concern for the safety of the poor.

This year's National Convention of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union—of the religious aspects of which

we give some account on another page—brings out even more prominently than heretofore the disposition of the aggressive temperance organizations to make their reform a part of the movement felt throughout Christendom to better the condition of the working classes. For some time past the speeches of Miss Willard and Lady Henry Somerset have been as saturated with Christian Socialism as the platforms of Western Prohibitionists have been with a temperate form of Populism. Miss Willard, in her annual address at Cleveland last week, stated her attitude toward temperance and labor reform in these explicit terms:

"The principle of the living wage has been established, a living wage being the sum necessary to maintain an average man with an average family in an average state of civilized comfort, and should be the basis of that 'cost of production' beyond which lies the 'margin' on which capital depends. . . . Protestantism has forged forward toward prohibition. The Pope's representative in this country has indorsed the right of any Bishop to exclude from the sacraments those who belong to the liquor-dealers' camp. Prohibition by law, by politics, by woman's ballot, is the watchword of the temperance army in all nations. I have not turned Populist, though I hope that Populists and Prohibitionists may be agreed and walk together before long."

For the organizing of the working classes to better the condition of the rank and file of the people Miss Willard expressed the fullest sympathy, and declared her belief that the labor organizations could be relied upon to secure their ends by the peaceful methods of arbitration and the ballot. In some directions—other than temperance and social purity—Miss Willard went even further in her recommendations than the Populists or the trades-unionists. Particularly severe was she in condemning the great newspapers for publishing only such things as the corporations and their stockholders desired to have published. If this labor-reform spirit in the head of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union extends among its membership in the same way that her zeal for woman's suffrage and prohibition have extended, a labor and temperance reform alliance is next to inevitable.

The "maximum rate" law of Nebraska, which is substantially the act passed by the Legislature of that State four years ago and vetoed by the Democratic Governor, and then in its present form passed by the Legislature two years ago and signed by the Republican Governor, has now been overthrown by a decision of Judge Brewer, who holds that the rates proposed were not reasonable. The principle upon which Judge Brewer nullifies the act of the Legislature is substantially contained in the following paragraph, quoted from the Omaha "World-Herald's" condensation of his decision:

"The whole trend of government legislation has been to promote and not to discourage investments in railway transportation lines, until now \$10,000,000,000 are invested in them. That may be too much money, but that is not now before the Court. Whether the public prefers, instead of buying these roads, to regulate their rates, is another question. The Legislature cannot take away the value of a road without paying for it. While the Union Pacific was given \$16,000 a mile subsidy, and can be replaced for \$20,000 a mile, it is bonded for \$70,000 a mile. It would not be just to make rates on a basis of \$20,000 a mile and deprive the lien holders of their interests."

The reasoning is the same as that upon which Judge Brewer rendered his well-known decision against the Iowa freight law. No matter, he held, what the natural value of railroad property may be (as measured by original cost or cost of replacement) the Legislature cannot regulate rates so as to prevent the payment of interest on the bonds, though it may reduce at its discretion the dividends on the stock.

Fortunately, no writer on railroads has followed Judge Brewer's reasoning. If a road costs \$10,000,000, and is