

*The Strike*

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## The Strike

A strike may be defined as an action by a body of workmen having a common desire to enforce demands upon an employer. This word has, however, come to be so freely used by the press of our country that "strike" now implies rebellion against almost any kind of control. For example, we have had "hunger strikes," "sit down strikes," and a host of other insurrections, all of which we include in the general term "strikes."

But what, essentially, is a strike and just what happens during one? Suppose I am a worker in a factory employing one thousand men. It while reading a labor periodical, I see an article explaining that men in other factories doing the same type of I do are making ten dollars a week more than I am; I am immediately dissatisfied and decide to try to effect a change. When I go to my

employer, he tells me that it will be impossible for him to raise my wages. This refusal is a basis for my cause, for I have just read that his profits for the last year were tremendous. My next move, then, is to organize other employees and get them interested in the higher wages too. When my organization is complete, I again go to my employer, not as an individual, but as a representative of all the men in the factory. If the employer again refuses to increase our wages, the union of employees decides to strike. This is accomplished by having the men leave the factory and stand guard to prevent any new employees from keeping the factory in operation. That is the basis of striking - union of the men and cessation of labor.

Organized striking is a rather new development. Prior to this century, the employer kept his employees at such a disadvantage that it was virtually

impossible for them to strike. With the advent of labor reforms, the workers gained powers heretofore inaccessible to them. Their power has increased by leaps and bounds during this century until now we have the strike as a potent weapon against sometimes tyrannical capitalism.

But often in the minds of striking men there seeps the conclusion that there is nothing for which they cannot ask. This of course is "the case of the punning kitten turning into a raging tiger". Their demands become outrageous, if resisted, much blood may be shed.

Evidently, there is some arbitrary point where organizations of employees may work together successfully and desirably. But the human element is so strongly present that it knows not where to stop.

We can just sit back, try to stem the overbearing organization or "needle" the too-bitterness out and hope we've not started something we can't finish.