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FRIENDS AND ENEMIES:
THE IMPACT OF THE 'LABOR PROBLEM' ON
POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN AMERICA, 1919-1924

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Phd

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July 1983

DECLARATION

I declare that the work of which this is record was undertaken and written by myself and that the work has never previously been submitted for consideration for the award of any degree or qualification. All quotations and reference material used herein have been duly accredited.



MICHAEL WILSON BRENNER

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates the relationship of trade unionism to the American political system from 1919 to 1924. It does so by studying the state of industrial relations and the effects of contemporary events on their conduct. The President's First Industrial Conference is employed to examine the state of industrial relations at the end of the First World War. Changes caused by the rise of the Engineering movement, the Open Shop Campaign, the recession and recovery and by successive crises are then traced to reveal the nature of the problem with which politicians had to wrestle.

The rest of the thesis studies the response of Congress and the administration of Wilson, Harding and Coolidge to what was known euphemistically as the 'labor problem' and analyses any trends in political outlook occasioned thereby. The research relied heavily on the private papers of contemporary politicians and official government, business and union documents falling within the dates which delineate the thesis and concentrates on the relationship aspect rather than purely political or labour issues.

The thesis contributes to knowledge of the period by emphasising the complexity of the political landscape. It contributes to the understanding of trade unionism's role within politics. The major themes are the continuing development of progressivism during the early twenties, the consequent diminution of the importance of traditional partisanship and the political stalemate which resulted. The other major theme is the debate among unionists regarding their movement's political implications and the effect of this on the nature of unionism's relationship with progressives.

The conclusions are that progressives remained a force in these years and drifted leftwards as Progressives understood and expounded the economic power struggle underlying industrial disputes. Unionists had many friends; economic factors, not political hostility, were its most damaging enemy. But the friends and enemies policy submerged unionism's political identity, hurting its own cause by contributing to the ambivalence between unionism and progressives and thus aggravating the political confusion between 1919 and 1924.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I should like to express my thanks to the following for their help in the completion of this thesis: Dr Bruce Collins of Glasgow University; Dr H Brown of Georgetown University and Professor William Brock for their thoughtful suggestions and valuable guidance: the staff of the Library of Congress; the National Archives; Glasgow University; Edinburgh University Library; Georgetown University; the University of Virginia Library; the Pennsylvania Historical Association; the Mitchell Library, Glasgow for their kind assistance and, finally, my wife who typed the manuscript.

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INTRODUCTION

The third decade of the twentieth century has traditionally been regarded as one in which prosperity and conservatism combined to triumph over an exhausted and disintegrating reform impulse. This triumph is regarded as having been due in large part to a diminishing concern about politics among a general public distracted by the benefits bestowed on it by the rapid growth in the American mass production industries and new technologies. In such an atmosphere the appeals of trade unionists for justice and equality fell on preoccupied ears. Politicians, according to tradition were most concerned with seeking tranquility in a return to 'normalcy'.

The purpose of the thesis is to refine this stereotype with regard to the years immediately following the conclusion of the First World War, the contention being that conservatism was far from entrenched and trade unionists far from being ignored. The study attempts to show that United States politics were in a period of gestation and change and that heated political debates continued to take place. Moreover, the thesis seeks to demonstrate that the nature of many of these debates reflected positions derived from

attitudes towards the role and responsibilities of the federal government for the welfare of the people rather than the traditional demarcation of Republicans and Democrats. It is argued that this development of the nature of the political debate was strongly influenced by the claims of the trade union movement and all the issues which became termed collectively in America as the 'labor problem'. It is intended that this will lead to a refinement of the interrelated questions of the position of the trade union movement within the political system and the nature of that system. The intention is to demonstrate that in the years 1919-1924, the trade union movement provided the American political system with a dynamic which contributed to the continuing development of political attitudes.

There are three particular and related reasons why histories of American Labour have failed to reveal more than "the mere inanimate carcass without the spirit"¹ of the movement's impact upon the politics of the period from 1919-1924. Firstly, works on labour history do not tackle these years as separate entities. The most obvious example of this neglect of the years within the decade can be seen in the major works in labour history. Irving Bernstein's The Lean Years, Phillip Taft's The A.F. of L. in the Time of Gompers and J. Rayback's A History of American Labor treat these years as constituent parts of the decade and subject to the generalisations made about the decade as a whole.² In such major histories the fate of trade unions is inevitably compared to the fortunes of the movement under the Presidencies of Woodrow Wilson or Franklin Roosevelt. One therefore receives only broad generalisations for the decade as a whole which, in comparison, tend to be unfavourable ones.

Secondly, labour historians concentrate, by definition, on the history of the trade unions, which is in itself a complex and disparate subject. Consequently, the treatment of politics is necessarily summary. Since unionism is the central topic and because of the lack of space which is granted politics, the political attitude to trade unionism is condensed into the question of whether at any given time trade unionism's political demands were 'failing' or 'succeeding'. The end result and its consequences for labour is the understandable first concern. Politics becomes a catalogue of laws passed or laws which required passage if the position of unionists was to improve. Bernstein for instance explains his comparison of 1920 and 1928 election results by saying that the La Follette candidacy in 1924 makes those figures "less meaningful".³ He concludes that a labour vote was in any case impossible to discover and touches little on the nature of politics at the time. Although Taft admits that "non-intervention is largely a myth"⁴ with regard to government policy, he does not examine the political situation in these years. The defect is not confined to the larger historical works, but is also apparent in labour histories with particular themes and subjects. In David Montgomery's Workers Control in America, the pursuit of his theme precludes attention to contemporary politics. Similarly, many labour histories cover large time periods in studying individual unions.⁵

Finally and arising largely from the nature of the works themselves and the problems that causes, the history of labour in the politics of the period 1919-1924 consists of isolated statements and incidents that have become accepted as reflective of the tone of these years. The consequence is to ignore the process of inter-action

and development in politics which is as important to a proper understanding of history as actual legislation and actions.⁶

This tendency to minimise the political aspect is echoed in the treatment of labour in political histories of the time. In John Hicks' Republican Ascendancy, George Mowry's The Urban Nation 1920-1960 or William Leuchtenburg's The Perils of Prosperity 1914-1932, the effects of trade unionism and the crises caused by industrial action gain little mention. Leuchtenburg, while admitting the continued existence of progressive reform demands, characterised these as "guerrilla sniping at the conservatives, who knew what they wanted".⁷ This minimal treatment of labour was perpetuated by the biographies and autobiographies of men involved in the period.⁸ Generalisations also abound in these histories of the decade which tend to lump the decade as a whole together. It is the consequent oversimplification which has thus developed which this thesis proposes to modify by a synthesis of these historical strains and by concentrating on the events and attitudes of the years from 1919 to 1924.

There are further reasons why such a work as this is felt to be necessary. The years following the First World War were likely to be extremely volatile politically in America, as they had been in Europe. Discussion of the nature of the government's role in the nation and the various dependent and particular issues were highly important debates which grew out of the war-time expansion of the government. The idea that these debates ended with the election of Harding in 1920 is questioned here. These issues were crucial to the future nature of the American political system.

and continued to be debated in the first years of the decade.

Within this broader political context the position of trade unionism becomes an important indication of political developments and a significant influence upon them. The war-time experience of industrial relations had similarly resulted in questions being raised about the nature these should assume in the post-war years. These two important and interrelated issues are deserving of reassessment.

In purely political terms, such a reassessment also involves a closer study of the nature of the progressive attitude to the problem of industrial relations. In turn therefore the attitude of Woodrow Wilson and his administration is re-examined. This will lead on to a further refinement of the prevailing view of the Harding administration's attitudes on industrial relations. To imply that the early twenties witnessed a return to 'normalcy' belies both the nature of pre-war and post-war progressivism and of the influence of post-war conservatism. Transition has long been the accepted conclusion as to the nature of the American economy in the decade. The politics of these years, however, were also in the process of transition and it is this process which is here under review, in particular the way in which the issues surrounding industrial relations affected and illustrated that transition.

The purpose as outlined above, and the areas in which it is felt further study is required imposes certain preconditions on the structure of the thesis. The need to appreciate the political

context, and the limits which appeared to contemporaries to be possible requires that the thesis proceed in broadly chronological fashion. In addition to the contemporary context, however, it is recognised here that the nature of institutions imposes a logic upon office-holders which is an important influence upon actions and attitudes. This context was also given weight in structuring the thesis. The chapters are broken down by focusing attention upon the process of policy formulation within institutions in order to identify, where possible, the influences upon policies advanced and in order to understand better the political differences within these institutions. Thus, chapters are devoted to the Wilson administration, the Harding administration, Congress at certain points, the nature of industrial relations and the Supreme Court, in chronological order where at all possible. This structure of itself largely signifies the basic areas which are analysed and discussed in the thesis. This work does not undertake an analysis of rank and file opinion, but it is intended that by such a scrutiny of institutions, the static and somewhat monolithic impression of political institutions will be broken down and a more fluid account of the history of the period provided.

This said, there are key themes which recur throughout the period and which form the main basis of the analysis of these years. The themes arising directly from the industrial situation in 1919 are treated in the first chapter. These in effect define the nature of the problem with which the political system in America was to deal in the following years of this study. Upheaval and disruption was the keynote of the first year following the Great War. The trade union movement and leading sectors of the American

business community were deeply anxious that the nature of industrial relations in the post-war era be conducted on a basis most conducive to their interests. Industrial action which erupted during the year in Seattle, New York and Boston indicated the determination of these two sides to succeed in their aims. In its simplest terms the business community wished to eradicate all sources of interference with its ability to conduct its affairs to fullest advantage. It therefore sought to denude the trade unions of any power which might hinder them in that purpose. The unions on the other hand wished to see their power grow and wished what they believed to be their rights upheld in order to do so. The purpose of this was to protect and advance the interests of their membership.

The key areas of dispute which arose from this clash of aims were the claims of unionists for the right to strike, organise, and bargain collectively and to do so through representatives chosen freely by the employees. If these rights were guaranteed and accepted by employers then the movement could carry out its purposes. Business challenged these rights by a call for individual liberty. Unions might well organise but it was up to business whether it should treat with them. This was a matter for individual choice. Similarly, individuals must be allowed to bargain for themselves. Unions claimed that they, and the power they exercised, assured the employees of justice and equality in the modern industrial system. Businessmen claimed that individual liberty ensured these basic goals of American society. Unions damaged the attainment of this goal by their collective organisation suppressing liberty. These entrenched positions are detailed by the First Industrial Conference of October 1919.

The thesis does not attempt to argue that both sides were unanimous with regard to the most propitious means of achieving these ends. The point which merits emphasis however is that despite internal differences, the industrial conflict of the period set the tone of industrial relations and therefore dominated the attention of politicians. While agreements were reached in 1919 in the electrical and garment trades, it was the strikes of 1919 which characterised the labour problem. Chapter 6 returns to the study of industrial relations from 1920 onwards, when the split in the labour movement becomes more palpable. Samuel Gompers embraced co-operation with the engineering movement as the means to win union recognition while disaffection reached a sufficient pitch in other unions to result in the formation of the C.P.P.A. This does point to the obvious split in the union movement between those who felt outwith the economic and political systems to a greater or lesser degree. Again this is not analysed in detail here since much has been written elsewhere about the ideology of unionism. The C.P.P.A. seized the initiative on unionism's political stance in 1922 and while there were differences it defined the substance of the political relationship. It is taken up here however as a modifying factor in the relationship between trade unionism and politics.

Unionists had particular demands, in addition to the rights mentioned above, such as Supreme Court reform, the ending of injunctions in industrial disputes and the reform of the Railroad Labor Board erected by the Esch-Cummins Transportation Act. Some unionists claimed these to be the extent of the movement's interest in politics. Other unionists believed that only a movement in

which unions were directly involved in politics and with a broader consciousness of unionism's implications could provide the setting for the rest of the unions' demands. This involved disputes between the view that unionism must be independent and those who saw it as increasingly dependent on the actions of government, as in the call for nationalization from coal and railroad unions, and in participation within the C.P.P.A. from 1922 onwards.

This division is explored to assess its effect on the conduct of industrial relations and the political position of trade unionism because any changes would have a bearing on the attitudes towards industrial relations.

While these chapters set out the reality of industrial relations, and the political outlook of trade unionism, which defined the nature of the problem with which politicians had to deal, the other chapters in the thesis study the political consequences. The second chapter analyses the response of the Wilson administration to industrial relations during the final years of his administration. In doing so it is hoped that the nature of Wilsonian progressivism will be refined and the basic political themes of the thesis revealed.

The progressive movement had diverse constituent motivations. The primary one, however was a perception that the business system which had developed in the post Civil War period had distorted the fundamental aims of the American democratic system. These were that justice, equality and liberty were basic to the nation's fabric and inherent rights of the populace. This had been the machine

which powered the progressive reform movement. Trade unions had found favour from it in the pre-war years. The question in the post-war years was whether the continuing agitation for consideration by unionists would continue to receive a favourable response from the Wilson administration. What emerges from the administration's response is that the basic tenets of progressivism embraced unionism originally but could not support unionism's aims entirely. The purpose of the progressive movement had been to diminish extra-parliamentary power in the shape of business agglomeration. It did not intend to give support to another extra-parliamentary power group. Indeed, power and economic justice were not basic progressive concerns, therefore creating an ambivalence between the Wilsonian style of progressivism and the aims of trade unionism. Thus, the Wilson response was to launch a policy of compromise institutionalised in a board of conciliation. The theme which is pursued is whether progressives could modify their outlook in order to embrace unionist demands. This required a reassessment of the priorities of the reform impulse and its basis. Progressives had to ask of their movement whether union agitation and industrial disruption signified a need to re-define the basis of justice and equality in more concrete economic and political terms.⁹

Chapter three analyses the response of Congress to the problem of industrial relations. The analysis of progressives' attitude towards unionism is continued to examine the spectrum of progressive opinion, since progressivism was a highly individualistic and variegated movement, and to study any differences between these and Wilson's outlook. Indeed the chapter analyses the response of Congress as a whole and thus hopes to refine prevailing view of

the balance of power in Congress, that is the strength of conservatism in Congress and the attitude of conservatives. This chapter also deals with the broader question of the role of the federal government in post-war American society. As with the issue of union power, this question again pressured progressives into a reassessment of the nature of their movement.

In 1920 Warren G. Harding was elected President of the United States. The fourth and fifth chapters analyse the Harding administration's attitude to labour, its conservative outlook and its ability to act upon its opinions. This is done in the context of responses to the effect on industrial relations and the crisis brought on by the strikes in the coal and rail industries.

The great majority of unionists supported Senator La Follette in the 1924 election race. Both the 'friends and enemies' non-partisan campaign and the unionists in the C.P.P.A. could support this candidate. Indeed 'friends' of labour were invariably progressives and yet the American Federation of Labor denied its political implications. In fact this stance was largely in order to avoid being identified with either Republicans or Democrats. This indeed provides another incidental theme arising from the general political development of the period in the question of the extent to which traditional party loyalties were politically relevant by the end of the period. By 1924 this division certainly appeared to be diminishing in political significance in the developments of these years.

The themes which run throughout the thesis are therefore few in number. The issues which exercised the business and labour worlds were based on the need for power. This included all the issues such as the rights to strike, organise and bargain collectively on behalf of the membership's interests in wages, hours and conditions. These demands and their denial by business form the core of the industrial problem throughout these years. The methods of unions in seeking to achieve these ends, direct action, co-operation or political action form a second important theme and are also important for politicians as indicators of the political outlook of trade unions.

These are the problems which faced politicians from 1919-1924 and thereby act as important factors in political development. The third major theme is how progressives reacted to these problems and how this changed the nature of politics in America. This involves the analysis of the other important theme, the outlook of conservatives and their power in this period. It is hoped that such themes satisfy the purposes of the thesis as described at the beginning of the introduction.

The thesis ends with the election of 1924, in order to study more closely the events and developments of these years. To define a larger time period might well result in the kind of problems which the thesis hopes to modify. It is also chosen deliberately so that the decade of the twenties, as an historical period, may become less prey to over-generalisation. The year 1924 also marked an end in some respects. Samuel Gompers, the President of the A.F. of L., since its birth in 1886, died in December of 1924. Inevitably a man

in a position of leadership for such a length of time leaves his imprint upon the organisation. His successor will not, however much he may have admired the man, be able to duplicate his policies, style or priorities. This was an important date therefore in the history of the A.F. of L.

Similarly, 1924 was the first year in which the A.F. of L. had declared officially for a candidate in the person of Robert M. La Follette. This in itself marks a further important reason why the year marks a stage in the history of the A.F. of L. The La Follette candidacy serves as a stopping point for the further reason that it serves to mark the state of progressives at a specific time. Since it was an independent campaign, it also provides a clearer expression of radical Progressive policies than might otherwise have been available. For these reasons 1924 has been deemed an apt conclusion for the clarification of the themes of the thesis and its attempt to offer a refinement of knowledge of the nature of American politics from 1919 and the role of the trade unions within it.

NOTES

1. Mills, J.S., Essays on Politics and Culture, p.1.
2. This criticism is most easily levelled at general histories which summarise trends and use time-periods as means of definition. See, for instance, Cohen, S. Labor in the United States, Dulles, F.R., Labor In America, Lorwin, L.L., The American Federation of Labor, or Pelling, H., American Labor. While these works are prone to the same conflict/consensus dialogue, the factuality of their books diminishes its influence. Commons, J.R. The History of Labor in the United States 1896-1932 is perhaps the most notable example and is certainly the most compendious.
3. Bernstein, I., A History of the American Worker Vol.1: The Lean Years 1920-1933, p.78. It is in the major interpretive works such as this that the conflict/consensus historiographical debate has the greatest influence on historical treatment. Bernstein argues that the A.F. of L. would only gain satisfaction through the support and espousal of a left-wing political philosophy. Thus the 1924 election, with its overtones of Progressive radicalism; and the obvious discomfort of the A.F. of L. leadership alongside the commitment of radical unionists to this Progressivism might well prove 'less meaningful' to his basic argument.
4. Taft, P., Organized Labor in American History, Introduction p. xvii. Taft takes the view that the A.F. of L.'s non-partisan position was simply the most common sense approach to the American situation, maximising labour support in both parties. He does not deal however with the problem of what to do if such maximum support is ineffective in securing trade union aims. Taft's interpretation comes perilously close to Hofstadter's fear that 'consensus' was becoming celebrated as the natural tradition of American politics. Ultimately, interpretations of unionism's political position has been derived from the study of trade unions with a minimal concern for the political situation. Rayback J.G., A History of American Labor is admirable in its neutrality in this respect. The alternative has been to remain strictly factual as in Wolman, L., The Growth of American Trade Unions 1880-1923, Helbing, A.T., The Departments of the A.F. of L. or Douglas, P., Real Wages in the United States 1890-1926.
5. The alternative to major interpretive and narrative works has been the detailed works of analysis on particular themes and events such as Montgomery's stimulating work. It is not the purpose of such theoretical works on trade unions to study the political context. See also Burns, C.D., The Philosophy of Labor, Hoxie, R.F., Trade Unionism in the United States or Tannenbaum, F., A Philosophy of Labor. Similarly, studies of individual unions or issues such as Foner, P.S., The I.W.W. and the Black Worker, Journal of Negro History Vol.55, 1970 or Foster, W.Z., The Great Steel Strike are by definition limited in scope. However Fink, G.H., Labor's Search for

Political Order: the Political Behaviour of the Missouri Labor Movement 1890-1940 is notably successful in making observations upon the subject with wider implications.

6. The few books which ostensibly do tackle the political context in which industrial relations existed are largely disappointing. Most deal with the structural nature of the situation as in Childs, H.L., Labor and Capital in National Politics or are too general to bear particular relevance to the situation in the twenties. See Vale, V., Labour and American Politics and Rehmus, McLaughlin and Nesbitt, Labor and American Politics. Zieger, R.H., Republicans and Labor, while an excellent work on the policies of Hoover is not particularly informative on the broader situation outwith the Republican administration.
7. Leuchtenburg, W.E., The Perils of Prosperity 1914-1932, p.137. This comment typifies the general political histories' treatment of the early twenties, the progressives' significance is minimised and union disruption is unconnected to the body of political development. The progenitor of this historical tradition was Allen, F.L., Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the Nineteen-Twenties. Link, A.S., What happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's? American Historical Review Vol.64, 1959 served to confirm this view. With few exceptions studies of progressives and reform appear to confirm rather than refute this traditional view of the twenties. The classical example of this is Mackay, K.C., The Progressive Movement of 1924, where La Follette and the P.L.S. are portrayed as a small band of visionary men struggling against overwhelming odds. More typical are works such as Nye, R.B., The Mid-West Progressives which concentrates so much on these men 'The Farm Bloc' that the wider political perspective is lost, and Holt, S., Congressional Insurgents and the Party System 1909-1916.

Burner, D., The Politics of Provincialism remains a major work on the period and does give the sense of political change and development taking place in the Democratic party but which was obscured first by the Wilson legacy and secondly by the 1924 debacle. Buenker, J.D., Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform continues to develop the theme of urban influence on reform thinking. Graham, O.L., Encore for Reform also helps to highlight the sense of change and development in U.S. reform politics. Many of the progressives who were opposed to the New Deal however can already be seen to be uneasy with the La Follette effort in 1924. Although these works do point to the process of change in the twenties none has been concerned to place trade unionism in this political process.

8. Biography and autobiography are by their nature unlikely to provide the broad context and sense of development which is pursued here. This is the case in Zinn, H., La Guardia in Congress, for instance, which never attempts to broaden the subject to reflect on why urban liberalism failed to develop significantly within the Republican party. Lowitt, R., George Norris 2 Vols. which also ultimately fails to place Norris's efforts in the broader political context.

Sinclair, A., The Available Man does provide a sympathetic account of the Harding administration while White, W.A., A Puritan in Babylon remains a perceptive and illuminating work on the Coolidge administration, which cannot be said for Coolidge's own Autobiography, Hoover, H. Memoirs 2 Vols., Baruch, B., The Public Years or McAdoo, W.G., The Crowded Years.

9. Progressives are defined here as those who had been or were prepared to countenance reform. A Progressive is only used here with regard to the Independent movement of 1924; progressives only appeared more coherent during the Wilson administration due to the reality of exercising power. Even then, however, it was a fragmented coalition which defied adequate definition. It never claimed any desire to undertake systematic social change, an assumption which underlines all the criticisms of the movement made by Kolko, G., in The Triumph of Conservatism. Expectations of reformers' intentions have been avoided in this work as far as possible, nostalgia and progress were intertwined in the progressive mind.

CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST INDUSTRIAL CONFERENCE

In the opinion of Professor P.W. Slosson, the American people never accepted the First World War as part of their national tradition. "Ten years after its close they remained still irritated and bewildered by it."¹ To two major sectors of American society, the consequences of the nation's intervention in Europe signified much more than an aberration. The trade union movement and America's employers regarded the war-time expansion of the federal government into the national economy as so startling that it broke entirely the natural development of the economy.

The wrench was such that it led both groups to regard the period of readjustment as a golden opportunity to remodel the economy, and industrial relations in particular, according to their own views. This chapter examines the consequences of this perception which shaped the attitudes and actions of both these communities during the year 1919. The First Industrial Conference, where those attitudes were stated bluntly, is subjected to close

study as the climax to a year of upheaval. As such it is important to the clear exposition of what was known in America as 'the labor problem'.

Two issues were regarded as the key indicators of what shape the post war economy would take; the first was the basis upon which industrial relations would be conducted; the second was the role which the federal government would assume. It was apparent that the first question would be dependent to a large extent on the outcome of the second. In February 1919, the National Industrial Conference Board issued a report on the problems envisaged in the readjustment of the economy to peace-time operation. The key to this being carried out, an opinion which the trade union movement could endorse fully, was "a sound determination and delimitation of the relations of the state and industry".² At this point the agreement between business and the labour movement ended. Although couched in diplomatic language, the report went on to make clear what the business community regarded as a 'sound' relationship between federal government and industry:

The relinquishing of personal liberty as a patriotic duty in the stress of a great national emergency . . . is not to be construed as a voluntary movement towards socialism and a demand for government control of private industry in peacetime.³

It was abundantly clear that the business community sought a return to the pre-war relationship of government to the economy. It wished the government to dismantle the war-time agencies and divest itself of all notions of continuing control or regulation. They had accepted

the economic reform of the Wilson administration largely because those efforts actually strengthened the economy without threatening their interests. Despite this modification they continued to advocate a return to an unfettered economic system - "The accumulation of new wealth . . . to provide for the improvement of social life"⁴ - in the post war period. They remained wedded to their belief in a 'natural' economy and this determined their attitude towards industrial relations. They remained committed to the credo laid down by the National Association of Manufacturers in 1903 that they were opposed to any "illegal acts of interference with the personal liberty of employer and employee".⁵ They regarded unionism as a threat to the efficient management of industry; strikes as an interference in the production process which were too costly to condone; and wages as a fixed cost of production.

The labour movement was also committed to having its demands met. At the Southern Labor Congress its President, Jerome Jones, posed the question which was most vital to labour; "After the reconstruction period what will be the workers' social and industrial status?"⁶ The status of workers and of unions themselves had been the primary concern of the American Federation of Labor since its inception in 1886. In order to clarify the position of this organisation in 1919, it would be useful to describe briefly its development. The labour movement was concerned with the whole gamut of factors which defined the social, economic and political position of the working man: his wages; working conditions; terms of employment; and, most important of all, the rights of a trade union to negotiate for its membership and carry out industrial action in

order to secure their demands. The ultimate aim was to establish the independence, self-respect and equality of the working population within society. It was important to the nature of American trade unionism that the emphasis be on the status of the worker, thus establishing the trade union movement as an ostensibly apolitical movement. This was the role which Samuel Gompers, the President of the A.F. of L. sought for trade unionism throughout his long career. As he maintained in his autobiography; "I have been jealous that the American labor movement should retain the character of a crusade for human justice".⁷

It was a humanitarian crusade for which, Gompers believed, trade unions had specifically evolved in industrial society. Unions were an industrial phenomenon which had emerged to ensure the well-being of their membership within the workplace. Trade unions were also eminently qualified for the task since they were the direct instrument of the workers' will. They were highly responsive to the desire of workers for the improvement of immediate surroundings. Thus, "true trade unionists contend that the trade unions are paramount to any other form of organization, or movement of labor in the world".⁸ The thrust of Samuel Gompers' argument was that unionism was an industrial organism, close to the workers and designed to give them strength to succeed in bargaining with employers; this was the purpose of trade unionism, he argued, not political activity - "Trade unions or voluntary associations of wage earners constitute one of the essential agencies for establishing procedures of control".⁹ By control Gompers was referring both to the complete organisation of

the workforce and the power to force employers to acknowledge and satisfy their needs in the workplace. Control had no broader meaning other than the power born of organisation to have a voice on issues pertaining immediately to the job.

As America entered the twentieth century, however, that organisation, control and power were clearly not being established. The various weapons used by employers - injunctions, strikebreakers and blacklists - were forcing unionists to question whether a large enough organisation could ever be established without political reform. Some unionists believed that the rights of trade unions required political confirmation if control were to be wrested from the employer.

Gradual acceptance of this opinion led to the publication in 1908 of Labor's Grievances. From this was drafted a Bill of Grievances which was presented to both Democratic and Republican conventions. It called for union exemption from anti-trust laws and the injunction process, and also included a demand for the right to organise. Labor Representation Committees were set up to conduct a non-partisan 'friends and enemies' campaign. The results were largely disappointing but political activity by the union movement had begun.

Politics and indeed the role of the government continued to be regarded by unions merely as a means to an end. This attitude was modified only marginally by the reforms of the first Wilson administration. Political activity, however, had become an

increasingly respectable and important part of trade union policy. Gompers' 'friends and enemies' policy continued to hold sway, due primarily to the split in progressivism between the Republican and Democratic parties, and Gompers' determination to keep as much distance between trade unions and the political system as possible. He did not wish to see the union movement embroiled in issues such as prohibition and broader political questions. Moreover his claims for the Clayton Anti-Trust Act also had some basis in his hope that, with union legitimacy secured, unionists would return to the original Gompers' model. Political action however had become a matter of course.

The war put a severe strain on Gompers' policy as did the failure of the Clayton Act to live up to Gompers' expectations. Not only did it involve the labour movement in the issues revolving around American entry, but it brought the government to the centre of the industrial system through price controls, the take-over of the railroads and its policies on industrial relations through the National War Labor Board. The result was an increasing awareness among trade unionists of the possible benefit to its own aims of an interventionist government. The most obvious examples of this were the demands of the United Mine Workers of America and the railroad brotherhoods for nationalization of their respective industries. The hope which the Southern Labor Congress held out for the post war status of the working population rested mainly on the assumption that;

The workers will continue to have all the machinery of government created as a war measure to which to

appeal and through which to adjust all labor grievances that may arise. There will be no returning to the pre-war status quo during the peace conference period.¹⁰

They clearly believed, as did the movement in general, that the N.W.L.B. policies would continue in effect at least during 1919; time enough for those same policies to be implemented in peace-time by the government and consequently for the unions to increase their membership. Such hopes were fuelled by unionists' increased sense of self-worth as a result of their co-operation in the war effort. They felt entitled to widespread public sympathy and a supportive government for their contribution.

The war increased awareness among trade unionists of the benefits of a sympathetic government. The call of the U.M.W. and railroad brotherhoods for nationalization represented only the most extreme of a widespread perception. Under the umbrella of a government agency, unionists believed that the time was ripe for expansion and they began to push employers for a definitive acceptance of their organisations. The time seemed to have arrived when unions would be able to establish their power base throughout industry on the Gompers' model and achieve self-reliance.

The rapid dismantling of the N.W.L.B. early in 1919 was a considerable blow to the hopes of the labour movement. It in no way diminished their determination to see those hopes realised in the immediate future. At a time when both sides were convinced of the need to act to establish their views and were highly sensitive

to any threat to their position, the disappearance of this mediation was likely to have serious consequences.

It would be a mistake to suggest that all disturbances in industry in 1919 flowed from these fundamental perceptions. A welter of disputes grew out of immediate conditions, notably over wage claims. Yet even these disputes were embittered by the broader difference between the two sides. Indeed the rash of strikes of 1919 combined with the ending of the N.W.L.B. to submerge almost entirely any thoughts of government backing. Increasingly during the year the unions and business community were locked with each other in a battle of wills; a struggle through direct action to force their views on the other. Rocketing inflation caused strikes by New York's longshoremen, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the United Textile Workers' unions; all three of which were successful. During the year the elevated, subway and street railway systems of New York, Boston and Chicago were also paralysed. Railroad shopmen in Chicago and the North East walked out in protest against the \$65 million awarded to other classes of railroad workers. In addition to these major strikes, a welter of requests poured into the A.F. of L. headquarters in Washington D.C. for strike funds. Suspender makers in New York, Hairspinners in Chicago and Rubber Workers in Ohio carried out industrial action for wage rises. These were local strikes which the A.F. of L. Executive Council had agreed to fund. A great many more strikes were either avoided by sending A.F. of L. conciliators or by

denying funds. The latter was particularly true of recently organised locals. It was the A.F. of L. policy that no local could receive strike funds until it had been affiliated with them for one year. This created the curious situation of the A.F. of L. frustrating the very purpose for which the new members had joined.¹¹ Clearly the strikes which took place were much fewer than might have occurred. The disruption of 1919 was never co-ordinated. The A.F. of L. was constantly short of funds and in any case had no power of control over constituent unions. Thus the mood of bitterness in 1919 developed out of the disputes in which each union was involved. Indeed the unions, autonomous bodies jealous of their independence, were notoriously unable to present a unified voice. Although other strikes had created a powerful mood of antagonism and a deepening sense of crisis, the key disputes which united the labour movement centred on the issue of union legitimacy.

The first major strike involving this issue was in Seattle in February 1919. It demonstrated that, in this city, unity had been achieved. The metal workers in the Seattle shipbuilding industry had organised a Metal Trades Council and the demand of the Council was for \$1 per day rise throughout the yards. The cause of the strike, however, was not the immediate demand but the about-turn of the Shipping Board's West Coast Director, General Piez. He agreed at first and then refused to negotiate with the Seattle unions over their demands. Piez refused to negotiate with the unions because he claimed they were tied by a contract covering all yards on the Pacific coast engaged in work for the government. The unions, however, believed that Piez aimed to break the unions. Given that the shipyards were the basis of the Seattle economy, general

concern in the central labour council was to be expected. The overwhelming support which the council received for an appeal made in support of the Metal Trades encouraged it to call for a general shut-down. It was this general action which caused a breach with the A.F. of L., a breach which was ensured by Mayor Hanson of Seattle dubbing the strikers as "anarchists".¹² Gompers was unable to endorse the Seattle action. In fact, although Seattle did have radicals in its unions, the editor of the Seattle Times confirmed the conservatism of the unions in the shipyards and squarely blamed the strikes on Piez's action. Indeed the Metal Trades Strike Committee wrote to President Wilson that "We . . . reaffirm our allegiance to your principles of democracy . . ."¹³ Nonetheless Gompers and the A.F. of L. Executive Council, aware of their new status, remained aloof from the dispute which finally collapsed on 11th February.

Similarly, a strike by the telegraphers in the North East of the nation was caused by the demand for recognition and collective bargaining. The core of the row for the union, part of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, was the dismissal of staff for joining the union. Postmaster General Albert Burleson's argument was that they had been sacked for striking without going through the proper negotiating procedure. The original negotiations involved a pay demand but again the industrial action was taken primarily to gain fair treatment. The strike dragged on for almost a month before finally being settled. In the bitter opinion of the telegraphers "Nothing favorable to our side will get through"¹⁴ to the President giving their view of the matter. They also blamed the Postmaster General for allowing Western Union to employ strike-

breakers. In this case the A.F. of L. did not involve itself in the dispute although it did put a resolution before the President calling for Burleson's resignation in July 1919.

Perhaps the most notorious strike of 1919 was that in Boston by police officers who demanded the right to organise a union and, after the dismissal of several officers, struck for their demand. The consequent chaos catapulted the Governor of Massachusetts to fame and persuaded the nation that a police force should never be allowed to carry out strike action. Despite the widespread condemnation of the police action, Samuel Gompers on this occasion publicly endorsed the strike. By August 1919 when the Boston police strike took place, the A.F. of L. was slowly swinging behind the efforts of unionists and their struggle to establish the right to organise. The upheaval of 1919 was gradually radicalising the movement. The steel strike completed this process and laid naked the root of the dispute between labour and business leaders and the depth of the antagonism between the two groups.

Since the crushing of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers' Union early in the century, the steel industry and especially the plants of U.S. Steel had been a major symbol of business antagonism to trade unionism. This situation had been allowed to continue by the trade union movement until the First World War. The task, they believed, was simply too enormous.

The war, the resultant shortage of labour and the increasing stature and responsibility of unions during it gave unionists a new confidence and determination. This combined with the need to

destroy the anti-union symbol which the steel industry was. The success of the organisation of the packing industry in Chicago under the government's aegis convinced William Z. Foster that the opportunity now existed to organise steel "such as might never occur again."¹⁵ Foster thus presented a resolution to the Chicago Federation of Labor on 7th April 1918 calling on the A.F. of L. to convoke a general conference and to inaugurate an organising campaign in the steel industry. The A.F. of L. took the matter up with the A.A. of I.S. & T.W. but things were moving too slowly for Foster and the Chicago Federation. They consequently sent the A.F. of L. conference the re-adopted resolution on 10th June 1918.

This resolution was adopted unanimously and Gompers called a conference of all unions interested in the organisation of the steel workers to meet in Chicago on 1st August 1918. The fifteen unions present agreed that only a joint campaign could succeed and for that purpose a National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers was set up, with Gompers as chairman while Foster, as the moving force, was elected Secretary/Treasurer. Twenty-four unions joined the campaign representing some two million unionists. These unions however assessed themselves only one hundred dollars each. The campaign had been intended by Foster to swamp the steel industry in a matter of weeks. This minimal funding punctured the hope Foster held that this would present Judge Gary, President of the U.S. Steel Corporation, with a fait accompli and make strike action unnecessary. The campaign was therefore launched only in the steel districts around Chicago in the first week of September. The fact that this contradicted the unions' pledge not to attempt to expand their organisation during the war troubled none of the unions

unduly. It was clear that Foster wished to use the N.W.L.B. codes to legitimize union organisation. In October 1918 the campaign was also opened in the Pittsburgh environs, the steel industry's heartland. By the spring of 1919 the campaign was ready to enter Pittsburgh itself. By this time the steel industry was becoming increasingly alarmed by the success of the recruiting drive. Gary had in September 1918 agreed to pay overtime rates on work done beyond eight hours in a daily shift. With this decision he hoped to defuse discontent. Since then widespread lay-offs of union members had also taken place.

Immediately following the armistice, the steel industry began to increase its campaign. They imported strikebreakers, used armed guards to carry out evictions and pressured local town councils to ban union meetings. Increasingly union meetings were disrupted by company guards and union leaders were arrested for incitement or breaking city ordinances. Tales of indiscriminate police violence abounded. The violent reaction of the industry and the co-operation of city fathers with them made it obvious that in order to break the industry and finally establish the unions, something more than organising would be required. It was argued that Gompers should present Gary with a call for a conference. This step was taken to avert local strikes to keep the organising campaign moving and to hold the A.A. of I.S. & T. in line. Gompers' request never received a response from Gary. Gompers, on 20th June 1919, resigned his chairmanship of the National Committee which John Fitzpatrick, President of the Chicago Federation, now took up.

This stalemate forced the National Committee to take a further step to hold membership in line and continue the momentum of the campaign. Given the unbending position of the steel industry, on 20th July 1919 the Committee decided to call for a strike vote which was to be carried out over the next month. The fact that Fitzpatrick was a more militant unionist also precipitated this decision. Their demands were formulated at the same meeting. The key demands were for the right of collective bargaining and the recognition of the right to join a trade union. Also demanded were the eight-hour day, reinstatement of a six-day week, a wage rise and check-off. There was a 98% vote in favour of strike action. The National Committee set itself a deadline of 10 days to arrange a conference with U.S. Steel. In a letter to Gary on 27th August requesting a conference, they wrote: "Surely reasonable men can find a common ground upon which we can all stand and prosper."¹⁶ There was again no reply from Gary to this communication. In view of the situation, the Committee went to Gompers in Washington where the Executive Council delegated him to go to the President to have him bring the steel industry to the conference table. In this the President failed. Wilson, however, urged the Committee through his secretary Joseph Tumulty to postpone the strike until the Industrial Conference set for 6th October in Washington D.C.. The Committee set the 9th of September as the date when a final decision was to be made. Tumulty's telegram of 6th September, offering no hope of a conference with the steel industry, left the Committee with no alternative. With the steel company by now laying off thousands of members, the strike was set for 22nd September. Only two days after the strike call Tumulty's telegram arrived asking for a postponement pending the Conference.

Samuel Gompers, removed from the situation, urged the Committee to agree to this recommendation.

Although the decision to hold an Industrial Conference was made before 9th September, no connection was made between it and a possible settlement in the steel dispute. A telegram sent as early as 2nd September from Foster to Gompers made clear that it was "imperative that we take defensive action at once."¹⁷ A decision to strike was practically inevitable as far as Foster was concerned. The Executive Council emphasised the critical situation in its letter of 4th September to the President. Now, once the decision was made and broadcast, the Committee was being asked to reconsider by the President of the United States with the support of the President of the A.F. of L. In addition to the recommendation made in Tumulty's telegram of 11th September, Gompers telegraphed Fitzpatrick on the 12th and John Tighe, President of the A.A. of I.S. & T. on the 16th. He strongly urged postponement. In the telegram to Tighe he questioned what the result of the strike might be - clearly implying defeat. Moreover, Gompers felt that in avoiding a strike which U.S. Steel were deliberately attempting to foment, the unions would win support from the President and the public. "A strategic and fundamental fact that is not understood is when to strike and particularly when not to strike."¹⁸ He went on: "Inasmuch as the iron and steel workers have been disorganized . . . for so many years, what grave wrong or injury can occur if the matter is held in abeyance."¹⁹ Gompers was in a deeply ambivalent position. Having argued throughout his career for independence, he disapproved of this strike action. He was in fact strongly supportive of Wilson, and anxious to avoid embarrassing the

administration. He was now conscious of politics and hoped for government backing in the organisation of steel.

Foster and the rest of the National Committee believed that postponement would destroy the entire campaign. Momentum would be lost, hope would disappear and mass sacking would continue. Their first consideration was the steelworkers, not Presidential or public opinion. Isolated strikes would still occur spasmodically and be stamped out, and all hopes for the unionisation of the steel industry would then disappear. Moreover, Foster wrote angrily to Samuel Gompers on 12th September: "You may not be aware that seven of our organizers have been brutally murdered and the campaign of terrorism on the part of the steel companies is beyond description."²⁰ As a letter to the President explained: "Delay is no longer possible."²¹ Of the major union figures only William Johnstone of the International Association of Machinists swung to Gompers' position but, despite his and Gompers' pressures on Tighe, Fitzpatrick and Foster, the decision was confirmed on 18th September 1919.

The actions of the steel industry from the outset of the strike prevented a more serious internal dispute. The use of thousands of extra deputies, strikebreakers, armed guards and their indiscriminate violence towards the strikers and their families galvanised the entire union movement. Three hundred and sixty-five thousand steelworkers joined the strike. Both the labour and business communities discovered a solidarity which was unprecedented. The issue on which the sides clashed so violently was the right of workers to join unions and to have that right recognized by employers entering into collective bargaining agreements.

The crisis in industrial relations had reached its most serious point. Both sides became intransigent over their demands: both were as united as possible. The steel strike laid open what had gradually been developing since the end of the war: the dispute was over power. The unions had sought the continuation of the N.W.L.B. codes in order to establish its organisation and power. The movement continued to try to establish itself throughout the nation even when the N.W.L.B. 'umbrella' disappeared. Their method would be direct action. The business community was deeply opposed to any increase in union organisation; a position rooted in their belief in the management prerogative which also governed their call for a return to the pre-war economic structure. Many strikes were over wage demands and here too deep antagonism was engendered to a point where, in common with strikes over legitimacy, they became disputes not on issues but between two power groups. The steel strike was the climax of this developing situation.

It was amid the violence and hatred of the steel strike and with the background of a year of increasing tension and confrontation between the labour movement and the business community that the First Industrial Conference met on 6th October 1919. Its purpose was to end the bitterness which then existed and to discover a basis on which more stable relations could be founded in industry. The Conference, it was hoped, could begin to reconcile the two groups who were as radicalised and as united as they had ever been. Their attitude towards the Conference was to use it frankly as a means to achieving their ends. This attitude was reinforced by the fact that this was an administration initiative; business and labour having never been consulted. The A.F. of L. Executive

Council, in keeping with this purpose, called for a meeting of their delegates to the Conference on 4th October in order that they might "discuss, consider and determine upon the policy which we shall advocate and maintain at the conference".²² Although the business community did not have a communications network as coherent as the unions', it would soon become apparent that their attitude towards the Conference was similar to that of the unions.

The structure of the Conference only served to formalise the antipathy between and unity among these groups. It conferred control of all resolutions on the three groups which constituted the Conference; Business, Labour and the Public. This further encouraged both business and labour to present their claims in a self-interested way as a platform upon which to present and justify their aims.²³ The success of the Conference depended on its being able to overcome these problems.

It failed to do so and collapsed three weeks later, because the claims of each side fundamentally reflected deep-seated political perceptions which neither side could allow to be compromised. Although the purpose of the Conference was not achieved, its importance as a formal platform of the fundamental aims and attitudes of both business and labour lends it significance as a starting point and was important as a definition of the terms of reference of what was known in American politics as the 'labor problem'. The Conference demonstrated that both groups' demands were expressions which derived from more fundamental attitudes towards the nature of the economic system.

It took only four days for the Conference to reveal the extent of the gulf between business and labour. The labour group, Samuel Gompers explained, felt it incumbent upon itself to offer the Conference "those principles and actions which we believe would contribute most to the accomplishment of the purpose indicated in the letter of the President of the United States invoking this conference."²⁴

These principles when they were submitted to the Conference amounted precisely to the aims of the trade union movement. It was not compromise but the recognition of their demands which would satisfy labour and bring industrial peace. The full panoply of union demands were thus included: the eight-hour day, five and one-half day week; a minimum wage adequate to support the worker and his family in reasonable comfort and security; equal pay for women; the prohibition of immigration for two years and the prohibition of child labour. In themselves these demands were the cause of much bitter antagonism between unions and management but three further principles went to the heart of the difference between the two sides and revealed the fundamentally political nature of their antagonism: these were the demands for the right to organise trade unions; the right for workmen to have representatives of their own choosing and the right of collective bargaining. In effect they were demanding the recognition of trade unionism per se. The steel strike was at that moment demonstrating that business could not accept such a demand.

Importantly, the labour group called for the installation of a nationwide system of conciliation and for the Department of Labor to instal the same where none existed. In effect this was a call for the continuation of the National War Labor Board and the government's protection of trade union rights. This final resolution went further to assign these boards the task of carrying out "a systematic review of industrial relations and conditions".²⁵ The import of this was that the boards would have a role far beyond mere conciliation and would also be empowered to investigate and report on conditions throughout America. Such a board would be a powerful weapon for continuing trade union expansion. The labour group presented these resolutions en bloc and with the group's unanimous support. In fact this call marked a significant shift for Gompers. For the first time he was adding his voice to a call for continuous government intervention in industrial relations. The earlier purist policy had been abandoned. However, the group's proposals did not end here. Wishing to demonstrate their "sincere and fair desire to prove helpful"²⁶ they resolved that the Conference should appoint a committee of six members, two from each of the three groups, to adjudicate in the steel strike. Once more this would be tantamount to recognition and acceptance of unionism in the steel industry. The purpose of the labour group at the Conference was thus the recognition of trade unions.

The Conference did not have to wait too long to receive the considered response of the business group and its views as to the basis for improved industrial relations in post-war America. On the following day, Harry A. Wheeler of the Union Trust Company in

Chicago presented the Conference with these views. In stark contrast to the labour group's emphasis on rights and reforms, the business group's preamble confirmed its belief that the main purpose of the industrial system was to produce as efficiently and plentifully as possible in order to provide a continually improving standard of living. To this end it submitted the following principles: that an increase in the quantity and quality of production was the responsibility of men and management so that inefficiency and restrictive practices were to be condemned; that as the basic productive unit, individual plants and factories were the proper units in which co-operation between workforce and management could take place; that wages were primarily determined by supply and demand and should be viewed as reward for individual effort and reflect local conditions; hours could not be too drastically reduced or production would fall. The right to strike was granted but could not be allowed where it was an attempt to coerce others to deal with or join the striking organisations. The right to associate was also granted but could not override the principle of individual liberty. No right of strike or association should be allowed in the public utilities or government service.

The underlying theme of the statement was that "the duty of the management"²⁷ was to make the decisions on hours, wages and working conditions and to exercise the "essential function of judgement and direction"²⁸ of the plant, factory or industry. Management must be free to manage. The statement ended by upholding the principle of the 'open shop' as the best means of fostering industrial harmony.

Both the statements of the business and labour groups were referred to the various committees set up to deal with the individual points raised. It was clear however that compromise was a practical impossibility. Both had presented what amounted to manifestoes for industrial relations. The points laid down by the two groups at this Conference were at the root of the dispute between the trade unions and the business community. Both intended to include the entire working population in their schemes.

The aims of the two groups were deeply antagonistic at every turn. For the unions the right to organise was crucial. This was countered by the business community's claim that this was an invitation to coercion and could never be guaranteed. Collective bargaining was similarly crucial to the recognition and power of trade unions. Again the business group claimed that striking to win this was coercion of the liberty of employers to choose whether to bargain or not. The unions demanded that workers have representatives outwith particular plants while business held that only the individual plant could form the base of industrial co-operation. Business's insistence on attention being paid to local conditions also challenged the unions' aims of nationwide agreements. At dispute was the recognition by business of trade union structure and method.

The dispute over industrial relations had its roots, however, in the differing attitudes towards the nature of the economic system. The basic question was whether industry should be run entirely at the discretion of management on purely financial grounds

or whether industrial policy should take cognizance of the workers' wishes. The unions sought a democratic industrial system. Business regarded the system as purely practical; a productive process under the imperatives of finance and profit and as such not open to negotiation with the unions. It was in this sense of conflicting views on how the economy should work for the benefit of the population that the differences between business and labour demands ultimately derived from deep-rooted political beliefs. Labour viewed the economy as a flexible mechanism which could be successful while catering to their needs. Wages would be based on a greater recognition of the contribution of workers to the wealth of the nation. They also denied that this view actually affected its working very greatly. Business, however, viewed labour as a cost of production which must be minimised. The economy was 'natural' and would not perform if interfered with unduly. The well-being of the population would be achieved by cheap production, making goods available to all, and through high profitability, encouraging greater investment. The economic implication of the various demands previously enumerated was that labour sought a demand-led economy while business sought a supply-led economy.

At the Industrial Conference it now fell to the public group to discover some basis for agreement between these two attitudes. The public viewed its responsibilities differently from the other two. They felt that the group's purpose was merely to screen resolutions to determine their relevance to the Conference. If they felt that the resolution was relevant then it was allowed to be presented by the individual who proposed it. The group never attempted to form an identity or a policy of its own and did not wish to.

The resolutions, when they were presented, revealed the real difficulty in finding any compromise in the dispute. Two resolutions by Henry Dennison, a mill owner in Framingham, Massachusetts, called for recognition of the workers' need for self-respect and accomplishment as a central policy in the conduct of industrial relations through the erection of works committees. These were committees set up within factories to enable consultations between men and management. Dennison's second resolution called for equal bargaining power and the recognition of representatives of the workforce from external organisations. These resolutions simply echoed the two sides' views on the structure of industrial relations, as did a resolution from John D. Rockefeller calling for closer personal relations between employer and employee which could be best achieved by organisations within individual plants.

On the same day, Thursday 9th October, two other resolutions were submitted reflecting a similar solution to the 'problem'. The first from Gavin McNab, a major Democratic contributor from San Francisco, called for a national conciliation board in the belief that it was "the duty of our National Government . . . to assume the leadership in this most important of issues".²⁹ McNab cited the success of the N.W.L.B. as grounds for his hope that such a board might ameliorate industrial disruption in peace time. The other resolution from the Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, was to create conciliation boards in each industry. Unlike McNab's board which would comprise the Secretary of Labor and ex-Presidents and House and Senate choices, Wilson's boards would be comprised equally of employers and employees. If this board failed to reach a unanimous decision there would be a national board and

finally an umpire to which any disputes could be referred. Any decision reached would be binding and equal in power to that of a trade agreement.

At the end of the first week it was already clear that the dispute between business and labour demanded a political decision. Even among the public group compromise appeared unlikely upon the principles involved because any solution would be based on attitudes to the economy which were ultimately determined by political thinking. The resolutions of the public group had already demonstrated this problem - it could fudge the issue by embracing the aims of both sides, as in Dennison's resolution, or it could squarely support one or other of the groups, as in the Rockefeller resolution. Anyone who believed in a free market economy would find it impossible to accept that wage levels could be decided on anything other than financial imperatives. This was a political belief. The only other course was to avoid dealing with principles entirely through conciliation boards which would defuse the anger and solve disputes piecemeal.

The public group, whatever choice it made, still required the support of the other two sides in the Conference before there was any possibility of recommendations being initiated. The discussions of the following week were to show how little either side was prepared to compromise on any solution. This was particularly true where the key issue of union recognition was involved. Unfortunately, this issue now dominated the Conference and caused its collapse. As far as both business and labour were concerned there was no reason for further discussion until this principle was decided.

On Tuesday 14th October the steel strike resolution came before the Conference. It symbolised labour efforts to gain its demands for recognition and collective bargaining. An amendment was submitted by Thomas Chadbourne, a Democrat close to Wilson, to have a steel committee set up with its decision to be binding. This was voted down by all three groups at the Conference and prompted Samuel Gompers to give an impassioned speech explaining the significance of the steel resolution to the assembly. The key to the dispute, he said, was that steelworkers wished "men who were representatives of the workers to speak in the name of and by the right of the workers".³⁰ This wish was being denied them by the steel industry who claimed that to do so would mean a closed shop. Gompers maintained that employers were using a scenario of complete union power in industry to justify their opposition to any acceptance of trade union rights whatsoever. He went on to say that such an attitude was akin to the disdain of the International Workers of the World for compromise and would indeed make the I.W.W.'s revolutionary assertions more credible to millions of workers. The purpose of the A.F. of L. was not revolutionary, but it might become so if it was not allowed to represent workers fully, including strike action, in pursuit of justifiable aims.

We demand a voice in the determination of the conditions under which we will give service . . . we demand that the workers shall have that voice not only as supplicants but by right.³¹

Gompers' view was that the sense of belonging which recognition bestowed would diminish the radicalism among unionists and it was from this position that he could argue that a strong unionism

within the system was better than a revolutionary unionism outwith it. The A.F. of L. endorsed the strike on 22nd September in order to hold the steelworkers within its purview. Trade unionists looked to the Conference to bolster their status and grant them recognition both for the justice of their demands and to avoid a further radicalisation of workers. Trade unionism was not only asking these rights for itself but for the good of the nation. Gompers presented the Conference with the alternatives - socialism or a reformed industrial system with unions countervailing the power of business. Union recognition went hand-in-hand with the conservation of the contemporary economic system. They were not a threat but an important development. Gompers' argument was given some credence by the events of 1919, from Seattle and Boston and by the Iron Age quoting Fitzpatrick as having said "We are going to socialize the basic industries of the United States".³²

The future turn of events however was not the concern of public or business groups. The former simply wished to solve the problem of industrial disputes in the present. For the latter it was a question of power. To allow power over industrial policy to pass from their hands was an unthinkable future. They trusted the A.F. of L. as little as the I.W.W. to use power in a way which did not damage their interests. Gompers himself was committed to constantly increasing standards of living, so that even the A.F. of L. ultimately threatened their economic position. In any case it felt that had Gompers been truly in control and out of sympathy with the steel strike it could have been stopped. Either he was weak, they concluded, or only marginally less radical than the strikers themselves. They were therefore determined that unionism

would not gain de facto recognition through consideration of the strike issue. A committee to adjudicate the strike, whether favourable or not, would give the strikers recognition. To many employers the A.F. of L. and the I.W.W. were of a piece a threat to the economic system which they sought. A vote on the steel strike resolution was postponed until Thursday.

In the meantime the Conference continued to be embroiled in the dialectic of recognition. The row shifted to a resolution on collective bargaining which the labour group had submitted. The Conference committee of fifteen, which was the vetting committee for the Conference, now returned the resolution. It called for the right of trade unions to organise and bargain while recognising the individual's right not to join. The committee also referred an amendment from Thomas Chadbourne to the floor substituting the word associations for trade or labour unions. A third substitute from Wheeler stated that it was the prerogative of management as to whether representatives from outside the plants would be recognised.

Speaking for the labour group, in the absence of Samuel Gompers, Matthew Woll attacked the Wheeler substitute as representative of the suppression by employers of the workers' freedom of choice. He went on to pillory the business group's paranoia that this demand for recognition would lead to the closed shop throughout America. All that this resolution meant, Woll continued, was respect for the wishes of the workforce by management and "the right of equilibrium",³³ ie representatives outwith the firm or work and job pressures who were free to pursue the aims of its membership. This was exactly what business wished to avoid. The likelihood was that these aims

would not accord with their own priorities of minimum costs and maximum production and as little extraneous interference with these as possible. A.A. Landon flatly defended the idea of management prerogative. It was they who ran the business and their decisions could not be coloured by union pressures. The business group also applauded the N.W.L.B. policy which forbade the extension of union organisation during the war. The business community saw no reason to allow unions to grow after the war. The impasse complete, the Conference adjourned until 20th October.

When the Conference reconvened, the voting demonstrated that there had been no behind-the-scenes discussions and little in the way of modification of attitude: these issues were too crucial to compromise. The Wheeler substitute was defeated by a combination of labour and public groups, the Chadbourne amendment voted down by business and labour groups and the initial resolution defeated by the business and public groups. The labour group's steel strike resolution which was up for reconsideration was voted down by the business and public groups. The public group in seeking compromise could not back either of the other groups' positions. Business and labour could not sacrifice their positions in compromise.

That is not to say that the public group was as coherent and united as were the other two. It was not. This was why there was no attempt to declare its collective view. The group was in fact, to some extent, a receptacle for further representatives of business and labour including Bert Jewell, of the Railway Employees Department of the A.F. of L.; John Spargo and Charles E. Russell, both renowned socialists among the ranks; A.A. Landon, a railroad executive; and

mill owners Dennison and Fuller Calloway. Yet the majority controlled and continued to search for compromise. By 20th October frustration had grown in the public group and polarisation began to occur. Labour sympathisers were becoming increasingly willing to back the labour group and businessmen were also revealing their sympathies.

On Wednesday the 22nd, Samuel Gompers made one final attempt to break the deadlock by reintroducing a resolution on collective bargaining omitting any mention of trade unions. As Gompers said, its purpose was simply to have the Conference declare for the principle of collective bargaining, irrespective of the organisation through which the workers were represented. This compromise went far enough to win the support of the public group. The resolution did not involve union recognition per se and could thus accommodate works' committees and business's insistence on plant-based bargaining. It was clear, however, that such a resolution would in the case of the steel strike have put the employers in the embarrassing position of having to accept the men who had been organised.

The reality was that employers did not wish to negotiate with trade unions or even give an implicit acceptance which might allow expansion. No resolution which called for any sort of recognition could be approved by them and since any resolution required unanimous agreement they voted it down. As they argued when explaining their vote, the resolution was still too 'vague'. Though unions were not mentioned specifically it would still mean a commitment to bargain, should they demand it. Furthermore in failing to prohibit unionism in government service the resolution was incomplete. Finally, and most

crucial to the business group, it included no mention of the right of management to decide whether or not to recognise any representatives of the workers. Several members of the public group attacked the business group for being obstructionist and for destroying the Conference itself. Harry Wheeler denied this and maintained that the business group would support "every resolution looking toward the making of a program that shall consistently represent constructive and progressive industrial relations in the United States".³⁴

Since it appeared that only a resolution exactly meeting business's views would be endorsed, the labour group withdrew from the Conference. Gompers was not about to present a resolution which would endorse business's attitude to labour. Only a resolution which gave management the prerogative of recognition would win business acceptance. Such a resolution was of no use to trade unions. It gave them no more security and no basic right of recognition. As Samuel Gompers wrote to William B. Wilson in explaining the withdrawal of the labour group "When the principle of collective bargaining was denied then there was nothing further that labor could do, as that principle is fundamental."³⁵

The First Industrial Conference forcibly demonstrated that the dispute between the labour movement and the business community was about power and levels of control. Business believed that trade unions threatened management's handling of discipline, manning levels, conditions of employment and wages and that they therefore posed a fundamental threat not only to the control of the productive process but to the broader financial policies of industry.

As the National Industrial Conference Board put it, "The stand taken by the Employer's Group was predicated on the maintenance of the open shop, which they saw endangered by the type of collective bargaining insisted on by the Labour Group".³⁶

The issues of trade union recognition, collective bargaining and the right for workers to have representatives of their own choosing was the key battleground between business and labour. The Conference demonstrated that neither side could afford to compromise over them. In spite of differences within the labour movement, on these questions the A.F. of L. could lead the trade unions confidently even if it was powerless on most other issues. As the steel strike showed, the A.F. of L.'s reluctance to encourage industrial action gradually dissolved in the face of increasing grassroot militancy and the tactics of employers until it realigned with the mood of those members directly involved in industrial disputes.

Strikes which did not concern these key issues in 1919 and in the following years were generally over immediate issues such as wages. Thus, taking place in industries where unionism was already established, they did not involve these political implications directly. Yet wage demands inevitably highlighted the question of the economic implications of trade unionism as far as employers were concerned. Whether disruption was caused by basic issues or wage demands, in 1919 the atmosphere was suffused by a sense of confrontation between two bitter antagonists.

The 'labor problem' by 1919 was apparent on three separate yet intimately related levels. Firstly, disputes between workers

and employers arose from immediate issues; hours and conditions of work and wages. Secondly, disputes were breaking out over the question of whether employers should recognise and bargain with newly organised unions. This caused strikes in steel in Kentucky and West Virginia coal fields and in the Boston police service. Ultimately, clashes on these issues were predicated on deeper perceptions regarding the purpose and working of the economy. Trade unionists argued that workers needed an organisation to end their exploitation and needed to feel that they were partners in the economy with their contribution being recognised. They also believed that wages should take greater cognizance of this contribution. Strikes, boycotts and blacklists were merely weapons through which this could be achieved. The differences within the trade union movement were caused by different views on the extent to which the economic and political systems accepted this argument. Gompers and his supporters felt that recognition could be achieved through co-operation and the demonstration of the responsibility and benefit of unions. Other unionists believed that only the exercise of power could achieve recognition, or that political reform was required. In 1919 this divergence was submerged because business disagreed with labour on these basic issues. They did not have unionism's mechanistic view of the economic system, nor could they over-concern themselves with making the industrial environment more pleasant. Higher wages simply deprived industry of investment capital and thus sapped the vigour of the economy. Strikes and boycotts, by interfering with the running of the economy, actually lowered standards of living. Employers opposed new union organisations on the basis that businessmen were free as individuals to choose whether or not to recognise them. Moreover they argued that their workforce did not

seek to join and were in fact being coerced. The depth of these beliefs varied among employers, but the antagonism of business leaders in key sectors of the economy had already set the tone of post-war industrial relations.

Attitudes towards the economy were the prime determinant of political loyalties. In the case of business there was no ambivalence about their attitudes being predicated on political perceptions. They tacitly admitted that their system would leave economic power entirely in their hands. Where confusion arises is in the denial of trade unionists that their movement threatened either the free enterprise system or the existing political system. They were above all concerned with having their demands met. The broader consequences for the economy was a secondary consideration. Arguments for higher effective demand were supportive of union wage claims. They also argued that better conditions would actually improve productivity. Economic attitudes were derived from unionists' demand for recognition rather than vice versa. Implications did not concern trade unionists and therefore they could deny any broader intent. They also made much play of their 'friends and enemies' policy towards the political parties as evidence of their loyalty to the basic economic and political systems.

Yet regardless of trade unionists' denials of any conscious intent to change the nature of the economy, the business community feared this possibility and therefore were deeply opposed to unionism. Indeed the likelihood was that, if unions were to win their aims, this might well happen to some extent. Despite union caveats, the issue was basically over economic power. This was

tacitly admitted by Fitzpatrick in the quote cited earlier and in two industries at least - coal and railroads - the demand for nationalization also signified the recognition among some unionists that satisfaction could only be achieved by major economic reform. The potential divergence within the labour movement between this and the position of Samuel Gompers was avoided in 1919 by business opposition to their basic aims, which gave unionists a common cause.

The collapse of the First Industrial Conference revealed that the experiences of 1919 had radicalised both sides to a point where compromise on any issue had become impossible, although this was due largely to business fears of the consequences of unionism rather than any declarations of their purpose by unionists. It also demonstrated that for both groups the power of their own organisations were major considerations. General issues in industrial relations such as hours, wages, the right to bargain and the right to organise became submerged in the charged atmosphere of a broader clash between incompatible opinions. It remained to be seen whether President Wilson could pick up the pieces of the Conference and whether his administration might discover a solution to the 'labour problem'.

NOTES

1. Slosson, P.W., The Great Crusade and After 1914-1928, p.1. This remains the best early factual account of the history of this period.
2. National Industrial Conference Board, Problems of Industrial Re-adjustment in the U.S., p.57. The N.I.C.B. as a source of primary material is not generally highly regarded. Nonetheless its membership was practically identical to that of the N.A.M. and its attitude was equally unbending. Its importance is as a 'diplomatic' outlet for business opinion.
3. Ibid., p.56. The N.I.C.B. called for wage reductions, opposed price controls and called for the early return of railroads to private hands.
4. Taylor, A.G., The Labor Policies of the N.A.M., p.55.
5. Ibid., p.37. From the original 1903 declaration of principles of the organisation. Its policies represented the apotheosis of rugged individualism in American business. However, their economic views were predicated on social Darwinism rather than economic theory. Businessmen in America had making profits as their first priority and formulated economic policies to support their perceived self-interest. See Normand, J.F., The Spirit of American Economics.
6. Southern Labor Congress, Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Congress, September 18th, 1918. The President's message was delivered by his vice-president. The Congress was then postponed.
7. Gompers, S., Seventy Years of Life and Labor Vol.2, p.2. He believed unionism to be "fundamentally spiritual". In addition to being 'spiritual' such an outlook appealed to trade unions since it placed them rather than the government at the centre of the struggle to advance workers' interests. Gompers' views had widespread backing in the A.F. of L. from the traditional craft and skilled unions. When Gompers is referred to in the text it can be taken that his opinions represented the views of most of these unionists.
8. Ibid., Vol.1, pp.180-181.
9. Ibid., Vol.1, p.25.
10. Southern Labor Congress, Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Congress, p.3.
11. American Federation of Labor, Letterbooks, Vols.255-259. Numerous examples of this can be found, viz., Vol.255, June 11th, 1919, Stoneware Potters' Local in Rovesville, Illinois. Further evidence of the A.F. of L.'s cash shortage was that from mid-summer onwards no new organising commissions were being issued and indeed some organisers were being given 'holidays'.

12. Taft, P., Organized Labor in American History, p.343.
13. Woodrow Wilson Papers, Executive Office File, series 3, case file 65, Industrial Disputes. Telegram from M.P.C. to the President, February 15th, 1919, requesting his help in reaching a negotiated settlement with the Shipping Board.
14. Ibid. A series of letters went to Wilson over this dispute and over similar charges growing out of a telephone strike in San Francisco where Burleson was seen as hostile to the unions. See also A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.255, May-July, 1919, July 1st, J.H. Walker of the Telegraphers to Gompers accusing Burleson of having "the mental attitude of an old time slave owner".
15. Foster, W.Z., The Great Steel Strike, p.17.
16. Ibid., p.33.
17. A.F. of L. Letterbooks, Vol.257, Aug.21st - September 20th, 1919. Foster to Gompers September 2nd, 1919.
18. Ibid., Gompers to Tighe, September 16th, 1919.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., Foster to Gompers, September 12th, 1919.
21. Foster, W.Z., The Great Steel Strike, p.94.
22. A.F. of L. Letterbooks, Vol.258, September 19th - October 21st, 1919. This was contained in Executive Document No.69.
23. The President's First Industrial Conference, Proceedings, pp.6-7. For a list of conferees see appendix 1.
24. Ibid., p.58, Thursday October 9th, 1919.
25. Ibid., p.59.
26. Ibid., p.58.
27. Ibid., October 10th 1919, p.81.
28. Ibid., p.82.
29. Ibid., p.55, October 9th, 1919.
30. Ibid., p.115, October 14th, 1919.
31. Ibid., P.116.
32. Iron Age, Vol.104, Part 1, September 25th, 1919, p.774. This was the main magazine of the Iron and Steel industry in the United States.
33. The President's First Industrial Conference, Proceedings, p.188, October 16th, 1919.

34. Ibid., pp.281-282, October 22nd, 1919.
35. A.F. of L. Letterbooks, Vol.259, October 21st, - November 20th, 1919. Gompers to W.B. Wilson, October 25th, 1919.
36. N.I.C.B., Vital Issues in the Industrial Conference at Washington D.C., October 6th - 23rd, 1919, p.15.

CHAPTER 2

THE WILSON ADMINISTRATION

The years of the Democratic administration of Woodrow Wilson were a watershed in the brief history of the American trade union movement. The Department of Labor began its work concurrently with that of the administration. Created to deal with issues pertaining to working people, its brief as specified by its organic act was the fostering, promoting and developing of "the welfare of the wage-earners of the United States, to improve their working conditions and to advance their opportunity for profitable employment."¹ Also important was the fact that the wage-earners had a voice in the Cabinet. The Act gave the working people a new status as an integral and recognized part of the political process. As the only organised voice of the working people, it was a de facto political recognition of the trade union movement.

This development was reinforced in 1914 with the enactment of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act. Hailed by Samuel Gompers as labour's Magna Carta, section 6 provided that "nothing contained in the anti-trust laws shall be construed to forbid the existence and

operation of labor organizations . . or to restrain individual members from carrying out the objects thereof".² In addition to this recognition of trade unions as a legitimate organisation per se, section 20 of the Act further provided that there would be "no restraining order or injunction granted by any court of the United States . . in any case . . between employers and employees . . involving or growing out of a dispute concerning terms or conditions of employment . ."³ The unions believed, and the administration intended, that this Act not only made trade unions and their organising legitimate but also protected strike action from legal interference where it arose from a dispute over immediate terms of employment. This intent was confirmed by an amendment to the Sundry Civil Appropriations Act denying funds to the courts for the pursuance of injunctive proceedings against unions involved in industrial action.

These reforms conformed to the Wilsonian theory of equality by which the grant of power to the trade unions would enable them to win the rights they sought from the business community. It was essentially a liberal policy of equality of opportunity under law and without the need for government action. In the final two years of the life of the first administration, however, it demonstrated a willingness to lay down policies specifically in favour of working people. This was the case in the enactment of the La Follette Seaman's Act in 1915 and in the passing of the Adamson Act in 1916. In both acts justice and dignity called for affirmative government action in the Wilsonian progressive theory. The eight-hour day, upheld in the Adamson Act, was a goal which surpassed the demands of the unions and was as such a just reform of the standard of

life in America which Wilson felt was worthy of federal confirmation. Wilsonian progressivism was a mixture of traditional legal and moral liberalism combined with a new acceptance of governmental responsibility to improve the quality of life of the nation. Wilson's government, sympathetic to some union goals, in fact benefited trade unions as a result of its own progressive beliefs rather than from particularist reforms.

American intervention in the First World War brought the government's reforming policies to a premature end. For the duration of the war, necessity was to be the arbiter of government policy. Nonetheless, when strikes erupted in the Pacific shipyards and at vital tractor, iron and steel plants, the government "preferred to smooth out these difficulties . . . rather than to pass any general laws against war-time strikes."⁴ The result of the continuing sympathy for the trade union movement was the recognition of the unions as a full partner in the productive process, rather than condemnation and proscription. The government decided to protect the welfare of the workforce in return for co-operation in the war effort. This it did through appointing Samuel Gompers to the Council of National Defense and giving labour a representative on each war-time board in which labour issues arose. The government also agreed to set up the National War Labor Board to act as an arbitration service as recommended by the National War Labor Conference and which also laid down the code on which Board decisions were based.⁵ In return for a voluntary no strike or lock-out commitment the Board ruled that collective bargaining should be used, that the eight-hour day be adhered to and that there should be a wage sufficient to provide for the minimum needs

of a family. The other commitment made by the unions was that no organising efforts be attempted during the war. In effect a truce was called on the basis of Board mediation. The code itself was not initiated by the administration but the response to the 1917 strikes places this, albeit through necessity, within the administration's labour policy.

The war-time response of the administration was tremendously favourable to trade unions. The code gave unions full recognition, tied employers to collective bargaining procedures and ensured the eight-hour day. In the case of the meat packing industry it meant the workforce gained an agreement without an enormous organising drive. Almost overnight trade unionism achieved a legitimacy shored up by the federal government and thereby accepted by employers; something which had not occurred under the Clayton Act. This apparent stability and status caused the tension in the post-war years as employers sought to end the code while unions expected that it would become the peace-time norm and thereby moved to win new membership to establish unionism throughout the nation. This ambition born of the war-time experience was, as we have seen, at the root of the steel strike and the bitter dispute between business and labour in 1919. The unions gained a status during the war which they wanted to maintain through their own power. The result was in 1919, as the Secretary of Labor Wilson reported to the President, the war-time agreements were "terminated in spirit."⁶ This termination was intensified by the scrapping of the NWLB almost immediately after the armistice.

Both sides recognized the importance of gaining the support, whether tacit or active, of the administration if they were to achieve their post-war aims. As the dominant force in the direction of policy the President's own thinking on the 'labor problem' would clearly be the arbiter of the government's post-war attitudes. This chapter studies the nature of Wilson's thinking at the outset of the year, what his intentions were and how the growing crisis modified this view and those of his advisers. Finally the response of the administration in its direct action in industrial disputes is analysed in order to reach an understanding of the broad nature of Wilsonian thinking on the 'labor problem', as already defined, during the remainder of his administration.

On his return from Paris the President took the opportunity in a speech to the nation's Mayors and Governors on 3rd March 1919 to re-emphasise his concern for the welfare of the working people;

The whole matter of the prosperity of peoples . . .
is not completed by the success of great enterprises -
it is only completed by the standard of benefit it
confers upon those who in the obscure roads of life
contribute to the success of those enterprises.⁷

Three days later the President set sail for Europe again and was thus largely cut off from direct control of industrial relations problems.

Tumulty had to inform Wilson on 27th March that Burleson, in his dispute with IBEW telegraphers in New England, was "out of harmony"⁸ with the President's own attitude. Although Wilson

urged Burleson to negotiate with the unions the dispute was in fact resolved before Wilson could exert pressure on the Postmaster General. Similarly, the dispute leading to the Seattle strike was being dealt with by the Shipping Board and was also removed from Wilson's control. Departmental independence was always a likelihood, particularly in an area where policy depended not on legislation but to a great extent on the personal wishes of the President. When he is 3,000 miles away, in an age without instantaneous communication, departmental indiscretion becomes an inevitability. Nonetheless, Wilson's attitude towards labour and industrial relations continued to be the basis of the administration's general policy. Certainly digressions such as Burleson's were causing deep concern to the Democratic National Committee's member from Massachusetts and further abroad in the party at this time, reflecting their support of the President's attitude. His written speech to the opening of the new Congress on 20th March 1919 was therefore an important indication of the post-war intentions of the administration.

As Wilson's speech of 3rd March had indicated, his pre-war political outlook remained substantially intact in 1919. The President saw no legitimate reason for any further extension of federal intervention in the American economy. The touchstone of Wilson's reform impulse did not derive from concern about the mechanics of the economy but from the abuse of the power which had accrued to business leaders from the economy. The abandonment of trust-busting for regulation reflected this outlook. In addition, concern over the size of industries was focused on the threat to the equality of opportunity, not upon the question of size as such.

Wilson's further concern with business power was in its threat to the functioning of the democratic system. Individual liberty was vitally important to ensure that the political system reflected and responded to the wishes of the nation. This in itself would offset the power of the business community. These were the primary concerns of Wilsonian progressives and with these modifications they had little further quarrel with the economic system.

Wilson stated his general approach to the labour problem in his speech to Congress as being a question of

How are the men and women who do the daily labor of the world to obtain progressive improvement in the conditions of their labor, to be made happier and to be served better by the communities and the industries which their labor sustains and advances?⁹

Any solution he proposed, however, would be dictated by his broader political philosophy. Thus, although he was genuinely concerned for the economic improvement of the less fortunate, it was a process which he believed could be carried out without recourse to further economic reform or interference by the government. Nor was it a process which involved the issue of the relative power of employers and trade unions. He believed the process would be best fostered by

The genuine democratization of industry based upon a full recognition of the right of those who work, in whatever rank, to participate in some organic way in every decision which directly affects their welfare or the part they are to play in industry.¹⁰

Wilson hoped that the co-operation which had been encouraged by the N.W.L.B. could be continued and extended in the following years. He hoped that improvement would emerge from a closer understanding between employers and their workers. In this way wages and conditions would improve as would productivity and performance as each recognized the needs of the other. Underpinning this hope was Wilson's conviction that the interests of both employer and worker were mutual and that this recognition would encourage co-operation. In Wilson's view, therefore, the improvement of the standard of living of the entire population was an organic process; one which would emerge in a cohesive society which shared mutual goals. In turn, Wilson stated that the solution to industrial disputes lay with business and labour themselves. The prerequisite was that the two groups ceased to

Calculate by what form and degree of coercion they can manage to extort, on the one hand enough to make enterprise profitable, on the other justice and fair treatment enough to make life tolerable.¹¹

Wilson called on the two sides to abandon their belief that power and the single-minded pursuit of their aims were the most effective means of securing satisfaction. The President believed that the broader reform programme of his administration had restored the fundamentals of equality and he could sympathise with neither side's assertions of their need for power within the economy. Wilson did believe, however, that the most important factor in collective bargaining was the recognition of the workers' contribution. His support of this was unequivocal. The President saw trade unions as the emergence of the voice of the working people, and to that extent

he accepted them. This is not to say, however, that Wilson regarded unions as the only legitimate vehicle of all workers and he was in no way committed to their growth. His first concern was that business and workers recognize the mutuality of their aims and benefit as a result. The basis on which consultation should be carried out was not Wilson's concern and he was not about to lay down any principles in the matter. The President went on to stress that Congress's task would be to legislate fundamental guarantees to the people, such as the eight-hour day, to improve their quality of life while the administration should undertake to ensure the efficient working of the agencies of conciliation. The government had no further role to play in the details of industrial relations.

Here lay the ambivalence between the outlook of progressives such as Wilson and the trade union movement in 1919. Wilson's basic philosophy had not changed during his administration, yet the experience of the war and the upheaval of 1919 resulted in both sides regarding the endorsement of their points of view as vital. Samuel Gompers was prepared to accept the Wilson view (as his final resolution at the Industrial Conference shows). The specific endorsement of unionism was unnecessary as long as the principle of collective bargaining was agreed. Yet the business demand to choose which people to bargain with implicitly denied this aim. Both sides looked for a clear statement from the administration which Wilson did not feel was his duty. Although his commitment to bargaining meant that the business demand for choice was out of step with his view, the President was adamant that the government should not become involved in this issue. The administration was prepared to accept any kind of agreed co-operation which would bring peace to industrial relations.¹²

In Wilsonian politics in 1919 therefore the labour problem existed at two levels; with regard to the working population, the humanitarian, liberal impulse was to continue to act to improve their quality of life where possible, even through central government leadership; the second was the practical issue of attempting to cement the trade unions and the rest of the working people with the business community in an industrial relations system with co-operation and stability as its basis. Both were in fact the continuation of Wilson's pre-war policies. Wilson saw little need to exceed the Clayton Act in its legal guarantee to unionism. In the case of the question of compromise the 'democratization of industry' was given added impetus by the apparent stability of industrial relations under the code of the N.W.L.B. during the war. The President remained loyal to his view of the government as an umpire in society. He would not be prepared to endorse the views of either side. Neither was he prepared to lay down principles on which industrial relations should be conducted, which was a matter for the two sides to agree.

As 1919 wore on, it became apparent that any movement towards compromise was unlikely to occur spontaneously, and that a government initiative was required to set such a process in motion. The policy formulated by the Wilson administration which most suited all the prerequisites of the Wilsonian attitude to the labour problem as outlined above was for the calling of an Industrial Conference. There business and labour could thrash out their difficulties with government blessing but without government involvement. Wilson had hinted at such an arrangement in his May speech when he said that "The new spirit and method of organization

which must be effected are not to be brought about by legislation so much as by the common counsel and voluntary co-operation of capitalists, manager and workmen . . ."¹³ The idea of bringing the two sides together had been accepted by Wilson as a responsibility of the federal government. The idea for a conference had first arisen in a telegram from Tumulty of 9th May. Conforming as it did to Wilson's political philosophy the idea held considerable attraction.¹⁴ In endorsing such a plan Wilson was also relying heavily on the hope that war-time co-operation had formed a bond which might now develop without recourse to federal interference.

The basic idea remained vague. Tumulty suggested a labour conference, a shop plan or a variation on the Whitley Plan.¹⁵ It is clear from the previous quote that Wilson was not prepared to have the government set up a system. This he felt should grow from the agreements of business and labour. The Whitley Plan was not an alternative, nor indeed was any basic plan at this stage. A direct intervention in industrial relations was not an approach Wilson was prepared to consider. A conference, or some means whereby industry itself could advise the President of its agreed wishes, was a prerequisite of any policy formulation. The idea was by no means definitive administration policy. The calling of a conference was never an explicit statement of policy, it simply took shape as the situation in 1919 deteriorated.

An acceptance of the need for government action grew during the summer of 1919. It was becoming increasingly obvious that only the federal initiative could bring the two sides together. In addition, the burgeoning inflation rate and the need for a stable economic

performance while readjustment took place served to emphasise the vital consequences industrial relations had for the whole of the American economy. By early August indeed Tumulty was so frustrated by the industrial turmoil that he was already shifting to a more antagonistic attitude towards the unions. He wrote to the President of his conviction of "the importance of your giving expression to some vigorous declaration with reference to the attitude of the Government towards peremptory demands made . . . by the labor organizations throughout the country . . ."¹⁶ This reflected a growing desire for action and control, rather than continuing to seek negotiated compromise. In his speech of 8th August, Wilson did highlight the need for stability in industry if the government were to deal with inflation which was hurting the entire population. He stopped short of attacking the trade unions but he made clear that the administration regarded industrial action as counter-productive to the goal of economic improvement. This guarded warning was sufficient to dissuade railroad shopmen, whose wage claim and strike threat had necessitated the President's statement. Over wildcat strikes, however, Wilson demonstrated a greater toughness, falling in line with the mood of Tumulty and the Director General of the Railroads, Walter D. Hines. Tumulty was growing considerably more extreme in his views than the President. The threatened shopmen's action had prompted Tumulty to write to the Director General of the railroads that "Any attempts to enforce these demands by 'direct action' would be considered an unfriendly act against the United States of America."¹⁷ So it was, in an atmosphere of increasing antagonism towards the unions, that on 3rd September 1919 the

President finally sent out a call for an Industrial Conference to be held in Washington on 6th October 1919 in order to

Discuss such methods as have already been tried out and to canvass every relevant factor of the present industrial situation . . . to work out . . . a practical method of association based upon a real community of interest.¹⁸

A combination of factors; the disruption of 1919; the relation of industrial calm to the general economic performance vital in a period of reconstruction; and Wilson's continuing commitment to the stabilisation of industrial relations on a basis of equality and justice, in addition to his own political philosophy of compromise and co-operation, informed his decision. Similar conferences had already been called in Canada and New York State. In the U.K. the Whitley experiment had confirmed the idea of the government acting to give industrial relations a framework. It could perhaps be said that the decision was somewhat belated. In part Wilson's involvement in Treaty-making caused the delay. Even after his return however the President hesitated to act until it was almost forced upon him by an increasingly tense nation and the obvious fact that industrial relations would continue to worsen unless the government acted. The day prior to the President's call, William Foster had made clear that strike action was now the only alternative open to the men organising in the steel industry. This dispute was so serious that the President belatedly attempted to have it postponed, so that it could be dealt with at the Conference. In this he failed but the steel strike emphasised the importance of the Conference to the administration.

On 4th September the President left on his fateful Western tour. The Conference remained apparently ill-defined. All that had been decided was that labour, business and the public should each have 15 representatives. The structure and actual personnel remained unclear; what was apparent was that the Conference was pure Wilsonian politics. As the President informed H.L. Ferguson, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, its purpose was to find "a genuine spirit of co-operation; a practical method of association based upon a real community of interest."¹⁹ The Conference embodied the liberal belief in the fundamental cohesion within the society based on a recognition by all involved that no group could expect to predominate, so that a willingness to compromise for the broader good of the society would emerge. It was in such a cohesive society that government could represent all the people and not any particular groups. In its conception the Conference was the litmus test of all that the New Freedom and Woodrow Wilson stood for.

The Conference was not merely a test of the Wilsonian credo; it was very much his own creation. Thus even his Secretary of Agriculture knew little about the Conference in mid-September and complained of the lack of farming representatives. In his reply Wilson revealed his deeper, unexpressed expectations for the Conference: "We expect this conference to widen into others, where special attention will be given to the several aspects of our industrial life. This is just a starter."²⁰ Wilson was not naive enough to believe that labour and business could agree on principles. His main concern was machinery and the hope that, once around the conference table, they would stay there. He hoped that a nationwide system of conciliation would emerge by mutual agreement among employers and employees.

The purpose of the Conference was confirmed in a letter which Franklin K. Lane sent to the President in September. In it he emphasised that "waffle" should be avoided and the Conference should deal with practical issues. To confirm the importance of this for the nation, Lane recommended that the President open the Conference. Lane considered that the key to compromise was for labour to achieve partnership status in industry. "Satisfy the worker that his personality as a thinking man is recognized and much of the present dissent will vanish."²¹ This indeed was the root of Wilsonian politics as has been seen in earlier quotes and the President wanted to see this implanted in a voluntary system of conciliation based on solving disputes; not satisfying principles or demands for power. With a system established, principles would be forgotten as recognition became reality. This was how Wilson viewed the labour question in 1919. This was the basis of his policy and his decision to call the Conference. It was now a fundamentally non-political attitude. This was a problem to be solved; not a political crusade to be participated in or fought against.

As regards the personnel of the Conference, business and labour were left largely to choose their own. The government intervened only when omissions occurred, such as the A.F. of L. not inviting any members from the railroad brotherhoods. They were included in the public group, as were men who the administration regarded as vital to the credibility of the Conference such as Gary of U.S. Steel. For the rest, the choice was made from lists submitted by each key member of the Cabinet. Some Democratic bias was to be expected as in the selection of Gavin McNab, Fuller Calloway and Thomas Chadbourne. Generally, however, the criterion was the

respect which these men might command. Thus Louis D. Brandeis and Bernard Baruch were both invited though the former refused.²²

The Conference convened on 6th October. That there would be difficulties was never doubted. On 16th September a letter from the National Association of Manufacturers stated bluntly that "We will never have industrial peace until the interference of government . . . is withdrawn."²³ Moreover it attacked the A.F. of L.'s dominance of the labour group, claiming it represented a small minority of the working population. Business remained apparently inflexible in its aims. Nonetheless Wilson believed that reasonable men once committed to discussion would continue to seek solutions. He was therefore bitterly disillusioned when the Conference collapsed a month after its opening. Principle, not machinery, had dominated discussions from the start. Wilson's plan had never begun to evolve. The two groups had become so entrenched in their positions that no consultation could take place without some guarantee of their principles.

In 1919 Wilson still viewed industrial relations in pre-war terms. His belief that the Clayton Act ended the issue of trade union legitimacy ruled his thinking on labour problems from 1914 onwards. That Act marked the extent to which the President could favour the power of any social group. From that time onwards he believed that legal equality had been achieved. The question then became one of making that equality work. The disputes over recognition and bargaining did not impress Wilson. He believed that these were principles which business ought to honour, but further legislation on this would, for Wilson, have been coercive and would

tip the balance too far towards unionism. Moreover he would be quite content for works committees to represent workers. He was not committed to ensuring that unions be the only voice of the workforce, although he did not personally object to such a development. The collapse of the Industrial Conference reflected the political gap between Wilson and the two groups. He could not sympathise with the continuing dispute over power in which they were embroiled. Now was the time for compromise which Wilson believed would benefit unions by allowing a gradual acceptance of their rights. Ultimately the Conference revealed that the 'labor problem' was intractable because the two sides required a government which had a political outlook in agreement with their economic ideas. This Wilson neither had nor sought. Wilson could sympathise with the position of Samuel Gompers expressed at the Conference that the union movement was actually a force for order and stability within the economic system. Yet he could not accept that it was the responsibility of government to coerce employers. This required a political belief that trade union power was actually a component of an egalitarian society, which Wilson was unable to accept. Such an acceptance had to come from industry. In the short term Wilson remained committed to compromise and the hope that union recognition would evolve. The gap between Wilson and the unions lay in what Wilson sympathised with and what he could accept as a political responsibility. The problem for the President, by now a very sick man, remained a practical one to be solved by machinery, not political philosophy. For him the collapse of the Industrial Conference signified merely the refusal of the two sides to be reasonable; not a basic flaw in the application of his political philosophy.

Given the inability of the two groups involved to provide an agreed plan, however, he now accepted the idea that the provision of machinery was a function of the state necessary to protect the public welfare. The President thus asked the public group to continue in conference and to produce a consultative report in December. In fact the public group underwent a considerable transformation between late October and 6th December when finally convened in Washington D.C. Ex-Attorney Generals Thomas Gregory and George Wickersham, ex-Governor of New York Martin Glynn, Henry Robinson of the Shipping Board, ex-Secretary of the Treasury Oscar Strauss and Bernard Baruch, Owen D. Young and Julius Rosenwald, all major figures in the Democratic party, had been drafted in to participate.²⁴ The second Conference became, in all but name, a brains trust of the administration and was chaired jointly by William B. Wilson and Herbert Hoover. Unlike the first Conference, this much more shrewd selection promised to reflect fairly closely Wilson's own attitude to industrial relations. The President was determined that a general policy would be the Conference's main concern when in his letter of 19th November to the body he said that "It is not expected that you will deal directly with any condition which exists today."²⁵

This much more homogeneous group was soon able to draft what Glynn regarded as a "pretty sweeping program".²⁶ This they released on 19th December 1919 as a "suggestion of practical measures which will serve to avert or postpone industrial conflicts".²⁷ The primary goal was seen as the restoration of the individual's sense of worth and self-respect. This was required as compensation for forced specialisation and monotony of automated production in large

industrial plants. The only way for this to be realised was through the organisation of the relationship between employer and employee. Trade unions were a 'hopeful sign' but until organisation was complete the most practical activity would be to provide machinery for bargaining on any basis. This machinery must be tripartite to include public representation as, in the Conference's view, industrial disputes were not merely the concern of the two antagonists. The machinery was to be a National Tribunal of twelve regional Tribunals based on the Federal Reserve districts with panels from which representatives of both capital and labour would be drawn. There should be no interruption of the work of public utilities or government, though the right of association in both was upheld. No abridgement of rights already granted was contemplated. This report was the basis from which discussions went on in early 1920 until 6th March when the Report was finally issued.

The final Report embraced any form of co-operation between men and management which would lessen conflict and increase understanding. In this it muted its clearer support of unionism in the consultative document by additionally welcoming works councils and shop committees. Where collective agreement could not be reached then the dispute could be voluntarily submitted to the Regional Adjustment Board consisting of four from each party, four more familiar with the industry and agreed to by the parties, and a chairman. A unanimous decision when reached would be regarded as a collective bargain. Where agreement was not reached the parties could submit the dispute to the National Industrial Board or an umpire on whom both were agreed. Where disputes were under review no industrial action could be carried out. However the board would "not submit to

arbitration the policy of the 'closed' or 'open' shop"²⁸ thereby leaving open the vital question of the spread of union organisations and of whether or not employers could refuse to bargain with new organisations. This apparent ducking of the key issue was modified significantly by the declaration on employee representation - the employees should be free to choose their representative by secret ballot, and employers should undertake to bargain with whatever organisation was endorsed by the workforce.

The main concern of the Conference was that a better relationship between employee and employer be achieved by whatever means agreed to by both sides. The aim of the Conference was entirely practical. The Conference, administration and Wilson consistently avoided the basic principle at the root of post-war industrial disruption; the question of power.

However, both sides had the power of their own organisations as the basis of their aims. Unions wished to continue to expand and thus required assurances of recognition. Business denied there could be any question of whether the working class should command the respect and recognition of business at all times as an equal element in the functioning of the industrial complex. In this the administration was reluctant to make a policy. Its priority was the peaceful conduct of industrial relations. The government itself accepted trade union demands for better conditions and pay but again did not see their achievement as being dependent on the unions. The 'labor problem' became essentially a question of political perception; whether the power of unions should be regarded as a necessary element in the readjustment of the balance in society, or whether this was

largely a question which did not involve power or balance but rather compromise and agreement. The latter was the progressive belief and was a fundamental tenet of their political philosophy.

Yet while the Wilson administration was unable to endorse the view of either side it did recognize that an initiative was required if compromise were to be achieved. It therefore accepted responsibility for the erection of conciliation machinery. The clause on secret ballots avoided the need for a political discussion by leaving the issue of organisation in the hands of the workforce, but free choice of the workforce and their access to conciliation machinery did go as far as possible to tying business to collective bargaining without actually laying down this principle. The Second Industrial Conference thus demonstrated that, while not committed to the power of trade unionism, it was prepared to leave this question with the workforce. It also demonstrated its commitment to collective bargaining and the respect for working people which it bestowed, as was further emphasised by the statement that "a strike is not merely a withdrawal from employment, it is an effort to secure better terms for the positions held".²⁹ As such this principle struck directly at the idea that strikers had terminated their employment and could simply be replaced.

As a reflection of the post-war labour policy of the Wilson administration, this Report was of some importance. There were indications that the administration, throughout a year of crisis, remained sympathetic to trade unionism's purposes though not its power. Both the statement on the nature of a strike and on secret ballots went some way to push employers to the bargaining table.

However, since it was not to be legislated, the obligation of business to accept the ruling remained unclear. Wilson had moved forward with his policy, but the problem of power was never answered, leaving both sides dissatisfied. Indeed the whole issue became academic in practical terms. The President did not press the Report for action so that it fell by the wayside. Hearings were held in Congress but no further progress was made before the end of the session.

These Conferences and Wilson's May and August speeches reflected the general labour attitude of the administration. It remained to be seen whether this approach would continue when the administration was faced with specific industrial disputes or threatened action and whether the rest of his administration would abide by Wilson's policy.

As already noted Burleson had strayed from the administration path early in 1919. Tumulty was increasingly bitter towards the unions as they threatened to disrupt the inevitably difficult period of returning to peace-time work. The responsibility for effecting the daily administration of labour affairs, however, lay with William B. Wilson, the President's Labor Secretary since that Department's birth in 1913. In Wilson the President had a man loyal to his own opinions and who with his union background also understood and sympathised with the union goals. Thus he was the least likely of the Cabinet officers to feel antagonism or frustration towards the unions. Throughout his tenure of office, he remained constant to the administration's policy. He upheld the President's belief that compromise was possible; in the case of

the Secretary more by a stronger emphasis on the need of both sides for a vigorous expanding economy. His attitude was best revealed in the speech he gave to the A.F. of L. Convention in June 1919. Wilson confirmed that the administration recognised that labour deserved a full reward for its contribution. The question was how the reward should be decided. The three choices were through the power of business, the power of labour, or through negotiation; he believed the latter was the best choice. Unions must also welcome the new machinery which could provide a much higher standard of living for the workforce while still producing adequate returns on investment. "The employers and employees have a mutual interest in seeing the largest possible production with a given amount of labor."³⁰ The emphasis the Secretary placed upon the economic benefit of compromise, combined with the President's more humanitarian outlook to form a coherent administration approach to industrial relations.

As with the President, the Secretary based his thinking on a conviction that consensus was a practical reality and that the conflict between unions and employers was not deep-rooted in differing perceptions about the nature of the economic system. He felt that the economic goals of both could be satisfied by an expanding economy in which wages and profits could both grow. Wilson willingly accepted that the unions were basically justified in themselves and their demands and stoutly defended their right to strike. Moreover, Wilson and his Division of Conciliation were handling most of the labour disputes so that his policy was the effective one. In this work the policy consisted of the balancing of demands. Thus Wilson termed the work "more diplomatic than judicial."³¹

From the beginning of 1919 the Division was inundated by requests for their help; it handled 1,780 cases by 30th June of the year. Nonetheless, the Division left only 111 unsettled. Despite the increasing difficulty the Division faced in reaching settlements, in his annual report in November 1919, Wilson demonstrated his constancy by his plea for "the exercise of the utmost tolerance and the maximum of good will and mutual forbearance during the trying days ahead."³² It remained to be seen whether the rest of the administration and indeed the President would find it possible to exercise the tolerance which the Secretary of Labor called for. Although the Division was handling the vast majority of disputes those such as the Seattle strike and the Massachusetts' telegraphers' strike were handled by the machinery of the Shipping Board and Wire Control Board respectively. Other disputes such as the steel strike were never referred to the Division.

Though disquieting, these divergences did not mark any change in the administration's policy, although they did undermine its authority and highlight the incapacity of the administration to achieve compliance. However, it was the clash between major administration policies and industrial disputes that most undermined the Department of Labor's control. The earliest demonstration that Wilson himself was abandoning his policy over industrial disputes where they were threatening to damage his broader aims was in the handling of a threat of a strike in August by shopmen on the railroads in which the right of workers to express their views was less important than the control of inflation. Wilson looked to the Industrial Conference to establish some basis for compromise but until it could convene the administration had to deal with

the difficulties thrown up by industrial disruption. Lacking any guidelines and machinery and surrounded by advisers who were emphasising the crisis which faced the administration, Wilson was finally convinced of the need for a strong response to any further major industrial disruption. Only Mitchell Palmer, the Attorney General, and Tumulty were able to gain even the most fleeting access to the President in the crucial months of October and November when the threat of a coal strike loomed.

Negotiations between the Scale Committee of the United Mine Workers and the coal operators had in fact been going on since before the Industrial Conference in Buffalo and Philadelphia. A strike call had been issued on 15th October upon the breakdown of these negotiations. At this point the Secretary of Labor intervened to call a joint conference in Washington a week later. The President made clear his own opinion on the situation in a letter to William Wilson on the day the conference opened. Emphasising that the mines must stay open, he warned that he expected the miners and operators to conform to this view and demonstrate a responsible attitude. "It is a duty that they (miners and operators) owe to society to make earnest efforts to negotiate these differences" ³³ When these talks failed, as Tumulty wrote to the Secretary, the situation was too serious to allow to continue. The strike was due to begin on 1st November. Tumulty was convinced "the next move is up to us." ³⁴ Two days later that move was made with Judge Anderson issuing a temporary restraining order against the U.M.W. carrying on strike activities. This was done under the war-time Lever Act, a decision earlier agreed to by Tumulty and Palmer. Tumulty gave the Attorney General a draft of a

statement to be issued defending the administration's actions. The statement was later delivered practically verbatim by the President. It was agreed that the right to strike could not be denied "in all ordinary industries and under ordinary circumstances".³⁵ However neither the times nor the industry were ordinary. As in the police strike, no action which threatened the public welfare could be condoned. The government had replied to the danger with "a refusal to surrender to this dictation and an assertion by the government itself of the right to protect . . the whole people. The government could never be seen to be surrendering its sovereignty to a class."³⁶

By late 1919 the administration needed to re-assert its control of the industrial situation. The strike in the coal industry would quite certainly have been disastrous; but that strike almost certainly appeared to the administration as a test where it had to impose its will, not only to avoid the disruption of the strike but also to re-assert its own standing in the eyes of the public. The collapse of the Industrial Conference threw the responsibility for industrial relations back on the administration. They were embittered by the entrenched position of the two sides. In this situation, public welfare meant the protection of the comfort of the general public at the expense of the rights of working people or business.

The possibility of a reaction by the government had not been overlooked by Samuel Gompers. He was aware that the government was reaching the limits of toleration. He had opposed the steel strike and wrote to John L. Lewis, President of the United

Mine Workers' Union, in similar vein urging that there be "an endeavour made by all means to avert the strike".³⁷ More concerned with the tactics of the unions and away from grassroots' opinion, Gompers was anxious that the movement did not antagonise an administration which he felt had done much for the unions and to which he was personally committed. Gompers was thus concerned to avoid causing the problems which the administration now faced and by demonstrating the unions' responsibility he hoped to keep the backing of the administration and in this way win the unions' aims. Many members favoured a direct attempt to win its aims. The irony of the situation was that Gompers had apparently abandoned his early model of the trade union. Reluctantly forced to back the steel strike he was anxious to avoid a rift with Wilson over coal. Lewis and Gompers had in fact clashed over organisation drives at the A.F. of L. Convention. Lewis was bitterly critical of Gompers' compromise at this time and later wrote that Gompers was "depending upon the federal administration"³⁸ far too much. As in the steel strike, however, the administration's use of the Lever Act allowed Gompers to swing to the support of the U.M.W..

On the same day as Gompers wrote to Lewis, the government instigated the injunction proceedings in Indianapolis, Indiana. The strike order was not withdrawn and Lewis claimed a major shutdown despite the sweeping nature of the injunction which prevented any benefits being paid or any communication regarding the strike being made. Under this pressure the two sides returned to the table with the Secretary of Labor on 14th November. In a memo to the President on the following day Wilson outlined the

the three ways in which a settlement could be reached: by a joint scale committee setting rates for the individual districts; by each district negotiating their rates independently; or by having the Central Competitive Field set a rate as a basis for negotiations in the outlying fields. In the Secretary's opinion, although the thirty-hour week and 60% pay rise demanded by the U.M.W. was unreasonable, it was impossible to stand pat on the issue. It was Wilson's belief that with the cost of living having increased by 70% and miners' wages having risen only 50%, "relief ought to be given to these miners on the basis of the justice of the situation".³⁹ He favoured the third option and hoped that such a settlement would not increase prices.

When the talks once more became deadlocked on 5th December, Secretary Wilson recommended that the miners ought to receive a 31.6% rise in yardage and dead work, to which the miners naturally agreed. James Garfield, the Fuel Director, then intervened to claim that the coal industry could only afford, and inflation could only justify, a 14% rise. This caused a furore in the union. Garfield's offer was rejected flatly and the Director was regarded as an interloper. The operators at once agreed to the Garfield offer.

The following day the President condemned the strike, in another of Tumulty's insertions, as being "not only unjustifiable but unlawful".⁴⁰ He did however offer to set up a commission to investigate the dispute based on the 14% offer. The Secretary wrote to Lewis on 8th December urging that he accept President Wilson's new offer. A commission had earlier been proposed to

the miners' President and rejected but with the 14% guarantee it seemed more attractive. Moreover, it was clear from Wilson's tone that there was little more to be expected. On 11th December he wrote to the President that "the mineworkers are profoundly impressed by the assurance of fair dealing which you have extended"⁴¹ and accepted the offer of the commission.

In the final analysis despite the toughness which the Wilson administration demonstrated in the dispute, the essential basis of the Wilson policy remained intact. The commission signified the continuing commitment to negotiated settlement, compromise and the recognition of the need of workers to be considered. The shift in tone from active sympathy to positive dissuasion, although it abridged the claims of unionists for the need to exercise their power, was a response to a crisis in the economy. Despite even this crisis the core of the labour policy of the administration remained intact mainly through the work of William B. Wilson, and the consistency of the President. As with any administration, control and order was always the first priority. Therefore the President could write to Calvin Coolidge to congratulate him on his election "as a victory for law and order".⁴²

As a progressive the President had to tread a thin line between the prerogatives of office and the policies which his administration espoused. In the coal dispute the President's ambivalence about the intrinsic goals of unionism led to the need for order and economic stability overriding the question of union demands for the right to exercise its power. Trade unionism never played a significant role in the President's view of the

economic structure of the nation. Indeed economic thought never played a dominant part in the President's general philosophy, where moral and humanitarian imperatives took precedence. Thus any economic future with trade unions as a major factor did not have a part in Wilson's thinking. This led to an economic orthodoxy which ruled his policy. At the time the President had been primarily occupied with the debate over the League and the Treaty. This led to a reliance on advisers or on a return to orthodoxy.

Despite Wilson's earlier dedication to reform, it was now clear he did not intend that the war-time arrangements should be regarded as the starting point. While ostensibly committed to reform, the Wilson administration was simultaneously dismantling the war-time machinery and attempting to return to a peace-time basis which meant in effect a significant contraction in the government's interventionist policy. This preoccupation also stood in the way of the administration furthering its labour policy. All the war-time expansion of the Department of Labor was being contracted as rapidly as possible. The United States Employment Service was reduced to a skeleton budget when two million troops were being demobilized. Secretary Wilson fought a desperate rearguard action against this trend, managing to at least save some bureaux like the U.S.E.S. albeit on reduced budgets.

The same priority of returning to peace-time, pre-war situations dominated the thinking of the administration on the question of the railroads. The ex-Director-General of the Railroad Administration, William McAdoo, attempted to convince the administration of the advisability of retaining the war-time

system. The current Director-General, Walter D. Hines, had a different priority however; that of stability. As early as May 1919 he was making suggestions about the future structure of the railroads in which the idea of de-control was implicit. He suggested that there be a reserve fund of railroad profits set up to help smaller roads and a board comprising an equal number of employers and employees to conciliate. He also suggested the idea of defining a reasonable return and a move to consolidate the system. By July, Hines was hopeful that a plan of this sort had a good chance of being accepted as a middle route, given the row between unions and the railroad companies over the Plumb Plan. This Plan called for worker participation in the management of a nationalized railroad system. Again it raised the question of the role of management, which was at the heart of the dispute between business and labour.

As with other Departments, the railroads were left largely in the hands of the Director-General, and the President depended on his opinion. Hines warned the President of the shop crafts' unrest early in July and advised that their request be refused as he believed that it would spark off an inflationary wage spiral throughout the railroad unions. He hoped this could be put across in a general campaign against the high cost of living. In this Tumulty and Hines held strikingly similar opinions. In August, Hines refused the shop crafts' wage claim of 15%. He claimed that with local conditions varying he could not give an across-the-board rise. Private industry he argued was much more flexible. The way to beat inflationary spirals was not to boost wages. This policy was finalised by the President's speech of 26th August, penned

largely by Tumulty. Wilson said that;

When the Government is taking unusual and vigorous measures to reduce the cost of living, it is not the time for organized labor or any part of organized labor to stay the Government's hand and to insist on increased wages, which inevitably will . . be multiplied . . in the prices paid by the consumer.⁴³

There was no mention of the fact that shop crafts had lagged considerably behind not only inflation but the wages of other railroad workers. The result was that although the strike was called off by Bert Jewell, President of the A.F. of L.'s Railway Employees Department, wildcat strikes broke out throughout the nation. These men had overstepped the administration's patience. It was announced that as of 30th August any men who did not report for work would be considered to have terminated their employment. This harsh action reflected the balance between sympathy and anger in the administration towards the unions. By late August 1919 frustration increased hostility towards the unions, since Wilson sought co-operation in his policies which he felt should be recognized as beneficial to the unions too. Wilson was also relying largely on the opinions of the Director-General which were considerably more hardened by then than Wilson's own views might have been. Perhaps the most costly effect was the residue of deep bitterness felt by the unions. It was bitterness which virtually negated all possibility of the Railroad Board being successful and was in no small part a cause of the upheaval of 1922. At the time this did not appear to influence Hines in his plans for the future of the railroads, given the dominating quest

for a settled industry and economy which drove the administration.

On 14th November Hines laid before the President the choices open to him. He advised strongly against government ownership and the Plumb Plan. He could however extend the period of war-time control for one year but this would embroil the railroads in the election though it was certainly a practical idea. Alternatively, the President could set a date for de-control and force Congress to act. By December Hines had concluded that "the public interest would be best promoted by Congress reaching a decision not to adopt legislation at this time".⁴⁴ The Cabinet, now meeting fitfully and only when the President convened it, disagreed with Hines and it was decided to set 1st March as the deadline for the relinquishing of government control. With Congress still embroiled in the League debate, it is clear that the tactical consideration of having the Treaty ratified played some part in the decision. Even so the decision was one which demonstrated the administration's increasing anxiety about relinquishing its war-time obligations. It thus fell to Congress to reach a conclusion on the railroads with considerable haste.

Another consideration which shaped the Cabinet's decision was the fact that the railroad brotherhoods were now becoming increasingly restive. By early February the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees called for a strike. This the President managed to avert through a promise that the Board to be provided by the Transportation Act would look at wages as soon as possible. This sufficed to quiet the railroad unions in spite of their attacks on the two bills then in Congress. They resolved to hold their

judgment in reserve. The Executive Council of the A.F. of L., anxious that negotiations with the railroad brotherhoods over affiliation should be successful, now decided to protest in order to curry their favour. They wrote to the President urging him to veto the Esch-Cummins Transport Act. It contained "subtle provisions which deprive the railway employees of their rights by providing compulsory arbitration".⁴⁵ The brotherhoods had also been voicing disquiet about the terms of the Board's power. The President assured them however that he could see no cause for concern and called for a consultative committee to be set up to begin the wage investigation. In fact William B. Wilson wrote to the President that although the A.F. of L.'s criticisms were general they may well have "just grounds"⁴⁶ for their disquiet. The President was determined to throw off war-time obligations and was in no mood for second thoughts at this late stage and duly promulgated the Transportation Act.

By spring 1920 the administration had practically completed the post-war readjustment. The railroads now had their own arbitration board, a commission had been set up in the coal industry, the National War Policies Board had been scrapped and the Industrial Conference was then attempting to lay down machinery for a national system of conciliation. Wilson's administration appeared to be close to achieving its goal - a systematic solution to industrial relations which would provide a practical means of harmony, removed from the purview of the government and without becoming involved further in matters of principle.

The infamous Red Scare was also now abating, so much so that Tumulty now felt it an opportune time to grant amnesty to political prisoners. Wilson had in fact stated clearly that he wished to grant "complete amnesty"⁴⁷ as early as June 1919. At that time his wish had been quietly ignored by Tumulty and the Attorney General. (Tumulty had in fact favoured Palmer's appointment over the objections of the retiring Attorney General Gregory.) By 1920 both the Socialist and I.W.W. organisations were barely in existence due to Palmer's raids in late 1919 and the Immigration Department's attempts at deportation. Amnesty was now considered a safe policy as well as politically desirable. The A.F. of L. had for some time been pressing for their release.⁴⁸ It was Wilson who now opposed the idea.

If the President and his administration believed that the labour problem had been largely quieted they were soon to be disabused of the notion. Bert Jewell reflected the increasing frustration on the railroads when he wrote to the President stating angrily that the Railroad Labor Board wished to conduct an investigation of the wildcat strikes when the unions had been waiting for a wage adjustment for 16 months and had been promised priority. The unions' acceptance of the investigation could be won only if the Board considered a national wage agreement. This was exactly the kind of action the President abhorred. It undermined the chance of compromise. He reacted swiftly, condemning Jewell's telegram as prejudicial to the success of the Board and its fairness. "The sending of such a message in such circumstances is in the highest degree reprehensible."⁴⁹ Jewell however complained further of the possibility that the Board might recognise the

"insurgent movement"⁵⁰ on the railroads. By this he meant the works council movement. However prejudicial Jewell's communications were, they accurately reflected the anger and frustration of the railroad workers. Unauthorised strikes had already broken out in Texas, Mississippi and Michigan.

The railroad union's position was that wages should be increased and seniority rights restored to all striking workers. They wished the wage rises backdated to August 1919 when the claims were first made. Their opposition to an investigation was based on the fear that its purpose would be to break the union's grip on negotiations. The Railroad Labor Board's decision was handed down on 20th July 1920. It awarded the railroad workers rises of 8 to 18 cents per hour, backdated to May 1920; some, such as the Engineers and Firemen, were awarded \$1.04 per day rises. Seniority remained an issue to be resolved.⁵¹

From September 1920 in fact railroad corporations began to mount a determined campaign to shake off the power of unions through the agency of the Board. Certainly, the workers were unhappy with the Board's decision, but at least it had confirmed to some extent the justice of their claim and seemed to assure them that they were regarded as representatives of the workforce. Tacit legitimacy seemed to have been granted. This fact incensed railroad executives. They began to impose new rules on the unions at a few days' notice. Some companies also began to impose wage cuts without negotiations or, where these did take place, without reference to the Board. The root of the corporations' campaign was

pinpointed by a quotation in the Iron Age from Mr Atterbury, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. He claimed that low rates, efficient service and operation could not be given "under national agreements or national boards of adjustments . . (or) in any other way than the fair and uninterrupted relations between our officers and their own employees".⁵² He called frankly for the ending of agreements with unions and clearly undermined the authority of the Board. He did so, he claimed, because the railroads were running at a deficit due to a slump in traffic and because wage rises had taken up all the extra revenue of rate increases. Wages had to come down and rules would have to change. This the various companies started to do without reference to the Board, and asserted that railroad management must be free from all shackles in the interest of the industry and the public. Inevitably the railroad unions quickly submitted these grievances to the Board.

By February 1921 and at the end of the Wilson administration the Board was awash with disputes. This was because, given the attitude of the railroad companies, local negotiation procedures were simply collapsing or were never even set up. Still more problematic was that the corporations, without any notice or prior negotiations, submitted claims for wage reductions to a Board already unable to keep pace with the workload. Atterbury was also demanding that the Board "enable them by orderly procedure with their own employees to develop appropriate rules and working conditions" ⁵³ — in other words, to abandon all negotiations with unions.

The issue of union legitimacy had once more been raised. Wilson and his administration had consistently avoided the issue. They sought compromise but this required a willingness to concede by both sides. As the Railroad Board was discovering, this was simply not possible. Atterbury's demands, if granted, would most probably result in the wrecking of the railroad unions. The issue which had faced the administration throughout the post-war years continued to burn. It was now in the railroad industry that the dispute was most evident and where hostility continued to exist.

In the coal industry it was also clear that the difficulties had not been settled. The report of the Bituminous Coal Commission, which failed to be unanimous, became effective as of 1st April 1920. It awarded a 24 cents increase to tonnage workers, 53 cents for trappers and boys and a \$1 per day increase to day-men. A tribunal of operators and miners was recommended as was a policy of coal storage to keep demand higher in summer. The wage increases were backdated to 31st October 1919. The result did not entirely placate the U.M.W. but, as in the railroads, it confirmed the justice of the miners' demands. Anthracite miners however were furious at the award and demanded their own wages be submitted to a Commission. This report in August 1920 caused fury in Pennsylvania. It gave the workers a rise of 13% less than the bituminous workers and even this was not a firm recommendation. The Commission felt it could not "commit itself to an award (which gave) . . encouragement to the . . vicious spiral in prices".⁵⁴

A strike appeared to be imminent and indeed anthracite workers began to go on 'holiday' as it was termed. This was in

addition to the strikes which had broken out in Illinois and Indiana in the Central Competitive Field over the destruction of differentials in the Bituminous Commission's award. Not surprisingly, the President felt compelled to write to William B. Wilson that "I feel I need your advice very much and there is no one else's I am willing to take."⁵⁵ This confirmed that Wilson had returned to his Secretary's advice rather than Tumulty or the Attorney General. The end of the crisis allowed the President to treat the 'labor problem' separately again without the pressures of 1919 to colour his attitude.

The Secretary of Labor immediately sent the conciliation service to try to bring about a settlement. Their conclusion was that agreement on differentials could be reached in conference. The President agreed that the Indiana and Illinois strikers return to work. The conference met on the 13th of August in Cleveland with the situation in the Central Field normal once more. Agreement was finally reached and the bituminous situation appeared finally to be settled by the end of the month.

The anthracite situation remained unsettled however. The U.M.W. had reluctantly accepted the award of the commission. However, "voluntary uprisings"⁵⁶ which the union had failed to quell now forced them to the conference table. On 9th September the Secretary sent the President a memo laying out his view of the situation. He agreed that normally, as the anthracite workers claimed, an agreement in the bituminous sector also applied to the anthracite sector. This did not apply in reverse however so that the November 1918 anthracite award did not apply to the

bituminous sector. This led to the unrest and the commission award. Anthracite workers moreover worked an average of 75 days more than their bituminous counterparts per annum. The bituminous rates, though higher, did not in fact lead to a larger wage. Moreover the Secretary added, the anthracite leaders had asked the President to set aside the award on 30th August, before it was even made. Wilson refused to do this on 1st September "until the real sentiment of the anthracite workers can find expression and they are ready to abide by the obligations they have entered into".⁵⁷ It was now his Secretary's opinion that this was the correct attitude to adopt. "Any initiative . . . that you would even consider calling the joint scale committee together . . . would be playing into the hands of those who defied you and lead to still further unsettled conditions".⁵⁸ The Secretary was sceptical of the U.M.W. argument about rank and file insurgency and believed that the leadership, both in failing to control 'holidays' and in calling for the award to be set aside, demonstrated not only a sympathy for the insurgents but an active desire to support them. Fairness was one thing but in this case the Secretary felt further concessions would be weakness in the face of threats from workers whose case he did not believe was as justified as the bituminous claim had been. In any case there was no opportunity for differentiation between insurgents or regular unionists, as both the Secretary and the President felt that the award had to stand. It was impossible for it to be changed merely to help the regular union leaders. Moreover it was doubtful whether any changes would have that effect. As the Secretary saw it, any changes would only encourage further insurgency. In the reply the Secretary drafted for the President, he advised the anthracite workers to abide by its obligations and

upheld the President's statement to Enoch Williams, one of the leaders of the Pennsylvania Mine Workers, on 1st September and hoped that they would return to work. This they did by 20th September. A row then erupted about non-union workers drafted in to replace strikers but this was settled by the operators agreeing to reinstate the strikers. Calm returned to the coalfields of Western Pennsylvania in October when a conference at Scranton confirmed the new wage levels. It finally appeared that the Wilson administration had been able by a judicious mixture of strength and concession to achieve at least a truce in industrial relations. A truce was all that could be expected. The administration had effectively failed to provide any way forward. The anthracite and railroad disruptions forcibly demonstrated that both sides were determined to pursue their own interests. In these industries, at least, compromise did not appear to be an immediate prospect.

The coal industry provided further evidence of continuing conflict. In Western Kentucky an outlaw strike had resulted in violence which had spilled over into the Virginias. In Alabama the operators had refused to agree to the award of the commission which led to a strike which lasted from the autumn of 1920 well into the following year. The Governor had intervened to order all out-of-state U.M.W. members out of Alabama. In such a situation the Secretary felt a further conference would be useless and on 6th February the President admitted that "I see no sufficient reason for action on my part".⁵⁹ The President was unable to take the step of enforcing his policy where compromise had collapsed.

However, this was no longer the Woodrow Wilson who had launched his New Freedom so powerfully in 1913 and had taken America into a war for democracy. Even before Wilson's own collapse and with this the collapse of Democratic cohesion, the strain of the war had had a telling effect on his administration. Cabinet members were resigning throughout 1919 and 1920, with Thomas Gregory leaving early in 1919 followed by Carter Glass, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture and War. The issue of the League served to throw the Democratic party into turmoil. Wilson had been the rudder of the party since his inauguration but in the face of the resignations, the divisive issue of the League and the Treaty, and the end of Wilson's power with his illness in 1919, disintegration and confusion affected both the administration and the party. Wilson had been at the centre of the administration's policy for six years. His illness left a vacuum.

This was serious enough but, in addition, despite Wilson's early re-commitment to post-war reform, the disentanglement from war-time commitments was the process which dominated administration thinking in 1919. A return to peace-time conditions was the precondition for further reform. Thus no reform programme had been implemented in 1919 which might carry the administration forward of its own momentum. He had accepted the codes of the N.W.L.B. but showed no enthusiasm for their implementation in peace-time. Wilson's labour policy was based largely on his own philosophy and on the 1915 report of the Commission on Industrial Relations. It had concluded that :

The only hope for the solution of the tremendous problems created by industrial relationships lies in the effective use of our democratic institutions and in the rapid extension of the principles of democracy to industry.⁶⁰

Industrial democracy was Wilson's policy. However, he did not wish to impose a system but wished to see labour and business agree on the mechanics of such an organisation of industrial relations. He called the Industrial Conference for that purpose. Its collapse destroyed his hopes for a mutually agreed system but not his policy of industrial democracy. For this purpose he called the second Conference. His concern was not the rights and wrongs of industrial disputes but to minimise their effect by a system of conciliation. He also believed such a system would of its own momentum minimise radicalism and result in bringing the two groups to a reasonable compromising attitude towards each other. This system would also end the need for the government to intervene in industrial disputes. As Louis Post, the second Assistant Secretary of labor said "We are trying to put the problems of government and society in a position where they will no longer disturb the public".⁶¹ The public welfare was in fact a key consideration in Wilsonian progressivism and the discomfort the public suffered from industrial disputes was a major reason for his lack of sympathy towards unions during such disputes. He recognized that injustice had caused many of the disputes and in these cases he was sympathetic to the workers' cause. Nonetheless, he saw that as a matter of reason and compromise, not as government policy. His was a concern for welfare, not economic power.

Increasingly in 1919 the industrial disruption not only caused public discomfort but also frustrated the administration's priority of adjusting as smoothly as possible to peace-time conditions. Thus, the justice of the workers' demands became less important than the disruption caused by the actions they took. This led to Wilson's condemnation of the wildcat railroad action and the coal strike. The Red Scare had given the period a tension which encouraged a stronger response, although the Attorney General's raids were never aimed at the unions.

These divergences from Wilson's traditional outlook reflected his lack of political sympathy with trade unionism. The crisis of 1919 apart, however, the Secretary of Labor remained the main formulator of the administration's labour policy. The President returned to his advice and posture during 1920 but it was clear that the President's view of trade unionism had changed little during his term of office. The Bituminous and Anthracite Commissions and the Railroad Labor Board reflected the President's continuing inability to take a fresh political initiative on the question of trade union powers. Although the Second Industrial Conference had made significant initiatives on collective bargaining and strikes, these were still within the progressive tradition by avoiding any federal grant of power to minority groups. President Wilson could not politically endorse the principles which unionists and employers continued to seek and which continued to fuel the 'labor problem'. The outcome of the Wilson administration was a failure to provide an atmosphere or framework within which stable industrial relations could be achieved. The President, as a moral 'friend' of unionism was unable to endorse its post-war demands,

nor was his progressivism capable of absorbing the political implications of the movement. Samuel Gompers was willing to accept this position to some extent, but he too required some assurance of unionism's rights. Wilson viewed the 'labor problem' as something to be solved, not an issue requiring a fresh political perspective. From 1919, while sympathetic to the improvement of the general quality of life of working people, in terms of legal, economic and political power he wished to institutionalise the status quo.

NOTES

1. The Annual Reports of the Secretary of Labor, 1917-1925.
2. Rayback, J.G., A History of American Labor, p.272.
3. Ibid.
4. Slosson, P.W., The Great Crusade and After 1914-1928, p.67.
5. Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor, p.119. The commission also recommended the setting up of the W.L.P.B. which attempted to rationalise working conditions in the government departments. The membership of the N.W.L.B. was: Taft, W.H., and Walsh, F. (vice-chairmen); Loree, L.F., Van Dervoort, W.G., Michael, C.E., Osborn, A.K., and Worden, B.L. (employers' representatives); Haynes, F., Hutcheononson, W., Johnstone, W., Olander, V., and Rickert, T., (union representatives).
6. Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor, p.18.
7. Woodrow Wilson papers, Executive Office File, series 7A, speeches, March 3rd, 1919.
8. Joseph Tumulty papers, Box 49, Telegram from Tumulty to Wilson, March 27th, 1919. Burleson denied this, claiming that the solution could be found through the proper machinery of the Wire Control Board, which the unions had not consulted before striking. The onus was on the unions to negotiate, not Burleson. See Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 4, case file 4967, North East Telegraph strike. Burleson to Tumulty, April 16th, 1919.
9. Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 7B, messages to congress, May 20th, 1919.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Baruch, B., The Public Years. As Baruch put it "labor seemed to care no more for the public interest than did industry", p.146.
13. Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 7A, March 3rd, 1919.
14. Tumulty papers, Op. cit. Tumulty to Wilson, May 9th, 1919. Tumulty's influence over Wilson during 1919 is a question of some debate. This is the first recorded mention of the idea, though Wilson's acceptance tends to give the impression that the problem of labour relations was already high on the list of the President's priorities.

15. Seymour, J.B., The Whitley Councils gives a detailed account of the scheme which was derived from the war-time Whitley Committee, which recommended national boards of conciliation in every industry. This idea was close to the plan which the Secretary of Labor had suggested to the industrial conference.
16. Tumulty papers, Op. cit., Tumulty to Wilson August 7th, 1919. By now Tumulty believed that the unrest was "the first appearance of the soviet" in America.
17. Ibid., Box 12, Tumulty to Hines August 27th, 1919.
18. A.F. of L. letterbooks Vol.257, August 21st - September 20th, 1919. In Executive Document No.69.
19. Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 4, c.f.5085A. First and Second Industrial Conferences. Wilson to Ferguson September 24th, 1919.
20. Ibid. Wilson to Houston September 19th, 1919.
21. Ibid. series 3. Letterbooks Vol.58, Lane to Wilson September 25th, 1919. Some measure of how close Lane's view was to the President's was that the former was appointed chairman of the industrial conference.
22. Wilson papers, E.O.F. series 4, c.f.5085A. Glass to Wilson September 12th, 1919. Glass was most concerned that the public be well represented.
23. Ibid. series 7A, September 16th, 1919. J. Babcock to Wilson.
24. President's Second Industrial Conference, Proceedings, p.1. For full list of members see appendix 2.
25. Ibid. p.2., Wilson to all conference members, November 19th, 1919.
26. Wilson papers, E.O.F. series 4, c.f.5085A. Glynn to the commissioner of the I.R.S. December 9th, 1919.
27. President's Second Industrial Conference, preliminary statement p.1.
28. Ibid., p.3.
29. Ibid., p.32.
30. Wilson papers, E.O.F. series 4, c.f.19, the Labor Department.
31. Seventh Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor, p.28.
32. Ibid., p.314.
33. Tumulty papers, Box 46, W. Wilson to W.B. Wilson October 24th, 1919.

34. Ibid. Tumulty to W.B. Wilson, October 29th, 1919.
35. Ibid. Tumulty to Palmer, October 31st, 1919.
36. Ibid. November 1st, 1919.
37. A.F. of L. Letterbooks Vol.259, October 21st to November 20th, 1919, Gompers to Lewis, October 29th, 1919.
38. Alinsky, S., J.L. Lewis, p.42.
39. Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 4, c.f.19. W.B. Wilson to W. Wilson November 15th, 1919.
40. Tumulty papers, Box 12, Tumulty to Hines October 24th, 1919.
41. Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 4, c.f.498. Lewis to Wilson, December 11th, 1919. Wilson always maintained that a moderate course was in the unions' best interests and that in seeking to curb strike action Wilson was in fact seeking to aid the movement.
42. Ibid., series 3, letterbooks Vol.58, August 22nd, 1919 to February 11th, 1921. Wilson to Coolidge November 3rd, 1919.
43. Ibid. series 4, c.f.350A, Government ownership/control of the railroads. Wilson also espoused the Tumulty opinion that "any attempt to enforce these demands would be considered an unfriendly act."
44. Ibid. Hines to Wilson December 12th, 1919.
45. Ibid. series 4, c.f.645, the Railroad Labor Board. A.F. of L. to Wilson February 25th, 1920.
46. Ibid. W.B. Wilson to W. Wilson February 28th, 1920.
47. Tumulty papers, Box 50, Wilson to Tumulty June 28th, 1919.
48. Preston, W., Aliens and Dissenters gives a detailed account of the development of this policy and its combined enforcement by the Immigration Bureau and the Department of Justice.
49. Wilson papers, E.O.F. series 4, c.f.350A, Wilson to Jewell April 23rd, 1920.
50. Ibid. Jewell to Wilson April 29th, 1920.
51. Ibid. U.S. Railroad Board Decision No.2, July 20th, 1920.
52. Iron Age Vol.106, part 1, September 30th, 1920, p.603.
53. Wilson papers, E.O.F. series 4, c.f.645 February 1st, 1921.
54. Ibid. c.f.664D, The Report of the Anthracite Commission.
55. Ibid. series 2, Personal Correspondence, W. Wilson to W.B. Wilson, July 28th, 1920.

56. Ibid. series 4, c.f.664, Bituminous Coal Commission, Representatives of the Anthracite workers to Wilson, September 2nd, 1920.
57. Ibid. Wilson to Enoch Williams, September 1st, 1920.
58. Ibid. W.B. Wilson to W. Wilson, September 9th, 1920.
59. Ibid. W Wilson to Tumulty February 16th, 1921.
60. Commission on Industrial Relations, Final Report 1915, p.2.
61. L.F. Post papers, Box.1, correspondence, from article in the Sunday Star August 17th, 1919.

CHAPTER 3

CONGRESS 1919-1920

The Congress to which President Wilson's speech was presented on 19th May 1919 was far from being the eager instrument of executive policy it had been during the President's first term. The 1918 mid-term elections had returned the Republican party to power in Congress. In the House of Representatives their majority was thirty-nine and in the Senate a slim margin of two. It remained to be seen to what extent the Republican party would be at loggerheads with the President over the labour problem.

The Republicans in 1919 were bitter towards Wilson. Buoyed by the victory, in spite of Wilson's plea for the election of candidates faithful to his goals, they were determined to make Wilson pay for his partisanship. Republicans were further embittered by Wilson's decision to go to Paris personally and by the partisan team of advisers he chose to accompany him. Theodore Roosevelt's personal pique at being refused a command in Europe had also turned him into a bitter critic of the President. Here

was a critic who, since his rejection of the Bull Moose nomination in 1916, had been able to reunite his party.¹ In the opinion of many Republicans, including Albert Beveridge, the League of Nations was "a real issue . . . a winning issue"² in 1920. It was clear that to defeat the League was also to defeat Wilson who Republicans assumed would again carry the Democratic banner in 1920. The Republican party, highly conscious of the next election, thus focused on the League as their weapon for victory and to obstruct the President. It is significant too that it should be the Senate Republicans who led this campaign. They wished to reassert the power of their positions over a President who had dominated the Senate for too long. Wilson's 1918 tactic had made it easy for Republicans to claim that their opposition to the President was motivated by a desire to defeat any attempt to use the war to partisan advantage. As Irvine Lenroot of Wisconsin wrote to Roosevelt on 13th April 1918, "It seems . . . we should do everything . . . to create public sentiment that will make it clear that the war cannot and shall not be used for partisan advantage".³ The Republicans' 1918 campaign theme would be continued in the fight over the League of Nations into the 1920 campaign. The Republican party in 1919 were thus in the happy position of being able to equate their partisanship with patriotism in attacking Wilson and 'his' League.

That political power was their primary concern in the League row was illustrated following the death on 6th January 1919 of Theodore Roosevelt. Almost immediately, speculation began about the likely nominee in 1920. The Philadelphia Public Ledger began a campaign for Senator Philander Knox of Pennsylvania. The

following month the New York Times wrote of the likely contenders.⁴ These included: Knox; General Leonard Wood, who was claiming the Roosevelt mantle; Governor F. Lowden of Illinois; Senator Miles Poindexter of Washington; and Senators William E. Borah of Idaho, Hiram Johnson of California and Warren G. Harding of Ohio, all three of whom were either opposed to internationalism or Wilson, or both; and finally ex-President William Howard Taft, a man who supported the League. As the New York Times pointed out, the key to the nomination and the party's success lay in the outcome of the League issue. Given Republicans' preoccupation with the 1920 election it was unlikely that they would be at all co-operative or interested in labour issues in the coming sessions of the Sixty-sixth Congress.

Even on the issue of the League, with its obvious electoral possibilities, the Republican party was far from unanimous. Senators Borah and Johnson were the most extreme of the Republican opponents of the League. They were fundamentally isolationists and would brook no compromise on the League. Senators George Norris of Nebraska, senior Republican and progressive, was also a member of the group to become known as the Irreconcilables. A further group, the Reservationists, was led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and Knox from Pennsylvania. These men did not object to internationalism but did object to any hint of obligation, which was of course basic to the League.⁵ There were also several Pro-League Republicans of major standing in the party such as Senator Reed Smoot of Utah and ex-President Taft. Nonetheless, opponents of the League predominated in Congress. Despite these divisions, the League was an attractive issue in that it disguised the split in the party in Congress between progressives and conservatives. It gave

the Republicans a greater appearance of unanimity than did any other issue, a major consideration for a party with the presidential election already firmly fixed in its sights.

Given this compelling list of advantages and the Republicans' preoccupation, it is hardly surprising that domestic issues received short shrift in 1919. The Eighteenth Amendment and Volstead Acts thus passed with distinctly less controversy than might have been expected "as if a sailing ship on a windless ocean were sweeping ahead propelled by some invisible force".⁶ The same was true of suffrage for women. Detailed criticism of the Wilson administration's handling of an increasingly difficult industrial situation was not forthcoming. Republicans merely condemned the government for returning to the "easy negligence of laissez-faire"⁷ in its failure to control inflation or the growing industrial unrest. It would have been unwise for Republicans to press this point too strongly since the right wing of the party was vociferous in advocating the run-down of the government's war-time agencies. Yet progressive Republicans, such as Norris and Senator R. La Follette of Wisconsin, supported continued federal oversight of the railroads, while Borah believed that a continuation of employment agencies were "vitally necessary".⁸ Clearly if deep divisions were to be avoided, then the party had to remain muted on economic issues and questions involving the role of the federal government in society in which it was largely successful during 1919. Even the notorious Red Scare did not become a major issue in Congress. A committee was appointed to investigate Bolshevism in the country. The Red Scare remained very much a phenomenon associated with the media, public opinion, and the Attorney General.

This unwillingness to deal with domestic issues was shared by the Democrats in Congress. In previous years of the Wilson administration the White House had laid down the policy to be adhered to by the party in Congress. Thus the Democratic National Committee early in 1919 urged that this support of the administration not only continue but that it was "desirable to nurture a spirit in Congress which would lead to a more effective and outspoken support of administration policies".⁹ Congressional Democrats were content to leave the initiative in policy matters to the Executive Branch. In their analysis the key factors in the Republican mid-term victory had been the German vote in States such as Nebraska, Missouri and Ohio and the influenza epidemic. The Committee also believed that the war caused Democrats to suppress their partisanship. They saw 1918 as an anomalous result for these reasons. With tighter organisation and stronger support for the President, victory in 1920 was a distinct possibility.

In early 1919 however the President was in Paris and contact between the White House and the party was minimal. The League of Nations dominated thinking in the White House. The Democrats, committed to backing the administration, were being given no policy directives on domestic issues.¹⁰ This was the congressional situation when the President's speech on 20th May was presented to Congress.

As has already been discussed, Wilson committed his administration to the democratization of industry. Exactly what this meant in detail he did not specify, so that the speech, while making clear Wilson's continuation of his pre-war policies, gave

Congressional Democrats no guidance with regard to legislative proposals they might support. Moreover, he made clear in the speech that he regarded matters with respect to conditions, health and safety, largely as State concerns. Indeed, Wilson's expectation of a mutually agreed programme emanating from industry itself tended to discourage any serious consideration of industrial relations by Congress.

Congressional attitudes towards trade unions and towards the 'labor problem' must be seen within this broader political situation. The partisan imperatives of the leadership of both parties tended to suppress any debate which might reveal deep splits in the ranks. The labour issue was frowned upon since it threatened to set progressives and conservatives within both parties against each other. Only when the crisis in industrial relations assumed major proportions in late 1919 did it receive the serious attention of Congress.

Yet even in early 1919, debates over the role of government in the post-war economy revealed that the split between progressives and conservatives was too fundamental to be easily overcome. They revealed the nature of progressive thinking in Congress in the immediate post-war years and the attitude of Congress generally to this important indicator of political thinking. They also proved to be important in defining who were the 'friends and enemies' of the trade union movement in the remaining sessions of the Sixty-sixth Congress.

The meetings of the Education and Labor Committee of the Senate in the first half of the year were dominated by the problems of the aftermath of the war and, particularly, the extent to which the federal government should accept the responsibility for the welfare of its population in peace-time. Pursuant of Senate resolution S5397, the Committee held hearings on 29th January 1919 on a bill presented by Republican Senator William Kenyon, of Iowa, to provide public works to increase opportunities for employment during the period of demobilisation and industrial readjustment.¹¹ The bill raised exactly the question described above, albeit circumscribed by the proviso that it be for the period of readjustment. The issue was one of whether government action should be used to interfere directly with the performance of the economy and to aid the population. Kenyon was anxious to justify the bill in practical terms. His questioning of the Second Assistant Secretary of Labor, Louis F. Post and Secretary Wilson was confined to demonstrating the necessity of the proposal if hardship and upheaval were to be avoided. Post strongly supported the proposal. In the two months since the end of the war a U.S. Employment Service study had shown a rapid increase in labour surplus. In November, of 115 cities studied only 12 had shown a surplus, 29 reported continuing shortages, while the remainder reported a rough balance. By 18th January 1919, 18 reported shortages while 55 reported surpluses. Seattle, as an example, had suddenly found itself with 8,000 unemployed workers and this excluded the strikers. Senator Carrol S. Page reflected his own conservative political stance in expressing surprise that a strike could be effective when so many idle hands were available. Kenyon however believed that

Congressional action on the proposal, given these figures and the backing of Wilson and Post, was distinctly likely.

The Chief of the Community Labor Board, confirming Post's figures, added that non-war industrial activity had increased by only half of one per cent in December. It was clear that the government would need to take up the slack until this situation improved. The Chairman of the Finance Committee of Chicago City Council also backed the bill. He claimed that his city had already almost exhausted its \$50 million budget, and that if public works were to expand the finance had to come from Washington. Secretary Wilson finally added that there was also a need for government activity in public works abandoned during the war and, in addition to other consequences of the war, a need for railroad construction and restocking.

Despite Kenyon's optimistic appraisal of the Congressional situation the bill did not get to the floor of the Senate before the end of the session. In the following session, and this time with a Republican-controlled Senate and Committee, a similar fate befell a bill to provide a permanent National Employment system.¹² This proposal was heard by a Joint Committee of Education and Labor on 19th June 1919. Once more the point at issue was the continuation in peace-time of the war-time level of interference by the government in the economy. As Secretary Wilson put it to the Committee: "I do not believe that any Government owes any man a living, but I do believe that it owes to every man the opportunity to earn a living".¹³ The Secretary was calling explicitly for a recognition of the government's increasing responsibility to ensure

the welfare of the population. Increasingly, equality of opportunity, the classic maxim of progressivism, was tending to be interpreted in interventionist terms. Again, however, it was the practical rather than the philosophical arguments which were employed in support of the bill. The market was not itself capable of balancing the supply and demand for labour. This J.B. Densmore, Director of U.S.E.S. claimed was obvious in time of war but was also true of the peacetime economy. Three hundred thousand soldiers had already been placed. The cost of placement was a mere \$140 per head, and in agriculture particularly where seasonal workers were vital, the U.S.E.S. was invaluable. With regard to strikes where employers asked for workers, the service would provide men although it apprised them first of the situation. The States themselves would provide most of the funds on a per capita basis so that the cost would be spread evenly.

On 29th June, F.C. Croxton of the Ohio Employment Service added that only a national system could properly assimilate the employment levels throughout the nation. He also attacked the private employment bureaux. Senator Kenyon intervened to scotch the idea that the U.S.E.S. was being used as political machinery. He asserted that it was run purely as a public service.

Thomas Blanton, a Democrat from Texas 9th District, then attacked the U.S.E.S. as a union protector, and an edifice for the spread of trade unionism. He cited a case of apparent victimisation of a government employee by the U.S.E.S. for her refusal to join the Federal Employees' Union. Blanton also accused the U.S.E.S. of political motivation in ending hiring by individual firms in

Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The Chairman, with the backing of Kenyon and Representatives Ira Hersey, a Republican from Maine, John McCrate, a Republican from New York and Democrat John Casey of Pennsylvania, dismissed Blanton's accusations as outwith their jurisdiction and not pertinent to the bill. The bill received strong backing from the A.F. of L. Nonetheless it never became law despite the strong bipartisan support it received. The office was a Democratic creation and yet it had been Kenyon in the Senate and John I. Nolan, a Republican from California, who had put the bill before Congress.

The following month the Senate Committee was dealing with yet another bill involving the question of government's role in the post-war economy. The Minimum Wage Bill was not a war-time policy now being assessed for its suitability. It was instead a long-standing issue and a bill had twice passed the House in the previous Congress by thumping margins.¹⁴ The Senate had failed to act on the bill as yet although it had been first introduced in 1913. The bill was for government employees only but progressives believed that once levels were settled, it would act as a barometer for the rest of the economy by enacting the principle of a living wage. Conservatives in this instance, however, had practicality on their side. Democrat Hoke Smith of Georgia questioned the right of menial workers to earn more than skilled people. Luther Steward for the National Federation of Federal Employees replied that a minimum wage would require a reclassification of wage scales throughout the government system. The vast cost of the bill was too much for conservatives to contemplate. Republican Josiah O. Wolcott of Delaware then challenged the whole basis of a living

wage. He challenged the assumption that the living wage should be calculated solely on the earnings of the father. Might not sons or his wife be working? In which case they might earn more than the so-called minimum. The hearings continued into October with it becoming increasingly apparent that conservatives on the committee could accept neither the principle nor the cost. They were rejecting the idea that the government could legislate on such a thing as a minimum wage or indeed that a minimum wage was legitimate. As in Wolcott's objection, the idea that the poor might actually earn more than a minimum wage appeared reprehensible to conservatives. No action was taken on this bill in the session.

Although not directly concerning industrial relations or trade unions, these bills raised the issue of the government's responsibility for the welfare of the less privileged. Attitudes on this, the central point of divergence between conservative and progressive political philosophies, were related to attitudes towards trade unionism and the labour problem. What the hearings on these bills revealed was that they split Congressmen into philosophical camps rather than party allegiances. Conservatives sought an end to the government's war-time commitments and a return to an unfettered market economy based on their belief that what benefited business would also ultimately benefit the rest of the population. Progressives were less sanguine. They feared business wealth would corrupt the democratic system. For progressives the question was now whether the pre-war reforms had actually created their idea of a just and equal society. It was clear that there were many among them who still felt that reform was necessary and that government initiative was required. Thus Democrat Smith was more akin to Senator Wolcott,

Kenyon closer to John Casey, a Pennsylvania Democrat on this issue. This resulted in a reluctance of Democrats and Republicans to air bills which were so palpably divisive.

By October the League was a far more politically attractive issue to exploit as, for Republicans, was the "cold calculating machiavellian tyrant"¹⁵ in the White House. Without party guidance, the subject of federal intervention in the economy was thus left to the individual conscience. It had yet to become clear whether a progressive position on the role of the government, derived largely from the Bull Moose platform of 1912, would be reflected in any new initiatives to reform industrial relations. Up to this time Congress had also been reluctant to deal with the question of labour's rights in industrial relations - the same divergence between progressive and conservative being likely to occur.

However, the strike in the steel industry was too large a dispute for Congress to shelve. In October it undertook an investigation into the steel strike. The investigation was in two parts; the first in Washington, the second in the centre of the strike region in Pennsylvania. Despite the immense amount of testimony that the Committee listened to, no suggestions were forthcoming. Both sides in the dispute stuck firmly to their guns.¹⁶ The Committee itself became increasingly divided as the two different arguments became understood. Senator Borah for instance was a Western progressive whose interest in labour issues had previously been slight. He accepted unions as organisations seeking equality, but he wrote to the editor of the Southern Labor Journal that "I never have advocated the right of a labouring man when he quits

work to prevent another labourer from going to work."¹⁷ By 10th November 1919, after the steel investigation, Borah's position had shifted to reflect the conundrum which the labour question posed for progressives. As he wrote to Idaho State Senator T. Stanford, he was in "entire sympathy"¹⁸ with Judge Gary's refusal to countenance a closed shop, or to have the dispute arbitrated. When Gary "imperiously rejected"¹⁹ the union representatives' call for collective bargaining however Borah felt he was unjustified, stating his belief in the right of trade unions to organise. Borah was thus on the horns of a dilemma. He did not sympathise with union power politically, but in terms of justice believed that unions had a right to recognition. If unions had no alternative but to strike in order to win recognition, Borah could sympathise with their moral position but he could not accept the sweeping power legitimacy might bestow. Neither could he, nor progressives generally, contemplate legislation which would force employers to recognise trade unions. There was a gap between moral and political support which progressives were unable to bridge.

Clearly, compromise was the course most favoured by Borah, a course which Wilsonian progressives in the Democratic party were trying to follow at the Industrial Conference. The problem of industrial relations in 1919 forced progressives to question the thrust of Wilsonian reform and raised the question of whether trade union power was a necessary component of a just, egalitarian society. It signalled a drift from Wilsonian progressivism to the Bull Moose platform of a balance of power groups by a more affirmative state. Balance remained the keynote of progressivism, but the basis was now under review as a result of the 1919 crisis. This situation in

progressive thinking was a contributing factor to the inability of Congress to legislate on, or even devise, a coherent policy with regard to labour. Sympathy for unionism was not sufficient to overcome doubt about the advisability of a grant of power to unions. Progressives sought reforms for the benefit of all the people and not to put power in the hands of any predominant group. The variegated nature of the progressive movement also prevented any new initiative on unionism in 1919.

The Democratic party had supported the Wilson reform programme. Robbed of the leadership of their President and without power in Congress after 1918, it remained to be seen whether the party could maintain its cohesion, and whether its progressivism could develop beyond the parameters defined by Wilson. In the Republican party, progressivism encompassed Senators La Follette and Norris, men who had taken part in the 1908 Insurgency against Speaker Joseph Cannon and who wholeheartedly supported the affirmative role envisaged for the government in the Bull Moose platform. Other progressives had followed Theodore Roosevelt back into the Republican party and a milder progressivism. However incapable of any new initiatives on the power of unions at this time, all remained firm defenders of trade unionism as it stood and its demands for better treatment from employers. In the remainder of the session they were called upon to be such as the labour problem came to the floor of Congress.

If progressives were in an ambivalent position with regard to trade union power, this was not the mood of conservative members of Congress in 1919. Although quiescent for much of the year, the spate of strikes by autumn, the Boston Police strike, the threat of

a rail stoppage, the steel strike and finally the threatened coal strike provoked their hostility regardless of intra-party damage. Their desire to protest against union disruption was encouraged by the action of the administration in bringing out a restraining order against the U.M.W. under the war-time Lever Act. They hoped that this signalled the end of union sympathy in the administration. The uproar which this action aroused was due to trade union claims that the unions had been given assurances by the Attorney General Thomas Gregory that the Act would not be used against them. For the Democratic party this was a major issue of policy. The deep division between the progressive and conservative thinking over the proper policy towards trade unions was therefore first aired in 1919 inside the Democratic party.

Speaking on behalf of conservative Democratic opinion, Senator Charles Thomas of Colorado strongly backed the administration's decision. Whatever assurances unions may have received with regard to the Lever Act "the coal strike carried that policy beyond the bounds of endurance".²⁰ Indeed, Senator Thomas went on, the strike being "the lawful carrying out of no legitimate purpose"²¹ had even gone beyond the scope of Section 20 of the Clayton Act. This strike was one which had to be prevented by whatever means the administration could find. The Senator believed that strikers may "disregard contracts, compel others to strike, prevent others from taking his place and continuing operations . . . may destroy property and terrorize communities"²² and that "the word itself implies force, violence lurks within it. Aggression is its synonym."²³ He went further to link unions to the Red Scare by claiming that 6,408 strikes during the war demonstrated their disloyalty. It was time to stop conciliating such a movement.

The Senator went on to develop this theme the following day. He read the Senate a letter from Leslie Shaw, the Democratic Governor of Colorado, which expressed the opinion shared by the Senator that trade unions sought "absolute control of America".²⁴ The progressive attempt to ensure equality had gone too far in giving unions the privileges it enjoyed. It was now abusing these privileges to destroy the American system and its traditions of equality and individual freedom, in an attempt to dominate the nation with its own 'collectivist' organisation. The only means by which this situation could be reversed was by ending this conciliation of 'collectivist' trade unions and reasserting individualism.

No man must be forbidden to associate himself with others engaged in the same enterprise, nor required to do so . . . Each must have the right to quit temporarily or permanently, and his employer must have the reciprocal right to suspend or discharge.²⁵

In other words, unions should be limited to the size of the business in which they worked and should not have the right to picket or prevent strikers from simply being replaced. In this policy the Senator was advocating something strikingly similar to the proposals made by the business group at the Industrial Conference. As a means of publicising its policy the Conference could be considered a success.

This bitterly anti-union position was framed in terms of individual liberty; the American way as opposed to an alien collectivist theory - "Shall an organized minority dictate to an

unorganized majority?"²⁶ This epitomised the nature of conservative thinking. For them individual liberty was the very fount of the American system. It was this which actually ensured equality and justice. The disruption of 1919 was an example of the consequences of progressive meddling with this tradition. People were already equal. By giving trade unions privileges, equality and liberty were destroyed with the economic vitality of the nation. It was this political philosophy which predicated conservative opposition to unionism per se. Its arguments exactly coincided with business arguments about the evils of unions. The system was a natural one and the people fared according to their ability, regardless of the futility of individuals in an economy dominated by giant corporations.

Yet the progressive movement had grown up precisely around this widely-perceived danger posed by large corporations' power. They believed that individual liberty was no longer an automatic assurance of equality and justice in such an industrial system. Individual liberty had to be considered in the context of the latter two maxims. Trade unions were necessary as a balancing power in industry to ensure these tenets of democracy and to improve the conditions of working people. This position was reflected by Democratic representative Robert Thomas from Kentucky's third district in the House, in defending the U.M.W. and condemning the administration's action. The premise of his argument was an acceptance of the right of men to organise and voice their grievances. Thomas denied that the U.M.W. had any intention of destroying the nation and pointed to the \$100 million Liberty Bonds bought by the union and 60,000 members of the union

who had served during the war. Thomas was determined to concentrate on the facts of the case which he was sure would prove the justice of the mineworkers' unrest. He attacked conservative claims that the miners earned adequate wages and claimed that "every statement I have seen about the matter is mere assertion and guesswork".²⁷ Citing the figures of the Department of Labor for his own State of Kentucky they showed an average yearly coal output of 804 tons per man. At a rate of 78/77.5 cents per ton a mineworker's wage amounted to \$623.89 per annum. Still more distressing was that their tonnage was limited by the inadequate supply of coal cars. Mineworkers' wages were not only meagre but were so due to factors including seasonality of demand over which they themselves had no power. In such straits the justice of the miners' position was undeniable. Thomas believed their aims were legitimate and deserving of more sympathetic treatment than that meted out by the administration.

As if to confirm Robert Thomas's attack on conservative figures, Thomas Blanton then produced facts on average wages in West Virginia, gleaned from mine operators. The figures of a Department which "sought to defend the lawbreaking, anarchistic leaders of the cruel coal strike"²⁸ could not be trusted. His figures gave monthly wages in West Virginia in the main unorganised fields as \$253 to \$547 per month - almost as much as Kentucky miners earned in a year. It should be said that Blanton was the most consistent and virulent opponent of unionism in Congress though his very extremism served to undermine the credibility of his arguments in the eyes of his colleagues.

In spite of Blanton's extremism it was clear that conservatives, in linking individual liberty to anti-unionism, had developed a powerful political argument. The conservative view was that by enforcing union membership as a condition of employment (the closed shop) the individual was denied the right to choose. Individual liberty was also violated where strikers prevented replacements from taking on the work. The strike weapon, by threatening the nation with discomfort and disruption, undermined the political system by winning demands in extra-parliamentary fashion. Individual liberty, freedom of choice and the proper working of democracy were under threat from trade unions, and thereby justice and equality. Conservatives, by using the language of progressivism enshrined by the Wilson administration, were able to forge an influential argument against unions. As the Republican-controlled Sixty-sixth Congress continued it became obvious that the undoing of Wilson policies in labour matters was threatened not by Republicans but by bipartisan attacks by conservatives.

The increasing crisis in industrial relations was being paralleled by the rising temperatures in Congress. Early in 1919 this issue rarely reached the floor of either House. As has been demonstrated, other questions held more political attraction. The continuing dialectic between progressives and conservatives was confined to the committees. Here, however, it was clear that progressives were not being restrained by the Wilsonian style. They were demonstrating a swing towards the Bull Moose acceptance of the extended state; a more direct assumption of responsibility for the welfare of the population by the government under the influence of the war-time experience. Although progressives

preferred to prove the desirability and need for such measures, they were underpinned by a continuing concern for progressive beliefs in equality and justice. There was a growing mood implicit in these proposals that these goals would not be achieved by the Wilson mode. Individual liberty could no longer assure these aims, even given a regulatory framework. Direct intervention by the government was required. Up until this time it was not clear to what extent this changing progressive perception of the proper definition of equality and justice affected their attitude towards the question of trade union rights. As the row over the invocation of the Lever Act revealed, however, the mood of congressional progressivism was at odds with the White House view. It appeared that there was an acceptance of even this action by the U.M.W. in the belief that equality in industry could only be achieved if trade unionism was allowed full use of strike action in order to bring business to the conference table. They believed equality had been achieved in industrial relations but it would require some years perhaps for the business community to appreciate the fact. The power of unions must be allowed to make employers appreciate the new situation. The attitude among some progressives was that unrest should not be suppressed since it was justified by business intransigence and the justice of the economic demands of the unions. These congressional progressives were in close sympathy with the unions but were not proposing to institute further reform. Acceptance of union power by business was the only way to reach settled industrial relations.

This attitude had been admirably demonstrated by Kentucky's Thomas in his condemnation of the use of the Lever Act in addition

to his outrage at the government's flouting of its commitments. Another prominent Democratic spokesman on unionism was Alabama's Representative George Huddleston. In December Huddleston gave a classic example of the progressive position on the trade union issue. He attempted to separate any political implications from the dispute. Yet the acceptance of unionism was itself based upon political views of the society. Holding that trade union unrest had primarily economic origins, the conservative attack "tends only to convert it from industrial unrest to political unrest".²⁹ Asserting that industrial equality could no longer be provided by individual liberty, the organisation of trade unions was necessary to ensure this. The strike weapon was the only truly effective method whereby unions could have any true equality since it gave them bargaining power. It was their one assurance of "a square deal for the wage earner".³⁰ If the nation were to espouse a faith in equality then it must accept these union rights. The alternatives were enslavement or a socialist government which would rule on all issues. The unions themselves did not wish either alternative, neither did progressives. Therefore the progressive task was to ensure equality by allowing unions their rights. If this were done then economic unrest would diminish and political unrest would not exist. For in granting them equality the government would have performed a task which the nation as well as the unions believed was proper. As Huddleston put it "We may always trust the citizen to love and defend the government which deserves to be loved and defended".³¹

The defence of unions was now identified as a basic test of progressives' commitment to their belief in equality in a free

society in which the government had the role of ensuring the effectiveness of the legal basis of that equality. Progressives must accept industrial disruption as a price to be paid in the first instance while both sides of industry came to accept the new basis of equality. This was in harmony with the progressive concern over the increasing political and economic power of business. Regulation they had agreed, was required. Unionism, however, fitted their belief in the minimum of government where their goals could be achieved by other means. Compulsion was not part of the progressive thinking on industrial relations. Justice required that trade unions be allowed to use strikes. This was the basic argument behind a firmer progressive support of the trade union movement in Congress. Their continued defence of unionism in 1919 rested on their belief that unions had still achieved neither equality nor justice. This rested primarily on economic issues of wages, conditions and hours, and a support of unions in the pursuit of these aims through strike action. They continued to deny that industrial unrest had any political overtones in spite of the fact that both parties were split deeply over the issue. It remained to be seen whether progressives still held enough power to defend these beliefs in Congress in the face of the conservative attack. It was clear that on the labour issue, party lines were irrelevant.

Up to this time the session had yet to vote on any labour issues. Progressives had been quick to defend the Department of Labor from attack from Thomas Blanton but had been unable to prevent the unseating of Wisconsin's socialist Representative, Victor Berger. The key test of Congressional opinion over the 'labor problem' came in the debate on the labour provisions in the

bill returning the railroads to private ownership. In the Senate, Albert Cummins, Republican, Iowa, had presented his bill for the privatisation of the railroads. He quickly made clear that his belief that the railroads should be returned to private ownership had no ideological basis. He believed that private ownership was more economically viable than public ownership. This was in itself a dangerous assertion. George Norris immediately attacked Cummins, arguing that his belief was unfounded since government ownership had never been given a fair trial. Before Cummins could draw such conclusions it was necessary to extend government ownership to evaluate the performance in peace-time conditions. This position was being pushed by ex-Director General McAdoo and was strongly supported by the railroad brotherhoods. However, another Section of the bill was causing greater hostility from the unions. This was a provision that the industrial relations on the railroads be subject to compulsory arbitration. Senator La Follette in attacking the provision gave a clear exposition of the progressive posture and reinforced Huddleston's opinion.

The very purpose of this provision is to prevent strikes, and the very benefit which the employee derives from the strike is that it gives him collective strength in grappling with the great corporations to bring them to a serious consideration of the demands labor makes.³²

Progressives had identified the strike as the Industrial Conference had, as a necessary component of genuine collective bargaining. Yet Progressives were not averse to conciliation machinery. As the President was aiming for such machinery in the belief that, once round a table, reason and common interest could emerge, so

many progressives in Congress shared his perception. However, many could not countenance the denial of the right to strike however much they might desire conciliation and compromise. Senator Borah found the provision "unsound in law and unwise in policy".³³

Senator Cummins' bill had included a measure proposing that the railroad workers have two seats on the board of directors of the railroads. The Cummins' bill was a curious mixture, denying unions power on the one hand, allowing them a voice in the overall affairs of industry on the other. A voice in industry had always been labour's wish. It was the root of President Wilson's hopes for democratization. They sought a voice in matters pertinent to labour rather than overall policy. If unions had power they could then influence overall policy by the nature of their own aims. Cummins' quite radical proposal was in fact struck from the bill on a motion by Senator Henry Myers, Democrat, Montana. In doing so he argued that business must be allowed to run its own affairs. Myers and Cummins agreed, however, that the railroads were too vital to the welfare of the nation to allow industrial disputes to bring them to a halt and thereby strangle the national economy. The railroads, Myers argued, were the arteries of the body of America. With regard to the railroads, the question was "whether the Government or organized labor is more powerful".³⁴ This was the argument which allowed the provision to remain in the Senate bill. It had powerful influence by dint of the fact that President Wilson had invoked the Lever Act against the U.M.W. Furthermore, it also upheld the principle of equality among power groups in society. The railroad strike was a weapon too powerful to be condoned.

In fact 'public welfare' was a double-edged principle. It could be used, as conservatives wished, to suppress the activities of a group liable to inconvenience the rest of the nation. Conversely, it could be used by progressives to support claims for nationalization, as had been done in the case of the railroads. The difference was in whether the right of workers were seen as part of public welfare. More important for the success of this provision was the fact that this principle split the progressive movement with regard to labour. This had occurred in the case of the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations.³⁵ Some, such as Albert Beveridge, had welcomed the idea. Other progressives, such as La Follette and Huddleston, opposed the move as a suppression of liberty, an argument endorsed by conservative politicians since business was equally under its rule. For progressives supportive of this idea, order and the public welfare were the priorities. For other progressives, concern for the rights of the unions and the independent power and self-worth of the working people took precedence. If progressives in the Senate appeared to be shifting to an acceptance of the arbitration provision in the Cummins' bill, in the House the mood was swinging in the opposite direction. An amendment from Congressman S. Anderson, Republican from Minnesota proposed a board of mediation be set up in addition to a labour board in order to defuse minor disputes and supercede compulsory arbitration. By early 1920, the Senate was beginning to agree with La Follette's judgment that compulsory arbitration would merely "accentuate and redouble the demand for Government ownership".³⁶ The diminution of tension in 1919 with the ending of the coal crisis had also reduced tension in Congress. A move was made by Lodge to insert a 60-day cooling-off period as a compromise measure but it became clear that a joint conference would not agree

to either proposal. In conference both these proposals and the provision of compulsory arbitration were struck out leaving only the original structure of the board.

The importance of the battle over the labour provisions of the Transportation Act was that in the real test of progressive strength it had been able to frustrate the aims of conservatives to curb union power. The railroad brotherhoods were far from happy with the plan of submitting disputes to a board of public representatives. The decisions were not binding however and the machinery offered no threat to and might even encourage the expansion of union organisation in the industry. The record vote on the conference report on the Esch-Cummins Bill unfortunately affords no indication of the actual size of progressive strength on the labour provision. In the House, while progressives such as Charles Linthicum in Illinois and Frederick Zihlman of Maryland supported the report, Thomas and Alabama Democrat William B. Bankhead, Republican Edward Browne of Wisconsin and Huddleston opposed it. The bill was a complex one. Progressive opposition was centred on issues such as return guarantees and indeed the issue of privatisation. What the vote points up is a split between radical progressives and moderate progressives on the bill as a whole. All that can be said on the outcome of the bill is that on labour issues the progressives together carried sufficient weight and unanimity to block any conservative attacks on the unions. While this was demonstrated, it also became apparent in the record vote that progressivism sheltered varying degrees of support for unionism which would make unanimity on any further initiatives on labour issues unlikely.³⁷

In fact by 1920 initiative was firmly in the hands of the conservatives who were unwilling to abandon their campaign against unionism at this point. They now attempted to end all industrial action by attacking picketing or any attempt to prevent strike-breaking as abridgements of individual choice, both of the employer and the strikebreakers. Senator Thomas had followed this argument earlier in the session and it was also at the centre of the principles which the business group had presented to the Industrial Conference. Miles Poindexter of Washington proposed an anti-strike bill which came to the floor of the Senate soon after the anti-strike provision of the Cummins bill had been defeated. He was one of the leading anti-union spokesmen in the Republican party. His bill was based on the idea that a strike, as a protest against conditions of employment, was simply a quitting of employment and did not "affect in any way the right of any individual to quit his employment."³⁸ The bill made illegal any organised effort to damage deliberately the trade or property of the firm involved in the dispute. In other words, the bill sanctioned strikebreaking, in fact refusing to recognise that strikes even existed. This flew directly in the face of the statement by the Industrial Conference that a strike was not simply a leaving of employment. Even Senator Lodge, now in favour of the idea of a cooling-off period, was forced to admit the inadvisability of the sophistry which claimed to allow strikes while actually making them illegal. It appeared from this that Congress was becoming less hostile towards unions.

This trend was confirmed by the debate on an amendment by Senator Myers to the Sundry Appropriations bill which attempted

to ban any federal employees joining unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. His supporting argument was that it was inconceivable that employees of the national service could be loyal in that service if they also were members of organisations whose aims were likely to clash with those of the state. Reflecting the growing Congressional distaste of the conservative anti-union position, Senator Irvine Lenroot, Republican, Wisconsin asked "When has the American Federation of Labor become an outlaw? There ought to be a stop to the baiting of organized labor."³⁹ Lenroot was far from being an independent of the La Follette and Norris stripe. He was a faithful Republican before he joined the 1908 Insurgency and remained loyal thereafter. This opinion thus reflected reasonably well the view of mild progressives in Congress that trade unions were far from subversive or that they posed any threat in their actions to the state. The result of the vote on the amendment was that while 35 voted against, only three supported the proposal. They were Myers himself, Senator F.E. Warren, Republican, Wyoming and Senator Thomas of Colorado. The conservative position was becoming increasingly exposed as an extreme one which progressives, both Republicans and Democrats, could not accept. The anti-union position was held by a small minority, however vociferous and vituperative.

This tendency in the Senate was being paralleled by events in the House. Consideration of the appropriations for the Department of Labor gave Blanton the opportunity once more to attack the Division of Conciliation as an agent of union expansion. To offset that tendency he urged that "this particular branch of the Department of Labor ought to recognize what is known in the

United States as the principle of the open shop."⁴⁰ This, together with an attempt to increase the appropriations for the Department of Justice to carry out its campaign against radicals, caused John J. Casey, a fellow Democrat from Pennsylvania, to warn Blanton to "stop playing politics with this all important labor issue."⁴¹ In fact it was clear that backing of unionism was a political position. Despite such attacks the House voted increased appropriations of \$50,000 for the Division. Simeon Fess, Republican, Ohio, also proposed a \$25,000 increase in the appropriation for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The reasoning behind the proposals was that the Department of Labor was the key government instrument in seeking peace in industry and as such should not be crippled. The progressives in the House, after successfully beating off the conservative attacks, appeared to be taking a tentative initiative over the 'labor problem'.

When the bill reached the Senate it was James Phelan, a Democrat from California who introduced the motion for an extra appropriation which James Nolan, Republican, California, had done in the House. In proposing the amendment he argued that, "It does not seem right at this moment, when the difficulties ahead of us are many and not insignificant to cripple in any manner a bureau which had demonstrated its success."⁴² Atlee Pomerene, his Democratic colleague from Ohio, supported these sentiments. The main threat to the success of this provision, however, was not anti-union attitudes but a growing demand in Congress and the administration for an economy drive. This served to defeat the amendment so that only \$100,000 was appropriated, which was the amount the Appropriations Committee of the House had originally proposed. This

illustrated that the labour problem never existed in a vacuum. Besides political attitudes, other contemporary issues inevitably influenced the outcome on votes pertaining to labour. As the session drew to a close the threat to unionism from a conservative backlash proved largely an empty one. The Poindexters, Blanton and Thomas's were fundamentally out of step with Congressional opinion, which had treated the labour crisis of 1919 with relative equanimity. Progressives proved resolute in the defence of trade unions' right to exist and the justice of their claims for improvements in wages and conditions. It was clear that this was becoming regarded as an established norm. What did cause some wavering among Congressmen had been the issue of preventing undue disruption and inconvenience arising from industrial disputes. Here signs of a split in progressivism were evident, depending on the depth of support for the trade union movement. In the final analysis Congress supported the status quo in industrial relations.

The real difficulty, however, was that there was no notion among progressives of extending these rights. Essentially the Wilsonian reforms on labour had reflected progressive opinion. Indeed unionism wished no more now than to be allowed to operate under the existing reforms. In this they had the backing of progressives committed to trade unions. Other progressives shifted their concern from union rights to an attempt to institute a system of machinery through which industrial disputes would be minimised and the possibilities of conciliation and compromise increased. Advanced progressive thinking had already shifted focus towards a broader social policy and questioned their perception of equality, reflected in the Nolan Minimum Wage Bill, voted for

reconsideration in March 1920, and the proposal for a national employment system. It remained to be seen whether this development in progressive thinking would also influence attitudes on unionism and how widespread this development might become among progressives.

The state of moderate progressive opinion in Congress as the session ended was reflected accurately by a joint statement made by Senators Robert Owen of Oklahoma and David Walsh of Massachusetts, both of whom were Democrats. If it were to establish and ensure equality in industry the administration must "substitute Government for private distribution of the necessary commodities of our people."⁴³ This was a renewed call for government control of the railroads and increasing government control on prices and profits. With regard to the 'labor problem' Owen and Walsh backed the policy of their President.

Fair wages, respectful treatment, reasonable hours, safety, sanitary conditions, collective bargaining and the right to be represented by counsel of its own choice should not be denied.⁴⁴

A strong confirmation of progressive support for union claims, they believed this to be the basis of an equal, just, industrial system. Owen and Walsh also called for "some intelligent co-operation for the protection of the people against highly organized special interests."⁴⁵

Despite progressive support for unionism, a fear of inordinate power still haunted the moderates' thinking and continued to rule

their attitude to unions. Progressives supported unions because they were one component of a system of equality, not the vanguard of a movement to win the reward due to the producers of the nation's wealth. Moderate progressive attitudes to unions were predicated still on moral imperatives of equality and justice, which they believed had largely been achieved. They might defend union rights but they did not perceive any avenue for further legislative action. Settled industrial relations was now a matter of custom and habit. Moderate progressives however did not advocate the complete freedom of unionism. They wished to foster agreement as soon as possible to prevent disruption and disorder. This was the principle implicit in the Railroad Labor Board and the Industrial Conferences. More radical progressives were less concerned about disruption. The exercise of power, in their opinion, was necessary in order to bring business to accept unionism's legality. There was thus a difference between the two attitudes, albeit significant only in crises.

Besides this ambivalence apparent in 1919 and the different priorities held, other factors of a more practical nature stood between progressivism and a development of thinking on trade unionism. As has been noted, there were progressives in both the major parties. This was a major obstacle to progressive coherence at any time. In 1920, election year, it was even more so. The focus of both parties in 1920 was on the election and the League of Nations, as has already been discussed. Thus, while the labour issue was increasingly threatening to split both parties, the issue of the League had a tendency to unite the parties once more. With the end of Congress and the debates on labour there, and with no major industrial disputes at the time, the election campaign

began in earnest, attention swinging back to the League issue and away from industrial relations. This brought progressives such as Borah and Norris into the Republican mainstream and had a similar effect on the Democratic party. To be sure, this situation did not end progressive support for unions but it did serve to deflect debate from the subject in the election year.

Indeed for Republicans, sensing unhappiness in the nation, any debate on particular issues might actually hinder rather than help their chances of victory. Philander Knox's keynote speech at the Republican Convention set the tone for the campaign to follow. Their main target should be "the egoist of the White House" who had "demanded uncontrolled power" in 1918. He had also attempted to force the League and Treaty on the nation. The effect of his obsession with foreign policy had been that, "The practical administration of domestic affairs is allowed to drift by neglect while the practical administration of foreign affairs is hampered by vague idealism."⁴⁶ The Republicans would follow a "wisely progressive" path in future, one which looked to the welfare of all the people. This was an approach which all the prospective nominees, Lowden, Wood, Harding, hoped to satisfy. Only Poindexter had based his campaign for the nomination on an anti-labour position. In Pierre, South Dakota he said that the two main issues of the election were "National Independence and . . . Industrial Independence. The one is menaced by Internationalism and the other by the closed shop."⁴⁷ As the Red Scare ebbed so too did Poindexter's chances, as did those of Attorney General Palmer in the Democratic party.

Senator Hiram Johnson of California hoped to carry the party for progressivism and isolationism, a hope which never looked likely to succeed. In 1920, Republicanism was not seeking a positive identity. Even the League was an issue which the Republicans could not agree on. The party in Congress might be able to do so but to the party outside Congress, with men such as Taft and Herbert Hoover and C.E. Hughes, could not. The Chicago Convention gave Wood a significant lead over Lowden in the early ballots while Johnson got the progressive votes. Wood satisfied the ex-Roosevelt progressives who had abandoned the Bull Moose. Lodge, however, was not pleased by the continuing slow accumulation of delegates for Wood, and even less enamoured of the increasing strength of Illinois' Lowden to whom many Johnson votes were by then drifting. Lodge overruled the floor and adjourned the Convention. Johnson refused the Vice Presidency under either Lowden's or Wood's leadership and thus threatened the Convention with a stalemate. The Senate leadership was unable to reach any conclusion as to a favourite. Reconvening next day, there was a gradual growth in Harding's strength and with the assertion by Smoot that Harding was his choice, the bandwagon for him got under way. In fact it was Connecticut which got the bandwagon going by voting for Harding against the instructions of Senator Frank B. Brandegee.

Harding was from Ohio; he had supported Lodge on the Foreign Relations Committee and had said nothing significant on labour issues. As a Senator in a time when the Senate was attempting to regain power, he was available by dint of the direct election of Senators which demonstrated his ability to win votes. The nomination of Harding on the tenth ballot ensured that the party was not committed to any particular

policy, since Harding had established his position by personality. He was, moreover, little known to the nation at large, but his personality could not have been more of a contrast with that of President Wilson which was an important consideration. "Harding had demonstrated the more attractive qualities of a compromise candidate."⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the President had cut himself off entirely from the pure politics of winning his party's nomination. By never stating his intentions he threw the party into confusion. No momentum could develop for the campaign in the nominating battle because Democrats were forced by the situation to hold themselves in check. Ex-Secretary of the Treasury, Carter Glass, was nominated by his own Virginia delegation but no real enthusiasm was inspired by this, least of all in Glass himself. The most notable aspect of the Virginia situation was its complete support of the Wilson administration. At this time William McAdoo, Wilson's heir apparent in the public's eye, and with the expected backing of the railroad brotherhoods, was denying any intention of running, though he made clear that he would not refuse if the office were offered to him. To a greater extent than in the Republican party, the Democrats had an additional problem in the prohibition issue. Major Democratic power centres, notably New York and its Governor Al Smith, were regarded as unequivocal 'wets'. W. J. Bryan and McAdoo were both staunch 'drys'. It was Burleson's opinion that only a personal liberty plank would defuse this situation. The Postmaster General, an important centre of patronage in the party, also strongly recommended that the party remain loyal to Wilson's policies and record.

By the time they reached San Francisco the Democrats were a subdued party, with its leader aloof and the tide against them. The League was not an issue at the Convention. In the keynote speech Homer S. Cummings restated the fundamental commitment of Democrats to the principles which their President held. On the floor, however, as Burleson explained in a long letter to David Roper, Secretary of the Navy, the prohibition issue was making a difference on votes. McAdoo's managers had succeeded in alienating key delegations from New York and New Jersey by insisting on a known 'dry' putting in McAdoo's name. Despite attempts by McAdoo and Burleson to minimise this problem, it cost McAdoo the nomination. New York finally went to Governor Cox of Ohio who was at least prepared to compromise on prohibition. Cox also had strong progressive credentials and a very efficient machine, a combination which finally triumphed.

Senator Key Pittman of Nevada, in charge of the Western Department of the Democratic National Campaign Committee, believed that the winning issue in the campaign would be to portray Harding as a reactionary against Cox's liberalism. Harding voted for the anti-strike Cummins' bill, against public ownership of the railroads and against publicity of profiteering figures. "In every important test between capital and labor, he voted for the former and against labor."⁴⁹ Cox on the other hand was calling for "industrial readjustment".⁵⁰ Pittman went further to stress that the League was merely a Republican subterfuge to gain power for business interests. The A.F. of L. and unions had taken no part in the Conventions but Samuel Gompers personally endorsed Cox as did T.J. Connelly of the Ohio State Federation of Labor.

In fact neither party had anything new to offer on industrial relations. Harding, in any case, was continually successful in defusing any threat of issues emerging from the campaign. He first agreed with Borah on the League and then with Taft; he was careful to seek advice on the campaign from all quarters of the Republican party. On 6th September he declared himself to be in favour of unionism. The campaign continued in this pattern with Cox desperately trying to create issues and Harding managing to obfuscate them. Damaging to Cox too was the lack of White House support, for Woodrow Wilson was the constant shadow over the entire campaign. While Cox sought national issues, it was local problems which were deciding voters - prosaic problems such as taxes and prices. Here both parties endorsed economy in government and a budget system, the only differences being their views on the tariff issue. By 6th October the New York Herald was predicting a Republican landslide. Ethnic alienation over the minefield of foreign affairs, taxes and prices and an exhaustion from moral crusades were all factors. The upheaval of 1919 was also an important factor in turning the population to the party of stability, the Republican party. In the West and Mid West there was unhappiness over the Federal Reserve's new tight money policy, one which Senator Owen had already warned Congress about in May 1920 when the Board began to put up its interest rates to member banks. "If this policy is pursued of broadly deflating the credits of this country, there can only be one result, that of depression and ruin to many."⁵¹ Farmers were already feeling the effects and were likely to vote according to their discomfort.

For these reasons Harding won by the huge margin he did in 1920. The Democratic organisation in the South was feeling resentful that patronage had not been more forthcoming and cracks began to appear. Above all Wilson had been the issue behind the campaign, if not personally then in his style of politics.

Despite a campaign which had avoided any issues of crucial significance, the split between progressives and conservatives had never entirely submerged. A wide variety of politicians were increasingly concerned about the growing depth of the split between the progressives and conservatives, despite their ability to minimise the split during the election. W. H. Taft had written to Charles Kelsey, President of the Guarantee and Trust Co. of New York, "I still wish both the old parties could be buried and that we could line up on the basis of conservatism and radicalism."⁵² As the previous session of Congress had demonstrated, the issues which were arising, and increasingly the labour issue was a major factor in the trend, were causing not a Democratic/Republican debate but a progressive/conservative one. This debate was becoming more and more difficult to reconcile, though fortunately the League in 1920 had temporarily achieved this, as had the Harding leadership and Cox's commitment to Wilsonian reform. The situation as Louis Post described to W. J. Bryan, however, was one which he believed likely to run outwith the control of the old parties.

The whole thing is in such a muddle . . . things seem to be muddling themselves up to such an extent that there may be a spontaneous breakaway from the old parties . . . I do not recall . . . a time which has so resembled that of the middle fifties.⁵³

Post was reckoning without the League.

Although this patched up the split, as the campaign went on progressives, while not abandoning their parties, were muted in the national campaign and were in the process of in fact attempting to form a more coherent Congressional presence on the basis of their own Senate and Congressional campaigns. It was Wisconsin's Senator La Follette who took on the leadership of this process. Of all the progressives, La Follette was the most bitter antagonist of the Republican 'Old Guard' of which he regarded Harding a product. Borah, while remaining completely independent of this group, did not involve himself in political attacks against them. La Follette was deeply involved in an attempt to defeat Irvine Lenroot, the Republican candidate in the Senate race in that State which began an important momentum in 1920. He had used his own Wisconsin machine to run the independent Governor Thompson against Lenroot. This campaign reflected to some extent the frustration radical progressives felt towards moderates. More important was the deep personal distaste La Follette felt for Lenroot. La Follette believed the campaign would be confined mainly to the issue of the League and he invited Borah, Democratic Senator James Reed from Missouri and several others to speak. The importance of this campaign was that it focused non-Congressional progressives such as George Record, Gifford Pinchot and Frederick Howe on La Follette as the man most likely to break with his party and run independently as a progressive. Most insistent on this was John Hopkins, Chairman of the Committee of 48, who urged La Follette during the summer to declare himself as an independent for President. In his Wisconsin campaign moreover he had won the support of the railroad brotherhoods and attracted attention from the U.S. Labor Parties.

Despite Hopkin's pleading, even offering La Follette the opportunity to write his own campaign planks, the Senator never took seriously the idea of jumping into the Presidential election so late in the race. He was aware of the lack of progressive unity and of their voice not being heard on issues of concern to them in the 1920 election. He was also aware that the first priority was to increase progressive strength in Congress. La Follette realised that his running independently would be of little consequence until there was a major congressional progressive presence, willing to support his independent position. On 14th August therefore La Follette sent a circular letter to progressive Senators proposing the idea of an Independent Congressional Campaign Committee. His call for an independent campaign was based on his opinion that neither the Republican nor Democratic party would under their present leadership and support be able to follow a truly progressive path. In the campaign, important domestic issues were being ignored. There was apathy towards politics and mistrust of politicians in the country. Both parties would succumb to "sinister interests of special privilege (who) . . . are preparing to complete their conquest of the country's resources and to free themselves from every vestige of governmental control . . . regardless of which party is successful".⁵⁴ To combat this development, progressives must identify this fundamental enemy which cuts across party lines and begin to fight for their own candidates, regardless of party. The task of the committee would not only take on this political battle but to do so must put before the nation the economic alternatives to be chosen. Although at the time these economic alternatives were unclear, La Follette was 'biting the bullet' and stating that there was a deep political difference between

progressives and conservatives, one based on attitudes to the economy. It was one which included the attitude towards trade unionism.

The most prominent targets of La Follette were Borah, Norris, J. I. France, Republican Senator for Maryland and, among the Democrats, Senators David Walsh, Massachusetts, James Reed of Missouri, Robert Owen of Oklahoma, George R. Chamberlain of Oregon, the leader of the Democratic pro-Leaguers in the Senate, Thomas Gore from Oklahoma, A. O. Stanley from Kentucky and representatives Thetus Sims of Tennessee and Huddleston of Alabama. During September the replies began to filter back. To Southern Democrats there could be no thought of splitting their party. Huddleston preferred to continue to fight within the party to establish "class action by the masses for taking over the party machinery"⁵⁵ If concern over the loss of any machinery they already had determined most replies to La Follette's proposal, then the idea of an organising committee was almost equally unanimously approved of. Some Senators who had been able, as La Follette had been, to establish a strong personal loyalty among the State electorate were the least enthusiastic. This was true for instance of both Borah and Norris. The response of virtually all the Senators and Representatives canvassed by election day 1920 was positive, and boded well for the continuing progressive commitment in the new Congress.

The effect of the Harding Presidential landslide inevitably had a dramatic effect on the Congressional power balance. The Republicans increased their majorities by 19 and 123 in the Senate and the House respectively. The effect on progressives however

did not depend on the victory of a particular party. In Idaho the defeated Democrat Nugent was replaced by Republican Frank Gooding, a firm progressive. In Kentucky, J. Beckham was beaten by Republican Richard P. Ernst, neither a progressive nor a reactionary. Charles Henderson was defeated by Republican Tasker L. Oddie in Nevada and in Oklahoma Thomas Gore, a key progressive, was defeated only to be replaced by another progressive, John W. Harreld, Republican. Chamberlain in Oregon was defeated by Republican, R. Stanfield - in this campaign in the isolationist West the leader of the Democratic fight for the League was too exposed. In South Dakota, Edwin Johnson was defeated by a progressive Republican, Peter Norbeck. In Utah the League was once more the factor which defeated Democrat King in his fight with Republican D. P. Coleton. In the Senate the election had made practically no impact on progressive strength.

It should be stressed further that La Follette's list was by no means all inclusive. He did not invite California's Senators Johnson or Phelan nor had he written to Iowa's Kenyon or the Kansas Republicans Charles Curtis and Arthur Capper, nor Democrats Key Pittman, Andrieus Jones in New Mexico, nor Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee. Indeed La Follette had been attempting to defeat Irvine Lenroot, an ex-insurgent and still a progressive.

The administration might prove to be different but in Congress the battle over domestic issues on a bipartisan basis appeared likely to continue. It is clear however that this organising drive by La Follette had failed to develop progressive policy. At the end of the war, as before it, progressivism's main impulse

had been a distaste of business power. It had been Wilson and his administration who had first combined this mood and their own thinking with recognition of trade unionism. For Congressional progressives, labour had generally been regarded casually. They accepted Wilson's view but rarely considered labour problems as such. The crisis in 1919 caused by labour disputes was now forcing a great many to come to terms with the implications of trade unionism for their movement. This process went on simultaneously with the growing debate engendered by the war over the role of government in the peace-time economy. These debates increasingly demonstrated the split between progressives and conservatives within both parties. This, and other issues, made clear that this was in fact a split involving deep political beliefs.

Progressivism had always been a hybrid of principles; justice, equality, individual liberty and the protection of the public. As the movement developed, particularly in the two years following the war, progressives were being forced to re-examine the meaning of their fundamental beliefs. As a result, individual liberty was becoming secondary to the consideration of justice and equality. They were increasingly being forced by labour disputes to reconsider even their definitions of justice and equality, particularly in economic rather than moral or legal terms. They could not commit themselves to a fundamental redistribution of wealth, by a radical reform of the taxation system or by providing unemployment benefits. They did continue to sympathise with unionism's demand for a continually improving standard of living. They continued to demonstrate a deep antagonism and suspicion of the business community as exploiters of labour and political power brokers. These trends

tended to push progressives however tentatively to clear support of the labour movement. Though further political initiative on industrial relations remained unlikely, this direction was given added impetus by an increasing willingness to regard natural resources as being of the people and as such not fit solely for private profit. Radical progressives, close to La Follette were beginning to form a broader economic critique. It should be emphasised that this trend was practically imperceptible and no concrete proposals had been propounded. It is a new harder tone in progressive thought, a willingness to deal with economic and industrial problems, which is the main indicator of the trend. But progressives were still very much individuals; the Independent Congressional Campaign Committee had yet to be organised.

The progressives, it must be pointed out, by no means constituted a majority in Congress. The key to legislation was the floating vote. Senators and Congressmen with little practical inclination to the right or the left, lacking detailed knowledge of the Bill under discussion, held the real balance in a Congress where neither committed progressives nor conservatives could command a majority. It was these floaters' reluctance to accept compulsory arbitration which had finally defeated this section in the Transportation Act; their concern for the National Debt which ruled out a minimum wage Bill. Also, for all the development in their movement, when it actually came to proposing industrial relations' legislation, the progressives had few suggestions. They believed employers ought to bargain with employees whether unionised or not even though the steel strike had demonstrated graphically that employers would not do this. La Follette's opinion on labour and

the democratisation of industry was, as his secretary put it, "He believed that this principle should be gradually applied to industry and that its detail should be worked out in the hands of its friends as the situation developed".⁵⁶ It was an opinion that his progressive friends could endorse. Still atomised and only tentatively re-assessing their political stance by late 1920, they had not developed a credo on labour relations which could bring them to launch a political campaign to pass legislation on industrial relations in favour of the unions.

The developing of a broader economic thinking and the formation of a more united group in Congress demonstrated that among this radical group there existed a determination to press on with further basic reforms; a development likely to be to the benefit of trade unions. The unions themselves of course were far from clear in their position on broader economic issues. 1919 and 1920 were years of confusion and conflict which had radicalised unions, made them feel the inadequacy of the Clayton Act. In 1920, after staunchly defending unions, progressives initiated a new impetus led by La Follette. It remained to be seen how the events of the following years would affect radical progressives', trade unionists' and conservatives' opinions towards each other.

NOTES

1. See Lenroot papers, Box 2, file 2. Roosevelt admitted that "he did not expect that he would be permitted to go". Roosevelt deliberately used this as an excuse to launch a vituperative attack on Wilson in order to regain the leadership of his party.
2. Albert J. Beveridge papers, Box 215. Beveridge to Senator Fess February 20th, 1919.
3. Irvine Lenroot papers, Box 4. Lenroot to Roosevelt April 13th, 1918.
4. Philander Knox Papers, Box 66, Press Cuttings.
5. Presenting reservations as Lodge did, also served to hold pro-League Republicans to the party by giving an impression of support for the idea, if not the details.
6. Allen, F.L., Only Yesterday, p.20, quoted from the New York Tribune.
7. Knox papers, Box 66. From a speech by Knox given at a Lincoln Day Dinner at the Republican Club, Pittsburgh, Pa. February 12th, 1919.
8. William E. Borah papers, Box 76, Borah to the Boise Trades and Labor Council December 1918.
9. Democratic National Committee, proceedings February 26th 1919.
10. Woodrow Wilson papers, E.O.F., series 7A, speeches, to the Democratic National Committee February 28th, 1919. Wilson called for Democrats to give strong support and tighter organisation with the League as the central issue.
11. Congressional Directory, Vol.2, 66th Congress, first session. The Democrats still held the chairmanship of the committee through H. Smith, Georgia. In his absence A.A. Jones, New Mexico sat in the chair.
12. Ibid. Vol.3, 66th Congress, second session. The personnel of the committee changed little with the new Republican majority. In the new congress the members were: Republicans Kenyon, Borah, Carroll S. Page, (Vermont), G.P. McLean (Connecticut), L.C. Phipps (Colorado), Thomas Sterling (South Dakota), and J.O. Wolcott (Delaware). The Democrats were Hoke Smith, A.A. Jones, Kenneth D. McKellar (Tennessee), and David I. Walsh (Massachusetts).
13. Joint Committee on Education and Labor, Hearings on S.688 to provide a national employment system.
14. In the 65th Congress it had passed in the House by 327 for and 48 against, and by 252 for and 16 against.

15. Beveridge papers, Box 2, Brandeggee F. to Beveridge December 9th, 1919.
16. See Chapter 1, pp.27-33. Industrial disputes hardened opinion on both sides and created the gulf of conflict which represented the actual nature of industrial relations with which politicians had to deal.
17. Borah papers, op.cit., September 8th, 1919.
18. Ibid. Borah to Stanford November 10th, 1919.
19. Ibid. For a good description of individual progressives see Graham, O.L., Encore for Reform. Borah was the archetypal individualist whose reform impulse was rooted in his belief in individual liberty. This outlook was widespread among progressives and was a basic cause of progressives' inability to come to terms with the nature of the problem raised by trade unionism.
20. Congressional Record Vol.59, part 1, 66th Congress, second session, p.44, December 3rd, 1919.
21. Ibid. p.44.
22. Ibid. p.45.
23. Ibid. p.45.
24. Ibid. p.60 December 4th, 1919.
25. Ibid. p.61.
26. Ibid. p.61.
27. Ibid. p.162 December 5th, 1919.
28. Ibid. p.164.
29. Ibid. p.344 December 6th, 1919.
30. Ibid. p.345.
31. Ibid. p.345.
32. Ibid. p.552, December 10th, 1919.
33. Borah papers, Box 79, Borah to M. Carpenter, November 22nd, 1919.
34. Congressional Record, op.cit., p.277 December 5th, 1919.
35. The Kansas Court had broad powers to take over the running of strike-hit industry and could force business to continue production at all times. The basis of the Court was the belief in the right of the consumer to have uninterrupted service. Neither radical progressives nor conservatives, neither business nor labour could endorse this policy.

36. Congressional Record, Vol.59, part 3, p.3286 February 20th, 1920.
37. Ibid. part 4, p.3316, February 21st, 1920. The vote was:
Yeas 250, nays 150, not voting 27..
38. Ibid. part 5, p.5580, March 17th, 1920.
39. Ibid. p.5150.
40. Ibid. part 4, p.3875, March 3rd, 1920.
41. Ibid. part 7, p.6550, May 20th, 1920.
42. Ibid. part 5, p.5087, March 17th, 1920.
43. Ibid. part 7, p.7197, June 5th, 1920.
44. Ibid. part 8, p.8957, June 20th, 1920.
45. Ibid. part 8, p.8957.
46. Knox papers, Box 48. All the above quotations are from Knox's
speech to the Republican National Convention.
47. Miles Poindexter papers, Box 34, series 1, file 63, speech at
Pierre, South Dakota March 20th, 1920.
48. William H. Taft papers, series 3, general correspondence,
May 3rd - August 3rd 1920. Karger to Taft June 13th 1920.
Karger was editor of the Cincinnati Times-Star and a regular
correspondent with Taft.
49. Key Pittman papers, Box 147, political campaign 1920, suggestions
from the Western Department to the Democratic National Campaign
Committee.
50. Ibid. speech by Cox in San Francisco, September 17th, 1920.
51. Robert L. Owen papers, container 5, from Congressional Record,
part 2, p.2936, A speech of May 18th, 1920.
52. Taft papers, series 3, Taft to Ira Kelsey, May 20th, 1920.
53. Louis S. Post papers, Box 1, post to Bryan, April 7th, 1920.
54. La Follette family papers, Box 113, letters sent, August 14th, 1920.
55. Ibid. Box No.86, letters received, Huddleston to La Follette
August 19th, 1920.
56. Ibid. Box 131, letters sent, La Follette's secretary to a
Wisconsin constituent, August 7th, 1920. Despite La Follette's
radicalism he too had not yet a concrete position on the
labour problem. La Follette's radical progressivism derived from
his belief in the need for permanent state intervention in the
economy, a position which most Democratic progressives balked at.

CHAPTER 4

THE HARDING ADMINISTRATION

In the opinion of the editor of the Machinists' Monthly Journal, "The election of Harding as President is to be the signal for a general assault upon the A.F. of L. by the courts, police . . . and press throughout the country . . ."¹ Since the end of the war the trade union movement was feeling increasingly besieged. Harding's victory appeared to justify this sense of embattlement and the belief in their own isolated position, despite his campaign equivocations.

This mood had begun to replace the earlier hopes of new recognition and power during 1919. The dismantling of the N.W.L.B., the unchecked localised suppression of the steel strike, and the invocation of the Lever Act by the Wilson administration demonstrated that unionism had still not achieved industrial legitimacy and government support. A sense of disillusion was confirmed in the opinion of unionists by the failure of either the First or the Second Industrial Conference to endorse trade unions fully as the

legitimate organisation of representation for the working population. As we have seen, this had been the basis of union hopes for the post-war period.² They had expected either a continuation of the N.W.L.B. or at least a clear confirmation by the Wilson administration of the principles the Board had upheld. This they believed would have ensured the rapid spread of unionism and the establishment of its industrial power. In the event the Wilson administration appeared to return to a 'hands off' policy. It appeared to be determined merely to institutionalise the pre-war status quo, without any guarantees of the rights accepted during the war. Many unionists were ultimately disappointed by the post-war policies of Wilson's administration.

They were also disturbed by an impression that Congress had "given encouragement and support to autocratic and reactionary policies. Its dominating thought has been the repression of labor."³ It appeared to many trade unionists that their movement was isolated from contemporary political attitudes. The election of Harding seemed to confirm this gloomy opinion, and led to the prophesy of the editor of the Machinists' Monthly Journal.

Samuel Gompers however was anxious to scotch such opinions. He stated that "The charge that there are no friends of labor in the Democratic and Republican parties is ridiculous."⁴ The anti-strike provision of the Cummins Bill, the Poindexter Bill, the Myers amendment to the Sundry Appropriations Bill had all been defeated. The people who were proposing the anti-union legislation did not reflect Congressional opinion. As for Congressional anti-unionists such as Thomas Blanton, here was "a subject for the psychopathic ward."⁵

Sympathy for labour continued to exist in considerable degree in Congress. Nonetheless Gompers was forced to concede that in failing to uphold unions as the legitimate representatives of the workers, the preliminary report of the Industrial Conference had made "a fatal omission."⁶ As 1919 demonstrated, the Clayton Act would only be tenable if backed by regulation of business's responses to unionism. By dint of his experience on the N.W.L.B., and his support of Wilson, Samuel Gompers in 1919 had looked to the government for the codification of union rights. His disappointment was evident in the abandonment of this idea. However, Gompers held to the traditional 'friends and enemies' policy to defuse agitation for an independent political movement.

The political situation in late 1920 was thus highly complex. In December 1919, reflecting Gompers' view, the A.F.ofL. had stated the basis of its policy for the 1920 election in Labor's Bill of Rights, agreed on in a joint meeting of the Executive Council and the leaders of the member unions. The meeting strongly backed the rights to strike, to organise, to bargain collectively through representatives of workers' choosing. It upheld the right of public service employees to organise. The frustration of these rights was being achieved by the injunction. This was "a revolutionary measure which substitutes government of judicial discretion for government by law".⁷ This signalled a return to the minimal legal protection of union activity. Labor's Bill of Rights went on to call for the election of judges every six years and for their power to declare Acts of Congress unconstitutional to be ended. Wages should not be fixed on a cost of living basis but must be allowed to rise in order that workers might achieve

constantly improving standards of living. Unions and collective bargaining provided the primary step to make industry an efficient and fair servant of the community. Co-operation was vital to improve industrial performance, in both industrial relations and the production process. Unions therefore welcomed co-operation between "the scientists of industry and the representatives of organized workers."⁸ This grew out of consultation between Gompers and the American Engineering Society. The engineers' sincere desire for efficiency easily overcame earlier fears of worker exploitation. Such consultation demonstrated unionism's value to industrial performance. Finally the meeting endorsed the Peace Treaty and the League and emphasised its own loyalty to the nation.

As the document made clear, the A.F. of L. remained determined that their rights be recognised by business. As has been noted however, progressives were philosophically incapable of legislating further to protect these rights although they continued to believe these rights to be proper. Congress would not abridge these rights but neither would it go further; such was the balance of opinion in the two houses. Yet this was necessary if the injunction were to end. The progressive solution was to erect a machinery of conciliation, an attempt which dominated the approach of the Wilson administration. It was a basic assumption that if the two sides met regularly round the table, the likelihood of strikes would be diminished. It would in fact implicitly recognise unions since they were the only organised voice of entire industries and importantly, the Industrial Conference had proposed region-based negotiations. Explicit recognition of unions could only mean the

denunciation of the plan by business and was therefore self-defeating. Yet this was the key to union acceptance since it was their belief that once recognised, their power would be such that employers would have no alternative but to bargain. The problem was firstly in establishing this power. Machinery was of no use unless it provided specific codes to support the growth of this power. Progressives could not give unions specific endorsements.

The situation as the election campaign began was one of stalemate. While the balance of strength in Congress enacted no destructive legislation, it enacted no favourable legislation. The collapse of its conciliation policy saw the Wilson administration return to an ad hoc policy with regard to the coal union. The inception of the Railroad Labor Board had the effect in 1920 of temporarily taking the railroads out of the political arena.

The stalemate continued during the election when partisan necessity forced both parties to issue only vague planks on labour to bind the parties together. This stalemate however was more damaging for unionism than otherwise might have been the case due to the increasingly aggressive attitude of the business community. Judge Gary's attitude in the steel strike had been implicitly endorsed by the employers' group at the Industrial Conference in 1919. They regarded bargaining as a function only of the individual plant of factory; individual liberty applied equally to joining or not joining a union, the right to work as the right to strike. The issue of freedom of choice was a major problem for progressives in deciding the propriety of backing unionism absolutely. Concern for individualism had been one of the

key founts of the reform impulse. The trade unions forced progressives to re-assess the basis of their movement. In 1920, business highlighted the issue by beginning a campaign to publicise this line, timing it to coincide with the election race.

On 18th June 1920, the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce issued a paper entitled Labor Relations in Cleveland. The nine principles in this document were of the ambivalent nature to which all sides could subscribe and yet never agree as to interpretation. On wages the document recognised factors other than simple supply and demand such as the cost of living and saving needs. However, also to be considered were punctuality, productivity, individual skill and continuity of employment. There was to be no discrimination in either closed or open shops. The document also appeared to endorse collective bargaining although it was to be among the immediate workforce unless otherwise agreed. This in no way abrogated the right of individual bargaining. Importantly too, it endorsed the right of the public to uninterrupted service. The document was widely circulated and warmly received by the business community. Its importance as a public relations exercise cannot be underestimated. It gave the impression of a responsible, concerned business community aware of its responsibilities towards the customer and prepared to be reasonable with its employees. In fact the document upheld the status quo and as such clearly pushed on to unions responsibility for disruption. Crucially it left business free to choose whether or not to bargain, which was the root of the problem.

Still more threatening to the union movement was the launch by the National Association of Manufacturers of 'The American Plan' in May 1920. Its primary purpose was to uphold the principles outlined at the Industrial Conference. The N.A.M. held that bargaining should be at plant level and that the individual was the basic component of the nation and the Constitution. It strongly upheld the right of the courts, as protectors of the individual's rights, to pass on Acts of Congress. It attacked the Federal Trade Commission as "inquisitorial beyond its authority".⁹ It called for control of strikes. Combination could be allowed only when it did not injure the public interest. It attacked the denial of funds for injunctive proceedings. The injunction, business believed, was simply a process which established an equality in industrial relations. The N.A.M. claimed it did not oppose trade unions as such, only when they interfered with the personal liberty of employer or employee. This was, in effect, a manifesto for a virile business community, free of any further government interference in industrial relations.

There can be little doubt that it was the strong campaign by the N.A.M. which was the real cause of the trade union's sense of isolation and embattlement by late 1920. The campaign was a highly successful one by November 1920, as the N.A.M. reported in its first Open Shop Bulletin. During these eight months no less than 1,665 Chambers of Commerce including the Cleveland Chamber had subscribed to the ideals of the American Plan. The key to the plan was the awarding of contracts. Wherever possible businesses subscribing to the policy attempted to place contracts or orders with businesses which were open shop, ie using non-union employees.

The building trade was a major target for this treatment and this explains why the Carpenter was so bitter in 1920. It should be pointed out moreover that the N.A.M. was itself a combination of employers' associations which were also carrying out this policy in addition to providing strike-breakers and implementing a blacklist.¹⁰ Finally the N.A.M. actively encouraged Citizens' Alliances to be formed which would carry out the same tactics under a guise apparently divorced from the business campaign. Business in its propoganda also attempted to imply that the trade unions were in themselves alien to the traditions of the United States.

Facing such an unprecedented and united campaign, including the moves by the railroad executives already mentioned, some unions were no longer prepared to accept progressive equivocation. They now believed that their interests could only be served by a government which would not allow businessmen the choice of whether or not they would deal with unions. They felt they needed a government devoted to the interests of the working class. For these unionists 'the labor problem' required a political solution, one which progressives appeared unwilling to provide. Stalemate in 1919 and 1920 in the face of the business campaign had now become disastrous. They felt that they needed outright political backing and began to form labour parties. This mood was particularly marked in Chicago where the Federation of Labor, under John Fitzpatrick was instrumental in forming the Chicago Labor Party. In Detroit, a similar move was afoot. In Wisconsin, as we have seen, the railroad brotherhoods were deeply involved in the Senate race.

Samuel Gompers was greatly upset by this mood. His views were expressed on 19th February 1920 in a letter to William Mitch of the Indiana State Labor Party. "This is no time for experimenting with political parties."¹¹ He continued to maintain that unionism should continue to back progressives who had stayed loyal to unionism in the crisis of 1919. Indeed it was now vital to build on that foundation. He held firm in his belief that unions had no part to play in politics, that it was a movement of and for itself. Neither would a party wholly wedded to the union movement satisfy Gompers. He denied that the trade union movement had any implications for the economic system as a whole. All that the unions required was an end to injunction. Then the unions could achieve their ends by themselves. As he wrote to J. J. McSwain, "The workday should be shortened through the economic power of the workers. It does not seek to gain a shorter workday by law."¹² Political ideology meant nothing he claimed, yet it was a palpable fact that only progressives were prepared to act for the movement. Gompers was, of course, deeply committed to Wilson so that in fact he himself was politically involved.

Gompers still carried the majority of the A. F. of L. behind him but with the U.M.W. calling for nationalisation and state and city federations forming independent parties, the next few years would be of telling significance for trade unions. The key to the problem was whether progressives could develop a critique whereby further reforms in favour of trade unions could be assimilated. This was important not only for the future growth of unions, but also for the political perception of unions and indeed the position of Gompers himself, in addition to the future of the progressive

movement. The 'labor problem' had already developed beyond the solution proposed by Wilson.

After the election of Warren G. Harding the issue was the same but the tone had changed. The union position in 1919 had been fused with optimism. During 1920 the campaign of business and its determination to push unionism back had changed the dispute to a defensive one. With Harding in power that defence became still more important. The reforms labour sought were no longer for expansion but for survival. This chapter studies the policy and attitudes of the Harding administration and how they affected the nature of the dispute between business and labour. The rapidly changing economic situation represents an important factor in this development.

The trade unions, believing Harding to have been the choice of the Old Guard, looked forward to his administration with trepidation. Indeed, Warren G. Harding was always a conservative. He was not, however, a radical conservative wont to attacking trade unionism; his was a flexible conservatism which upheld the contemporary status quo. He would do unions no favours and had no reform programme to offer, but neither had he any intention of a vigorous pursuit of legal reforms detrimental to trade unionism. It is also untrue that Harding was politically naive or that his mind was incapable of grasping the modern system; his was the mind of a career politician, loyal to the party, supportive of the powerful, uncontroversial. As a standpat Republican he had no unique political programme. His main concerns were the traditional Republican planks; tariff, taxes, economy in government and

laissez-faire in the economy. The later disaster which befell the Harding administration was due to his lack of discrimination in appointees. He was a conservative and believed in the conservative policies of his party. He was a follower, not a leader. With regard to trade unions he had no political opinions as such, though no doubt his personal distaste for them had its roots in his political leanings; his was a personal, not an ideological view. This was revealed in a letter the President-elect wrote to a close Ohio confidante in February 1921; "I do not think I should be excessively annoyed by any process of picketing though I confess I do not like it . . . They are prejudicing their case more than helping by that sort of procedure."¹³ What Harding meant was that his own opinion was prejudiced by picketing. For Harding, a booming economy was the prime obligation of a Republican President. Any disruption of this process would not find favour with the new President. Thus, in his broad political outlook, Harding could tolerate unionism where it did not injure and disrupt the business system. As regards trade unionism, Harding had no particular antagonism or indeed particular concern; his priorities were the traditional Republican ones.

Yet even in these, Harding was to cause his Senate friends some considerable doubts. Aware of his own limitations, perhaps, Harding had pledged to draft 'the best minds' into his cabinet. The 'Old Guard' in the Senate confidently believed this to be an election promise and unlikely to influence Harding's ultimate choices. His early appointments reassured Senate Republicans. Rewarding his campaign manager, he appointed Harry M. Daugherty as Attorney General. His loyal Ohio supporters were drafted into

minor posts. Major contributors to the Republican war chest were also remembered - ex-Senator John W. Weeks became Secretary of War and Edwin Denby was appointed Secretary of the Navy.

These were less important than two key posts still to be decided - the Secretaries of State and Treasury. The former would be a key indicator of Harding's position on foreign policy generally and on the League issue particularly. His choice of Charles E. Hughes was greeted by isolationists as the defection of Harding from their cause. Hughes' standing in the nation and the party overcame these grumblings and the appointment was confirmed by the Senate. Much more widespread consternation was caused by Harding's decision to appoint Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce. Despite his support of the Republican cause in 1920, Republicans believed him to be still too close to the Democratic party after his relief work and participation in the Industrial Conference. Hoover had also built up in a series of speeches in 1920 a strong identity as a progressive. Additionally, he had been one of the foremost spokesmen in support of the League of Nations idea. Hoover's appointment was finally confirmed after Harding agreed to accept the conservative Republican's wish to see Andrew Mellon appointed as the Secretary of the Treasury. The concession was easy since the President had no objections to Mellon or his economic view. Yet the Mellon appointment apart, Harding had been able to choose largely whom he pleased to serve in his cabinet, a striking example of the lack of leverage which various groups in the party had on Harding. His appointment of James J. Davis to the Department of Labor was also largely Harding's personal decision. He had first come to Harding's attention through their both being members of

the Order of the Mooseheart, a charity organisation which Davis had almost singlehandedly kept alive. More importantly, he was an ex-iron puddler and still held a union card. Such abilities and advantages convinced Harding that Davis was ideal for the post. Harding did take cognizance of the need to reassure the broader party faithful and did so by appointing Will Hayes as Postmaster General, Charles G. Dawes, a supporter of Frank Lowden, as Director of the Budget, and Henry Wallace, editor of a mid-western farm journal, as Secretary of Agriculture. With the exception of Hoover, the labour movement remained largely unimpressed by the Harding cabinet and continued to view the future with concern.

The President's inaugural address served only to confirm the unions' view. The speech signalled Harding's determination to shake off as much of the war-time commitments of the Government as possible. He called for "the omission of unnecessary interference of government with business . . . a resumption of our normal onward way . . ." ¹⁴ This meant a return to "the inexorable laws of nature", ¹⁵ or at least the law of supply and demand, of economy in government, tax cuts and tariff reform. The theme of his speech he encapsulated in concluding that "Our most dangerous tendency is to expect too much of the government." ¹⁶ The Harding administration was determined to interfere as little as possible in any aspect of the American economic system. Industrial relations would have to be settled as the employers and employees saw fit.

Harding's economic outlook was echoed by his constitutional interpretation of the role of the President. He believed that the President was bound strongly by the election platform of the party

and should work in co-operation with Congress in seeking to enact its planks. Harding was well aware of the congressional mood as a result of the Wilson presidency and doubtless felt it unwise to claim any predominance for himself in the drawing up of a legislative programme. He was happy to tow the party line and leave the legislative agenda to the Congress. On both these issues the Harding administration's basic strategy was founded. Initiatives on domestic policies, other than tax and tariff, were not envisaged and particularly not in industrial relations. Harding had given little thought and had no specific views in what was a minefield of detail and intra-party disputes. Striking fear into trade unionists, the Harding attitude in fact disappointed the N.A.M. who sought much more positive support. They condemned such a hands-off policy as "pussyfooting".¹⁷

This did not mean that Harding did nothing at all once in office. It did mean that the Presidency would not be the forceful policy initiator it had been under Wilson. Thus, while Harding was in close touch with Senator Nicholas Longworth of New York over the programming of the legislative agenda, he had little himself to suggest as to how it should be implemented. The President did intervene in the tariff debate but only to advise Representative Joseph W. Fordney of Michigan that he opposed the idea of a duty on Mexican oil imports. The spread of American investment abroad was too important an objective to be discouraged in order to appease domestic oil producers.¹⁸ In fact discussion on specific tariff proposals was being held up by a bitter debate over the American valuation plan and an anti-dumping bill. These divisions were aggravated by the introduction of the Mellon Tax Plan. The result was

a virtual end to any direction of legislation. The Congressional situation may have deflected attention from the administration but increasingly, criticism was beginning to mount about the inability of the administration to take initiatives or indeed to appear to have any initiatives to pursue.¹⁹ The result of Harding's policy on industrial relations was stagnation. Nothing would be done by the administration on this issue or indeed on any issue as Congress became increasingly rancorous.

In this stagnant and yet bitterly divisive atmosphere, with public opinion increasingly critical, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released figures giving the unemployment level as approximately 5 million. These dramatic figures forced the Harding administration to grapple with the increasing problem of unemployment as revealed by its own agency but indeed it was neither the President nor his Secretary of Labor but the Secretary of Commerce who first pointed to the need for the administration to act.

Herbert Hoover was the sole recognised progressive in the Harding administration. In accepting the Commerce position he had made it clear to the President that he could do so only with an assurance that he would be given a broad portfolio to be involved in every aspect of the nation's commercial life. Harding had willingly agreed to this since he had little wish to involve himself in the economy at all. Thus it was that Hoover wrote to the President on 20th August 1921, that although he believed the Labor Bureau's statistics were "absolutely incorrect,"²⁰ he did fear a worsening situation in the winter and for this reason he

felt it was for government to explore any possible way which might help. His idea was that "local action must be stimulated" if "any real service in the unemployment problem"²¹ was to be accomplished. To achieve this Hoover proposed a Presidential Commission which could influence public opinion and the "employing forces".²² The fact that the federal government was demonstrating concern would galvanize States into taking action in public works, particularly road building.

Since Hoover's proposal in no way implied federal action beyond the encouragement of individual community and State activity, the President had no objection to the idea. In addition Harding "would be glad to have you suggest to me some of the men . . . whom you think would be helpful in making a success of such a conference".²³ The final list included Samuel Gompers, J. De Frees, Chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, ex-President of Yale University Hadley and D. C. Jaecklin of the Utah Copper Company. In fact as the conference proposals were to make clear their catholic suggestions covered the entire range of possibilities. The conference was from start to finish Hoover's plan. Its proposals reflected strongly Hoover's own ideas. The first of these reports was issued on 30th September 1921. As Hoover had earlier said, the conference confirmed that "the problem of meeting this emergency is primarily a community problem".²⁴ It recommended the setting-up of emergency committees in each locality to register those seeking work and provide charity relief. It urged businesses to manufacture for stock. Pointing to the \$700 million municipal bonds floated since August to support public works it urged further

State and municipal spending. It called on the federal government to expedite public works for which appropriations had already been made and for further appropriations for road construction. The President was delighted by these proposals. He wrote to Hoover that "If nothing more comes of it than the recommendations contained in these resolutions, the meeting will not have been in vain."²⁵ Harding might well be enthusiastic; it made no demands on the Executive other than administrative ones. The burden of costs would fall squarely on the States and municipalities. It highlighted the need for self-help and community concern and focused on Congress in the call for further appropriations.

On 12th October Hoover sent Harding a further list of the conference's proposals of broader scope. These proposals once more focused attention on Congress rather than the Executive. It called for the speedy passage of tax and tariff reforms, reduced railroad rates and settled exchange rates. Finally, the conference called for an elimination of waste in production.

There can be little doubt that the latter proposals were intended largely to pressurise Congress on the issues of taxation and tariff, both of which business pointed to as causes of, and necessary precursors of recovery from the recession. More importantly, however, the conference revealed that the economic concern of Herbert Hoover was with working people as a whole. The Secretary had a broad organic view of the nation. He believed deeply in the greatest possible measure of individual liberty. He recognised however that in the twentieth century this required modification. This he believed must arise from the strengthening

of the community conscience and a recognition of the need for individuals to accept responsibility for the welfare of the rest of the community. This voluntarist view was reinforced by Hoover in emphasising the importance of State and municipal action where the problem of unemployment was beyond the abilities of localised co-operation to solve. Responsibility flowed from the individual upwards - the federal government being a last resort; the traditional progressive view of the individual in a competitive system offset by a caring responsible society. The President was quite willing to accept Hoover's policy. It signified no commitment from the federal government nor further regulation. In most respects it supported the traditional standpat Republican view of the economy.

As with the majority of progressives, Hoover did not view his goals in terms of political power but simply in terms of improving the quality of life in America. Unlike Wilson, Hoover's primary concern was for the improvement of the economic quality of life. This would be determined by the nation's capacity to produce. Hoover believed it was the duty of the government to foster the conditions for an increase in America's productive capacity. Information, structural improvement and research were the means by which this could be achieved. Hoover was an administrative progressive, seeking the overall improvement of American life through technical reform. Efficiency in all things was the aim of the Secretary of Commerce. If achieved, the economy would be capable of satisfying the needs of capital, labour and the consumer. It was Herbert Hoover who controlled the economic policy of the Harding administration and in its main thrust was a policy to which Harding could not object.

Hoover's attitude to trade unionism was a part of his broader economic philosophy. As we have seen, Hoover shared the opinion of the Wilson administration that industrial relations required machinery for order. Unions were simply a reality. Because they were the only organised voice of the working people, Hoover was prepared to accept trade unions as an integral part of that machinery. Additionally, Hoover also accepted that unions could aid his campaign to eliminate waste in industry. While Hoover accepted unionism he had no intention of championing any further reforms. The 'labor problem' had developed from being a part of Wilson's moral progressivism to being a part of Hoover's administrative progressivism. It remained only a factor. Hoover was not prepared to deal with the question of the power of unionism per se. Ultimately, Hoover did not fill the vacuum which existed in the policy of the Harding administration towards the question of trade union power. His priority was economic well-being and efficiency. Unions, where they existed, were accepted as organisations which could contribute to that effort.

Despite this lack of commitment to the fostering of trade unionism itself, unionists warmed to Hoover's approach because it offered them a chance to prove their importance to the production process. With lay-offs occurring regularly and falling prices undermining union wage claims, this was becoming an increasingly important argument in the trade unions' struggle for legitimacy. Hoover was doubly important as the one major administration figure with some sympathy for the trade union position. On 30th November 1920, Samuel Gompers had congratulated Hoover on his election as President of the Federated American Engineering Society and agreed with Hoover that unions could co-operate over waste. It was

particularly important for unions to demonstrate their validity in the face of the N.A.M.'s Open Shop Campaign. Gompers therefore believed that "It is necessary that employers, the engineers . . and the workmen join in working out the basis of the principles of constructive production."²⁶

In declaring this position Gompers believed one of the principles underlying co-operation must be union legitimacy. This was a major about-turn on Gompers' part. In January of 1920 he had written that "Organized labor does not seek or want a share in the management of industry".²⁷ Now he accepted that his movement must now be willing to accept some responsibility at least for industrial production. This direction was emphasised by the deepening recession and the need to counter the N.A.M.'s policy. Co-operation had been launched by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers. It increasingly appeared to offer security for unionism in a hostile atmosphere. This shift in trade union attitude did not reflect any major change in their aims. They still believed the Harding administration was hostile and this perception indeed encouraged their willingness to co-operate with business. The 1921 recession deprived them of the argument that a rocketing cost of living justified their wage claims. They now saw that wage claims needed to be tied to production. Moreover, it also ended the growth of union membership. For all these reasons, if unions were to win their demands they needed a new approach and one based in industry. As we have seen, the railroad brotherhoods had lessened their attacks with the erection of the Railroad Labor Board, although their political activity continued as their participation in Wisconsin demonstrated. Co-operation was a tactic not a

shift in the basic goals of unionism. The I.A.M., for instance continued to be involved in a great number of small disputes while it also investigated opportunities for co-operation.

The combination of recession, the N.A.M. campaign and the non-interventionist attitude of the Harding administration led to a shift in the trade union outlook. In 1919 and 1920 the unions sought the acceptance of their legitimacy by business for expansionary purposes. In 1921 the movement was in a defensive struggle to preserve the unions which already existed from the attempts of employers to emasculate them. In this struggle unions had been badly weakened by the recession. The goals of each side remained the same as at the First Industrial Conference but the economic situation changed the power balance in industrial relations.

In this situation the leadership of the union movement sought a tactic which could be employed to strengthen their hand at such times. The attitude of the President was determinedly non-committal. The economic policy controlled by Herbert Hoover became the one glimmer of hope for trade unions. They seized upon his call for the elimination of waste as a new means of establishing their legitimacy. In this cause unionists were prepared to accept responsibility for production performance. This was important not only for union legitimacy but also for the maintenance of wage levels against calls by employers for cuts in wages in this time of deflation. In the situation of 1921 trade unionists were shifting to an acceptance of integration into the economic system, a significant modification of the 1919 position of legitimacy on their own terms. The combination of the industrial situation and the

nature of the Harding administration caused a move by unions towards compromise in tactics, though it must be emphasised their goals remained the same. The tactic itself however called for unions to integrate themselves into the economic system as it existed. This new stance was now being considered by the A.F. of L. but no policy had yet been announced. It remained a question of the judgment of individual unions. It was also unclear as to whether they would initiate any policy on these lines - the Unemployment Conference made clear that Hoover had little inclination towards central activity.

While unionists were adapting their attitude to the Hoover economic policy the control of labour policy, as such, was left entirely in the hands of James J. Davis, Secretary of Labor, by Harding. Davis's policy became clear in a series of speeches he gave during 1921. Particularly important was his speech in Philadelphia in June 1921. He stated that, "This time of adversity has taught us the lesson of working together."²⁸ He felt that co-operation must be legally enforceable by making "all parties to labor disputes . . get together before disruptions take place."²⁹ The Secretary of Labor's first concern was with economic disruption rather than with laying down the principles which would guide his department's approach to labour. Davis was extremely sensitive to business opinion. He went as far in November 1921 to explain to the Academy of Political Science that the conciliation division was not in any sense "a government interference with private enterprise."³⁰ The reaction of the business community to the department's unemployment statistics in the summer was scathing. Although Davis responded that the N.M.T.A., one of the loudest critics of

the figures, represented the most "hardboiled"³¹ of anti-unionists, he had new figures issued for the Unemployment Conference. These reduced the total unemployed by 1.5 million, ignoring the coal and railroad communities entirely. Davis, it was clear, would do nothing which would antagonise the business community.

Davis took little part in the Hoover Unemployment Conference and indeed appeared to resent Hoover's interference in labour affairs. He complained to Harding that Hoover's plan to set up an Unemployment Bureau in the Commerce Department merely duplicated the work of the U.S. Employment Service. His participation in the Shipping Board row over preference of Americans in merchant ships was ineffective. Similarly, although a conciliator was sent to Alabama, little could be achieved in settling the dispute between coal miners and employers over wage cuts. Davis did commit himself to the saving wage, but had no opinion on the legislation of a minimum wage. The conciliation division continued to solve most of the disputes which occurred in local areas and here Davis now proposed the appointment of experts in each industry who could be consulted in reaching agreements and in their implementation. Davis sought order and compromise in industry. He had sympathy for the justice of union claims but no patience with industrial disruption. He similarly berated industry for its aggressive attitude towards labour. Hence his advocacy of a legally enforceable cooling-off period and legally enforceable contracts. He had no sympathy for either side in any industrial disruption. In all his speeches Davis kept firmly in line with the non-interventionist attitude of his President. The one exception was Davis's determination to cut immigration to a minimum and to set

up elaborate machinery to ensure immigrants became naturalised as quickly as possible.

The administration had withdrawn entirely from the industrial relations debate. In doing so it had ended the framework around which that debate continued under Wilson. It was a framework which had been decided primarily by the attitude of the President. In 1921 neither Harding nor Davis was prepared to declare opinions which might be used as guidelines in handling industrial disputes. The result was a continuation of the guerrilla mentality which Wilson had hoped to dispel. It was up to both sides to win what it could be direct action. The year 1921 had been largely trouble-free yet to ignore a situation which had never been properly assuaged was a dangerous exercise. Not only did President Harding allow bitterness to fester but he had no guidelines for the handling of disputes.

The momentum of the N.A.M.'s 'American Plan' was continued in the vacuum created by Harding's position and the recession. Early in 1921 employers began to call for wage cuts. A questionnaire devised by the Chamber of Commerce and circulated in Pittsburgh found 66% supported wage cuts. It was their belief that "normalcy could not be expected until all wages had taken a cut".³² As prices fell, business called for wages to fall equally, the argument being that the war had inflated both and both must now fall if the nation was to revert to a peace-time basis. The response of the A.F. of L. at its 1921 Denver/Colorado Convention in June was to blame inefficient business and unscrupulous profiteering for the recession. It also resolved that wages should not be tied to the cost of living but should be decided on a more 'scientific basis'.

They were determined to continue to increase their living standards, regardless of moves in the cost of living. This position directly contradicted that of business and demonstrated the tactical aim of co-operation. "The practice of fixing wages solely on the basis of the cost of living is a violation of the whole philosophy of progress . . ."³³ The unions were not prepared to accept cuts. As Samuel Gompers wrote to President Harding on 27th August, this idea meant that "There is a constant tendency to standardize classes, each class having a presumptive right to a given quantity of various commodities."³⁴ Indeed this call for wage cuts was beginning to engender unrest in the unions, particularly on the railroads and in the coal industry. While unionists were turning to compromise, the pressure from employers was simultaneously stiffening union resolve.

As has been mentioned previously railroad executives had begun to inject the issues of wage cuts, work practices and the scope of agreements into claims before the Railroad Labor Board which decided that working rules should be changed. It introduced piece work, allowed non-unionists to be represented by men of their own choice other than union negotiators. This latter was seen by unions as a threat to their power in the industry. Still more angering to the brotherhoods was the fact that several railroads particularly Atterbury's Pennsylvania Railroad had begun wage cuts and a process of widespread lay-offs while contracting out work. The 1921 recession had weakened unions and forced them to reconsider their tactics and avoid strike action. As the business attack continued, however, the unions were being forced to defend their position in the face of government inaction. The consequence was the bitter strikes in the coal and rail industries where unions

were at their most powerful. Ostensibly over wage bargaining, these disputes centred on the question of power and whether the economic priorities of business or labour would triumph.

In Indianapolis in September, the President of the United Mine Workers had issued to the unions' biennial convention a commitment to "no compromise".³⁵ The agreements in the coal industry were set to run out on 31st March 1921. While operators sought cuts, this message from Lewis seemed to presage trouble.. The Carpenters' union had early in 1921 declared its intention that "no reduction in wages under present conditions is admissable."³⁶ As in 1919, the unions and the business community once more appeared to be approaching unanimity in determined opposition to each other, with neither prepared to compromise on wages. The unions claimed the right to a constantly increasing standard, regardless of the cost of living - in effect a redistribution of wealth. While wages were the ostensible cause, the root of the disruption once more was economic beliefs. Once more a political stance was required for any proposed solution. This was the worsening situation which the Harding administration, with nothing which could be recognised as a policy, had to deal with in 1922.

The crisis brought on by the strikes in the coal industry and the Shopmen's strike on the railroads dominated the Harding administration's labour policy in 1922. No other issue intruded. The administration had made a premature attempt to bring the operators and the U.M.W. to the conference table in October 1921. Since the U.M.W. did not decide on its wage demands until

February 1922, this was an unreasonable request. Essentially the difference between the operators and the miners was that the former wished a major wage reduction and district or State-wide agreements whilst the union refused to accept cuts and wished to continue with the national agreement. The determination with which both sides held their positions gave Harding little cause for hope. Hoover was convinced from an early date of the inevitability of a strike.³⁷ Hoover indeed had the Geological Survey draw up a report on coal stocks and output in the event of a strike. He appeared to be willing to wait out the strike.

Their report anticipated that the U.M.W. would be able to close down only 65% of the nation's mines and that 5 million tons per week could be expected from non-union mines. This still left a weekly shortfall of 2 million tons but there was a stockpile of 65 million tons, enough the survey concluded, to survive an 11-week strike by bituminous miners without serious discomfort even though some regional differences would arise. The anthracite region, however, much more concentrated and more strongly organised, was likely to suffer near complete closedown. A stoppage of longer than six weeks would mean exhaustion of stocks and severe difficulties.³⁸ Anthracite production, however, went largely to domestic consumers and with summer near the discomfort was unlikely to be serious. The administration therefore had three months to solve the bituminous situation which would begin to hurt industrial output, as that was where most bituminous coal was consumed, particularly by the railroads. The administration made another attempt in late February to bring the two sides to the table but the operators turned the offer down since negotiations would be

national, at once satisfying the union position. The rigidity of the two sides caused Harding to wash his hands of the dispute. As he wrote to Davis: "I doubt if there is anything which the Administration may do to prevent a suspension . . in the union field."³⁹

The coal strike began on 1st April 1922 with the administration apparently unhappy but unwilling to intervene physically in the dispute. James Davis, however, expressed his "keen disappointment at the failure of certain operators to fulfill the terms of their obligation to meet in conference."⁴⁰ In his opinion it was clear that the operators had acted wilfully in allowing the strike when the U.M.W. was prepared to negotiate. No further action was taken by the administration in the first two months of the strike. Yet given the policy of the administration and the lack of interest in industrial relations during 1921, it was difficult to see what could be done. Only a guarantee of union legitimacy might end business intransigence.

Reports from the Geological Service during April and May made it clear that the strike had won far more support than they had anticipated. Bituminous production during April never reached 4 million tons; this was not achieved until mid-May. Anthracite production throughout this time remained practically nil. The crisis appeared to be coming on much more quickly than had been projected. The Herrin Massacre in Illinois caused a loss of a great deal of sympathy for the U.M.W. This much publicised atrocity was the result of the miners' determination to prevent strikebreaking in a small community. Perhaps the most shocking

aspect for Americans was the realisation that these isolated and feudal towns where such bitterness festered still existed. Harding never considered using this as an excuse for the suppression of the strike at the time. In July, when he hoped both sides would be exhausted, he called the operators and unions to the White House to discuss his proposal for a commission to investigate the dispute, its findings to be binding. As Harding put it, the U.M.W. rejection based on its demands for a guaranteed national agreement centred on the Central Competitive Field, caused him to have a "loss of sympathy with the position of Mr. Lewis who has assumed that the nation must do his will or be made to suffer."⁴¹

By July, Harding was beginning to feel keenly the pressure on him to settle the industrial disruption. This had been made worse by a strike by railroad shopmen on 1st July over a further decision by the Railroad Board to reduce their wages. He was personally piqued by Lewis's refusal of government arbitration of the dispute and had no further intention of offering his services as mediator.⁴² He now believed that the men must return to work, for which he appealed on 17th July after the breakdown of talks.

The freedom of action on the part of workmen . . . does not measure in importance with that of the public welfare and national security, I therefore invite you to return to your mine properties and resume operations⁴³

Although Harding now strongly disapproved of the strike and wished it to end, he was extremely reluctant to suppress it. He hoped it would end of its own accord. Unlike Wilson, curiously, he allowed the right to strike to stand in this dispute. To suppress the

strike would only satisfy operators and Harding still sought "the middle path to a permanent settlement"⁴⁴ and in this he remained firm. In fact, in early August it became clear that both operators and strikers were beginning to feel a strike was costing too much and a rapprochement began to take place. Indeed, by the time of Harding's tough speech of 18th August 1922, the two sides were in Philadelphia and close to agreement.

As can be seen, Harding's view of the strike had been hardening during the summer to a point in August where his anger could no longer be contained. There can be no doubt that he wished to pressure the U.M.W. into agreement through his speech. Suppression of the strike could not be far off. The refusal of the miners to return to work pending the commission angered him to the point where he claimed that "Except for the coal as comes from the districts worked by non-organized miners, the country is at the mercy of the United Mine Workers."⁴⁵ The real reason for the refusal of the U.M.W. was the binding nature of arbitration and the issue of seniority. The agreement was reached independently but essentially on the lines Harding had suggested, though it was not binding. Settlement, favouring the U.M.W., in the retention of the old wage scale, was achieved in late August to run until 1st April 1923.

Harding, however, still had to resolve the crisis in the railroads. He had also tried to mediate in this strike by calling for a resumption of work while the issue of seniority be put before the Railroad Board. Inevitably, the shopmen's union rejected the proposal. Firstly, Harding's suggestion put the issue of wage cuts, the reason for the strike, out of the dispute. Moreover,

in their view the Board was now clearly antagonistic to unionist aims and if they resumed work without seniority guarantees then they would simply lose them. Thus, they rejected the administration's proposal. This, in addition to the coal strike, added to Harding's anger and frustration. Most important in influencing Harding's later activities however was the opinion he held about the nature of the Railroad Labor Board which he made clear in his 18th August speech. Frankly, he believed that the Board's decisions were in effect quasi-judicial and that as such their decisions deserved to be upheld. He believed that the shopmen in striking had broken a trust implicit in the machinery of the Board. He now called for legislation to make the Board's decision legally enforceable. The union position was that an appeal to the Board, which Harding held to be the proper course, was pointless since the Board was biased against the unions.

Harding was moving to a position, at least with regard to agreements reached through government machinery, where collective bargaining agreements should be regarded as legally binding. In effect this called for the banning of strikes. It was his opinion that, although recognition of unions was not in dispute, "We must check abuses or excesses which conflict with public interest . . ."⁴⁶ Public welfare for Harding came to mean the banning of economic disruption. Wilson had been constrained from this view by his acceptance that public welfare also meant the improvement of the standards of living of workers.

As the crisis mounted, the President became increasingly aware of the power which trade unions in key industries such as coal and the railroads could exercise through the use of the strike

weapon. This appeared dangerous to Harding. It was not simply a damaging economic power but threatened the fabric of the nation.

He moved significantly in 1922 from a position of remarkable equanimity in April, prepared for the time being to tolerate the disruption while sympathising with neither side, to strong opposition in August. The power of the unions, the real crisis they caused and their refusal to negotiate forced him to attack unionism bitterly as a dangerous minority. "Generations of democracy are surrendered to mobocracy and the freedom of a hundred millions is surrendered to the small minority which would have no law."⁴⁷ The latter piece is a reference to the Herrin Massacre. The public interest must be upheld at all costs. In this instance the administration had no hesitation in accepting responsibility for the welfare of the nation. Harding went on to attack unions for suppressing the rights of individuals to work. As he wrote to the Attorney General on 1st September 1922, sanctioning an injunction against the shopmen: "The underlying principle involved in this situation and this action is the survival and supremacy of the Government of the United States."⁴⁸

The government had also laid down an ultimatum tantamount to breaking the strike in calling for workmen to return to work with the protection of federal troops. It was when this tactic had failed that the decision to seek an injunction was decided upon. Ultimately, Harding could accept unions only in so far as they did not disrupt the economy. He appreciated that destruction of unionism was undesirable. Indeed, Harding wrote to Atlee Pomerene,

Democratic Senator from Ohio, that he feared that "Peace and restored transportation would be a very long way off if we undertook to bring it about from the viewpoint of those who speak alone for the operators."⁴⁹ Yet circumscribing unionists' right to strike meant robbing them of their power, requiring that they depend on employers' magnanimity. Harding's position, however ambivalent, was not favourable to trade unionism. His Attorney General, Harry Daugherty, had no qualms about such a consequence, declaring the purpose of the injunction to be to uphold the open shop, as well as the government. The injunction caused a storm in Congress and strong protests from Hoover and Hughes. Harding was attempting a 'middle path' once more.

In fact this storm left Harding unaffected. The attacks centred almost entirely on Daugherty and the injunction row soon lapsed. As in 1919, the ending of the strike far outweighed concern over the method of its achievement. It did however demonstrate that there were limits to Harding's acceptance of trade unionism. In the event of a crisis he believed it necessary to abridge union rights, although normally he had little time for unionism one way or the other. They were part of a free market in Harding's view and as such he had no objection to them. Allowing unions to cause a crisis could be sanctioned only by a political ideology which accepted the thesis that the distribution of wealth was of a priority which justified the economic damage caused to the business community. It required a belief in the right of the working class to wield power in the form of trade unionism. It was a position which Wilson had been unable to sanction - neither could President Harding. In a crisis the commitment of the

Executive, conservatives and progressives alike, was to resolve it as soon as possible.

The atmosphere surrounding the labour problem in 1922 remained identical with that of 1919. The purpose of each group remained the acceptance of their power by the other. Each issue disputed by the two groups was imbued by the broader hopes which each cherished. Thus, while wages was ostensibly the key issue in 1921 and 1922, in fact the core of the disagreement was the divergent views of the two groups as to what wages actually were and what should influence their levels. Whatever the issue, the real difference between unions and employers remained their economic perception.

The most significant development of 1921 was the acceptance by trade unionists of the need for some degree of responsibility for industrial performance on their part. Although the goals remained the same, this tactic meant integration and a modification of their inflexible position where only full acceptance of their aims would be adequate. It signified a shift towards accommodating the political thinking of Herbert Hoover and administrative progressivism. Although the inflexibility of employers forced unions to resort to industrial action, this was a trend which would re-emerge when the unions were able to construct a coherent policy. It was, however, but one of the unions' methods to achieve its ends. In a period of recession, the need to maintain wage levels forced unions to abandon the simplistic cost of living scale and seek other means. What this might mean for the future relationship of trade unionism and the political system remained unresolved. The continuing intransigence of the business community meant that in 1922

politicians were faced once more by the question of how to minimise industrial disruption without forcing business to accept unionism.

President Harding was disinclined to deal with the problems of industrial relations. His Secretary of Labor sought to maintain the status quo but was never able to give this the force of a coherent outlook; he simply abhorred the extremism of both sides. He failed moreover to establish the authority of his office. Herbert Hoover represented the one glimmer of hope for unionism within the Harding administration. Yet unionism was but a factor in the Secretary of Commerce's broader economic policy and it was far from clear whether Hoover would initiate any plans which would give his ideas solidity. In 1922 the crisis resulted in Harding's resorting to his basic instincts. Unionism, though not to be destroyed, must certainly be controlled. Given the lack of any momentum in labour policy this attitude became representative of the administration's policy. In these years unionists had to look to Congress for backing.

NOTES

1. The Machinists Monthly Journal Vol.32, No.11, p.990.
2. See Chapter 1, pp.22-23. In the hearings before the Senate committee on education and labor on the report of the Second Industrial Conference it was W. Jett Lauck's opinion that the N.W.L.B. code would have recognised the steel organisation and avoided the disruption in that industry.
3. The Carpenter, Vol.20, No 4, p.462. The sense of disillusion in the unions was widespread in 1920. The key to the split in the union movement was between those whose disillusion led to a commitment to a more radical position and those who did not see that any change in their political outlook would bring greater benefit.
4. A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.263, February 24th - March 18th, 1920. Gompers to L Schlemmer, the Secretary of Bakers Union No.14, Rochester, N.Y.. March 12th, 1920.
5. Ibid. Vol.262, January 27th - February 23rd, 1920. Gompers to J. Radley, February 16th, 1920.
6. Ibid. Vol.261, December 19th, 1919 - January 26th, 1920. Gompers to the New York Evening Post, December 29th, 1919.
7. The Machinists Monthly Journal, op.cit. No.1, p.43. This signalled Gompers' return to particular grievances and the abandonment of hopes of government support.
8. Ibid. p.45.
9. The National Association of Manufacturers, platform of American industry, p.5. This platform reflected the fact that business never had a coherent economic outlook. It simply defended its own interests at all times.
10. Members included the Metal Trades Association, the Association of Employing Printers and the League for Industrial Rights.
11. A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.261, Gompers to W. Mitch, President of the Indiana State Labor Party and secretary of the Indiana State Federation of Labor. February 19th, 1920.
12. Ibid. Vol.262, Gompers to J. J. McSwain, President of the Woodworkers' Union March 6th, 1920.
13. Warren G. Harding papers, personal office file No.148, Harding to Malcolm Jennings February 1st, 1921. Jennings was secretary of the Ohio Manufacturers Association.
14. Congressional Record, Vol.60, part 1, 66th Congress, first session, p.4535.
15. Ibid. p.4535.

16. Ibid. p.4535.
17. N.A.M. Open Shop Bulletin No.1, November 1920.
18. Harding papers, Executive Office File, case file 60/61, Tariff. Harding to Fordney July 5th 1921.
19. Lenroot papers, Box 4, The Editor of the Wausau Daily Record-Herald complained to Lenroot that the President appeared to be doing nothing in Washington but "going to parties" August 4th, 1921.
20. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f. 804: 1-2, Unemployment Conference, Hoover to Harding August 20th, 1921.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid. Harding to Hoover August 24th 1921.
24. Ibid. Hoover to Harding September 30th 1921. Communicating the Conference's resolutions. The membership of the conference was overwhelmingly from business. See Runfola, R.T., Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce who characterised it as "a manufacturers' conference", p.114.
25. Ibid. Harding to Hoover, October 4th, 1921.
26. A.F.L. letterbooks, Vol.272, October 30th - December 6th, 1920. Gompers to Hoover, November 30th, 1920.
27. Ibid. Vol.261, Gompers to E.H. Wilson, January 7th, 1920. Gompers' argument had always been that unionism by its very nature helped business efficiency. While he now endorsed co-operation, although not responsibility for actual management, it did mean that Gompers was prepared to see unions accept responsibility for productivity and performance. Hoover was an important contact for the A.F. of L. and Gompers. But Hoover's was a general view with no particular concern for unionism despite the sympathetic arguments put forward by Zieger, R.H., in Republicans and Labor.
28. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f.15, Davis's speech of June 19th, 1921.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid. November 4th, 1921, speech by Davis in New York. Davis indeed carried out a full agenda during 1921 speaking in Pittsburgh, Toledo and Milwaukee and he also issued several major statements to newspapers.
31. Ibid., E.O.F., c.f.804: 1-2, Davis to Harding September 16th 1921.
32. Iron Age, Vol.107, part 2, April 14th 1921, p.971.
33. A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.281, July 27th to August 19th, 1921. Gompers to Harding August 19th 1921.

34. Ibid.
35. United Mineworkers of America, proceedings of the convention, September 20th to October 5th, 1921, p.143.
36. The Carpenter, Vol.21, No.2, p.25.
37. Urofsky & Levy, The Letters of L.D. Brandeis, Vol.5. Brandeis to Alfred Brandeis October 25th, 1921. He reported Hoover as having said that "a strike on April 1st is probable". Hoover believed that the workers' leadership was out of step with rank and file opinion. He believed they appreciated the problems of the industry and would accept wage cuts. In fact, as the success of the strike showed, it was Hoover who was out of step.
38. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f.175 Survey reports began on March 8th, and were sent weekly to the President.
39. Ibid. Harding to Davis March 21st, 1922.
40. James J. Davis papers, Box 5, Davis's press release March 31st 1922.
41. Harding papers, P.O.F., c.f.148, Harding to J. Harriman, July 28th 1922.
42. Ibid. Harding to Harriman, July 31st, 1922.
43. Harding papers, E.O.F. c.f.175, Harding's statement of July 17th, 1922.
44. Harding papers, P.O.F., c.f.148, Harding to Harriman, July 7th, 1922.
45. Senate Document No. 240, Strike Crisis, p.2. Harding's speech to 67th Congress, second session, August 18th, 1922.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f.175, Harding to Daugherty, September 1st, 1922.
49. Ibid. Harding to Pomerene July 31st, 1922. Although the strike was to be ended, by force if necessary, the purpose for Harding was a public necessity and did not signify any wish on his part to crush the trade union movement.

CHAPTER 5

CONGRESS 1921-22

President Harding had made clear from the outset that his policy towards labour would be strictly non-interventionist. He had avoided labour issues at all times during 1921. He believed deeply in the maxim he had expounded in his 4th March Inaugural Address: "No statute enacted by man can repeal the inexorable laws of nature. Our most dangerous tendency is to expect too much of government."¹

This chapter studies any divergence or agreement between Harding's outlook and Congressional opinion during the years to 1922. Particular emphasis is placed on the nature and development of progressive thinking on the labour problem at this time. Although La Follette's idea of a more formal progressive identity in Congress had been obscured by the pressures of electioneering, the response had been generally positive. The fortunes of this idea and its impact upon the nature of progressivism is of major concern in this chapter. The development of a more coherent progressive programme was likely to be of considerable importance to the nature

of the relationship between unionists and their Congressional 'friends'. Whether this would be the key to bridging the political gap between trade unionism's ultimate aims and the limits of progressive attitudes on industrial relations remained to be seen. The following sessions of Congress and its response to the unemployment issue and the 1922 crisis would be a strong indicator of these trends. This chapter also examines the question of how damaging such tendencies might have been electorally in 1922 and to what extent a progressive/conservative dialogue was superceding the traditional party loyalties.

The 'lame-duck' session of the sixty-sixth Congress provided ample evidence that progressives had not been cowed by the Harding victory in 1920 and were as determined as ever to protect the trade union movement. While the President-elect began to assemble his Cabinet in Florida, Oscar Bland, Republican from Indiana, re-opened the issue of the Lever Act's use in a debate on repeal of war-time legislation in the House. He flatly stated that the Act had shattered labour's trust in government due to its misuse against them a year earlier. Bland went on to argue that its use had been deeply unjust not only for the violation of trust but also because "the miners struck in 1919 because they had a grievance that ought to have been listened to by someone."² Wells Goodykoontz, Republican from West Virginia, endorsed Bland's opinion that the miners had a just grievance. So too did Alabama's Huddleston, signifying the continuing bipartisan progressive support for the fair treatment of labour by the government. Similarly, conservative opposition to unionism maintained its bipartisan character. Poindexter's anti-strike bill returned to the floor of the Senate in December 1920.

A motion to reconsider effectively killed it off in that session. In the House, Blanton also continued his harangue of the A.F. of L.. By this time he was demanding that there be no recognition of strikes: "We have got to establish 'The American Open Shop'".³

Yet despite this, in the sixty-sixth Congress initiative on labour matters was taken up by progressives. They were now pushing bills up for consideration which forced Congress to continue to consider labour issues. In his resolution (S.Res.440) California's Republican Senator Hiram Johnson called for:

A thorough and complete investigation of the conditions existing in the coal fields of Logan, McDowell, Mercer and Mingo Counties, West Virginia, for the purpose of ascertaining the underlying causes of unrest.⁴

The Senator called particularly for the investigation of the practice of coal operators employing armed guards and whether state troops were necessary. Since this investigation would require funding it was referred to the Committee to Audit and Control Expenses and not the Education and Labor Committee. The most important aspect of the resolution was its pointed reference to business practice in industrial disputes. Johnson recognised that the greatest single contributory factor in prolonged bitter strikes and the failure of unions to organise was the recourse to strike-breakers and their violent protection by private guards. Deprived of this tactic they would also be deprived of any expectation of being able to end strikes themselves. The end of the hope that strikes could be broken would make employers much less willing to allow strikes to occur. Some progressives now appeared willing to

grasp the nettle of the details of industrial power. Seeking, as we have seen, to uphold union rights without further legislation or coercive laws against employers, progressives hoped to achieve this through such issues as these. What was significant was that progressives were moving from a position where unions ought to have their rights upheld to an attempt to find means of achieving this end.

Such bills and resolutions as these, however, remained dependent upon individual initiatives. There was nothing recognisable as a progressive labour policy as yet. The homogenising force in progressivism had always been the movement's objective of ridding America of corruption and establishing an egalitarian society. Progressives had never been able to agree on the means by which this could be achieved. The defection of Theodore Roosevelt from the Bull Moose Party, the impact of the government's war-time activities on post-war politics and the end of Wilsonian leadership served to atomise further the progressive movement. It fell to the conscience of each progressive to decide which of the movement's moral imperatives should gain predominance. Their conclusions with regard to the priorities of their movement were of considerable importance to trade unionism. As we have already seen, a continuing support for equality and justice had not been established. Progressives generally still could defend the rights of unions but many, in accepting the post-Wilson status quo, sought order and were prepared to minimise the economic powers of unionism. Yet even among advanced progressives prepared to accept union power, means of achieving a broader acceptance of unions remained unclear. The Johnson resolution was a first tentative step in this

direction, though it was once more an individual initiative. It was the concern of La Follette, the most prominent of these advanced progressives, that they should form a more homogeneous group based on coherent policies. How successful this effort proved to be and the extent of support it gained in Congress would be of major significance for the trade union movement in its continuing struggle to have its legitimacy accepted by the business community.

La Follette's attempts to launch a progressive group in August 1920 had met with a lukewarm response. In the wake of Harding's victory the need for progressive coherence appeared to La Follette to be more important than ever. In December 1920 he launched the People's Legislative Service. It was formed largely by La Follette's Wisconsin backers, prominent among whom were Warren Stone of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers and William Johnston who became Secretary/Treasurer of the P.L.S. and Basil Manly, an ex-chairman of the N.W.L.B. who became a staunch ally of La Follette. The Senator himself was chairman, George Huddleston, one of the first to join the P.L.S. was its vice-chairman. Concern to define policy and to win wider support prevented the P.L.S. from making great impact on Congress and the treatment of labour issues. Nonetheless, the Johnson resolution represented a continuing concern among some progressives over the details of industrial relations which seemed to bode ill for the policy which Harding committed himself to in his Inaugural Address.

Indeed, a major question mark hung over the nature of relations between Congress and the new administration. Despite the fact that Republicans now had handsome majorities in both houses,

this barely affected the fine balance between progressives and conservatives in Congress. The situation was tailor-made for the Democratic party to embarrass the administration in supporting the progressives. Moreover, one of the key campaign issues had been the power of the Presidency under Wilson. Now free from Wilson's domination, Congress would not willingly succumb again. Still more troubling to Harding was the factionalism in the party other than that caused by the progressives. Internationalists were at loggerheads with nationalists over the key question of foreign relations. Tactically, too, Harding could not call on the unquestioning support of Senator Lodge, while the influence of Senators Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania and Reed Smoot of Utah was on the wane. The administration's spokesmen, Senators such as Harry New and James Watson, both of Indiana, did not have clout. All these factors pointed to a fractious sixty-seventh Congress and difficulty for the new President in gaining its backing.

On the debate on the Johnson resolution, Harding's non-interventionist position received strong support from the anti-union conservatives at least. Democrat Senator Henry Myers from Montana agreed with the President that:

Of late it has become a practice every time a strike of any consequence occurs in the United States for the striking miners particularly to fly to the Government and ask the Government to take their side.⁵

It was Myers opinion that the government ought not to allow itself to be used as a weapon in industrial disputes, particularly where these involved private contracts. Myers also maintained that this

particular unrest was a matter for the authorities of West Virginia, not the central government. This latter line of argument brought support from Senator Dial, Democrat, South Carolina, who was also concerned for the debilitating effect on States' power of the increasing recourse to the federal government. West Virginia's senior Senator, Republican Howard Sutherland, echoed this opposition to the resolution by stating that the unrest in his State could be controlled by the West Virginian authorities. Despite this apparent unity between standpat Republicans and States' rights Southern Democrats, they could not command a majority, so that the Johnson resolution passed the Senate. The vote not only made clear that conservatism had no control over legislation in the Senate or the House but that Harding's non-interventionism did not have the backing of a Republican majority.

This is not to say that the progressives had an overall majority. The key to the fate of labour issues, ironically, was held by the majority of Senators and Representatives who eschewed ideology. These men had little studied the 'pros and cons' of the arguments surrounding the labour problem. They took each case on its merits. They could not initiate legislation - their knowledge was not adequate - but it was their votes which decided whether any proposal achieved a majority. An investigation could be backed by these men. It involved no legislative commitment while it did demonstrate Congressional concern. They understood that conservative opposition was not on a par with Harding's non-interventionist policy but was rather a deliberate attempt to crush unionism. They sympathised with neither side but appreciated that something must be done. Thus, the Republican Senator from New York, William Calder, had

proposed a bill giving the Federal Trade Commission much increased powers over the investigation and publication of prices and profits in the coal industry. Reflecting a growing recognition of the government's duty to actively protect the public interest, Calder stated that "in the interests of the public, the Government must have some oversight of this basic necessity".⁶ The bill went to La Follette's Committee of Manufacturers where three weeks of hearings were held, at which the dispute quickly centred on the question of government intervention, but the bill failed to come to the floor before the session ended.

The continuing progressive campaign, it was clear, was succeeding in shifting the centre of concensus slightly. The floating voters were now prepared at least to consider government action. That these floating voters approached questions on a piecemeal non-ideological basis, however, was demonstrated during the summer in the debate over an amendment in the House to the La Follette's Seaman's Act. Priorities shifted with the terms of the proposal under consideration. The amendment from Republican Frank Scott of Michigan essentially called for the scrapping of the Act's provisions with regard to shipping on the Great Lakes. It sought the return of a two-watch system, the reduction by 15% of able seamen required, and an increase in hours from 56 to 84 per week. Alabama's William Bankhead, Democrat, characterised this amendment as but a prelude to "a wholesale attack upon all the provisions of the La Follette's Seaman's Act".⁷ The majority of the House did not share Bankhead's concern. The amendment was passed after a further amendment from California's Republican John I. Nolan restoring the eight-hour day. The argument for the Scott amendment rested solely on a concern about the viability of Great Lakes' shipping. The smaller vessels plying

on the Lakes simply could not afford or require the legal minimum of able seamen, while the three-shift system crippled the short-haul business there. In this case principle gave way to the practical consideration of the survival of shipping on the Great Lakes. This again swayed the floating voters and caused the amendment to pass. Congressional confirmation of trade union legitimacy depended upon the opinions of mild progressives and the floating vote. The success of the Johnson resolution appeared to demonstrate that the campaign of more radical progressives over the labour issue was shifting the centre of consensus. But, since even these progressives remained disunited and unclear as to how to proceed with the 'labor problem', this shift was due mainly to the repulsion many felt towards the conservative attitude. William Borah caught this mood when he argued on the floor of the Senate on 7th July 1921 that:

The safeguards of our liberty are not so much in danger from those who openly criticise them as from those who, professing to believe in them are willing to ignore them when they are found inconvenient to their purposes.⁸

Congressional opinion on the labour question was in considerable disarray in the new Congress. Backing for labour among mild progressives and the floating vote was due largely to deprecation of the attitude and activities of business and conservatives. It remained to be seen whether a new coherent initiative by more advanced progressives still aiming to act on behalf of unions, could clarify this situation. Vital to any development of opinion on the 'labor problem' was whether the issues arising during the

Congress would continue to involve debates based on the progressive/conservative dialogue.

When La Follette wrote to a Wisconsin constituent early in the new Congress that "this is one of the busiest sessions of Congress in my experience"⁹, it was due largely to the protracted debates over tax and tariff reform. These two issues had been the major planks of the 1920 Republican platform and as such were the top priorities of the Harding administration. As basic Republican policy it was hoped that these two issues could be employed as the foundation of a united party in Congress. These were regarded as means to end the fractiousness and ineffectiveness of the Congress, and revive traditional party loyalties. The tariff debate certainly succeeded in deflecting Congress from the progressive/conservative clash. In doing so, however, it did not line up the party but rather caused it to degenerate into an incoherent free-for-all. After eight years of low tariffs this was almost inevitable, given the vast number of articles whose rates had to be decided and the clash of particularist interests involved. Some coherence did appear early in the tariff debate over the basis from which schedules would be decided. In this row it quickly became clear that the dispute centred on tariff levels rather than the principle of increased tariff itself. On this issue, at least, the Republicans were able to muster a majority. To that extent the Republican leadership succeeded. From that point, however, the debate became largely a process of barter.

Tax reform proved equally contentious. Unlike the tariff free-for-all, these proposals broke traditional loyalties and the progressive/conservative dialogue re-emerged. La Follette sought inheritance taxes while Ogden Mills, a Republican Representative from New York, championed the proposal for a tax on spending rather than the idea of a sales tax, to bring in revenue lost on the reform of income tax and scrapping of excess profits taxes. These latter proposals Mills supported in the belief that the key to prosperity was the fluidity of capital. Taxes, he maintained, "drive capital out of enterprise; stops the wheels of industry".¹⁰ This was the argument broadly backing the Mellon income tax cuts. Progressives, however, were dubious of this argument. La Follette was pushing for an inheritance tax in order to prevent "the accumulation of immense fortunes in the hands of the few"¹¹ and so to equalize wealth to some extent. Their concern was not particularly industrial enterprises but rather personal fortunes. This goal was shared by both Democratic and Republican progressives and advanced on the Democratic side by Oklahoma's Robert Owen. The debates on tax and tariff proposals ground on through the summer and into the winter of 1921.

Conservatives, even in traditional areas, were simply unable to push their aims through this confused Congress. If Harding was adopting a 'hands off' attitude then the task of pulling the Republican ranks together fell to the Senate 'Old Guard'. Their power had diminished dramatically, however, with seniority now passing to several progressives, notably La Follette, Borah and Norris. Lodge and Pennsylvania's Penrose were unable to bring Republicans together in sufficient numbers to defeat a Democrat

alliance with progressives. Indeed as we have seen, the key was again inconspicuous Senators, neither committed progressives nor conservatives, who could not endorse legislation which represented the fullest expression of these groups.

The tariff debate was largely an interruption of the dispute based on the progressive/conservative split at the expense of traditional party loyalties. In 1921 neither the Harding administration nor Congress was able to hurt the labour movement directly. In Congress particularly the balance indeed was such as to make any anti-union legislation highly unlikely. In fact the initiative in the debate had by 1921 passed from conservatives to progressives. It was far from certain, however, whether advanced progressives could win the backing of mild progressives and floating voters to push through legislation favourable to unions; these progressives remained disunited and unclear as to policies to pursue. It remained to be seen whether this stalemate would be broken if the progressive/conservative dialectic was to continue to dominate Congressional debates.

As the recession became a public concern in mid-1921, the conservatives in fact gained new strength from the position adopted by employers. The recession of 1921 ensured that the dialectic would continue. Wages had gone up in the inflationary war years. To maintain profit margins, wages must now fall as prices fell and demand contracted. These efforts to lower wages led progressives to attack the profit margins which industries had achieved during the war and immediately afterwards. Profits were more than adequate, they argued, to offset short-term losses.

Moreover, they argued that it was not wages but a credit squeeze which caused the slump. Progressives also used the slump to argue for the improvement in efficiency. Thus, even where economic and industrial conditions provided conservatives with the initiative, the strong progressive response tended to counter balance it. Conservatives in effect wished to pass at least part of the cost of the slump in revenues onto their employees, either in redundancies or wage cuts. The 'Wage Reservoir' in classical economic thinking was too large, relative to the amount of money in the economy. This in turn meant business had less money to invest and to cover costs; thus wages must fall. Progressives disagreed with this static model of the economy's performance. Firstly, the profits of the war were such as to cover short-term losses. That to ease the slump, demand must continue at a level of maximum effectiveness. They further believed business could, by improved efficiency, cut production costs and thereby boost sales levels. Crucially, however, the traditional progressive suspicion of business meant that they were unable to accept that employers should be able to pass on to the poor the effects of a slump on their profit levels. Progressives remained unconvinced by the conservative argument as their own thinking became centred on the economic system, rather than the corruption of the system by individual businessmen.

While the progressives continued to be sympathetic to the labour viewpoint, they could do little of practical value to help unions. The economic slump was far more damaging to labour than any actions of the Congress or the administration. The 5,735,000 out of work had given employers the freedom to impose cuts in wages and redundancies in the battle to reduce costs in

industry. However much Congress argued over this issue, the action required in the final analysis was the enactment of a minimum wage or the augmentation of the power of unions. As we have seen the Nolan Minimum Wage bill could not be passed even when limited to the public service. In any case, trade unions were at best ambivalent towards such a proposal. They feared that a statutory wage floor would in practice become a wage ceiling. Union leaders also feared that government intervention would destroy any need for workers to rely on unions to protect their interests. In 1921 their position was that the worker deserved and should expect a constantly improving standard of living. The major threat to this was a recession in which employers could cut wages with impunity and recalcitrant workers would simply be dispatched to a congested job market. As far as unionists were concerned the recession and its effect on the workforce emphasised the question of the powers of trade unions to protect the interests of their membership. Their main concern was the reservoir of jobless which undermined their ability to act and thus maintain wage levels. Their first priority was to oppose the employers' campaign of wage cuts thereby maintaining effective demand and thus reducing the unemployment total.

The unemployment crisis, due largely to the example of Wilson and Roosevelt and time-consuming procedure of Congress, was primarily the President's responsibility. This fact and the willingness of the Secretary of Commerce to identify and accept this principle had resulted in the Unemployment Conference being called. Congress, given no lead from unions, was pushed into the background in terms of its ability to affect the economic recession.

Senator La Follette for one was sceptical of the benefits of the Conference and of the intentions of the administration. As he wrote in October 1921: "The best minds of the country are in Washington to solve the problem, but as far as I can see their chief task has been to minimize the figures issued by the Department of Labor on the number of unemployed".¹² Although this was a widespread view of what could be expected of the Conference, the Conference itself demonstrated some acceptance of government responsibility for employment. However, in its calls for tax and tariff stability it again focused on Congress where criticism had been increasingly aimed in 1921. On the unemployment issue itself, however, by concentrating as it did on voluntary work, and calling on industry to regulate its production and for the Commerce Department to provide better figures, it justified the skepticism of La Follette and advanced progressives. Only the proposal that public works be made to respond to the economy more tellingly was of any direct relevance to Congress and this proposal was taken up in a resolution submitted by Senator Kenyon of Iowa on the relieving of periods of unemployment with a system of public works. While the administration dealt with the immediate problem, the issue was also of major concern in the long term to Congress. Progressives once more demonstrated their initiative and willingness to embrace government proposals.

The hearings before the Senate Committee on Education and Labor made clear that conservative opinion was flatly opposed to Kenyon's bill and the government intervention for which it called. Senator Coleman Du Pont, Republican of Delaware, believed that "it would be 10% good and 10% bad and the rest would not cut any ice".¹³ This was not an opinion shared by many of those who gave statements

to the Committee. Dr. Wesley Mitchell, Director of the National Bureau of Economic Research, organised in 1920 and funded by the Carnegie Foundation, strongly supported the bill. He believed that the proposal would smooth the business cycle in the belief that booms caused slumps and the severity of the two were closely related. He also believed that knowledge of the figures were in themselves an important step towards a stable industrial system. The idea was close to Hoover's own economic thinking. It was accepted that booms led to over-expansion which would lead inevitably to contraction. Even the knowledge of over-expansion would dampen the boom and minimise slumps.

O.T. Mallery, the Chairman of the Industrial Relations Committee of Department of Labor and Industry, Pennsylvania, added that it was actually cheaper to build in recession when materials were more plentiful. Moreover the bill only proposed the postponement of 20% of government building per annum so that building in normal times would not unduly be contracted. Yet even this small percentage would absorb an estimated 30% of unemployed labour in a recession. The proposal did not increase the government's expenditure, indeed given the reduced costs in slumps and inflated prices in booms, it might actually save money. At no extra expense this proposal could have a significant impact on the well-being of the population.

Mr L. Wallace of the American Engineering Society believed that "this bill is fundamental in its theory and it has in prospect very material and beneficial results".¹⁴ Not least of these benefits was the hope that such a system would encourage private industry to minimise seasonality, a problem which was at the root of industrial

disruption in the coal industry particularly. The hope among engineers was that this planning would act as an example in all areas of the industrial system. The American Federation of Labor gave the proposal "its absolute endorsement".¹⁵

The purpose of the bill was not to attack business. Although the recession was disastrous for unions, neither was it particularly enjoyed by business. This was not, in the strictest sense, a union/employer issue. Yet the key to the bill was its intention of modifying the performance of the economy. In this it did highlight the growing ideological implications of the union/employer dispute. The bill fundamentally conformed to the union viewpoint of a mechanistic economy as opposed to business belief in a natural economy. Thus, while business saw the benefit of a more stable economy and could accept the proposal on that basis, as the General Manager of the Associated General Contractors of America said, his industry might object to the bill for the interference of the government it implied. This bill pointed up the basic political divergence between unions and employers, a divergence which also characterised the nature of the progressive/conservative split in Congress. This was not a radical proposal, it had been put forward by Senator Kenyon, by no means associated with advanced progressives and, in fact, a senior Republican and chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor. This proposal represented the new mild progressivism, very close to the Hoover view but which now accepted the need for government action in this area, while being still uneasy about unfettered union power. Even this was too much for conservatives to accept.

Senator Thomas Sterling, Republican from South Dakota, for one could not accept such a principle of intervention. "That time has not come when we simply appropriate money for the support of the people".¹⁶ He clung tenaciously to the idea of a free economy. To Kenyon, however, the bill did not mean extra appropriations it meant positively improving the conditions of the people of the country by doing nothing more than re-arranging the schedule of public works. He did not regard this as any real interference by government, and even if regarded as such, to be so palpably wise as to be justified. Notwithstanding the objections of conservative Senators on the committee, Kenyon was confident that the bill would be voted favourably. Important to the bill's prospect was also the support from Secretary Hoover, though Harding himself did not venture an opinion. Despite Kenyon's optimism the bill failed to get to the floor of the Senate during the session.

In his address to Congress of 5th December 1921, the President had barely mentioned unemployment. His only reference to labour relations was a call for "a charter of elemental rights".¹⁷ This indicated Harding's wish to see industrial relations come under quasi-legal supervision. It was not an opinion which many progressives could back and was deeply unpopular with trade unionists. Yet the question of the peaceful settlement of industrial disputes remained a major problem for progressives to solve. The recession of 1921, the Railroad Labor Board and the Coal Commission had temporarily freed Congress from involvement in the issue. Yet it was clear that the question of unionism was inextricably bound to

many questions about the economy and the government role with which Congress was concerned.

The report of the Committee of Education and Labor on the West Virginia situation submitted on 27th January 1922, forced Congress to return to the consideration of the issue specifically. The first fact the report demonstrated was that despite the attempt by Senator La Follette in his People's Legislative Service to create a coherent progressive philosophy and bridge the gap between progressivism and the unions, it was an issue on which progressives were hopelessly unable to come to any agreement. As Kenyon, the Chairman of the Committee admitted, in submitting the report, "It is impossible for the committee to agree on any report."¹⁸ There were therefore only the opinions of the Committee to report. Borah did not submit an opinion although his views were plain. As he wrote to George Perkins in February 1922:

I urged several years ago that the only solution of these matters was for the government to take over those commodities which are of the nature, and by nature, monopolies, and I do not see any other solution.¹⁹

Such a position of government intervention had never previously been accepted by conservatives and was not in this case, as the opinions of Lawrence C. Phipps, Republican of Colorado, Sterling of South Dakota and Republican F.E. Warren of Wyoming showed. Their views were that the mineworkers had been perfectly satisfied with conditions, that union organisers had come from other States and that they had used violence and intimidation. They strongly urged that unions be incorporated and held liable in contracts, as were industries and

businesses. They believed only mutuality before the law could make contracts binding and bring stability to industrial relations.

Senator Kenyon's response was to propose a code of industrial relations. This reflected the strong tradition of mild progressives to seek orderly justice in industrial relations which had grown in popularity since the Industrial Conference in 1919. Indeed Kenyon referred specifically to the Second Conference in putting forward his proposals. He agreed with its recommendations that either the Bureau of Mediation and Conciliation within the Department of Labor must be expanded or that the coal industry must have a board similar to that organised in the railroad industry under the 1920 Transportation Act. He was critical of the Conference and that Act and indeed the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations for failing to provide a code which would allow both sides to find out where they stood.²⁰ It was Kenyon's opinion that the key to peaceful industrial relations was that both unions and business be given firm guidelines. Both sides must recognise the practical limits of their claim. He believed that "the whole story of this contest is . . . of a spirit of suspicion, hate and retaliation on both sides that does not augur well for industrial peace in that portion of the state".²¹ Once both sides understood definite limits to their claims they would end their constant struggle for supremacy. This echoed strongly the view of President Wilson. Now, however, progressives believed that a code must be put in place, since understanding was unlikely to emerge voluntarily. Also reflecting the development of progressive thinking was the code proposed by Senator Kenyon. In his opinion, the code must recognise the rights of unions to organise peaceably and bargain collectively through representatives of the workers'

own choosing. It must also recognise the right to strike, and the right to attempt to dissuade others from breaking the strike, though not by violent means - picketing rights in effect. The unions had no right to force individuals to join unions or to force them to break contracts made with employers in doing so.

This code, which Kenyon attempted to put on the legislative agenda, appeared to give trade unionists the legal endorsement they had so long sought and which, as Kenyon himself had noted, the Industrial Conferences had failed to ensure. However, real difficulties were also inherent in the code. Primary among these was the ruling that unions could not force individuals already under contract to join the union. This in fact left open the question of the Yellow Dog Contract, a popular method of union obstruction among employers. The code also lacked any meaningful prohibition of strike breaking and the use of armed guards, although Kenyon had in his report condemned these practices. In attempting to be fair, Kenyon was leaving businessmen with the weapons which could undermine unionism. Whether this coincided with Harding's position was never made clear.

Kenyon's proposed industrial code failed as had his proposal on unemployment. The beginning of 1922 showed Congress to be still confused. The two groups at the extremes of Congressional opinion remained true to their positions since the war. Anti-union conservatives were doing all they could to end the ability of unions to strike or picket and to deny any government aid. This derived from their belief in a free market economy, a belief which also led to their opposition to any suggestion of federal economic intervention.

As we have seen this group was bipartisan in composition. Similarly, advanced progressives close to La Follette remained committed to allowing trade unions to exercise their power, even if crises resulted, to force employers to recognise their legitimacy. These men had made but little contribution in 1921. They were unable as yet to speak as one voice. The resolution of Senator Johnson of California, however, reflected their concern for the detail of industrial disputes.

Between these two groups the real power in labour issues lay with the floating, pragmatic vote and mild progressives. The floating vote was not swayed by principle. As has been demonstrated, this vote passed the Johnson resolution and then abridged the provisions of the La Follette Seamen's Act. Practicality, and the mood of the public would govern their decisions. Nonetheless the leftward trend towards clearer support of union rights and the acceptance of federal responsibility in the economy, as represented in the resolutions of Senator Kenyon, marked a shift in the centre of Congressional consensus. Consensus here means simply the point at which most could agree. The Kenyon proposals marked a new trend among moderate progressives in 1921. They were now prepared to codify the rights of unions which Wilson and the Industrial Conferences had avoided. It should be pointed out that progressives, however, remained splintered and individualistic. These were trends, not coherent policy developments. Even these trends, while not voted down, were not being accepted by the floating vote. The issue of tariff reform had failed to submerge the ideological split, or end the consequent stalemate. It appeared that only a major upheaval would be likely to bring such a confused situation to an end.

It was at this time that the coal miners' announcement was made to strike on 1st April 1922. Oscar Bland characterised the strike as one likely to become "one of the greatest industrial struggles in the history of our country".²² When the impending strike was first known of Congress displayed its sympathy for trade unionism in a widespread belief that the coal operators were "permitting the 1st of April, the expiration of the contract to come, knowing that a great nationwide strike will prevail".²³ Support for trade unionism was at its strongest when progressives' traditional antipathy towards the business community and its power was aroused. Progressives believed clearly that the operators were deliberately fomenting a strike in order to blacken and destroy the United Mine Workers in order to re-establish their control over the mining communities. Where they felt a business conspiracy existed, as in the looming coal strike, their support went more firmly in the first instance to the unions. In the House, Edward E. Browne, Republican, Wisconsin went further still to deny the legitimacy of the ostensible purpose of the operators in refusing to negotiate, that high wage levels were being maintained through inflated prices.

In the Senate too, the progressives sympathised with the U.M.W. The coal strike encapsulated the key questions which confronted progressives in the sixty-seventh Congress. The basic question of employers not respecting the rights of unions to represent and bargain for the workforce became enmeshed in the broader question of wage levels and whether the economy should be made to benefit the population more directly. On the first issue, progressives were quite clear and unanimous in their opinion which Borah stated: "Either a strike . . . or the miners go back to work for wages

absolutely dictated by the mine owners themselves".²⁴ The strike also raised once more the role of the government in industrial relations. In the House, progressive support for the U.M.W. was a basis for an attack on the Harding administration. This attack was adopted predictably by Democratic progressives. Huddleston accused the executive branch of sympathising with the operators in its "hyprotical pretense . . of an effort to bring these contending forces together".²⁵ In its failure, the administration became identified with those who, while "always lustily decrying class consciousness, the affiliated open shoppers show an intense class consciousness".²⁶ Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover defended the administration's failure to bring the two sides to the negotiating table in terms of the limits of executive power. "The governmental agencies have no legal authority to terminate or intervene in the strike".²⁷ This was a reminder of the fundamental non-interventionist thinking shared by the members of the Harding administration. As advanced progressive opinion had developed, however, this position was regarded as being as hostile to trade unions as active support for the business community's motives; a position which also put pressure on mild progressives to take a more positive stance. Huddleston's attack reflected the leftward trend of the P.L.S. under La Follette and showed the progressives' suspicion of business as a class, although there was a continued reluctance to express this feeling. Furthermore, suspicion of the administration's motives was a bipartisan progressive phenomenon. This was confirmed by a resolution by Representative Edward Dennison, Republican, Illinois which sought to deny wages to any government officer in the State and Justice Departments bringing injunctive proceedings against the striking miners.

The growing crisis occasioned by the strike was forcing several progressives to consider the radical step of government ownership of the coal industry. This mood did not come from such socialist ideas as expressed by Meyer London of New York. His opinions were too much the expression of an 'outside' economic critique to be embraced by progressives. It was his opinion that "the time when legislating consisted in laying down moral principles is gone".²⁸ In his view it was time for government to take over running of the economy from the shambolic private enterprise system and to bring justice and equality based on the economy, not morality, to the majority of the population. While Senator David Walsh (Democrat) of Massachusetts agreed that "private enterprise in the coal industry is on trial",²⁹ this position grew from its tradition of concern for the general welfare. The motivation behind the idea of government ownership was the progressives' belief that the public had a right to expect continuity in the essential industries. Clearly, though the U.M.W. also campaigned for government ownership, the question of strike action in a government-owned coal industry, committed to serving the public, remained open. Progressives sought order in the industry and an end to periodic disruption. Given the progressive attitude to unionism, however, unions' status would certainly be assured, while the rationalisation of the industry also would be to the benefit of the workforce. The progressives had taken the initiative on the broader issues of the coal industry, and also backed the U.M.W. position in calling the strike.

The Herrin Massacre in Illinois in June 1922 quickly threw the initiative back to the conservatives in Congress. To anti-unionists these killings demonstrated the lawlessness of unionists and proved they were undeserving of justice. It also demonstrated trade unionism's violent suppression of the individual's right to work. Senator Myers pointed to this principle, long a conservative favourite in their attacks on unionism, as the conservative approach to peaceable industrial relations.

If the people who wanted to work . . . were permitted to work . . . and if the government would protect them in exercising that right, I believe the strike itself would work itself out to a wholesome, healthful and natural settlement.³⁰

As in the Poindexter bill, the conservative argument remained that a strike was a mere quitting of work and that as such workers should simply be replaced, with government backing if need be. This in their opinion was the best way to ensure peace and prosperity in industry, effectively a call for the breaking of the strike and the union.

Therefore, there existed a deep political divide between conservatives and progressives, a divide which was being opened up by the problem of labour relations and the issues it raised. Conservatives believed strongly in the emasculation of trade unions, in the pre-eminence of the 'natural' working of the economy, the right of management to make decisions on wages, productivity, and lay-offs, unfettered. They saw no role for the government in the economy, except where action was necessary to recover this basis.

Progressives, derived from their early suspicion of concentration of wealth and the power such wealth commanded, were increasingly convinced of the need to reform the 'natural' workings of the economy. In their opinion equality and justice had still to be achieved. Once embarked on this trend, progressives were forced to deal with the priorities involved. By 1922, the coal crisis and the apparent root of the problems in the structure of the industry forced several progressives to consider government ownership. They were far from unanimous. Many progressives balked at such intervention and concentrated on the labour relations problem; they embraced Kenyon's idea of a code on which to base a nationwide conciliation service as suggested in the report of President Wilson's Industrial Conference. All were now reconciled to increasing federal intervention in the economic system. This was an issue which many in Congress were unable to accept, as they were unable to accept the full implications of the conservative position. They were prepared, however, to accept that trade unions were legitimate organisations with legitimate concerns. The Congressional situation in mid-1922 remained in stalemate, swaying from conservative to progressive initiative as the industrial situation changed but with neither able to achieve even temporary dominance.

What the crisis had achieved was the increasing agreement of progressives in the need for action, however unclear they were on what that should be. Three courses of action were now open to them. One choice was based on the view that the nature of industrial power amounted to the ability of unions to enforce a strike. The Johnson resolution on the West Virginia situation had indicated the key to industrial power in raising the issue of the use of armed

guards by operators seeking to break the strike. On 29th July 1922 Senator Lee S. Overman, Democrat from North Carolina, had read into the Congressional Record a statement by the Governor of that State of his policy towards strikes and picketing, a view which was heartily endorsed by Overman:

Striking labourers have a right, to such an extent as they can do so orderly . . to present their argument to a person about to take their place and if such person agrees . . it follows that a person breaks no valid laws who undertakes to persuade another . . . I will hereafter . . permit reasonable-sized committees . . to present their cause to anybody they present it to.³¹

This principle of lawful, peaceful picketing was one which progressives could agree to with ease. This gave strikers their rights while also giving the individual his freedom of choice, and progressives believed that such rights the unions already had, whether explicitly or not. What the Herrin Massacre, and indeed the West Virginia rioting, had proved was that the use of company guards and strikebreakers brought in en-masse by companies denied unions the opportunity to let the strikebreakers know the situation. The first choice was legislation to end business weapons such as armed guards, importation of strikebreakers, the use of the Yellow Dog contracts. The second, as in the Kenyon resolution, was to set up a board or a code of conduct for all industries. The third choice was government ownership. Progressives were split largely between the government ownership or Kenyon alternative. These two also satisfied the progressive desire for order and to be seen to be acting in the national interest, rather than against any group, as the first choice

entailed. By 1922, however, it was clear that progressives were looking to several areas in the search for a solution.

None of these were, as yet, choices which the floating vote or indeed standpat politicians in both parties could endorse. During the summer the effects of the crisis in galvanising progressives began to weaken. Increasingly concern for the welfare of the consumer began to dominate Congressional attention, reflecting once again the broad rather than specific concern which progressives demonstrated towards the 'labor problem'. This concern was heightened by the beginning of a strike by railroad shopmen over Railroad Labor Board decision No. 1074 to cut wages, for the second time in six months, by between 4 cents and 15 cents per hour. The emergency changed in nature from the problem of coal production to one of coal distribution. In consequence, Congress abandoned its traditional disputes to quickly promulgate legislation for a new investigation of the coal industry, although this time with specific instructions to assess the possibility of implementing government control of the industry - an investigation which was now also winning the grudging backing of traditionally standpat Republicans such as Senator Walter E. Edge of New Jersey who stated that: "I am ready to modify . . . opposition to Government intervention in private business . . . and to advocate legitimate scrutiny." ³² Senator Kenyon was less hesitant: "I for one . . . shall favor taking over the mines."³³ The crisis had served to shift consensus marginally, although whether legislation could actually pass remained to be seen. The U.M.W. and the operators of the central competitive field had now begun to seek a conference and were able to reach agreement at Cleveland in late August 1922. The key issue of

national or district agreements was postponed as alarm grew at the rate by which non-union production had increased during the strike.

Despite the improvement in non-union production and the return to work of the union fields, the strike on the railroads continued to threaten a coal shortage and present the Congress and administration with a desperate situation. So much so that Harding in his 18th August speech had to ask for legislation to set up a Federal Fuel Distributor to give priority to coal shipments. The legislation for this and a U.S. Coal Commission were law by 22nd September 1922. Even this legislation progressives regarded as largely ineffective and Senators with such divergent views as Borah, Edge and Lenroot of Wisconsin became increasingly convinced that the Congress would have to grant power to the President to take over the mines and railroads to cope with the crisis. The rights of the public must take precedent over both union and business prerogatives. Many more in both Houses were no longer concerned with the question of rights, all they wished to see was an end to the industrial crisis, which was by then in its sixth month.

The President had called for a return to work on 1st September 1922, a return to be protected by federal troops and state militia. This, in conjunction with his opinion that the strike being against a decision of the Railroad Labor Board was in itself illegal, set a tone of anger and impatience centred on the shopmen's union. This line was echoed in the House of Representatives by Republican Andrew Volstead of Minnesota who held frankly that "the strike and lockout must be outlawed".³⁴ The government must act to stop the strike. But the strikers must be reinstated for in mentioning

'lockout' he reflected the Congressional opinion that both operators and strikers were equally to blame. Alabama's Huddleston also believed in action: "The administration has abandoned its efforts to end the rail strike and Congress sits supine."³⁵ He did not want the type of action ultimately taken by the administration.

Government control was increasingly being accepted by progressives. By September 1922, however, the crisis had caused Congressional concern to be focused almost wholly upon ending the strike. The Daugherty injunction of 1st September 1922 demonstrated that this attitude was shared by the President. Given the mood of the time, the injunction was received by Congress, as the New York World editorialised bitterly, as being "too sweeping . . but the strike ought to be ended. . . Therefore remain silent while the Constitution which we are sworn to uphold is disregarded."³⁶ Relief, rather than protest, swept through Congress and the nation.

What protests there were, were made by Democrats. Republicans remained remarkably muted. Senator Tom Watson of Georgia made a bitter attack on Daugherty, condemning the injunction and his explanation of it as flagrantly biased in favour of the railroad owners. This, he argued, overlooked the violations of Board decisions by the railroad executives. If the Board was a legal body, as Harding claimed, then it was as illegal as any strike and had destroyed union confidence in the Board. This in turn made Harding's argument that the union should have appealed to it a fatuous proposal. Watson also queried the convenience of Judge Wilkerson, who had issued the injunction, having been appointed only a few weeks earlier. In the House a motion to impeach the Attorney General was

made and referred to the Judiciary Committee. The main protests were being made against Daugherty while Harding himself escaped most criticism.

Democratic Senator Joseph T. Robinson's (Arkansas) objections to the injunction were confined largely to its nature, not the broader thinking of the administration. Robinson thus made several key points about the nature of the injunction and held that it was itself illegal. Firstly, the injunction was patently sought by the government on behalf of the railroad owners and as such violated Section 20 of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act. Furthermore, he held that in such sweeping repression of any activity pertaining to the strike, it also violated the constitutional rights of free speech, press and assembly. Finally, Robinson argued that the fundamental assumption of the injunction was that the strike was per se an illegal conspiracy against interstate commerce, again not a legal basis for injunctive action. From these points Robinson expanded the issue to condemn the administration. The injunction had been used not for its proper purpose of protecting property but to end the strike, which power "the law of the United States does not, expressly or impliedly, give the Attorney General or the courts."³⁷

Senator James Watson of Indiana, defending the administration with which he had been closely identified, claimed that the government had a great responsibility in fact to defend interstate commerce against conspiracies, so that the injunction was not against the strike as such. Furthermore, he argued that Section 20 of the Clayton Act had not been violated since it had been the government which had brought the action. He also believed that the injunction

had been justified in order to protect the public in the emergency. Watson added that it was no longer properly a case for Congressional perusal, being sub judice.

The crisis had both continued to prod progressivism to more radical proposals and attitudes to unionism while reinforcing the need for the crisis to be brought to an end, by whatever means. The relief felt by Congress and its inability to find any solution to the labour problem were factors contributing to the desultory treatment accorded the injunction. Nonetheless, the injunctive action had ended the credibility of the Harding administration in the eyes of much of Congress and certainly in the eyes of trade unionists. This was likely to become evident in the 1922 mid-term election. This would also be some indication of the mood of the public in 1922. The preparations for the election, in fact, also contributed to lack of Congressional outrage. Senators seeking re-election in 1922 had begun to turn their thoughts to the matter as early as October and November 1921, as in the cases of La Follette and Borah. They turned in 1922 to State issues as they tried to demonstrate their commitment to their constituencies. Comments on national issues were thus muted. The Harding administration recognised the local nature of these elections, and so determined not to interfere in the campaign. It also wished to avoid making 1922 a test of the administration. As Taft, now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and very close to Harding, particularly on the golf course, wrote to William Karger: "The administration did not think it part of its business to help candidates in the primaries . . . even in Ohio."³⁸ Senator Lodge, running for re-election in Massachusetts, found the lack of White House backing disturbing.

Despite actual non-interference, Harding had, in vetoing the Bonus Bill, thrown the campaign into confusion. Lodge had voted for the bonus and so he badly needed some confirmation from the administration of its continued confidence in him. Throughout October 1922 he wrote a series of letters to Harding asking for a letter of endorsement. He also complained of the failure of Secretary of Labor Davis to make any speeches in Massachusetts. Moreover, the crisis of 1922 was being felt particularly in New England as winter neared. Lodge felt embattled and in need of help.

Standpat Republicans were also running into problems in the Mid West as Senator Harry New discovered in his primary defeat by Albert Beveridge in Indiana. In addition to the bonus, the Mid West was in a depression which was forcing them to seek central government aid, as had been the case in the 1880's and 1890's. The Republican nomination of Beveridge, however, demonstrated the agricultural motivation behind the Mid Western sentiment since Beveridge was a strong backer of the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations, much hated by the A.F. of L.

The 1922 elections, despite the non-intervention of the Harding administration, except in Frank Brandegge's race in Connecticut, raised ideological questions. To be sure this varied from State to State and candidate to candidate, and yet the government's role in the economy did recur during the campaign as did attitudes towards trade unionism.

The extent to which the crisis in 1922 affected voting is impossible to quantify accurately. As we have seen, the labour

problem had become enormously confused by this time. 'Friends' for unionists meant men who would support their views. As progressives found, however, these wishes were often contradictory and not often compatible with their own views, as in the opposition to Kenyon's code of conduct. Nationalization too remained an issue on which unions were far from unanimous. Progressives moreover were themselves divided and ambivalent on the labour issue so that it was too complex by 1922 to have any quantifiable effect. Progressives were clearly 'friends' but on new proposals the relationship remained ambivalent due to unionists' continuing denial of their political implications. The crisis itself did polarise opinion on the actions of Congress and the administration, however, and did possibly have an effect on voting. However, the likelihood is that it merely confirmed trends already set in motion by the agricultural crisis and local issues. In the latter the unions could make themselves felt, as in Wisconsin's La Follette machine. In rural areas where railroad towns and mining communities had more impact, then progressivism was much more likely to be friendly to unions. With regard to Senate races, this concentration of unionists had less power but they could provide an organisation of sorts. In 1922, the mood of the nation, one of frustration with Congress and the administration alike, determined the outcome at the polls, an amalgam of issues rather than any one in particular with the exception of the Mid West and Great Lake States.

The election of 1922 provided the Democratic party with a much needed boost after the post 1920 gloom, but the results provided progressives with still more encouragement. Indeed the Democrats suffered the defeat of two of their Senators with Atlee Pomerene losing to Simeon D. Fess, a Harding-backed candidate in Ohio and

Marcus Smith, defeated by Ralph Cameron in Arizona. These defeats were offset by Samuel Ralston's victory over Beveridge in Indiana, a reflection of union strength in that State. Beveridge believed his defeat to have been due to Ku Klux Klan strength there; the Klan had apparently infiltrated Indiana unionism. William Bruce defeated Joseph France in Maryland; Woodridge Ferris triumphed over Truman Newberry, a man tainted by scandal; Edward Edwards was successful against Joseph Fellinghuysen, a recognised White House favourite in New Jersey; Royal S. Copeland defeated William Calder in New York; C.C. Dill, with full union backing, defeated the hated Miles Poindexter; and the victory in West Virginia was M. Neely's over Howard Sutherland. The Republican majority in the Senate was cut from 20 to six. The Democrats made similar strides in the House. The gains made by Republicans in the South, notably in Tennessee and Missouri were overturned, while in New York, New Jersey and Indiana Democrats made gains while they picked up seats throughout the country. In the House a whopping 165 Republican majority was reduced to a mere 10.

The gains made by progressives in 1922 were likely to make these majorities still more difficult for Republicans to transform into legislative control. Particularly stunning had been the sweeping victory in Minnesota over Republican Frank Kellogg, still another Republican stalward, and Knute Nelson by the Farm-Labor candidates Henrik Shipsted and Magnus Johnson. The progressives had suffered a set-back in the defeat of France in Maryland but this was offset by the victories of progressive Democrats Dill and Neely. Even where Senatorial positions had remained within the same party, progressivism had made further inroads. This was the case in Iowa,

for instance, where Kenyon's seat (he, having become increasingly troublesome as chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, had been appointed to the Customs Court) had been taken over by Smith Brookhart. In Montana, the outspoken anti-unionist Henry Myers was ousted to be replaced by Burton K. Wheeler, later to run as La Follette's vice-presidential candidate and in Pennsylvania Penrose had been replaced by George W. Pepper. A further progressive gain had been the election of Lynn Frazier to Porter McCumber's North Dakota Senate seat. Success in the House was less apparent, indeed in New York, Meyer London was defeated although in Wisconsin Victor Berger did win.³⁹

This new infusion of progressive strength into a more evenly balanced Congress prompted La Follette to attempt once more to unite progressives. His P.L.S. made no impact so far. Indeed, the initiatives on labour issues came from progressives who were out of sympathy with La Follette's radicalism. Yet this leftward drift encouraged La Follette in thinking that a broad progressive movement could be created. On 18th November 1922 the Senator issued a statement declaring that: "The time has now come for the organization of a well-defined group co-operating in support of accepted progressive principles and policies."⁴⁰ These policies he outlined as aid to the farm community, opposition to the administration's determination to pass a ship subsidy bill and an acceleration of the merger of railroads. He believed that "public sentiment will earnestly support a sincere effort to mobilize the progressive forces in Congress".⁴¹

It was clear that progressivism needed some coherence. In 1922 it was little more than a collective phrase applied to several individuals. As we have seen the principles on which progressivism was based were moral and as a result each progressive gave different weight to different principles. In economic problems moral principles decided their actions. As London had noted, and the disarray in progressive ranks apparently demonstrated, moral principle could no longer be the basis of legislation. As La Follette's statement revealed, progressives' unity since 1919 derived from legislation they were able to oppose rather than any they might propose. This applied equally to the labour problem, as the events of the post-war years had so far demonstrated. Perhaps the development in progressive thought in the Sixty-Seventh Congress could now be made into concrete policies and give the movement a basic credo, particularly with regard to labour, the economy and the role of the government.

While progressives rejoiced and were girding their loins for the new Congress, the view from the White House seemed more dismal. The President, who had had to wait over a year for tariff reform and had the tax proposals of his Treasury Secretary practically overturned, was also under pressure from the very heartland of Republicanism to act on the agricultural depression. He had witnessed a rebellious Congress bringing government to a practical standstill and was frankly dismayed at the progressive gains. The gains themselves did not worry him most, he would "have been more satisfied . . if it always expressed itself for or against a political party so that we might have party sponsorship and . . party ability to do things".⁴² It was the continuing stalemate in

Congress which dismayed him. He frankly wished that La Follette et al would split away, expecting of course that conservatives would unite under the Republican banner. For President Harding the 1922 election presaged yet another difficult and argumentative Congress to come.

By 1922 the ideological split between progressives and conservatives had become clearer. The unemployment problem in 1921 caused progressives to accept the need for positive federal intervention to protect the well-being of the less fortunate in America. This shift represented a significant move, albeit limited in detail, away from the traditional progressive 'national interest' stance. Equality and justice it appeared could no longer be ensured by legal reform; the government must act in favour of particular groups.

This trend continued with Kenyon's proposed code growing from the West Virginia investigations. Unions' right to bargain and organise was unequivocally guaranteed, again a significant development from the position of Wilson and closer to advanced progressives such as La Follette. The agricultural crisis also encouraged the leftward trend toward the protection of the less fortunate and away from simply regulating business and allowing the 'small man' economic freedom.

Yet despite this progressive development with its unequivocal endorsement of trade union rights, there was no legislative success in these years. The floating vote remained in control. Moreover, while the unions welcomed progressive proposals on unemployment, they

still sought a voluntary system and discouraged Kenyon's code.

Ambivalence between unionists and progressives remained unresolved.

NOTES

1. Congressional Record Vol.60, part 5, p.4535, 66th Congress, third session.
2. Ibid. part 1, p.297, 66th Congress, third session.
3. Ibid. p.301. Congressional distaste for Blanton was such that a move was made to expel him during the 67th Congress. Although it failed it served to demonstrate that Blanton was isolated in his opinions.
4. Ibid. part 3, p.2693.
5. Ibid. p.2798.
6. Ibid. part 5, p.4322.
7. Ibid. part 3, p.2640.
8. Ibid. part 4, p.3433.
9. La Follette family papers, Box 113, letters sent, La Follette to George Comings May 7th, 1921.
10. Ogden L. Mills papers, Box 121, statement by Mills of July 20th, 1921.
11. La Follette family papers, Box 115, letters sent, La Follette to Charles Anieken, district court, Fargo, N.D. October 4th, 1921.
12. Ibid. Box 116, letters sent. La Follette to a Wisconsin constituent October 13th, 1921.
13. Senate Commission on Education and Labor, Hearings on S.2749, to prepare for periods of unemployment, p.10.
14. Ibid. p.31.
15. Ibid. p.22.
16. Ibid. p.37.
17. Congressional Record Vol.62, part 1, p.39, 67th Congress, second session.
18. Ibid. part 2, p.1797.
19. Borah papers, Box 109, Borah to George W. Perkins February 14th, 1922.
20. For details of the Kansas Act see notes to Chapter 3, No.35, p.150. As Kenyon pointed out the conference had completely avoided the issue of trade union legitimacy as a method of worker representation.

21. Senate Committee on Education and Labor, S.Rep. No 457 to accompany S.Res.80 January 27th, 1922, p.8.
22. Congressional Record Vol.62, part 4, p.4023, 67th Congress, second session.
23. Ibid. p.4023.
24. Ibid. p.4957.
25. Ibid. part 6, p.5205.
26. Ibid. part 7, p.6415.
27. Ibid. part 9, p.8528.
28. Ibid. part 7, p.6417.
29. Ibid. part 9, p.8375.
30. Ibid. p.9297.
31. Ibid. part 10, p.10733.
32. Borah papers, Box 109, Borah to Hoover May 19th, 1922. Borah was quoting Edge from his statement in the Calder Committee Hearings.
33. Ibid. Quoting Kenyon.
34. Congressional Record, Vol.62, part 12, p.12017, 67th Congress, second session.
35. Ibid. p.11806.
36. Ibid. p.12197.
37. Ibid. p.12206.
38. Taft papers, series 3, Taft to Karger April 1st, 1922.
39. Congressional Directory, Vols.1-7. See these for all voting totals.
40. La Follette family papers, Box 118, letters sent, November 18th, 1922.
41. Ibid.
42. Harding papers, P.O.F., c.f.806, Harding to Jonathan Bourne November 9th, 1922.

CHAPTER 6

BUSINESS AND LABOUR OPINION TO 1923

In preceding chapters the political response to the 'labor problem' had been predicated upon the definition which had arisen from the First Industrial Conference in 1919. As was made apparent in Chapter Four, however, the A.F. of L. seemed to be beginning a reassessment of its tactics in 1921. In addition, the preceding chapter demonstrated that progressives tended to move towards a clearer acceptance of unionism's claims. This tendency was most marked by the group of advanced progressives who had agreed to participate in La Follette's People's Legislative Service.

This chapter returns to look at the impact which the recession and the aggressive business campaign had upon the nature of industrial relations and trade unionists' outlook from 1921 to 1923. This in turn leads to an analysis of the development or otherwise of trade unionists' attitudes to the

political dimension of their movement. Subsequent chapters will deal with the political response to any trends which emerged in industrial relations during these years.

On 5th September 1921, James J. Davis, Harding's Secretary of Labor expressed the administration's desire to see a lessening of industrial hostility when in a Detroit speech he said: "No true American businessman entertains a serious thought of smashing the working man's organization."¹ Davis called on business to restrain itself in a period of recession and not to escalate industrial disruption by using the situation to crush unionism.

This appeal reflected the neutral position of the administration and Davis' willingness to pressurise at least verbally the business community as well as the unions. Yet such an appeal showed an imperfect understanding of the atmosphere in 1921. Regardless of whether business sought to destroy unionism or simply reduce wages it would almost inevitably force the unions to respond to the challenge. As already described, deflation for business meant cost-cutting and wages were a main target. It was not a simple question of wage cuts, however, but involved the opposing views of the two groupings as to how the economy worked. Business policy would almost inevitably clash with unionism's aims in the economic situation in 1921. In such a situation Davis would be powerless as a result of his lack of policy.

In fact, despite the appeal for restraint by the Secretary of Labor, the N.A.M. regarded the recession as a golden opportunity to intensify their campaign for the open shop. Given the ample

supply of labour, the Open Shop Department encouraged local business to employ non-unionists where possible and to use non-union firms in contracts. This effort reached its zenith with the organisation of the San Francisco Business Exchange which was a clearing house for non-union labour and contractors. San Francisco businesses would submit their contracts to the Exchange, which would be won by tenders also submitted to the Exchange by employers agreeing with the principles embodied by it. The aim was to attempt to control the flow of business deals and to squeeze out firms employing unionists. Local participants in the open shop campaign adamantly denied that they intended to crush trade unions, theirs was "a spontaneous protest against the autocratic tendencies of organized labor."² Their ostensible aim was merely to allow individuals to exercise their own choice although it is debatable whether this could ever be satisfactorily achieved without trade unionism being rendered powerless. This was certainly the view held by trade unionists of the purpose of the open shop movement.

In 1921, however, the business community did not require prompting from the N.A.M. to begin to centre its attention on a campaign to reduce wages. They were still deeply committed to the laws of supply and demand as revealed by their continuing belief that wages were merely a function of the costs of production. "To stimulate buying at home and to secure markets abroad, efforts are being made to reduce the cost of production by lowering wages . . ."³ The business view was that to stimulate demand, products had to be made more cheaply. This in turn required wage cuts and increased profitability to stimulate business demand and to maintain productive capacity. The N.A.M. campaign, although enjoying increasing

popularity in 1921, did not represent the central pre-occupation of American businessmen. This was purely economic. Yet even this ran exactly counter to labour aims in the recession. Thus, while perhaps not subscribing to the radical position of the N.A.M., employers who merely sought wage cuts became participants in the broader clash between unions and employers. While the Iron Age editorialised about retrenchment being "necessary in everything,"⁴ the Carpenter stated bluntly that "no reduction in wages under present conditions is admissible."⁵

While business concentrated on cheap supply to attract contracting demand and to release capital for expansion, the A.F. of L.'s view was of a demand-led recovery. As Samuel Gompers saw it: "Every reduction of wages is a reduction in the consuming power of the wage earners and a direct blow at the prosperity and well-being of the country."⁶ More importantly, wages were in any case woefully inadequate to provide a proper standard of living so that any reduction would mean penury. Unionism was committed to a constantly improving standard of living for its membership and so fundamentally opposed to any attempts at frustrating this goal. Once more the opposing philosophies of the two groups seemed to presage a new test of strength, even without the N.A.M. campaign.

The American workforce was being cowed to a large extent simply by the reality of at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ million unemployed in the summer of 1921. This resulted in there being little opposition to cuts of 5 to 10% in wages, although these cuts were largely made in unskilled non-union sectors. Nonetheless even the Carpenters' union had accepted cuts of 5 cents per hour. Some industries did

demonstrate a close connection between the reduction of wages and an attempt to emasculate trade unionism. This was the case, for instance, in the coal fields of Alabama. Here, wage cuts of 10% were simply announced, to take effect in only three days' time in late 1920, in breach of the 1917 Washington Agreement. The Alabama U.M.W. went on a strike which dragged on through the year. When union funds ran out and strikebreaking began to have an effect production slowly returned to normal.

The Unemployment Conference in September made little difference to the industrial atmosphere by the autumn of 1921. It never came to any significant conclusion on wage levels, although Hoover, as had Davis, appealed to business to continue as normal in order to soften the impact of the recession. If anything, the Conference deflected attention from the deteriorating industrial situation by concentrating on voluntary efforts, on government action and tax and tariff reform. The latter also reflected a major business concern. Business leaders regarded tax cuts as a vital element in economic recovery, almost on a par with wage reductions. The unions too, warmly supported the proposals on public spending and were amongst the foremost backers of the Kenyon bill derived from these ideas. Unemployment insurance, though, never became a popular issue within the unions although broached at several conventions. Their preoccupation was with an expanding job market to lessen business impunity in laying off men and so keeping wage levels steady. The main concern remained with the immediate economic situation in 1921, not a questioning of the fundamental social structure.

It was a disastrous year for trade unionism. At the same time as the A.F. of L. celebrated record membership levels of 1920, the recession was already beginning to whittle the figure away. This weak job market led to an insecurity which allowed business to reduce wages with relative impunity. The union position was also undermined by the first cuts taking place among unskilled, non-unionised workers. This widened differentials and isolated the unions' wage rates. The Unemployment Conference, despite its endorsement of the use of public works to buoy the economy, did not help the immediate situation. By the end of the year the trade union movement felt increasingly under siege from aggressive employers who, whether seeking the destruction of unionism or wage cuts, were equally threatening to the future of the trade union movement. Trade unionists throughout America realised their isolated position was itself now under threat. Increasingly, business complained that union rates must also fall, especially in key sectors of the economy such as the coal, railroad and building industries. Business now sought to have its demands met in the bastions of union power.

Two major decisions by the Railroad Labor Board had begun to break down union work rules in that industry. So threatened did the shopmen feel by this, coming as it did at a time when several anti-union railroads, notably Pennsylvania, had begun contracting work outside their shops, that they were on the brink of strike action. This was postponed in October 1921, but it made clear that the pressure was now wholly on the heart of the American trade union movement. The full implications of the wage reduction campaign were now clear. This was not merely a question of dollars

and cents but far more a question of whose economic view would dominate. The editorial of the Iron Age for 5th January 1922 elucidated the business attitude at the beginning of the new year; ". . wages on the railroads, in the building trade, and in coal mining. These are the three conspicuous obstacles to resumption of industrial and commercial activity."⁷ 1921 had seen wage reductions and the intensifying of the anti-union campaign leave unionism largely unaffected. Their losses had been due to the recession. In 1922 the wage and anti-union campaigns were reaching their climax in an attempt to triumph against major union strongholds. Coincidentally, key industries in the American economy, the ones in which costs and production levels were of vital importance to the rest of the industrial complex, were also the ones with the strongest union organisations. If the economy was to recover quickly, railroad rates, coal prices and building costs had to come down. This required wage cuts. In effect the strength of the unions in these industries had to be broken. A major clash loomed whether over unions' power or over wage cuts. By late 1921 these differences were largely irrelevant, it was a dispute over the nature of the economy.

The first to feel the full blast of the combined strength of the demands for wage cuts and the anti-unionist mood were not in fact the railroad unions. Although wage reductions were before the Board, these had not yet been decided upon. In the meantime, the railroad workforce was prepared to live with the revised work rules. It was in the Chicago building trades that the struggle began.

Early in 1921 several contractors had handed building workers an ultimatum of accepting wages of \$1 per hour, or not reporting for work. This in effect constituted a lock-out, resulting in a complete shut-down in Chicago building. On 7th June 1921, the trade unions and contractors agreed to the appointment of Judge J.M. Landis as an arbitrator. One week later the Judge ruled that the wages dispute could not be settled without a change in work rules and practices, although these were not part of Landis's remit. Pressure from press and public forced both sides to remain silent, thereby allowing Landis to proceed. His decision on 7th September, effectively setting a maximum wage of between 95 cents and \$1 per hour caused an immediate walk-out. Several contractors, equally unhappy with the award, agreed to continue with old scales and practices at least until contracts under construction were completed. A 'Citizens Committee' was then organised which urged a return to work only on the Landis scale. It threatened contractors not abiding by this, with the loss of contracts, and of credit from Chicago banks. The Illinois Manufacturers Association, the Employers' Association of Illinois and the Chicago Association of Commerce backed this threat by announcing that contracts would be given only to those firms which adhered to the Landis award. The 'Citizens Committee' went further to announce to the unions that if they did not work under Landis terms, they would be replaced by out-of-town, non-union labour. This 'Committee's' policies were strongly akin to those employed by the N.A.M.'s San Francisco Business Exchange. Confusion reigned in Chicago. Many unionists struck, others re-negotiated their wages with individual contractors while others returned to work at the Landis scales.

Still more confusing was Landis's further decision to recommend that carpenters, sheet metal workers and painters should similarly accept wages of around 95 cents to \$1 per hour. This was despite the fact that these trades were not part of the original dispute, nor parties to the award. The result was that the 'Citizens Committee' joyfully expanded its campaign to include the carpenters. The other trades were small and specialised, the carpenters' union had 18,000 members in Chicago alone. The Committee had decided that the opportunity to defeat the unions and make Chicago an 'open shop' town had arrived.

The carpenters' union immediately moved to seek an injunction against the Committee. This was refused the union, although the court agreed that the Committee was an illegal conspiracy in restraint of trade. Faced by the full panoply of business organisations in Illinois and Chicago and denied any legal recourse, the union was grimly defiant. "The Carpenters' Union will not be destroyed . . . The union of carpenters of Chicago defy the Criminal Citizens' Committee to do its worst."⁸

In April 1922, the carpenters' action in Chicago was overshadowed by the beginning of a nationwide stoppage in the coal fields on the 1st of the month. Miners' president, John Lewis, in the April issue of the Carpenter in fact denied that this was a strike at all, since "the operators want a suspension, the workers do not."⁹ The miners had been willing to negotiate with the operators in February but they refused, claiming that no good could come of it since the U.M.W. would simply seek a raise. This Lewis denied; all they sought was a continuation of the existing scale.

The points at issue were the operators' desire to cut wages, to scrap the check-off, vital machinery for the union organisation, and to end the nationwide agreement. These were demands which the U.M.W. could never submit to. The operators, in fact, did not wish to re-negotiate and make their position clear, for fear of public revulsion. Thus, they simply allowed the stoppage to occur, both to crush the union and weaken the union's public position. The business community, united behind the coal operators, denied ulterior motives in their position. They argued that all that was being sought was wage cuts to bring profitability back to a struggling industry. This sanguine support of the coal operators was based largely on the belief that in a time of large coal stockpiles, and a large non-union supply of workers, no serious damage would be done because the U.M.W. could not keep a strike viable for a long enough time to dangerously deplete stocks or harm industry. Following a year of returning business initiative in industrial relations, their attitude towards the coal strike was one of confidence, indeed treating the strike with something approaching levity.

As the effectiveness of the mineworkers' action became apparent by its complete closure of unionised fields and significant impact on non-union production, this optimistic mood evaporated. As this situation continued, attacks on the U.M.W. became more strident. Calls for an end to all strike action in the coal industry proliferated during the summer. By 5th October 1922 the Iron Age editorial was taking a much harder line against trade unionism as a whole, reflecting the broader nature of this and other disputes:

It is high time that strong efforts be made to combat our various organized minorities. There are many substantial nuclei around which working forces can be marshalled to meet the organized minorities. There are for instance the Chamber of Commerce of the U S, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Railway Association, American Bankers' Association and the Engineering Societies.¹⁰

It was calling for nothing less than a full-scale N.A.M.-style effort by the business community to overcome the power of trade unionism. The success of the U.M.W. in continuing an effective strike for five months had further radicalised some business opinion.

The coal dispute itself had never been a clear issue for the public upon which business could capitalise and the U.M.W. even had some strong political support. By August, moreover, while this opinion was hardening, the coal operators were feeling the strain and began negotiating with the U.M.W.. Attacking unionism was one thing, but in a highly-unionised industry carrying on the struggle had proved too costly. The president of the U.M.W. could justify claims that the miners' action had "checked the downward trend of wages for labor in general".¹¹ Moreover, in getting the old wage scale and work rules reconstituted it had destroyed arbitration as a settlement procedure. These claims and the outcome of the dispute were irksome to business in the frustration of its aims.

Aggravating as it did the effects of a coal strike already assuming serious proportions, the reaction of the business community to the railroad shopmen's strike was predictably damning.

Crucially, their opinion condemning the strike coincided with that of the President. On the shopmen's strike, they were afforded a clear issue upon which to attack trade unionism. From the outset they were loud in their support of the railroad operators' resolution not to rehire strikers on a seniority basis. They hoped frankly that the union would be crippled in the aftermath of the strike. The cumulative effect of these strikes was to radicalise business and labour opinion once more. The polarisation of the 1919 Industrial Conference had returned to industrial relations in 1922; in this instance, however, not as a result of both sides' ambitions, but as a result of the employers' aggressive campaign. The 1920-21 hiatus had resulted from the recession and the initiative of engineers in calling for co-operation. While unions responded favourably, the effect on the conduct of industrial relations in the meantime was ephemeral.

The railroad brotherhoods' ire was raised not only against the railroad operators but also at the Railroad Labor Board. As far as the Railway Employees Department of the A.F. of L. were concerned, they felt they were "marching down a blind alley with no hope of relief in sight".¹² The Board had scrapped the national agreements, abruptly ending hearings on the various clauses to do so, had ended overtime for Sundays and now proposed a cut in wages of 7 cents per hour, coming on top of a cut of 8 cents per hour a year previously. The railroad operators meanwhile were blithely ignoring decisions of the Board. The Pennsylvania railroad even brought injunctive action against the Board to prevent the publication of findings on that railroad. To

the railroad workers the 7 cents' cut meant that they were the only ones likely to suffer from adverse decisions of the Board. The Railway Employees' first effort was to seek a guarantee from the Railroad Labor Board that it would in future be able to have its decisions acceded to by the railroad operators. On 7th June 1922 the Board replied that since it had no police powers, it could give no such guarantee. The railway employees saw no other alternative but to take strike action against the proposed wage cuts, a decision which the shop crafts supported virtually unanimously. They regarded the Board as a tool of the operators.

The President's view was that the strike was illegal. He felt that the railway employees ought to have appealed to the Board and from the outset his attitude to the action was apparent. The result of this attitude and the defiant positions taken by the operators and strikers led to the issuance of an injunction against the strikers on 1st September 1922 by Attorney General Daugherty. If the U.M.W.'s action seemed to demonstrate the continuing strength of unionism, and appeared as a victory for the movement against the employers' campaign of cuts, the end of the shopmen's strike was a crushing blow. To all intents and purposes it enforced the Board's second wage cut and badly damaged the shop crafts' organisation as new men were recruited to fill the places of those who defied the injunction. It also badly undermined union confidence in the face of a hostile administration.

The industrial disruption of 1922 marked the apotheosis of the business campaign against the trade union movement and the attempt to confirm its power in the industrial system. The strikes made

clear, however, that even at a time when business opinion was most radicalised the success of its efforts depended largely on government intervention to uphold its position. This occurred in the railroad shopmen's strike and its consequence was to deal a shattering blow to that organisation. In the coal strike, however, it was clear that stalemate would be the only result of such a business attitude in a tightly organised industry. Business efforts could not dislodge unionism without government backing. Moreover, the coal strike also revealed that general business opinion was diverging from that of industries actually involved in disputes. The huge cost discouraged active efforts to implement their views. The result of the havoc of 1922 was therefore far from discouraging for trade unions in well-organised industries. Moreover, while the shopmen's strike demonstrated the fragility of unionism when business and government were arrayed against it, the coal strike had also revealed that government backing for business was far from automatic, and was not predicated on support for business perceptions.

In terms of the relative strength of the antagonists, there was no doubt that, as the Machinists' Journal editorialised: "The industrial depression . . . has been our greatest handicap."¹³ Although Samuel Gompers attempted to make light of the membership losses in 1921, a decline of almost one million could not be explained away simply by the cessation of war work. Samuel Gompers also added that these figures were deceiving in that unions waived membership fees on unemployed members, so that these, while still unionists, were not being counted. This was in fact irrelevant. No matter how loyal unemployed unionists may be, they had no power

because they had no work. Moreover, the jobless pressured unionists and non-unionists alike to accept wage reductions. It was when these reductions became a campaign theme that the unions in industries under the greatest pressures, as were the coal and railroads, decided to resist. It was clear that the traditional unions could defend themselves and stop the campaign by the employers. The result of the 1922 industrial conflict was stalemate.

The problem for unionists from 1922 was not defensive but how to continue to advance the movement. While maintaining strength, the unions were not able to increase membership. The recession also forced the unions to look closely at their policies with a view to making them better able not only to defend their members' interests but to continue to pursue these during economic recession. Policies for that purpose did not become apparent until 1923, after the 1922 disputes had ended. However, plans for co-operation between unions and employers, had already arisen from various stimuli. The International Ladies' Garment Workers co-operation plan in New York stemmed primarily from the shared wish of unionists and employers alike to end the difficulties of this chaotic industry. The agreement was reached after a bitter strike to oppose wage reductions. In effect the union accepted a 10% cut in return for a commitment to give priority to union workers. The war had also given an impetus to hopes for co-operation. As the preamble to a 1919 co-operation agreement between the I.B.E.W. and the National Association of Electrical Contractors and Dealers, there were among unionists those who wished that their long-held belief that their interests lay with a prosperous economic system be made more

obvious. Thus the agreement made its priority not only a consideration of the public, but states its belief that: "Close contact and a mutually sympathetic interest between employee and employer will develop a better working system, which will tend constantly to stimulate production . . ." ¹⁴ Increasing production and improving economic performance was the basis of claims of 'mutual interest'.

Samuel Gompers was also forcefully supporting the move to co-operation during 1921 in the pages of the American Federationist. It had printed in full Herbert Hoover's speech to the Federated American Engineers' Society on 19th November 1920. Samuel Gompers believed that co-operation was a major part of the tradition of the A.F. of L.. 'Voluntary helpfulness' was applicable not merely to trade unions but also to their relations with employers. Only where employers sought no reconciliation with or recognition of trade unionism would unions of necessity fight for their aims. The employers in such cases had destroyed any possibility of co-operation.

Taylorism had been seen by Gompers as an attempt to destroy all that unions represented. The new engineers, however, did not use the language of the stopwatch; additionally they criticised management for waste, particularly that caused by seasonality of employment. The engineers seemed to offer unionism recognition as a meaningful part of the industrial system, which, as unionists had always held, could provide a decent living for employers and employees alike. They appeared to confirm unionism's claims that better working conditions, shorter hours, better wages, could improve productivity and efficiency, thereby maintaining profitability.

The engineering approach offered trade unionism the hope of a voluntarist industrial relations system where workers' rights were respected by employers who recognised the contribution made by workers to the production process. It provided exactly the compromise between political agitation and economic improvement which many unionists sought. Thus Gompers felt that "the co-operation now being developed between the workers and the scientists of the engineering profession is one of the highly significant developments of the day".¹⁵ Gompers saw in the engineering movement an opportunity for the integration of unionism into the industrial system, thereby winning the movement de facto legitimacy without any legislative or political guarantees. This integration had been given added urgency by the recession. If unionism was accepted as an integral part of the industrial system, then expansion and improved conditions would follow. This opinion also led to the setting up of a committee at the Denver convention of the A.F. of L. in 1921 to investigate a new wages policy. It sought a policy which would pursue an ever-increasing standard of living, while attempting to associate the movement with an increasingly mechanised industrial system and protecting workers from the hazards of recession.

1921 had been a year of confusing signals. A.F. of L. membership reached its peak in late 1920, but by the time the convention could celebrate the feat, the recession was already cutting deeply into these gains. The recession also led the A.F. of L. leadership to give priority to stability and job security, considerations which coincided with the rise of the engineering movement and hopes for the integration of unionism.

These two factors caused labour leaders to look seriously at defining a new wages' policy which would quicken this integration while still maintaining wage levels in a recessionary period. Gompers also gleaned hope from the recommendations of the Unemployment Conference for it at least demonstrated that "unemployment is a problem that can be solved".¹⁶ This coincided with the unionists' mechanistic view of the economy as opposed to the business view of a 'natural' economy. That the Conference called for action at all was a major fillip for unionism, even though the action was limited in the main to communities, States and municipalities.

Despite these signs of apparent hope for Gompers that his gradualist, voluntarist, non-political attitude might triumph, any real promise of reconciliation depended on the attitude of the business community. Although Samuel Gompers believed unions would not affect the economy significantly, this was a moot point for many employers. In 1921 the recession had strengthened their determination to weaken trade unionism and cut wages in order to improve their own financial prospects. They were as hostile towards trade unionism as at any time previously, a fact of which rank and file workers were acutely aware. Co-operation was not being taken seriously by these men. As we have seen the business community did not regard co-operation as a pressing priority. The result was that the unions under most pressure were forced by business aggression to defend themselves in 1922. Hostility and conflict submerged any move towards co-operation and conciliation. There was a feeling that "such trusts need to be broken up for the benefit of the wage earners in general".¹⁷ Any mention of co-operation tended to centre on works councils, rather than trade union agreements.¹⁸ The Open

Shop Department of the N.A.M. continued its bitter attacks on trade unionism which they held threatened the United States with "subjection to arbitrary class rule".¹⁹ Company unions were the only co-operation which they were willing to contemplate. The result was that 1922 became a year of bitter conflict, completely submerging thoughts of conciliation, as unions fought for their continued existence.

Despite the new trends towards co-operation, abandoned during the 1922 strife, the aim remained legitimacy. Co-operation was merely another means to the same end; a response to the difficult times in which unionists found themselves and reflective of many unionists denial of any economic or political implications of their movement. The recession was putting new strains on industrial relations and on the trade unions' policies. While the effects of the recession caused these shifts in unions' industrial policies, it also had a significant effect on their political posture. Once more it made trade unionists aware that, particularly in recessions, until there existed a Congressional majority sympathetic to trade unions' viewpoint, they would be under continual threat from business tactics. "The value of political success will be the measure of assistance it may render the industrial movement in its struggles."²⁰ The major impetus towards a deeper political commitment, however, did not come from this general labour consciousness which was well within the traditional 'friends and enemies' policy. It came rather from particular trade unions, which the recession and the employers' campaign were putting under intense pressure and who therefore felt that business must be forced to accept their movement or whose major concerns were political in nature. Thus it was that

the railroad unions, unhappy with the Railroad Labor Board, emerged as the major impetus behind the launching of the Conference for Progressive Political Action in February 1922. They were convinced that it was time for unionism to forge more permanent and organised links with the Congressional progressives. This opinion had been stimulated by the experience of participating in the Wisconsin campaign of 1920. The 'friends and enemies' policy was simply inadequate for their pressing needs, nor did it give strong enough expression to their feelings of antagonism towards employers and disillusion with the ineffectiveness of the two old parties.

Samuel Gompers was deeply anxious about the organisation of trade union political machinery. He attempted to have the first meeting of the C.P.P.A. in Chicago on 20th February postponed because the Executive Council of the A.F. of L. was scheduled to meet at that time. William Johnstone, President of the I.A.M. and the Chairman of the C.P.P.A. flatly refused this request. Although the organisation of a third party was to await events, the time for organisation of a trade union political movement was overdue. In addition to Johnstone, the railroad presence was represented by Warren S. Stone, the Locomotive Engineers chief, and J. Manion, President of the Railway Telegraphers' Brotherhood. Sidney Hillman of the textile workers, Morris Hillquit from the Socialist party, Basil Manly, a close confidante of La Follette, and Frederick C. Howe were also prominent among the delegates to the Conference.

Gompers was alarmed by the tone of the resolutions from Chicago. The C.P.P.A. called for a joining of forces with socialists, the Non-Partisan League, the Farmer-Labour party and

the Committee of 48. It also made clear its determination to take an active part in the political process, particularly the primaries, and most alarming of all to Gompers, it resolved that:

When action within the old parties is futile, organize independently. It is often better to lose as independents with a square cut issue, than to lose as you have lost in the past by wasting ballots on men who cannot be trusted.²¹

The resolution made clear that this movement represented to a large degree the class-consciousness within the labour movement in America. Attacking bankers and speculators and large employers, they stated that "They have declared war on the producing classes".²² Although the impetus came from unions with particularist interests, the C.P.P.A. revealed the deep feeling among these unions that only a thoroughly left-wing movement could fully protect, understand and propound trade union aims. It was an explicit admission that some unions no longer felt represented by the traditional two-party system. Despite the serious implications this had for the nature of trade unionism as he saw it, Gompers in the spring of 1922 had little to say about the C.P.P.A. He preferred rather to emphasise the unity of the movement in the hostile, contemporary industrial climate. In a major article in the American Federationist of February 1922, he pledged A.F. of L. backing for the railroad union and the U.M.W. positions in the strongest terms. He stated bluntly that the Board had failed, that the unions were once more bargaining directly with operators and would have full A.F. of L. support if industrial action was required. As for the situation in the mining industry, Gompers stated frankly that "The American labor movement will support the miners in their position, for to yield would be to

yield to injustice".²³ On the issue of the defence of unionism, the movement was united. Despite the new political split and moves towards co-operation, in the bitter industrial atmosphere of 1922 the movement had closed ranks.

Indeed this was vital for Gompers. John Lewis had attempted to win the Presidency from Samuel Gompers at the 1921 Convention largely as a result of Gompers' ambivalence in 1919. The President did not wish to commit the same mistake in 1922. The A.F. of L. Executive was thus anxious to prove itself to be in step with rank and file opinion. Gompers moreover was anxious to repair the damage done to his relationship with Lewis in the row surrounding the Kansas Industrial Court and the action of District 13 of the U.M.W.. Gompers had been a bitter and outspoken opponent of this Court since its inception in 1919 and had supported the defiant posture of District 13. This, however, conflicted with the determination of the International Executive Board to stamp out insurgency. They therefore condemned the District's actions and sought to expel its President. Gompers found himself in the awkward position of supporting what Lewis and the I.E.B. regarded as insurgency. His forthright support of the U.M.W. came as a welcome opportunity to repair this damage. The founding of the C.P.P.A. gave added impetus to the aggressive attitude adopted by the A.F. of L. in 1922, and the dropping of the co-operative mood which had been their first response to the recession. In the following year, radicalism again became the keynote of the unions' attitude. This reflected itself in the founding of the C.P.P.A. and this also stimulated the A.F. of L.'s close support of industrial action in 1922.

The C.P.P.A. provided a stimulus to the increasing activity of the A.F. of L. in politics. The important thing for Gompers to offset the threat of the C.P.P.A. was to demonstrate the vigour of the A.F. of L.. This he had done in his unequivocal support of the U.M.W. and railroad brotherhoods. He also had in the issue of the Supreme Court, and the injunction, a further opportunity to demonstrate the determination of the A.F. of L. to expound the wishes of the rank and file and do so in a political milieu.

Hostility towards the courts had long been a tradition of American trade unionism. This had intensified after the Clayton Act appeared to be nullified by the continuing use of the injunction against industrial action by trade unions. Other than complaints and anger, however, there was little move to mount a campaign to reform the court or to make this a major political issue. The appointment of William Howard Taft as Chief Justice had, as Gompers admitted to Karger, "tickled me to death".²⁴ Gompers, having worked with the ex-President on the N.W.L.B., hoped that "a new and progressive"²⁵ Taft might emerge as Chief Justice. Despite no co-ordinated campaign against the court, trade unionists had been bitterly angered by the White Court's decision in the Duplex case in 1920, making illegal the secondary boycott and denying any defence under the Clayton Act due to the lack of 'proximity'. Justices Oliver W. Holmes, John H. Clarke and Louis D. Brandeis dissented.²⁶ The Supreme Court had always been a conservative body, a thorn in trade union flesh. This made Gompers welcome a man whom he believed had gained some experience of labour and its thinking.

Gompers' hopes for a more sympathetic Supreme Court were dashed by decisions handed down in the first term of the new Taft

Court. The first decision made against trade union interests involved the emotional issue of child labour. It was Taft moreover who delivered the opinion of the Court. The Wilson administration had used its powers of taxation to effectively punish the employment of minors. Taft simply held this to be unconstitutional, a breach of the government's use of its taxation powers. It was an opinion which only Clarke felt constrained to dissent from. The A.F. of L. said little about the opinion as its grounds were apparently justified. In 1921 it continued to be the injunction which dominated union attacks on the courts. The opinion of the Court in the case of Truax -v- Corrigan, again by Taft, caused considerably more anger in June 1922. The decision made picketing practically illegal. A dispute over wages and conditions led to a strike and the picketing of a restaurant in Bisbee, Arizona. Taft upheld the injunction, arguing that the picketing was of a nature which violated the restaurateurs' property right by making "abusive and libellous charges".²⁷ Justice Pitney and Clarke dissented over the Supreme Court's overruling of a law in Arizona which had exempted such actions from legal constraint. Brandeis in his own dissent also made this point. Within the broad legislative terms it was perfectly within the Arizona Courts' powers to decide on the terms of its powers of equity and that this had not violated the 14th Amendment which ensured due process and under which Truax had sued for a remedy. Brandeis went further to condemn the Court's action as a police action, since no remedy was legally required. The dissent of Holmes was the most political of the three. "There is nothing that I more deprecate than the use of the 14th Amendment beyond the absolute compulsion of its words to prevent the making of social experiments that an important part of the community desires."²⁸

Within a month of this decision, on the 5th of June 1922 Chief Justice Taft handed down the opinion of the Court in the case of The United Mineworkers -v- The Coronado Coal Company. At issue was the coal company's claim for damages from the United Mineworkers. Taft found that the International was too remote to be held liable so that the U.M.W. in effect won their case. However, in coming to this decision the Chief Justice said that it was with "great regret that the court finds itself unable to affirm the decision of the lower court's holding the United Mineworkers liable".²⁹ This obiter dictum caused a furore in 1922 at the A.F. of L. Convention which was held only five days after the handing down of the decision. As Samuel Gompers pointed out, the Court in this case "rendered a decision which goes beyond any previous decision of that tribunal in its antagonism and opposition to labour . . .".³⁰ It was clear that the Court would be only too glad to make unions themselves liable to damages. Not surprisingly the Convention warned of "a growing spirit of resentment that is being engendered by the class attitude of our judges".³¹

The cumulative effect of these decisions from the first sitting of the Taft Court was to make the powers of the Supreme Court the major issue which the A.F. of L. raised in the 1922 mid-term election, along with the question of the future of the Railroad Labor Board. The Court issue lent the A.F. of L.'s non-partisan campaign a vigour and radicalism it badly needed if the effect of the C.P.P.A. on the broader trade union movement was to be contained. Early in 1922, Gompers had previewed the campaign committee's likely priorities by listing unemployment, taxation, agriculture, the anti-union campaign and injunctions as the main issues, positions on which union endorsements of candidates would be

decided. By September the Supreme Court and Open Shop campaign had given the A.F. of L. a uniting purpose. These were given added significance by a speech by Senator La Follette to the A.F. of L.'s Cincinnati Convention attacking the Court's veto power of the wishes of the people. The Daugherty injunction of September 1922 only served to focus labour hostility on the courts and also on Congressional politics. These events galvanised the A.F. of L. into a radical position close to that of the C.P.P.A., though the A.F. of L. was not yet prepared to echo political posture at the time of the 1922 mid-term elections. Combined, the result was a marked leftward swing in unionists' outlook.

It remained to be seen whether this attitude would become entrenched or diluted. The Chief Justice was little concerned by the uproar over his decisions, as was reflected in a letter to President Harding in August 1922. "I suppose you have noticed the yawping of Gompers and La Follette over the Child Labor and Coronado cases, but I have not heard much of anything . . ." ³² Taft was secure in his interpretation of the role of the Supreme Court:

Whenever the legislative department steps beyond the legislative sphere and attempts to assume itself any of that portion of sovereign power which by the constitution is reserved to the states or to the people it violates the fundamental law. In order that the constitution be preserved inviolate it was entrusted to the dutiful care of the judiciary. ³³

Protest did not affect this view at all. The Chief Justice's main concern was with the balance of the Court. Far from being a wholly conservative body it was in Taft's view dangerously divided. In the cases of labour indeed only Taft's vote produced the majority. He loathed the sight of the Court undermining itself by significant

dissent from its own opinions. This weakened its authority. Brandeis, Clarke and Holmes formed a core of dissent in the Court. Taft's reaction to the row over his decisions was a determination to bring on to the bench men of his own opinions who could lend greater weight to the court's rulings in such cases. His problem lay in the dissent, not in the decisions. Thus when Justice Pitney announced his decision to retire, Taft advised the President that "The best way to deal with them is to hit them between the eyes by the appointment of staunch friends of the Constitution, who will do nothing to sap the pillars of our Government."³⁴ Taft thus continued to stand by his decisions and sought to strengthen his opinion in a court which he saw as too liberal.

The years of 1921 and 1922 had been replete with a bewildering change of emphasis on priorities. The A.F. of L. began the decade with the largest membership in its history, with increasing government recognition, implicit even in the Transportation Act of 1920. The recession however forced labour into a rapid policy change. In 1920 the unions had been aggressively seeking recognition and wage rises in a full labour market. Three million unemployed early in 1921 immediately shifted concern to a defence of gains in the face of a business effort to slash wage bills. This with the rise of the engineers encouraged unions and the A.F. of L. to give serious consideration to means of integration in the industrial system which would protect their position in just such difficult times and undermine the business attitude. As the recession continued and the N.A.M.-inspired campaign gained wider credence, these essentially long-term ideas were pushed into the shadows as unions in key industries fought to maintain the status quo. The railroad and coal strikes resulted.

By the end of 1922 bitterness and hostility were being directed not only against business but also against the administration, and the Supreme Court. This mood was strengthened by the Daugherty injunction and a series of decisions unfavourable to labour. Both industrially and politically trade unionism as a whole was once more radicalised as the 1922 mid-term elections approached. The C.P.P.A. signalled a mood among many trade unionists that a new class-consciousness was near to gaining concrete political expression. The agricultural crisis by 1922 had become so serious that it echoed the political issues which the 'labor problem' had highlighted so that the 1922 election had undertones of an ideological struggle between right and left as American society came near to splitting into class-based political allegiances in the industrial and agricultural crises. The result of the election would be vital to the political stance of the A.F. of L. and would influence the A.F. of L. as to whether it would follow the lead of the C.P.P.A.

Samuel Gompers chose to interpret the result of the election as a vindication of unionism's claims and the non-partisan policy of the A.F. of L. although this was of course on a progressive versus conservative basis. Thus while in Indiana Democrat Samuel Ralston defeated Beveridge, in neighbouring Iowa, Republican Smith Brookhart was the victor, both standing as progressives. He believed the result to be "a condemnation of the whole program of hostility to the organization of workers . . a sweeping condemnation of . . the Railroad Labor Board. It was a condemnation of the injunction in labour disputes."³⁵ The movement could look forward to 1923 with renewed hope and confidence in the struggle against

repressive employers and a reactionary judicial system in the knowledge that their argument was winning public support, as the results had demonstrated.

Although Gompers made no mention of it, the C.P.P.A. also rejoiced at the November result in their Conference the following month in Washington D.C.. They had been active in the support of La Follette, Edwin Ladd and Lynn Frazier, Brookhart, C.C. Dill, Robert Howell, Henrik Shipstead and Magnus Johnson, John Kendrick, Royal Copeland, Henry Ashurst, Kenneth McKellar and Burton K. Wheeler. It is impossible, however, to define even the labour vote in 1922 and equally impossible to distinguish between the relative effects of the C.P.P.A. and the A.F. of L. campaigns. In fact both organisations backed the same candidates. It is certain however that without the rural discontent in that year, the power of labour electorally would have been exposed as minimal. However, the fact that the C.P.P.A. provided these progressives with an organisation which, given their independence, was likely to be more efficient and united than their own party's machinery, did make a significant contribution to the progressives' success. As did Gompers, the C.P.P.A. looked forward to 1923 and the further development of their movement.

In the event, the 1922 elections were the high water mark of trade union radicalism and of the ideological split in United States politics. Even in 1922 there had been signs that industrial relations were unlikely to continue in the same vein for very long. In the same issue of the American Federationist in which Samuel Gompers had rejoiced at the mid-term election results and

exhorted unionists to continue their efforts in 1923, the President of the A.F. of L. noted an article by the Bank of Commerce in its Commerce Monthly. That article noted that "the spread between producers' and consumers' prices is unreasonable for many classes of goods".³⁶ In other words, Gompers observed, the banking community was finally admitting that prices were well above the reasonable cost plus basis of pricing. He hoped that prices would now be reduced and that business would end its extortion of the public.

A still more significant indicator for 1923, however, besides this voice of criticism from the centre of the business community, was the collapse of the Citizens' Alliance campaign against the Carpenters in Chicago. It had been broken quite simply by the business resurgence in the city building trade in 1922. The need to build meant taking on unionists on their own terms and accepting that the power of the unions in Chicago would not easily be destroyed. This was abetted by the revelations that the Citizens' Alliance was run by several prominent Chicagoan businessmen, a fact which quickly aroused public ire and wrecked the credibility of the campaign. With the business resurgence and in the wake of the U.M.W. strike, non-union miners received a 40% increase. In the steel industry too, the workforce received 20% wage rises.

Economic recovery caused business attention to switch from the campaign for wage cuts and against trade unionism, to their main purpose of making profits. The determined union resistance to the campaign, moreover, discouraged business from active continuation of the campaign when prosperity once more arrived.

This is not to say that antagonism towards unionism had abated to any great degree. The decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court in the Moore Drop Forge case, for instance, caused widespread joy in the business community. The decision legitimised the 'Yellow Dog' contract, a document which employers had new recruits sign promising not to join trade unions. While their hostility to unions remained constant, however, businessmen were no longer willing to make this a prominent feature of industrial relations. They did not wish to force industrial action on unions.

The most prominent example of the changing business mood was the issue of the 12-hour day in the steel industry. Prompted by Hoover, Harding had called the leaders of the industry to Washington and proposed that they abolish the two-shift system.³⁷ This suggestion was unacceptable to the steel industry. A compromise was reached whereby these men agreed to form a committee to examine the question. After an entire year of study, this committee finally reported that it could not recommend the institution of an 8-hour day in the American steel industry. It based this finding on a belief that there was insufficient labour to fill the new jobs, that the cost would be prohibitive, and that the men in the industry appeared unenthusiastic about the idea. The steel industry thus appeared as united as ever in the summer of 1923, anti-union, and rejecting ideas proposed by engineers and backed by the Secretary of Commerce.

In the steel industry there was no threat of reprisals by the unions against this intransigence. Yet in July 1923 James Campbell,

a member of the committee and President of the Youngstown Steel and Tube Company announced that his mill departments would be implementing an 8-hour day at once. He warned that this might add \$3 to a ton of steel but he believed that the 8-hour day would come rapidly to the steel industry. In August the Carnegie Steel Company announced an immediate and complete shift to the 8-hour day, adding that "the cost may not be so large as at first estimated".³⁸ As the Iron Age editorialised, there were problems in the changes, but there was now a mood not only in steel but throughout the business community that it was time to act rather than dwell on the difficulties involved.

Similarly the boom in building had largely turned contractors from the attempts to destroy the unions in that industry. In the railroads, peace set in in 1923 as average freight loadings for the third week in August rose to record levels. In the coal industry too, to a large extent as a result of the stock rundown caused by the coal and rail strike, record production figures were being achieved. Railroad re-stocking had given the steel industry the demand it needed to look forward, and as steel production rose so railroad business improved. By late August the steel industry was even admitting that, in addition to their cost estimates being wrong, "there appears to be an ample supply of workmen available for the three-shift plan".³⁹ This marked a significant concession by this industry in particular, for it had consistently argued for the existence of a labour shortage in order to oppose the restriction of immigration.

A combination of prosperity and a realisation of the strength of trade unionism in its key areas served to end the campaign by the business community. Dollars and cents once more became their main preoccupation, not the open shop. As decisions in the steel industry had demonstrated, moreover, the return of prosperity fundamentally undermined the business coherence which the recession and the N.A.M. had been able to forge for a short time. The N.A.M. continued its campaign, but it no longer commanded the adherence it had achieved in a time of over-supply of labour and dwindling contracts.

This change in business mood was a prerequisite to any change in the atmosphere in industrial relations. As has been adequately demonstrated, the recession had put enormous pressure on unionism, pressure which the movement as a whole felt compelled to resist. Conflict dominated union policies throughout 1922 as a result, and had pushed political activity to the forefront of union tactics. The apparent thaw in business attitudes led to an easing of the pressure unions had to face and allowed them to turn to the policies which had been in gestation since 1921. At the Portland Convention from 1st to 12th October 1923, co-operation began to emerge as a realistic policy. This surrounded the recommendations of the committee set up to study a 'scientific' basis for wage negotiations. The committee found that an American standard of living must be the bedrock of the wage ladder. Significantly, however, the committee felt that recognition of the contribution by unions to productivity levels must also be taken into consideration in wage negotiations. Unionism was beginning to accept that it had a responsibility for the performance of the plant or industry, a principle first broached by the engineers' movement.

The most striking example of this idea came in the setting up of a co-operative scheme between the I.A.M. and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Unions long held that their movement was an aid to industrial performance. By 1923 it recognised that this required a positive commitment by unions to do so. It was this thinking which had prompted the convention committee to propose its recommendations which in addition, given mechanical improvements, provided a fail-safe way of securing steadily rising wage levels in return. The I.A.M.'s call for co-operation was a conscious attempt to prove the union's position. The union's President, William Johnstone, had first floated the idea in an article attacking piece-work in 1921. To end this system the unions must get a basic wage schedule in return for productivity commitments. "It strikes me that the thing to do is to get some railroad president who is not bitten by the Atterbury bug . . . to go into this matter in a sincere wholehearted way."⁴⁰ This idea was quickly applauded by Oscar Beyer, an engineer with offices in the Machinists' Building in Washington D.C. who encouraged Johnstone to follow up what he had recommended. Johnstone did bring the idea to the attention of Davis Warfield, President of the Seaboard Railway, but the response was lukewarm. It was not until Beyer met Mr M. Potter, a member of the Interstate Commerce Commission, that any possibility of the idea reaching fruition appeared. Potter was enthusiastic about the idea and "very intimate"⁴¹ with Daniel Willard. It was Potter who was successful in having Johnstone, Jewell and Beyer meet Willard in spring 1922.

The railroad strike brought these consultations to an end though not before these were advanced enough to withstand the

bitter atmosphere of the strike. Talks resumed in October 1922 and in spring the plan was launched in the Glenwood shops of the B & O Railroads. This encouraging news for the unions took on added importance in late 1923 when Beyer issued his first report on the success of the venture. The railroad proved an exception in having launched "a rehabilitation campaign"⁴² for striking shopmen. These men were largely forgotten by other lines. Beyer made a point of comparing its figures with those of the Pennsylvania Railroad whose antagonism to unionists was legendary. Comparing the B & O's July 1923 performance with that of July 1922, freight train miles increased 89.9%. Gross ton miles increased 122%, reflecting an increase in business of 90%. Despite this huge increase in business still more encouraging was the fact that the percentage of locomotives unserviceable had been reduced from 50 to 14.1%. Locomotive miles per day increased from 34 to 69.5 miles. The comparative figures for the Pennsylvania were 45 to 61 miles. In passenger service, locomotive miles per day increased from 107 to 140.2 miles in July 1923. The Pennsylvania figures were 110.2 to 119.5 miles. Beyer thus concluded confidently:

It is expected that the accomplishments of the future even more than those of the past will demonstrate the wisdom and soundness from the viewpoint of organized labor as well as management of the policy of co-operation, as now enforced on the Baltimore and Ohio.⁴³

This was an enormous fillip for trade unionism and its integration policy. The A.F. of L. also gained a boost from an unexpected source in 1923. The Supreme Court ruled that the Kansas Court of Industrial Relations was unconstitutional. Chief Justice Taft

made the ruling on the basis that, simply because business provided a service to the community, it was unreasonable to charge businesses with an obligation to continue service under all circumstances. The unions regarded this ruling as ambiguous. It demonstrated that their claim for justice could be upheld by law. It also showed that Taft, while accepting this principle for business, would not apply it to the unions.

These important events in 1923, in addition to an improving job situation and a slight improvement in wages, gave rise to a peaceful interlude in industrial relations. Nonetheless, this changing situation did not result in trade unionism becoming any less bitter about business inequities or the Supreme Court. At Portland they continued to call for a constitutional amendment to prohibit child labour; for Congress to be able to re-enact laws declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court; for unions to simply ignore the 'Yellow Dog' contracts and for unionists to continue to pressure the politicians through legislative committees; and the abolition of the Railroad Labor Board.

The I.A.M. best typified the gamut of trade union attitudes in 1923. While the co-operative idea was launched at Glenwood and spread to other B & O shops, A.T. McNamara could write enthusiastically that : "Amalgamation is just around the corner. Industrialism is in the air."⁴⁴ Throughout the year, moreover, the Machinists' Journal published articles with the intent of informing its readership on political issues sponsored by the C.P.P.A. Among the contributors were Donald Richberg, a leading progressive lawyer, Basil Manly, J.A. Hopkins of the Committee of 48 and Senator

La Follette. Their subject matter included the pay of the railroad presidents - L.F. Loree of the Delaware and Hudson received some \$70,000 per annum from his various directorships - Invisible Government, the Constitution, Railroad Valuation and Government by Monopoly. The I.A.M. was employing all fields that lay open to it - economic, co-operation and political - to achieve its ends. Moves towards co-operation in 1923 by no means diminished the sentiments expressed by Frank Duffy in the Carpenter:

Much has been said . . about the 'identity of interests' of Capital and Labor. If the interests of these two forces are 'identical' . . why should the workers be denied the right to place their price of labor, and the capitalists be privileged to dictate upon what terms and conditions he shall invest his money? . . . if the interests of Capital and Labor are identical . . why do they not share equally in the profits . .? Are these evidences of 'identity of interests'? . . . we do not see it.⁴⁵

Hostility and co-operation co-existed in the A.F. of L. in 1923, indeed co-existed even within individual unions. In the years 1921 and 1922 the movement had been briefly re-united by a crisis which made defence the priority. In 1923 freed from such pressures, individual unions began once more to air their own views. The consequence of the quiet industrial situation was that the split between radicals and the A.F. of L. leadership over politics became more distinct. As was reflected in the Machinists' Monthly, there was now an increasing involvement in the C.P.P.A. among certain unions. The political momentum carried on in 1923, despite the lack of industrial disputes. It was no longer limited to those industries radicalised by strikes or direct involvement with legislative issues

or the Supreme Court. It must have been disturbing for Gompers to see several key State Federations of Labor submit resolutions to the Portland Convention calling for an independent labour party. Such a proposal from the Chicago Federation was not surprising but Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Illinois Federations all submitted similar proposals. These proposals were supported also by the A.A.I.S.T.W. They were resoundingly defeated by 25,066 votes to 1,895 with 1,628 not voting. Nonetheless, despite this defeat, the trend was worrying for Gompers since, although it was clear that an independent party would not be endorsed, a much stronger political movement might well have commanded more support. Gompers responded by publishing a remarkable amount of editorials during an off-year, emphasising the need for effort while simultaneously limiting political concern to immediate issues. He poured scorn on any dependence on legislative and state action.

The American trade union movement . . is opposed to having the state do anything for adult wage earners which they are capable of doing for themselves. Those who place their faith in the legislative method . . believe that the state should be used to do everything it can . . .⁴⁶

The threat from communism was also beginning to gain more space in the American Federationist though generally this consisted of attacks on Russia or on Foster's Trade Union Educational League. Gompers also found time to attack Amalgamation Schemes. The A.F. of L. leadership was returning to its traditional posture by late 1923, which upheld the existing structure of the movement, its traditional political posture and economic integration.

The fact that times were good, or at least becoming better, aided the A.F. of L. in containing its radicalism. Business optimism had permeated the rest of the society and problems were being minimised, except almost inevitably in the coal mining industry where industrial action once more loomed as anthracite miners sought wage rises. Yet here too conflict was avoided by the new progressive Governor of Pennsylvania, Gifford Pinchot, who gave the miners a 10% rise. Even in the coal industry it appeared that peaceful relations might have an opportunity to develop. Of increasing concern for the A.F. of L. Executive was the continuing decline in membership and growing complaints of apathy in paying dues which again distorted membership figures. John Frey lambasted "raincoat unionism"⁴⁷ in December 1923, attacking the tendency to apathy when times were good, and to which the A.F. of L., through its integration proposals, looked for a remedy.

By late 1923 the A.F. of L., as Samuel Gompers made clear, was shaking off the radical posture of 1922. In this he was aided by the improving economic situation and an apparent tendency among business leaders to view their workers in a more considerate manner. These factors served to stimulate the hope that with the help of the engineers, trade unionism could be integrated within the economic system. The consequence for the political stance of the A.F. of L. was that it once more resorted to limiting itself to particularist issues and its 'friends and enemies' policy. The A.F. of L. remained loyal to the narrow view of trade unionism as a purely economic organisation, denying that its claims to legitimacy had any broader economic or political implications. The emergence of the C.P.P.A., however, demonstrated that some among the unions did recognise

the relationship between their aims and political attitudes in Congress. They had both responded to and stimulated the shift in Congress in attempting to form definite links with the advanced progressives.

This political fissure in the trade union movement was largely a question of tactics, and did not concern the basic aim of establishing trade unionism as a legitimate industrial power. As we have seen, Frank Duffy, editor of the Carpenter, was as convinced of the existence of the class structure in American society as McNamara of the I.A.M.. The difference between the C.P.P.A. and a great many within the A.F. of L. was that the latter refused to accept the need for a permanent organisation outwith the A.F. of L. or political methods to achieve legitimacy. In terms of candidates both were supporting the same people. The only difference was that the C.P.P.A. explicitly accepted that, whatever their views of the nature of trade unionism, the hostility of business and the ineffectiveness of many politicians, the movement would only achieve its aims by political means. They would not simply be able to become integrated into the economic system.

The conservative leadership of the A.F. of L. was attempting to avoid such a posture in its new hopes for cooperation and by an increasing tendency to tar all union radicals with the communist brush. They held aloof from a firmer commitment to the growing progressive trend towards their industrial view. Despite the apparent fragmentation of the labour movement as election year approached, the purpose of all unionists remained the same. This was the definite acceptance by the political system of the legitimacy

of their power in the American industrial system. The question in 1924 would be the political expression which this aim would take, and what effect it would have on the nature of the American political system.

NOTES

1. N.A.M., Open Shop Bulletin, No 6, September 22nd, 1921.
2. Ibid. p.6, a statement by the Businessmen's Association of Omaha, Neb.
3. N.I.C.B., Industrial-Economic Conditions in the U.S., Bulletin No. 1, June 15th, 1921, p.3.
4. Iron Age, Vol.109, part 1, January 5th, 1922, p.101.
5. The Carpenter, Vol.41, No 2, p.25.
6. American Federationist, Vol.28, No.4, p.291.
7. Iron Age, op.cit., p.101.
8. The Carpenter, Vol.42, No.4, p.21.
9. Ibid. p.23
10. Iron Age, Vol.110, part 2, p.946.
11. American Federationist, Vol.29, No.10, p.741.
12. The Machinists Monthly Journal, Vol.34, No.8, p.561. An article written by the vice-president of the Railway Employees Department of the A.F. of L., P.J. Conlon.
13. Machinists Monthly Journal, op.cit., No.3, p.143.
14. Cooperation Agreement between the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the National Association of Electrical Contractors and Dealers, December, 1919.
15. American Federationist, Vol.28, No2, p.122.
16. Ibid. No.12, p.1012.
17. Iron Age, Vol.108, part 1, July 21st, 1921, p.149.
18. N.I.C.B., Experience with Work Councils in the U.S., May 1922. See also Experience with Agreements in the Clothing Industry, 1921 and 1922.
19. N.A.M., Open Shop Encyclopedia for Debaters, p.47.
20. Machinists Monthly Journal, Vol.34, No.2, p.89. This was by the I.A.M.'s vice-president J. Somerville and reflected that union's continuing consciousness of the necessity of political power for unions, and their determination to do something about it.
21. People's Legislative Service papers, Conference for Progressive Political Action, proceedings, Chicago February 22nd to 25th, 1922. Despite the self-interest of Railroad and Coal unions, the

political disillusion had resulted in precisely the opposite position to which Gompers and his supporters had arrived. The crucial point is that from 1922 onwards the C.P.P.A. captured the initiative on unionism's political position and forced Gompers to become much more politically active than he wished to be.

22. Ibid.
23. American Federationist, Vol.29, No.2, p.148.
24. Taft papers, series 3, Karger to Taft September 3rd, 1921.
25. Ibid.
26. Supreme Court Reports (Lawyer's ed.) October term 1919, pp.364-369. Holmes and Day were Roosevelt appointees. Pitney and White were Taft appointees. McKenna was appointed by McKinley and Clarke and Brandeis had been appointed by Wilson.
27. Ibid. October term 1921, p.254.
28. Ibid. p.256.
29. Ibid. p.997.
30. A.F. of L. Report of the Proceedings of the 24th Annual Convention, p.39.
31. Ibid.
32. Taft papers, op.cit. Taft to Harding August 19th, 1922.
33. Ibid. July 21st 1922.
34. Ibid. December 4th, 1922.
35. American Federationist, Vol.29, No.12, p.893.
36. Ibid.
37. Hoover, H. Memoirs, Vol.2., The Cabinet and Presidency 1920-1932 Describes the evolution of the Committee and the attitude of the steel industry which he encountered. See chapter 5, pp.56 - 58. Zieger and Runfola both make much of Hoover's release of the Committee's report on July 5th. The link between this and the collapse of the steel industry's resistance is tenuous although the publicity may have exerted pressure. The industry would not have carried out the changes merely for public relations purposes.
38. Iron Age, Vol.112, part 1, August 16th, 1923, p.419.
39. Ibid. August 23rd, 1923, pp.492 - 493.
40. Oscar S. Beyer papers, Box 94, p.2. of the article.

41. Ibid. Beyer to Jewell and Johnstone, April 20th, 1922.
42. Ibid. Progress Report as to Co-operation of Unions with Management, November 24th, 1923, p.8.
43. Ibid.
44. Machinists Monthly Journal, Vol.35, No.7, p.351.
45. The Carpenter, Vol.43, No.4, p.22.
46. American Federationist, Vol.30, No.6, p.471.
47. The Carpenter, Vol.43, No.12, p.883.

CHAPTER 7

FROM HARDING TO COOLIDGE 1923-1924

This chapter studies the effect of the 1922 election results on thinking in Congress during 1923 and early 1924. The purpose is again to follow the development in progressives' attitudes to trade unionism in the industrial context of those years set out in Chapter six and to gauge the impact of these attitudes on the nature of Congress and its outlook on the 'labor problem'. The chapter also studies the nature of the administration's approach to both industrial relations and the Congressional situation in these years.

President Harding had been upset by the progressive gains in the 1922 mid-term elections. The progressive upsurge was deplored for further weakening traditional party coherence and the influence of the administration on Congress. Gone were such friends of the administration as Senators Harry New, Frank Kellogg and Joseph Frelinghuysen. The President had become estranged from Lodge, while also having lost the key Pennsylvania voices of Philander Knox and Boies Penrose. The administration felt keenly

the lack of senior Republican Senators who could wield influence on the party as it faced the new session of the Sixty-Seventh Congress.

President Harding might not have been too upset by this prospect. In the previous two years Congress had borne the brunt of public criticism for the lack of coherent policy. It was a situation which was unlikely to continue for much longer. In 1924, it would be the Presidency not Congress which would inherit the legislative record. Indeed, the Democrats had continually attempted to tie the Congressional situation to Presidential ineptitude in order to gain the maximum partisan advantage. Inevitably they regarded the results of the 1922 election as confirmation of the success of their campaign against a Do-Nothing Congress and administration; a Congress in fact whose most beneficial legislation they claimed had been achieved by co-operation between Democrats and progressive Republicans. Throughout 1921 and 1922 they echoed a remark made by Borah that "It is impossible to get anywhere in Congress and it is impossible to get a negative or affirmative declaration from the White House".¹ Their campaign was based on there being a leaderless Senate and House and an incapable Executive. The result, Democrats asserted, was "the worst Congress in twenty years".²

For these reasons the President was conscious of the political necessity of acting to defuse these criticisms from an enlarged progressive presence and a re-invigorated Democratic party. He also realised that if action by the Executive was not forthcoming then Congress would be still more shambolic. In fact, Harding had been

urged since mid-1921 to take more control of the chaos in Congress. James Emery, President of the N.A.M., for instance, had written to Malcolm Jennings in September 1921 that "The leaderless condition of the party in the House and Senate on practical questions . . will make it necessary for the President to assert party direction."³ This Harding had only once attempted; so determined was he to beat off the prospect of having to veto a Bonus bill that he had taken the decision to address the Senate on the issue. The result had been the defeat of the measure. This was offset to some extent by bitter Democratic complaints about the intervention. For Senator Borah the President's action cast doubt upon the Senate's sovereignty. The Bonus had been sure of a majority until the President intervened directly. The power of patronage had forced the Senate to "surrender our judgement to his direction".⁴ This bitter reaction convinced Harding that his earlier view that the Senate must simply agree with the Executive without overt Presidential pressure was the correct one. Thus, despite continuing chaos in Congress and advice from close friends, Harding had refused to exercise his power. Harding was encouraged in this posture at the time by a persistence among critics to disparage Congress rather than the Presidency.

The industrial chaos brought on by the coal and rail strikes, however, pushed responsibility upon the Executive. As has been noted, Harding, due in no small way to personal pique, ruled out any Presidential initiative after his July proposals had been rejected by the U.M.W. Unable and unwilling to become involved directly, the President called for, and got in short time, a U.S. Coal Commission and a Federal Fuel Distributor to ameliorate the shortages the rail strike was continuing to cause. These steps were forced on Harding,

and such a course was far from his personal preference. Harding washed his hands of the coal industry after the Federal Fuel Distributor was installed and a Commission was set up to investigate the industry's problems. Answering a plea from the Mayor of Boston to act on the coal crisis the President wrote that "I do not see how the government could effectively do more".⁵ When the coal strike ended Harding was in full accord with the wishes of Secretary Hoover who believed that "The Administration should keep its hands out . . .".⁶ except to encourage acceptance of mediation in April when a new agreement was due to be fixed, and to discourage hopes of wage reductions among coal operators, for which Hoover believed there was no basis. Harding agreed that "a definite peace"⁷ lasting at least two years was required. He was anxious that the coal industry's problems should not again plague his administration. He hoped, as Wilson did, that if stability could be achieved, the two sides would strive to extend it. Harding's action over the coal strike had been in response to a crisis, and was in no way part of a new initiative by the administration. In fact Harding's action continued to be neutral in this industry, recognising the contribution which coal operators' calls for wage cuts had made to the disruption.

Yet the crisis continued due to the tie-up in the railroads as the result of the shopmen's strike. Mediation and fairness evaporated in the face of continuing chaos. Harding as a result endorsed his Attorney General's wish that the Government enjoin the unions involved in the strike. In fact Harding found his justification for this action in his belief that the Board was a quasi-judicial institution. Among his cabinet, however, while Davis remained silent, Hughes protested strongly and Hoover was frankly

"flabbergasted"⁸ by the injunction. The President persisted with his attitude to the Board. In his message to Congress on 8th December 1922, he called clearly for making the decisions of the Board binding. This he justified by stating that:

We have assumed so great a responsibility in necessary regulation that we unconsciously have assumed the responsibility for maintained service: therefore the lawful power of enforcement of decisions is necessary to sustain the majority of government and administer to the public welfare.⁹

Ultimately, this attitude revealed Harding's conservative interpretation of 'public welfare', which was in effect the right to consume. The purpose behind such a proposal was simply to avoid the recurrence of the chaos of 1922 and to avoid embroiling the administration in such industrial disputes. In so doing, however, Harding was prepared to overrule union demands for free collective bargaining which could not take precedence over the discomfort it might cause. Following on the heels of the rail strike and combined with the 1922 election results and the Democratic revival, Harding was now reconciled to taking on the mantle of leadership of the Congressional Republicans and advocated such proposals. The Railroad Labor Board topic was an area in which Harding had a personal opinion and definite policy. In addition, this was an area in which the government was already involved. The 'labor problem' in general, however, was not an area where Harding was anxious to launch his campaign or where he had further proposals to make. The issue was far too divisive within the Republican party to base an attempt to renew the party's direction upon. Harding was also

conservative in his attitude to the role of government. This basic viewpoint restrained him from applying his attitude on the Railroad Board to industrial relations generally. Here he continued his neutrality. The crisis of 1922 had forced Harding to act, so that now Harding was resolved to assume a more forceful role. He now required an issue on which to base his effort.

Harding's campaign to give the Republican party a lead required the backing of mild progressives. In this aim the 'labor problem' would be of no use and indeed counter-productive. In his December speech he launched this effort by promising to follow "a sanely progressive"¹⁰ path. More significant than this vague rhetoric was Harding's shifting away from 'normalcy' when he asserted that "There will never again be precisely the old order; indeed I know no-one who thinks it to be desirable".¹¹ This statement in fact clarified what had always been Harding's opinion. 'Normalcy' meant status quo, not an attempt to undo reforms which had gone before, as extreme conservatives wished and as progressives feared. Harding then decided to use the Ship Subsidy Bill to unite his party and assert his leadership. The President had indicated to Reed Smoot his determination that this be made a test of Republican loyalty.¹² He was quite prepared to see the pressing appropriations' schedule held up and to call an emergency session to get the bill through. This was the issue around which Harding decided that the "re-consecration to the nation as a whole"¹³ would begin.

The railroad legislation was certainly part of the Harding initiative. He did not object to unionism, but could not tolerate too great an inconvenience as a result of their activities. Harding,

in any case, had always believed that the Board's decisions were tantamount to being legally binding and was equally unhappy that the Pennsylvania Railroad had blithely ignored the rulings of the Board. Therefore, he wished to bring legal force to the Board and suppress the freedom of both sides. The President, in fact, did well to concentrate on the Ship Subsidy rather than to make his proposals on the Railroad Labor Board the major priority of the new session. Any initiative by the President needed the vote of centrists in Congress to succeed. Harding was not sure of gaining the support of centrists in his view of the Railroad Board. Indeed neither was Harding likely to gain railroad or conservative support on such a proposal. As the Kansas experiment had shown, control of unionism was welcomed but attempts to control their own freedom were bitterly opposed by business. His railroad proposal never gained serious attention.

The vital need to hold the centre of his party in Congress had been recognised by Harding in his 8th December speech and had been made increasingly urgent with the apparently independent policies now to be pursued by the progressives within La Follette's expanding People's Legislative Service. On 1st December 1922 the Committee on Committees of the P.L.S. had organised committees to handle various policy areas in Congress.¹⁴ The willingness of so many progressives to form such an organised cabal reflected their new confidence. The timing of the La Follette call, coming on 18th November 1922 after the election, had allayed fears that the move was tied to an independent campaign. Earlier rebuffs had indeed forced La Follette to set such an idea aside, at least until such an organisation as the P.L.S. had been well founded.

These progressives were not primarily concerned with compromise. They were quick to respond to the Harding initiative by setting priorities of their own. For this reason, while Harding gained from his Ship Subsidy success, he seemed unable to form the cohesive unit which would ensure Republican majorities consistently. The lack of Congressional power and the small Republican majority meant victory on any issue could well be regarded as a success by the administration. The Ship Subsidy bill had been carefully chosen to make success for the administration as sure as possible. The emergence of the P.L.S. at one and the same time challenged the administration for the support of the centre, including mild progressives, and also threatened the hopes of the administration's being able to control the legislative agenda.

The agricultural crisis provided a prime example of this threat. Action was problematic due to the administration having little in terms of positive policy which it could sponsor. Clearly, if the progressives were to translate the organisation into policy, Harding's Ship Subsidy inspired momentum might be quickly halted and a new agenda proposed. This was particularly true since the P.L.S. committees did not include such progressives as Fiorello La Guardia, a Republican, or Democrats J.C. Linthicum of Maryland or Cordell Hull of Tennessee in the House and Dill, Thomas Walsh of Montana, Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee, David Walsh of Massachusetts, Burton Wheeler of Montana, Carter Glass, newly elected from Virginia or Key Pittman of Nevada, all of whom might be expected to support P.L.S. initiatives.

This threat quickly became a reality in the fourth session of the Sixty Seventh Congress. Harding's Ship Subsidy success apart, the progressives took over the momentum by placing the agricultural problem squarely before Congress. It was due to their ability to make agricultural reform a major Congressional issue at this time that earned the progressives the term the Farm Bloc. Since a great deal of the progressives were from rural areas it was not surprising that the agricultural recession should be their first priority once they became organised. It was an issue on which they were all agreed and was by 1923 the primary concern of these men. Nonetheless the P.L.S. organisation did not have as its only concern the state of agriculture, it was simply that these factors made that issue the first priority. Farm Bloc is thus something of a misnomer, unfair to the breadth of the significance of the P.L.S.

Irvine Lenroot had offered a rural credits bill which proposed to extend a \$48 million line of credit to banks to lend at the rate of only 1%. Rumoured to have received administration backing the progressives attacked the bill as simply aggravating the problem of rural indebtedness. The response from the P.L.S. was to sponsor a bill by Senator Norris, which called for the launching of a corporation to build, buy, lease and operate elevators and warehouses. It would buy up surpluses to sell abroad at reduced rates, while ensuring farmers a fair rate of return on their produce. In fact in a session crowded by the Ship Subsidy, itself a long and often bitter debate, and appropriations, neither of these proposals was allotted the time for lengthy consideration.

Despite the fact that the Republican majority was largely ineffective and that the progressives were increasingly influential, Harding emerged with his reputation much improved in public opinion. His success in the Ship Subsidy and the return of tranquility in industry were partly the cause. Much more important, however, was the administration's foray in foreign relations. In successfully negotiating a debt repayment with Britain and in his new call for American participation in the World Court, Harding won renewed personal popularity while Congress continued to be at loggerheads and while rural America suffered. The Arms Limitation Treaty in 1922 had also greatly boosted the reputation of the President. This was a step which could satisfy all sides of the party and public at that time.

As a result of the priorities of the two contending forces in 1923, labour issues were forced to the back of Congressional minds and the calendar. Issues other than labour were more conducive to the aims of both the P.L.S. and administration. It must be emphasised, however, that the lack of attention paid to labour in no way affected the significance of the continuing progressive/conservative dialogue. If anything, it served to demonstrate the underlying ideological nature of the debate. This was no longer disputes on particular issues but a continuing divide on broader perceptions of the extent of the government's responsibility for the welfare of the population. After the crisis of 1922 and the unemployment of 1921, the administration returned to its traditional position on the 'labor problem'. The theme struck by the Secretary of Labor Davis was that, with the economy improving, it would be wrong to continue the industrial conflict. Now was the time to

co-operate. On 1st January 1923 Davis argued in a speech delivered in New York that "The American people are tired of strikes. Public opinion will not tolerate any suspension of work in any of these basic industries."¹⁵ Wages moreover were beginning to trend upwards in steel, non-union coal and building, and even the American Woollen Company had awarded a 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % increase to its workforce. While Davis spoke of optimism and co-operation, he was anxious that government-run enterprises should not wreck the basis for his argument. He therefore strongly protested to the President over proposed wage cuts by the Shipping Board in May 1923. He warmly welcomed such moves as the B & O co-operation plan and the ending of the 12-hour day in the steel industry and decisions such as the Supreme Court ruling in the Pennsylvania railroad case. The administration welcomed this ruling by Taft against the railroads' application for a Writ of Certiorari, since it appeared to demonstrate the evenhandedness of the legal system "depending upon which side is in the right",¹⁶ a point emphasised by the Kansas decision.

All this Davis could point to as demonstrating that labour was not being victimised by the administration or legal system and that the best interests of unionism lay in co-operation, not conflict with the business community. This would also mean, of course, less difficulty for the administration in maintaining its non-interventionist position. The issue of the Railroad Labor Board reform was quietly forgotten in this atmosphere of optimism, encouraged by a lack of serious industrial disputes. As described in Chapter six, the trade union movement had begun to move independently to such co-operation - a process launched in 1923 - and their response to the administration was to ignore it. Angered by the activities of 1922, it simply did

not respond to what the administration said.

While the administration, in pursuance of its laissez-faire policy, sought to calm the waters of industrial relations, Congress and the P.L.S. did not in fact ignore entirely issues which were closely related to labour. This was despite the pressures on time caused by the clash of progressives' and administration's purposes and the need to pass the appropriations bills. The North Eastern states continued to suffer from coal shortages which caused Senator David Walsh of Massachusetts to call for a better grading of anthracite due to the poor quality coal now being used to satisfy demand but which many felt was yet another example of exploitation by the coal operators. A further bone of contention in the New England states arising from the coal shortage was the continued export of coal during the shortage. Again this aroused ire and attacks on the coal operators. Traditional progressive suspicion of business continued, a factor likely to be of some importance if milder progressives were to back the P.L.S. or to seek more radical reforms. Indeed, this particular issue was broadened to include most progressives following the first report of the U.S. Coal Commission on 15th January 1923. The report flatly refused to make any recommendations on the future of the coal industry since these would inevitably involve "not only theories of government but also the economic life of the Republic".¹⁷ William Borah in particular was frustrated by what amounted simply to a reiteration of the problems of the industry. There was no attempt to solve over-development, the question of prices and profit, or crucially, the issue of government ownership. As a member of the P.L.S. Committee on Natural Resources, Borah was determined to take up the matter once

more when time allowed. By 1923 the progressive suspicion had developed from attacks on the men involved to a questioning of free enterprise in industries charged with the public interest.

Also in gestation was the issue of what to do with the Railroad Labor Board. In this La Follette was closely involved with the Railroad brotherhoods and the Railway Employees' Department of the A.F. of L. and had been since November 1922. While this issue was being worked on in Spring 1923, the issue of government works in time of depression was again introduced. Originally proposed by Senator Kenyon, it was now taken up by Senator Frelinghuysen of New Jersey and in the House by Frederick Zihlman, a Maryland Republican and progressive. Given the pressure of time, this bill failed to get a hearing. The most striking point was that Frelinghuysen had sponsored the bill, a measure of the extent to which progressives had shifted the centre of debate in Congress.

The situation in the summer of 1923 was of a President enjoying a continuing high level of popularity, who was largely unable to control a contentious Congress where the agenda was being, if not decided then increasingly frustrated by a vocal minority. The President had succeeded in having his Ship Subsidy Bill passed, tariff reform enacted and had also switched his line on foreign policy, now championing American entry into the World Court and abandoning his ambivalent isolationism; "It is an unseemly thing for this nation to say to the world we are unwilling to have to do with anything which is not our specific creation."¹⁸ This position, following the success of the disarmament conference in 1922, appeared to restore to America a diplomatic leadership welcomed by a

great deal of Americans. Isolationist opinion remained but this, concentrated in areas where progressive strength was already firmly established, little affected Harding's popularity. Harding's championing of disarmament had also to a large extent negated this group. Equally important to the President was that it effectively spiked the Democratic guns on foreign policy.

Also playing a major role in Harding's popularity by the summer of 1923 was the strong recovery of the domestic economy, based on a major boom in construction, railroad re-equipping and automobile manufacture, facilitated by the growth in lending. Similarly, the increasing use of credit by consumers had fuelled a revival of demand. Harding had also strengthened his popularity among the population for his criticism of factionalism in Congress, although this tended only to aggravate the already strained relations between the President and that body.

While still an issue for progressive interest and thought, the labour problem had not received any serious consideration in 1923, though the difficulties involved had yet to be solved. The Harding administration continued its hands-off policy on labour. To this end Secretary Davis continued to urge compromise and co-operation in industrial relations, a policy which the hiatus in the bitterness within industry served to encourage. Indeed the President had received a reminder of the continuing threat of Congressional progressivism's concern with labour's policies in the form of a proposal by James Frear of Wisconsin early in 1923. He called for the ending of the Supreme Court's ability to declare unconstitutional by votes of five to four acts passed by Congress.

Increasingly progressives were becoming involved in the debate on Supreme Court power which had been a major issue for labour for some time. Even Albert Beveridge, defeated in 1922 in Indiana largely by the opposition of labour combined with democratic votes, believed that "reaction has grabbed the Supreme Court".¹⁹ This row was over the decision in the Adkins case that a minimum wage law in the District of Columbia was unconstitutional. Harding, buoyed by his popularity and preparing for a Western tour, did not regard this as anything more than "the individual game of personal advancement . . ."²⁰ Increasingly Harding was becoming Presidential in outlook and action, perhaps the most important factor, with the improvement of the economy. So much had Harding become personally popular, that the increasing evidence of corruption within his administration failed to significantly affect his position.

Upon his death, Harding had indeed reached a peak of popularity which looked secure enough and so personally directed that it seemed sure to carry him to victory in 1924. The progressives, while bringing Congress to a practical standstill, were unable apparently to hurt the President. While this was the case, it was also clear that progressives continued to have a deep interest in labour issues and that these had not yet been laid conclusively aside. Indeed, if anything, the continuing concern of progressives in a time of relative calm emphasised the broader implications of the movement for politics in the United States. The issue during the Sixty-Eighth Congress under the new Presidency of Calvin Coolidge, would be whether the progressives could translate their Congressional organisation and strength into a broader popularity and electoral success.

Yet the relationship between the P.L.S. and the C.P.P.A. and the labour movement remained a puzzle. Although there had been little debate on the issue of labour, it was clear that it remained a major consideration for progressives. Increasingly, the members of the P.L.S. were prepared to advocate specific union aims advocated by the C.P.P.A. The Supreme Court was becoming an issue of increasing significance for the development of closer links between progressives and labour. Moreover, talks continued between progressives and the railroad brotherhoods over the Railroad Labor Board. Yet the A.F. of L. while involved in the Supreme Court issue remained suspicious of the independent progressives and of any political involvement beyond particular issues. Unease continued to characterise the relationship of the broader labour movement to these progressives and the C.P.P.A. The extent to which progressives as a whole could embrace the movement's objectives remained unclear. Milder progressives were still unwilling to grant unions the power which would devolve from the satisfaction of their demands. They remained fixed to the idea of a collective bargaining machinery, albeit shored up by a code such as Kenyon had suggested. While the radical progressives had succeeded in forcing milder progressives to approach the broader reform principles implicit in such proposals as government ownership, there was still no concrete disposition to act. All these issues depended upon the inclinations of the Sixty-Eighth Congress for clarification.

The announcement by the new President that he intended to ask the Harding Cabinet to remain seemed to confirm that the traditional battle lines between progressives and conservatives would continue. This decision wrecked any hopes Coolidge may have harboured of

succeeding in uniting his party for 1924. He attempted to bring progressives such as Borah, Johnson and Capper into the confidence of the White House but they remained intransigent. Progressive antagonism over the Cabinet decision was aggravated by Coolidge's opposition to any rural aid.

While this rift continued, Coolidge demonstrated his talent for blurring the issues in the labour problem by his actions in the threatened anthracite strike in August 1923. On the 8th, Coolidge had agreed with Gifford Pinchot, the Governor of Pennsylvania, that no suspensions should be allowed during 1923. On the 15th of August Pinchot informed the President of his view that the Training Board involved in the dispute was a legitimate safety measure. The anthracite operators complained that this training scheme was little more than a closed-shop arrangement to control the entry of workers. On 17th August Coolidge thanked Pinchot for his suggestions and passed them to John Hays Hammond, chairman of the Coal Commission. Talks between the U.M.W. and the operators, meanwhile, had moved from New York to Atlantic City. In these it was clear that the bituminous miners were reluctant to engage in further industrial action and were seeking an accommodation over the row concerning the national agreement. The anthracite workers' position was more secure, however, and they displayed little inclination to compromise. Pinchot therefore decided to pre-empt possible disruption and awarded the anthracite miners in his State a rise of 10% and the continuation of the training law. In a carefully worded telegram of congratulations, Coolidge praised Pinchot's decision. "It was a very difficult situation in which I invited your help."²¹

In the following days it was Coolidge who received the plaudits while Pinchot was attacked for having sold out to the miners. Pinchot thus had the Coolidge telegram published in order to try at least to gain the credit that only the President had so far received. The astute Coolidge, however, on the same day Pinchot had his telegram published, again wrote to Pinchot to offer the advice that "There is unlikely to be any result to the consumers unless there be sane action by the Pennsylvania State Government in the mine prices".²² By a brilliant piece of manoeuvring, Coolidge had succeeded in inferring his control of the negotiations while not being satisfied with Pinchot's handling of them. At one and the same time Coolidge inferred responsibility while distancing himself from its consequences. The President thus won applause for saving the nation from still another strike while avoiding any other criticism for the details of the settlement. There could be no doubt, however, that the need to avoid a strike led to the generous award in Pennsylvania. It is doubtful whether Coolidge would have taken the same course had the threat been a national one. The continuing negotiations between U.M.W. and the operators in bituminous mining, however, made clear that neither of these groups sought another strife-torn winter. Increasingly, pressure from non-union production was forcing compromise upon the two sides in the Central Competitive Field.

Coolidge's Secretary of Labor Davis, moreover, continued to emphasise the improvement in standards of living to support his call for reconciliation in industrial relations and could point to the 8-hour day in the steel industry as a prime example. Immigration continued to be Davis's main plank in his attempt to win union approval. In 1924 his new proposal was that the U.M.W. should

create its own research bureau in order to bring order to any negotiations with management. In his search for order and tranquility in 1924, also repeated his suggestion that the Department of Labor take on experts to interpret agreements and establish their terms in order to end the constant rancour caused by differences over the implementation of agreements. The overall impression created by Coolidge was of stability and continuity, a sense of proportion and a sense that America really was quite all right and that, if left well alone, would be still better. America had had enough of self-criticism, particularly since the anthracite and bituminous settlements presaged a period of quiet in industrial relations. In such a situation, Coolidge and his Cabinet would be the last to attempt any change, especially in industrial relations and union issues, unless action was forced upon them.

This impression created by Coolidge contrasted sharply with the situation in Congress where a new campaign of self-criticism was being launched. This took the form of a welter of investigations into the activities of the Harding administration: oil leases at Teapot Dome; the Veterans' Bureau; allegations of industrial espionage by Senator Wheeler of Montana. These investigations were expanded in 1924 to include scrutiny of campaign contributions which was an additional progressive concern.

Senator David Walsh of Massachusetts also challenged the Republican claim to having achieved an economic recovery. The figures from a Bureau of Labor Statistics Report he found "startling in view of Republican propoganda and claims of prosperity, of no unemployment, of high wages, and satisfactory living conditions".²³

He claimed that, while the new tariff schedule had bloated profits (U.S. Steel had shown profits of \$75.37 million in the third quarter of 1923, up from \$28.4 million in the same period in 1922), it had also increased the cost of living. In the year from September 1922 to 1923 there had been an inflation rate of 5.8%.²⁴ Indeed, Secretary Davis wrote to President Coolidge on 19th March 1924 that there was the beginnings of an unemployment problem as the result of improvements in efficiency and mechanisation. These figures also showed that "This is rapidly becoming the situation throughout the country."²⁵ The study in the North East states showed that while full-time working was now the norm, unlike 1922, there had been significant reductions in payrolls, ranging from 6 to 10%. It appeared that the Republican boom was far from including the entire population.

However much Democrats attempted to destroy the impression of well-being under Republicanism there were reasons why this effort failed. Technological unemployment, although clearly under way, was hitting few industries as yet. Some industries were already highly mechanised, such as the automobile industry, others were dominated by skilled workers as in the building trades. The impact was as yet limited but had already been felt in, for instance, the textile, boot and shoe industries. The unions, while beginning to feel the effects in the textile industry had not mounted any campaign on this issue. Their silence was a result of tying themselves to productivity as a means of increasing wages and to an acceptance of technological innovation with their support of the engineering movement. Unionism itself was also beginning to feel the effects of apathy among its employed membership. The other key

factor was that while the industrial population had, despite increased production, remained stable the service industries were booming. It was a middle-class boom, the very class whose conscience had been the key to the earlier progressive wave. Hard as Democrats and progressives worked to dispel their apathy, in 1924 they appeared to be failing. Their perception was that "In many issues now coming up the people stand with the impression that the President is right and Congress wrong"²⁶ as Benjamin Felt put it. The effect of the investigation into corruption was not to arouse suspicion and disgust but rather irritation that the happiness of prosperity was being blighted. Coolidge, a symbol of calm, inaction and economy, reflected extraordinarily well the popular desire that politics did not intrude on this economic bliss. The unions in late 1923, as explained previously, had turned inwards and were also basking in prosperity. This combined with the disinterest among the middle-class to cause a silence in 1923, while the P.L.S. worked quietly on labour policies.

The lack of industrial disruption also served to dispel any question of concern. Early in 1924 the U.M.W. and operators had finally agreed in Jacksonville, Florida, to continue their April 1923 agreement. Lewis wrote to Coolidge that "The three-year agreement is a constructive development that will lead to the stability of the coal industry."²⁷ The stability would certainly benefit the nation and endear Lewis to the President. Whether it would be to the benefit of the U.M.W. was an issue which would cause increasing internal dissension within the union and internecine warfare which debilitated the union and distracted its attention from industrial relations, as well as political involvement, in the rest of the decade.

The apparent hiatus in the 'labor problem' made the investigation into corruption in the Harding administration vitally important to Democrat and progressives alike for the nearing 1924 election. Corruption had always been a major component of the progressive reform impulse. It was therefore doubly important that progressives expose the corruption and thereby find solid ground for their reform demands, a vital consideration which could bolster their election chances in 1924. Corruption and the continuing battle for rural aid formed the core of the progressive interests in election year. The President's response to the latter issue was to preach economy in government in order to boost investment and savings. As regards corruption, Coolidge's valuable capacity to hold aloof helped, as it had done in the anthracite row, win public support and deflect personal criticism. This position was greatly aided by Coolidge's becoming President only in 1923, thereby minimising charges of complicity on his part. The fact that he had been a member of the Harding Cabinet was submerged by his fastidious and honest character. The President was also aided considerably by his turning away from his earlier promise to keep on the Harding Cabinet. Daugherty was bitter about Coolidge's about-face on the question, accusing the President of capitulating to the demands of "rioters and war profiteers".²⁸ The action nonetheless neutralised the threat of the progressive campaign.

The situation in 1924, one all too common since 1919, was of a rancorous Congress lacking any clear majority or coherence attracting public approbation. The President meanwhile remained personally popular despite being unable to forge any policy which could unite a Congressional majority, making him practically ineffectual.

Such was the effect of the mounting progressive strength in Congress that it had "done practically nothing with reference to any matter . . we have approved bills . . we must put through. I doubt if anything else is considered."²⁹ Indeed such was the progressive momentum that Congress was at a practical standstill. Yet, progressives set an agenda which they could not pass.

Despite their concentration on corruption and rural issues in fact progressives were now in such an ascendant and coherent enough to also push labour issues, despite the lack of industrial disruption to force their consideration. The P.L.S. was by now anxious to display its continuing concern for union issues and wed the labour movement to its cause and forge a broad left wing movement in Congress. In the House the Committee on the District of Columbia reported favourably on the Fitzgerald-Jones Workmen's Compensation Act. The unions had long complained bitterly about the treatment of injured and disabled workers by insurance companies in compensation claims. There was invariably a long wait, often requiring court action while the awards were generally paltry.. The Committee found that the maximum sum paid, rarely exceeded \$4,000 and this was no compensation whatsoever. The Committee argued that since machines were inspected it must also take responsibility for the well-being of the workforce. The bill, as so many before it, never reached the floor.³⁰

The Committee on the Judiciary in the House also reported favourably on the proposed Child Labor amendment. It was argued that the principle of minimum age and the responsibility of the Federal government to act had already been established in the ratification

of the two previous laws attempting to end child labour. This amendment was merely another constitutional means to the same end. In addition, since all but seven States of the Union already had child labour laws, the effect of the amendment would simply be to standardise those provisions. A minority report, however, strongly objected to this extension of federal power. It held that since 1913 there had been a welter of constitutional amendments; that it was time to end this tampering with the fabric of the nation. It upheld the States' rights to regulate this problem. The battle between progressive intervention through centralised regulation and conservative laissez-faire allied to States' rights doctrine and also now employing the sanctity of the Constitution was yet again rejoined in this labour issue. In this case, however, the progressives' argument won the day. On 26th April the Child Labor Amendment passed the House, 297 voting for and only 69 against, with 64 not voting - a striking success.

The development of progressivism to an acceptance of the use of federal power in the interests of equality, though increasingly accepted, was still far from basic policy. William Borah, always a maverick both within the Republican party and progressive movements, expressed strong doubts about the use of federal power in such cases. "When you come to turning over to the national government not children but boys and girls up to the age of 18, I don't think the Soviet Government has much over us."³¹ The Sterling-Townsend Bill had also caused such doubts and revealed the early liberal traditions of progressivism. It was a suspicion which progressives had not yet entirely overcome, had still not been lost from their thinking, in their search for equality. Nonetheless they

still could not accept the conservative cry as in this case of no change. In the vote on 2nd June 1924 Borah was unable to sanction the extension of federal responsibility. While Wheeler, Owen and Underwood did not vote, the progressive argument was strong enough to carry the day and the Amendment passed, 61 votes in the affirmative, 23 votes against and two abstentions.

While these bills showed a continuing progressive loyalty to the interests of the working population and in the Child Labor Bill a new ability to win approval for their policies, the key issue in the progressive-union relationship by the spring of 1924 was the Howell-Barkley Bill, one on which progressives could set aside their difficulties over centralised power. The bill was in fact a clear test of the loyalty of progressivism to the wishes of the unions, and the railroad unions in particular. Certainly, the unions themselves regarded it in this way. The bill had been drafted entirely by the brotherhoods and the Railway Employees' Department of the A.F. of L. in 1923. The credibility of the Railroad Labor Board had completely collapsed. The Board had been swamped by disputes due to the failure of the Railway Executives and the brotherhoods to set up joint boards of arbitration to settle technical grievances. This had been the system under Federal operation during the war and had been generally recognised as a success. The Railway Board itself, tripartite as it was, was intended to deal almost exclusively with wage negotiations, the only issue in which the public could be deemed competent to participate. Thus, the intention of the 1920 Act had never been achieved while the ruling of the Board on technical issues, particularly work rules, had caused anger and ultimately a flouting

of the Board's decisions. This dissatisfaction led to the reform demand and the proposals for compulsory technical boards to supplement a Mediation & Conciliation Board which was to deal with wages and be made up only of members of the public. The two sides would guarantee to abide by the board's decisions which were to be filed with the U.S. District Court. As Democratic Representative Alben Barkley of Kentucky argued in a letter to the editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, these proposals were derived largely from the provisions of the Newlands-Erdman Act and from the experience under federal control, during which time no industrial disputes such as had occurred under the Railroad Labor Board had taken place. Only the compulsory nature of the technical adjustment boards and the payment of the members by the government was a new proposal.³²

The real impact of the bill and the implications which aroused most opposition was the tacit acceptance that the unions were the only legitimate and representative voice of the workforce. Only significant organisations could possibly allow the proper working of the machinery. Local non-union groups would not be considered. Given the hatred expressed by several railroads towards unionism, this was not an acceptable proposal at all. The issue developed into whether the union could be the only representative of the workforce.

If the unions required any further confirmation of the need to change the nature of the negotiating machinery in the railroads, it was provided by the chairman of the Board, Benjamin Hooper. Late in 1923 he launched a determined campaign against the proposed reform

which immediately infuriated the unions and convinced them of the bias of the Board and its opposition to union power on the railroads. He argued that given the deluge of cases the Board had in fact coped remarkably well, that its decisions had almost all been adhered to, and that the failure of the shopmen's strike "has strengthened the Transportation Act by demonstrating that a railroad strike cannot succeed against public sentiment".³³ Since the railroad themselves were flouting board decisions with impunity, this once more smacked of persecution and bias to the brotherhoods.

Hooper's protestations against the bill grew more vehement when it won time on the Senate floor. In April 1924 he again wrote to Coolidge denouncing the proposal as "an iniquitous measure drafted by certain labor organizations",³⁴ whose main purpose was to cement their own power. The public must remain paramount he claimed. On 31st May 1924 he wrote to Bascom Sloop, Coolidge's secretary, attacking the bill as "a vicious, partisan, socialistic measure".³⁵ The response of the leaders of the brotherhoods was inevitable. In a telegram to Robertson, President of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers, Stone of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers said frankly that "The Labor Board through its present composition and through the freely expressed prejudices and antagonisms of its chairman . . . has disqualified itself from acting as an important tribunal".³⁶ In the hope that this would justify his claim that the unions were seeking reform for their own purposes. Hooper had this circulated to all Congressmen. What in fact it demonstrated was that relations strained in any case were now impossible to repair. Hooper had completely undermined the legitimacy of his Board. In fact this also undermined Coolidge's characteristic

attempt to defuse the situation in his December speech to Congress. In it he had called for a code of practice which might ultimately gain the force of law; a call which in fact the proposal went some way to satisfy. The point at issue, however, was the apparent extension of union power.

The progressives were determined to push this reform as hard as possible. As an act of faith it was vital to progressives, in order that the brotherhood dominated C.P.P.A. remain in close harmony with the P.L.S. They were determined that this labour issue be forced on Congress in addition to the fact that many sincerely believed reform to be necessary. As Hooper's campaign increased this became more imperative.

The fact that the bill actually got time on the calendar reflected this progressive determination and the breakdown of Congressional discipline resulting from their independent and aggressive approach. Early in the first term of the session the House rules had been amended to allow a discharge motion on bills which the majority of the House felt were being unnecessarily held up by the relevant committee. A petition to discharge a bill required one hundred signatures which would allow the motion to be discussed and voted on. If a victory was achieved then the bill would be discharged from the committee. This procedure was now initiated with regard to the Howell-Barkley Bill. This reflected the Congressional mood of independence from the Executive and party hierarchy. Importantly, this progressive initiative now also included labour issues as a vital part of the reform effort. The A.F. of L. support of the Howell-Barkley Bill made this the key to the progressive relationship with labour, indeed would be the basis

of labour's attitude to Congress in the 1924 election.

The debate on the bill began with the vote on the discharge motion. As Huddleston of Alabama put it, the vote on the motion itself was a test of Congressional opinion with regard to the labour movement. "The laboring people of this country have set their heart on this bill and are going to accept your action upon it as a test of your profession of friendship for them."³⁷ The decision even to discuss the bill would be seen as a measure of Congressional willingness to respond to labour's concerns.

Barkley argued as he had done in his letter previously cited, that the proposals were with one exception not new and that despite union sponsorship, the proposals were not partisan at all since the unions were "mindful of the general trend of public thought toward the railroad problem . . ."³⁸ Given the reasonable nature of the bill, Barkley argued that since the railroads were vital to the economy the discharge motion was a justified attempt to get the bill out from a recalcitrant Interstate Commerce Committee and on to the calendar. Everett Sanders, Republican from Indiana, denied all these justifications made by Barkley. The measure was a partisan one he argued, aimed at forcing the closed shop on the railroads. He protested that carriers could not accept the proposed technical adjustment boards since these would deny any possible flexibility in local conditions. As in 1919, the opposition to the Bill centred on the issues of local negotiations and of the unions' suppressing individuality. Conservative opposition to trade unionism continued to rely on the same arguments and continued also to paint the spectre of union power as the basis of their opposition. On this basis

Sanders went on to attack Democrats and progressives with political motivations, hoping either that Republicans would defeat the bill if passed or embarrass the President when he vetoed it. Republican Samuel Winslow of Massachusetts, Carl Mapes of Michigan and John Tincher of Kansas, all members of the committee involved, protested that such a motion would undermine Congressional authority and create a dangerous precedent. Democrat A. Shallenberger of Nebraska pointed out that any attempt to recommit the bill at this time would effectively kill it in the present session. The choice was clear, discharge or kill the bill. It became in such terms a stark ideological choice for Congressmen and had nothing to do with disrupting Congressional traditions. The Speaker of the House also observed that despite protests from committee members, the discharge motion, since it was in the rules, was a legitimate procedure. The bill had in fact been referred to committee in November 1923, some six months previously.

The members of the committee, having had their first protests against the discharge motion brushed aside now raised objections to the provision in the bill for compulsory arbitration boards, primarily because they were to be structured on craft lines. This was a major complaint of the carriers too, since such a scheme forced negotiations upon them and also made it inevitable that the union would represent the workforce. It gave the carriers no escape route although the Board's decisions were not to be binding. The Howell-Barkley Bill raised all the issues which had plagued union-management relations and Congress, in the 1920's, in plumping for a board set up by the government, which virtually assured unions of control of its side in negotiations on a national scale; something

which railroads and the coal industry were then attempting to shake off. When the vote came on 5th May, therefore, the question of opposition or support for the bill rested clearly on the question of attitudes to the trade union movement and whether business should accept it as the legitimate voice of the workforce. The vote was 194 in favour of, and 181 opposed to the discharge of the bill, with 57 not voting.

This apparent significant success for trade unions and progressives, however, was blunted by the failure to pass the bill in the session. In the two days in May 1924 when the bill was actually discussed, conservatives carried out a successful filibuster which included 24 roll calls. In an increasingly hostile atmosphere the bill was attacked as socialistic, class legislation while being defended by Wisconsin representatives notably and Democrat Frank McNulty of New Jersey. Nonetheless it was clear that Congress was near to giving unionism full endorsement. Time, and the conservative filibuster had frustrated the bill this time.

Despite this failure, unionists were heartened by what they identified as a growing favourable opinion in Congress. Yet, even the victory on the discharge motion was shrouded in doubts. Conservative Democrats might well be disposed to vote for the bill in order to embarrass the Republican party and President. The record vote on the discharge motion witnessed many Democrats support the motion who might not have been considered radical progressives. The southern States of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas showed striking solidarity in support of the motion. Yet, in Georgia, Florida and Missouri and New York, Democrats either opposed or

chose not to vote. Ultimately this was a vote of conscience, with no party control, so that the vote in fact did reflect at least a willingness to see the bill discussed. Some Republicans under pressure as a result of the corruption investigations and criticism even from Republican newspapers of their failure to properly clear their names, might well have been inclined to vote for the measure. This did not happen, however. While New York and Ohio Republicans went with the motion, the majority opposed the measure. The discharge motion by no means implied support for the actual passing of the bill. For Congressmen regarded as marginal by unions, it could be an important vote winner in 1924. The entire House, unlike the Senate, would be up for re-election. Yet such a large opposition vote does certainly seem to demonstrate that conservatives were voting their political views and not taking political tactics into account. The fact that on all the adjournment and consideration motions the record votes remained consistent also tends to demonstrate that the votes were the legitimate expressions of political opinion.³⁹ In comparison with the Child Labor vote too, the closeness of this vote shows an appreciation of the issues at stake.

Yet if those who had particular opinions did vote upon them, then it becomes clear that success for the measure required the support of those pragmatic Congressmen, neither progressive nor conservative, who had not yet voted. This non-voting total was thus an important example of the power of the centre in Congress. Their votes would decide the fate of the bill, while neither progressives nor conservatives could command a majority. Expressions of viewpoint from the centre were very rare. Never experts on the subject nor wont to express their political ideology, they simply voted for the

issues they felt fairest and most just, in narrow terms of the status quo. A statement by Herbert Hoover that "the present set up of labor adjustment has not given entire satisfaction"⁴⁰ would exactly sum up the position of the centre. They shared his concern with the continuing disruption on the railroads and were prepared to see the Railroad Labor Board reformed. Here, more than ever, the question of whether the discharge motion could be equated with support of the bill was vital. For at root it meant whether centrists had shifted to an acceptance of trade unions as representatives of the workforce and a legitimate force to protect their interests. The vote on the discharge motion demonstrated that they remained far from convinced of this, while they did not oppose it. Centrists would never initiate legislation. The key to their support lay in the nature of the proposals. The Child Labor Amendment was supported on moral grounds, while on the Howell-Barkley Bill they remained ambivalent. Their attitude was largely negative. As Senator James Couzens of Michigan said:

There is danger in control of Government by labor unions, just the same as there is in control of Government by capitalists. What we must do is to have government control by all the people, not by groups.⁴¹

An admirable philosophy, perhaps, but one which gave no guidance when faced by labour issues nor one which could in twentieth century industrial America be practically applied.

Progressivism had made major strides, in fact, since this centrist sentiment was a plea for popular control which had long been a key component of the progressives' reform movement. In the

post war years, progressivism, when confronted by the issues of power and the continued questioning of the proper basis for justice and equality raised by the labour problem, had developed beyond the position now occupied by the centre. Pre-1916 progressive thinking had now become the basis of the status quo. Progressivism had developed at varying speeds. La Follette and the P.L.S. appeared to be moving to a view of an extended state to protect the population which included the call for a programme of nationalisation. Milder progressives could not accept such a role for the state. They continued to seek a compromise between the maximum of equality and a continuing free enterprise economic system. Advanced progressives accepted the need for trade unionism to wield real power. Milder progressives, although since 1922 they accepted the need for trade unions to exercise their rights, were still unhappy about the grant of power and continued to hope for an early compromise and for conciliation machinery to be erected.

Despite the quiet of industrial relations in 1923 and early 1924, the commitment of the P.L.S. to the labour movement had seized the momentum. Serious industrial disruption was no longer necessary for consideration of labour issues.

On the particular labour issues raised in the Sixty Eighth Congress moreover, milder progressives were in support of the reform proposals. Yet the centre was still far from supportive of trade unionism. The outcome of the 1924 election would do much to influence their opinions in the next Congress and the shape of reform politics in the following years.

NOTES

1. Tumulty papers, subject file, Democratic National Committee: Bureau of Political Research Bulletin, July 24th, 1922.
2. Ibid. July 1st, 1922. Quoted from The Boston Transcript.
3. Harding papers, P.O.F., c.f. 148, Malcolm Jennings. Emery to Jennings September 22nd, 1921.
4. Borah papers, Box 49.
5. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f. 175, Coal, Harding to McCurly, February 20th, 1923.
6. Ibid. Hoover to Harding December 22nd, 1922.
7. Ibid. Harding to Hoover January 1st, 1923.
8. H. Hoover, Memoirs Vol. 2, p. 48.
9. Congressional Record, Vol 64, part 1, p. 213, 67th Congress, fourth session.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Harding papers, P.O.F., File 545, Harding to Smoot, December 1st, 1922.
13. Ibid. File 303, Harding to Jonathan Bourne, December 4th, 1922.
14. La Follette family papers, Box 96, Chairman of the P.L.S. was George Huddleston, the Committees were: Agriculture, Senators Norris, Capper (Republican, Kansas), M. Sheppard (Democrat, Texas), and M. Johnson (Republican, Minnesota) and Representatives, C. Ward (Republican, New York) and E. King (Republican, Illinois); Labour, Senators Borah, France (Republican, Maryland), and Representatives J. Beck (Republican, Wisconsin), O. Keller (Republican, Minnesota), H. Hoch (Republican, Kansas), and J. Mead (Democrat, New York).
15. Harding papers, P.O.F., File 1013, Davis to Harding, January 6th, 1923.
16. Ibid. E.O.F., c.f. 61, Strikes, W.F. Martyn to Harding, January 16th, 1923.
17. Harding papers, E.O.F., c.f. 175, U.S. Coal Commission, Report, p. 63.
18. Sinclair, A. The Available Man, p. 275.
19. Beveridge papers, Box 265, Beveridge to W.A. White, July 7th, 1923.

20. Harding papers, P.O.F., File 248, Harding to Christian Snr. June 1st, 1923.
21. C. Coolidge papers, series 1, case file 285, Coolidge to Pinchot September 7th, 1923.
22. Ibid. Coolidge to Pinchot September 13th, 1923.
23. Congressional Record, Vol.65, part 1, p.991, 68th Congress, first session.
24. Ibid. p.990.
25. Coolidge papers, E.O.F., c.f.15, Department of Labor, Davis to Coolidge March 19th, 1924.
26. Ibid. c.f.103, Benjamin Felt to Coolidge January 16th, 1924. Felt was editor of the Boston Post.
27. Ibid. c.f.175, Coal, Lewis to Coolidge March 7th, 1924.
28. Ibid. c.f.26, Cabinet, Daugherty to Coolidge March 28th, 1924.
29. Borah papers, Box 248, Borah to Beveridge, April 11th, 1924.
30. Committee on the District of Columbia. Report on H.R.562 April 24th, 1924.
31. Borah papers, Box 150, Borah to J. Wourms July 18th, 1924. Borah voted against the amendment.
32. A. Barkley papers, May 8th 1924.
33. Coolidge papers, E.O.F., c.f.51, Railroad Labor Board, Hooper to Coolidge November 26th, 1923.
34. Ibid. April 17th, 1924.
35. Ibid. Hooper to Bascomb Slemp May 31st, 1924.
36. Ogden Mills papers, Box 79, Hooper to Mills, May 29th, 1924.
37. Congressional Record, Vol.65, part 8, p.7713, 68th Congress, second session.
38. Ibid. part 1, p.991.
39. Ibid. part 8, pp.7874 - 7875. See Appendix 3 for the Record Vote on the Motion to Discharge the Howell-Barkley Bill.
40. Ibid. p.7716.
41. Ibid. Vol.66, part 1, p.137, 69th Congress, first session.

CHAPTER 8

THE 1924 ELECTION

The 1924 election presented Samuel Gompers and the American Federation of Labor with an unedifying prospect. Their outlook on politics had ostensibly remained consistent since 1919. The 'friends and enemies' policy continued to be the basic trade union method while the definitive establishment of the legitimacy of the movement remained unionism's basic aim. In 1919 Gompers had been near to the abandonment of voluntarism in his enthusiasm for the continuation of a system similar to the N.W.L.B. in the post-war years. The collapse of the Industrial Conferences and the failure of the Wilson administration to codify the basic demands of unionism resulted in a return to voluntarism. In the recession of 1921 the consequence was that unionism embraced the idea of industrial co-operation and its emphasis on the self-reliance of the movement. The industrial strife of 1922 did not result in a renewed call for a codified recognition of unionism's demands. Instead the A.F. of L. launched a campaign against not only injunctions but also against the bias of the court system against any development or change. This

they did in order to end the key tactic used by employers to defeat strike action. Although a major union concern for many years, in the quiet atmosphere of 1923 this issue was pursued in the pages of the American Federationist with increasing vigour. This, and the Howell-Barkley bill gave the A.F. of L. the issues which would be the basis of its friends and enemies, non-partisan campaign in 1924.

The election appeared unedifying because neither the Republican nor the Democratic party appeared likely to endorse these issues clearly. Equally distressing from the viewpoint of a movement anxious to preserve its non-partisan stance was the growing independence of the progressives who would fully embrace labour's demands. While the A.F. of L. had withdrawn to its traditional political outlook, many unionists saw the continuing inability of the political system to respond to union demands as the reason to increase political activity and embrace more radical political solutions. The result had been the launch of the C.P.P.A. in 1922. The radical progressives most closely aligned with La Follette's P.L.S. and the C.P.P.A. represented a more radical and politically independent avenue to satisfy labour's needs in 1924. Although highly complex the election of 1924 presented the A.F. of L. with the question of whether or not the trade union movement held ideological implications which made non-partisanship an impractical political outlook.

The fact that up to 1924 the unions had backed progressives was disguised by the vagueness of progressivism and by their being in both parties. The development of progressivism from 1920 however had made it increasingly clear that the traditional identity

of the two major parties was being undermined by the ideological split between progressive and conservative. Although this had been made evident by the organisation of the P.L.S. many other progressives were putting ideas before party loyalty. Most politicians still hoped that their parties could evolve without a formal split but 1924 would be a major factor in any future developments.

The purpose of this chapter is to study the machinations involved in the preparations for the 1924 race and the campaign itself. The outcome would be of vital importance for the nature and development of progressive thought. The election would also reveal progressivism's continuing impact upon political thinking. Finally, the election was an indicator of who the friends and enemies of labour were in 1924, with all the implications this held for their traditional non-partisan policy.

In the summer of 1924, the Republican party possessed two important assets for the November election. The first, despite Democratic and even internal doubts, was the booming economy. The second asset was the President. This was due in part to the practical consideration of the incumbent's power of patronage. Still more important in terms of the need for widespread popular appeal fundamental to electoral success was the character of Calvin Coolidge. As the election campaign progressed, it became clear that "Calvin Coolidge the man, not Calvin Coolidge the Republican"¹ was the main issue of the campaign.

In the wake of four years of progressive reform led by a moralistic President, a world war, and four years of industrial

strife and recession, all the American people wished was the opportunity to enjoy to the full the contemporary prosperity. Prosperity appeared to dissolve any desire for change. In an ebullient, hopeful mood, the populace now wished only that nothing be done to interfere with the boom. Calvin Coolidge was eminently capable of fulfilling this task. It appeared that he was extremely reluctant to do more than keep the wheels of government turning. A taciturn man, the paucity of policy statements and speeches came as a welcome relief to the populace. Far from wishing to interfere it was clear that all Coolidge wished was that the prosperity continue. This relaxed approach to the political affairs of the nation elicited a warm response.

Many of the nation's problems he regarded as "God's problems not his"². The one policy with which Coolidge could be readily identified was that of government economy. This too won widespread support in the business community. The argument ran that cash freed from the government went directly to investment and increasing American industrial capacity and hence spreading wealth throughout the population. Yet in spite of the popularity of this policy, Coolidge was his own most important asset in the 1924 Presidential race. His silence and the fact that he was a new President gave Coolidge an appearance of aloofness, both from the scandals within his own party and the confusion of Congress.

Since Coolidge had only become President in 1923 he could not be held accountable, in the public mind at least, for the chaos from 1921 to 1922. This argument also applied to the issue of the scandals within the Harding administration. Though Coolidge

appeared to take on some of the opprobrium in his decision to keep the Harding Cabinet, a suicide and resignations, particularly that of Daugherty, did much to sever the connection between Coolidge and corruption in public opinion. Coolidge's own piousness and frugality served to further destroy the taints of corruption which might have affected the President's standing.

The President's consequent silence on the matter contrasted sharply with the Congressional investigations into corruption, once more winning the public sympathy. It also distanced the President from the Republican party machinery. Coolidge had already gone far to achieving this in his lack of criticism of Republican insurgency. This distanced him from a party machine fighting desperately against that insurgency movement. A comparison between the pious, frugal, and taciturn President and a raucous, mud-slinging, confused Congress meant that, in the opinion of Secretary of Labor Davis "The more they stir it up the more the people will look to Coolidge and if they keep it up the election will be sure".³

The predominance which Coolidge achieved through his personal popularity within the Republican party was more striking by dint of the dearth in the party of alternative presidential nominees. There were doubts about Coolidge and he was far too conservative for the insurgent progressives. Yet this popularity and his silence meant mild Republican progressives had little with which to oppose Coolidge. Importantly, Republicans were loathe to tarnish their main asset in a real winning candidate. A popular nominee was something which many progressives could swallow, particularly those who needed every help they could get in their re-election fights.

It should be noted that the 1922 wave of Senatorial progressives were not involved in such races in 1924 and their influence consequently diminished.

In consequence of Coolidge's predominance within his party and apparent lack of any significant movement to put forward another candidate to challenge the President, the Cleveland Convention of the Republican party was "a cold-storage affair".⁴ There was a deep contradiction in the tone of these proceedings. In Congress the discharge motion on Howell-Barkley and on June 2nd 1924 the adoption of the Child Labor Amendment, pointed to a continuing split in the Republican ranks. Yet a split party appeared to be united behind Coolidge. This appearance was aided by independent progressives, Norris, Borah, La Follette, Brookhart et al, regarding the platform as an irrelevance. They simply denied that the document had any influence on their own political stance, and took no part in its construction. The regular Republican progressives, meanwhile, acquiesced in the deeply conservative platform of 1924. The platform eulogised Harding and re-affirmed its commitment to economy in government, reduction of taxes and the Republican tariff policy. On foreign relations, independence was balanced by an acceptance of the nation's duty to participate in the cause of peace. It vigorously opposed government ownership but made no commitments whatsoever to labour or agriculture. Mild progressives, while doubtless unhappy with the tone of the platform, had no policy recommendations on these issues, embroiled as they still were in the conflict of priorities these issues raised for their philosophy. Conservatism consequently became the dominant tone of the Republican platform largely through progressive default and disgust.

While the Republican party appeared to pull itself together, however short-term and unstable the tranquility might be, the proceedings in the Democratic party were also taking a highly unpredictable turn. The Democrats in 1921 were in disarray in the aftermath of the disastrous 1920 election. Various factors had been blamed, including a strikingly low turnout and the character of James Cox's supporters. The recovery of their fortunes had been encouraged by the recession in 1921 and Harding's lack of leadership, combined with the breakdown of Republican discipline in Congress. The rapidity of this recovery was further spurred on by the results of the 1922 mid-elections, which appeared to confirm Democratic criticism of the Republican administration and had given them real hope of victory in 1924, particularly if they could produce a major progressive as their standard-bearer to contrast with Coolidge. William Gibbs McAdoo continued to be the main contender for Wilson's mantle, a trend given added strength by the former President's sharp denunciation of any hope of Cox being re-nominated, this "would in my judgement be an act of deliberate suicide".⁵ The Wilson years dominated Democratic party thinking.

Wilson himself was well aware that his Presidency had been a major turning point for the party. It demonstrated that conservative southern Democrats, while still a major component, could not control the actions of the leadership and could accept even a progressive leader, if need be. In fact Wilson in 1922 was intending to resurrect both himself and the Democratic party, despite Southerners, as the vehicle of progressive reform. The result of a series of consultations in late 1921 and early 1922 with Brandeis, Bainbridge Colby, his former Secretary of the Interior, and

Thomas Chadbourne, now a New York lawyer but previously a Democratic House leader, was the drawing up of 'The Document'. It was intended by Wilson to be proposed prior to the primaries in 1922 as a manifesto for the future Democratic party.⁶ Wilson stuck firmly to internationalism, calling once more for America to join the League of Nations and lead in the cause of justice throughout the world. The economic purpose of the Democrats was to promote wealth "as a means of diffused prosperity and happiness . . . on the part of the great working masses of our people" in contrast to Republicans who viewed wealth as "an instrument in the hands of individuals and corporations".⁷ A Secretary of Transportation was called for to take over from the I.C.C. and to control loans and security issues by railroads. The Secretary would perform the same tasks with regard to shipping.

Revolution was identified as the major threat to democracy: "It is our purpose to defeat the irrational programs of revolution by sober and practical legislative reforms which will remove the chief provocations to revolutions".⁸ This required co-operation, based on an equality and dignity between workers and employers in industry and equal accessibility for all to the raw materials and means of motive power. In fact Wilson's Document never gained the wide circulation the ex-President had hoped for. He was, in fact, dissuaded from publishing it. The Document itself was not controversial. Ultimately it was largely a reiteration of traditional Wilsonian progressivism except for the question of transport and national resources where Wilson showed his willingness to expand federal power. It remained a vague policy statement nonetheless. It was Wilson and the fear that he would use this

as a springboard to re-nomination which caused the failure of this initiative.

Wilson had, even without the document becoming accepted party dogma, thrown leadership of the party to progressivism. After such an achievement Woodrow Wilson died in January 1924. Wilson's death and Cox's unpopularity gave rise to the expectation that McAdoo would finally be able to take up the leadership of the party and "be unswervingly true to the principles of Wilsonian democracy".⁹ The basis of Wilson's success in capturing the Democratic party for progressivism had not only been his ability to win the acquiescence of conservatives. He had also been able to minimise the antagonism between rural and urban Democrats. In 1923, however, urban progressive Democrats were moving swiftly to the banner of the Governor of New York, Alfred E. Smith. Re-elected in 1922 to the Governorship by the biggest plurality in the history of that election, his success was such as to push him into the national limelight. Not only would he command the support of other major democratic centres, Boston and New Jersey for example, but his progressivism was largely free of moral imperatives. Reform was a matter of necessity and logic: "The State should not be prohibited by law from using ordinary human intelligence."¹⁰ A problem required a solution and if only the state could do so then the state must take responsibility. In the Gubernatorial race he pledged to curb the use of the injunction and championed decent low-cost housing. He was anxious to improve the performance of the States' Workmen's Compensation Act, which he had ratified in his first term as Governor. He also strongly supported the municipal ownership of public utilities where any municipality deemed that to be in its best interests.

The difference between McAdoo's and Smith's progressivism was qualitative. McAdoo for instance had long been an advocate of government operations of the railroads. Neither were in fact desperate antagonists of business. They still sought order rather than a shift in power. Smith, however, had not inherited progressive concern for individuality. Need justified the use of state power and overruled concern for individual liberty. Smith could thus give stronger specific commitments than McAdoo - commitments more clearly for the benefit of the underprivileged than Wilsonian progressivism was yet able to propound. The striking thing was that the leaders of the Democratic party were both committed progressives.

The key issue which was to divide Smith from McAdoo had little to do with reform for the underprivileged. In his inauguration speech, after calling for minimum wages for women and minors, an anti-injunction bill and rent control, Smith read a resolution calling on Congress to modify Volstead to allow the sale of light wines and beer. This proposal, as with the majority of his other initiatives, became bogged down by the determined Republican opposition in Albany to all of Smith's proposals. What did cause the Prohibition issue to attach itself to Smith was a Republican measure repealing the New York State Prohibition Law. To veto it would earn the approbation of Tammany Hall, the Irish and the A.F. of L.. To go with repeal would raise the spectre of disregard for the national law and would certainly lose Smith the major upstate support he had received in 1922. It would additionally cause a furore within the Democratic party.

On 1st June 1923 Smith finally decided to sign the Bill and repeal the State law. He argued that the law merely meant a duplication of work while the enforcement of the federal law would still continue. He also pointed out that this bill had been passed on a bipartisan vote. Respecting this decision's effect on his political future, particularly within the Democratic party, Smith stated "I have no political future that I am willing to obtain by the sacrifice of any principles or any convictions."¹¹ This last statement really occasioned an uproar in the party ranks. In saying this the Governor undermined his legal justification by making it appear that he supported the repeal in principle. He now became firmly identified with all the vices of liquor which many progressives sought to end. From being dubbed a 'wet' by the Anti-Saloon League, this measure tied Smith irrevocably to anti-Prohibition in the mind of the broader public.

In 1922 the Democrats believed they had a real chance in 1924. The issues of tax and tariffs were then augmented in 1923 by the scandal in the Harding administration. In Congress this had remained the basis of Democratic attacks on the Republican President and his party. If the Howell-Barkley vote had been used as a means of winning union support, it also presented conservatives with the opportunity to cull anti-union support in the country. Yet even this strain the Democrats were prepared to overcome if it meant victory in 1924.

At the 1924 Convention, however, the deeper tensions within the Democratic party, dormant during the Wilson years, erupted in the battle for the nomination. The two candidates represented the

two wings, cultural rather than political, of the Democratic party. William Gibbs McAdoo represented rural, protestant, dry Democrats while Smith represented the urban, immigrant and Catholic, wet Democrats. The bitterness indeed testified to Wilson's achievements. The candidates in 1924 highlighted what Wilson had smothered. The situation was vastly different from 1912 or 1916. All the issues which separated McAdoo from Smith had never become political issues but they were deeply emotional ones and always liable to erupt to the surface. Such an eruption was practically inevitable when the two candidates were personally identified with these issues. It was also due in part to the urban migration which had resulted in America's urban population outstripping the rural population in the twenties. The rural population felt increasingly under siege, a mood aggravated by the agricultural depression. Radio, the new highway construction, the flapper and the bootlegger seemed to threaten their way of life with extinction in an avalanche of sophistication and corruption. The Ku Klux Klan was only the most extreme expression of this widespread fear. They felt themselves and their America - that of the yeoman farmer so beloved of political rhetoric - being overwhelmed by an alien culture. Al Smith became the incarnation of this. They could never accept his leadership. McAdoo aggravated their antagonism by his own commitment to Prohibition and reiteration of the praises of rural America.

Adding to the seriousness of the clash was the fact that the urban Democrats were equally contemptuous of rural values. And the clash was aggravated by a lack of middle ground in the party. The Wilson coalition had depended in 1916 on renegade Mid Western

and Eastern Republican progressives. Without this centre the two wings were exposed and unbridgeable. The New York Convention of the Democratic party was an unmitigated disaster. It had been clear that there might well be antagonism but in fact there had been no real row in the ranks up to that time. The Convention itself became the crucible for all these forces. The key was Bryan and his fundamentalist supporters. McAdoo felt he needed Bryan's men for victory, convinced that Smith would not release his own men to McAdoo. Thus, McAdoo had skirted carefully around the Klan issue. The Platform Committee had voted to put an anti-Klan resolution to the Convention. With four million voters, in the rural South and West, outright condemnation could be suicidal. Bryan however went on to praise a plank endorsing the Ku Klux Klan. Uproar ensued and hatreds flared to the surface. After a fortnight and 103 ballots, McAdoo and Smith agreed to step down in favour of John W. Davis. Still worse, Democratic disarray had been broadcast by radio to the nation for the first time. The Democratic campaign had died, or rather committed suicide, in New York.

Despite the amount of progressives in the party the Democratic platform reflected the peculiar pressure which an election puts on a party to return to its traditional planks. Thus, while it called for a co-operative marketing movement and the extension of credit for agriculture, the platform highlighted the problem of high tariffs as the greatest barrier to rural recovery while the issue of honest government also received prominent treatment. It also pledged to uphold the prohibition laws. Monopoly gained the party's condemnation. On the labour problem, however, while being in favour of collective bargaining, it would commit itself no further.

Significantly, and reflecting progressive strength within the Democratic party, the Convention clearly called upon Congress to override unfavourable decisions of the Supreme Court on Acts of Congress. This platform was Democratic in character before being progressive. The labour plank was far from being an unequivocal endorsement of trade unions.

Given the policies and standard-bearers of the two major parties the choice for labour seemed to be between the lesser of two evils. They could not support Coolidge or Republicans nor did they feel that the Democrats, with a relative unknown as its candidate, offered labour much hope of success.

As in previous elections the two major parties had offered nothing which might elicit an endorsement from labour, but in 1924 labour also had the candidacy of Robert M. La Follette to consider. The effect of La Follette's candidacy was to highlight the continued indecision of the Democratic platform by comparison. The C.P.P.A. had been working hard to organise since 1922 and could, at its 1924 Convention in Cleveland on the 5th and 6th of July, boast an organisation in thirty states of the union. There had been difficulties. A split had developed between Manly of the P.L.S. and Hopkins at the Committee of 48, Manly having accused the Committee of being less than open with the P.L.S.. Hopkins had in fact been courting Borah during 1923 to run in the following year. He wanted Borah to run in an attempt to regain a position of influence in a situation where the C.P.P.A. and P.L.S., in support of La Follette, were becoming the increasingly dominant organisations of the left-wing progressive movement. The efforts of the C.P.P.A. were such as

to guarantee a major effort in 1924. It was an effort, Manly believed, strong enough to warrant an independent campaign in 1924, with all the leftist movements uniting. This included not only the Committee of 48, P.L.S. and C.P.P.A. but the Farmer-Labor parties and the Socialists. The fact that all these groups could unite in Cleveland behind La Follette and Wheeler was largely a testimony to the extent of the C.P.P.A.'s groundwork. None of the other groups could hope to command such a nationwide organisation. For all of them the reality of a growing and apparently solid organisation of progressivism encouraged them to combine.

The second factor which encouraged unity was the possibility that this movement could tap both agrarian and trade union discontent. This prospect of a national organisation and a strong voter base fired all the progressives at Cleveland. La Follette, having witnessed the Republican Convention and doubtless heard the Democratic farrago on radio, announced his availability. There could be no doubt from that moment that the organisation had a leader and that 1924 would see an independent campaign.

Coolidge's conservatism at the Republican Convention and the disarray of the Democrats in New York presented the C.P.P.A. at Cleveland with the final incentive it needed for the running of an independent campaign. La Follette, so long considering the move, believed the time was ripe. Progressives who had been so long frustrated by the two old parties believed they could now make clear the differences between themselves and Republicans and Democrats. They believed, moreover, that the groundswell of discontent which had become evident in 1922 could be exploited for

an independent candidate. The buoyant and expectant Convention therefore bluntly stated their case.

Although the progressivism of La Follette was significantly different from that of Wilson, the key theme of the platform and *raison d'être* of the independent movement remained strikingly similar. In the words of the chairman, William Johnstone, this was a campaign for freedom. "The people of the United States must regain control of their government in order that they may move forward toward that economic freedom that was intended by the Declaration of Independence."¹² The fight was for "the restoration of the confidence of the American people in the institutions under which they lived",¹³ in the words of Peter Witt of the Cleveland City Council. This curiously echoed the Wilsonian rhetoric about the recovery of American freedom of an earlier time. In the speech of socialist Morris Hillquit, however, there arose a note of the power struggle between classes of the population. The time had arrived he declared for "the toilers of this nation to free themselves from the bonds of capitalist oppression".¹⁴ There was a hint here of the shift in progressivism away from the political reforms of Wilson to a determination to give priority to the people who were weakest in the economy, to use the government not simply to protect their interests but actually to foster them at the expense of the rest of society. La Follette's progressivism occupied a middle ground between the mild progressives and socialism.

To the Progressives in Cleveland, the Harding scandals were simply the most sordid side of business control of politics. It

was their intention to make reforms for the benefit of the people. The extent of this determination became clear in the platform of the Independents. It called for unqualified enforcement of the freedom of speech, press and assemblage; public ownership of the natural resources including water power, iron, coal, oil and timber; increased public works in times of depression; a surtax, excess profits tax, estate and inheritance taxes and a tax on stock dividend; and repeal of high tariffs. It proposed public control of the Federal Reserve and Federal Farm Loan Boards to make credit equal to all and to promote co-operative banking; legal guarantees of the right to organise and bargain collectively; control of the meat packing industry and a government marketing corporation to relieve the agricultural depression; public ownership of railroads and their democratic control; the abolition of injunctions in labour disputes, the ratification of the child labor amendment and the election of all Federal judges.

Wilsonian progressivism, and that of Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose party regarded the federal government as an arbitrator and administrator. What reforms were necessary were undertaken only to ensure that this task would be performed fairly to all. In 1924 the Progressives of C.P.P.A. had re-defined equality and the role of the government. They believed that equality could be achieved through a destruction of the economic grip of business, in addition to a purification of Congress itself, which meant the election of progressives. They regarded equality as a task which could only be achieved by the government abandoning its arbitration role and actively controlling key segments of the economy. The government, not the individual, would be the guarantor of equality. Taxation

would no longer simply be a means of raising funds but would be so selectively, becoming a social policy and not simply fiscal.

Though the purposes ultimately were traditionally progressive, the interventionist nature of the means marked a major break with previous progressive tradition. It echoed closely, in fact, the welfare statism of the British Labour party. It was an explicit acceptance of the theory that the state must take responsibility for and actively protect the welfare and well-being of the poorest in the population at the expense of the richer and that true equality could only be achieved thereby. The effect of their platform was to explicitly accept the existence of a class structure in the United States and that equality was much more a function of economic status than progressivism had previously been able to accept. They could not accept socialism and the belief that the state become a proxy for the population. Individualism still remained a powerful factor in Mid Western progressivism. Their social thought therefore compromised on control of industries which were exploiting the common wealth of the nation or were vital to its economic policy and power. Significantly, welfare proposals such as unemployment benefit and a free health service were not included.

The independent movement of 1924 was an indigenous phenomenon arising from a growing acceptance that Wilsonian reforms had been inadequate. Regulation had given way to control. Additionally, the battles of trade unionism in 1919 and 1922 had revealed to many Progressives that their philosophy simply did not take cognizance of the real root of economic and power inequalities

in the nation. They realised that there existed a constituency which would be untouched by progressivism unless the government determined to alter the economic bias in the society. Finally, business remained rich and powerful, which fact confirmed them in their view of Wilson's failure. This revisionist progressivism had developed piecemeal since the war. The 1924 platform brought together all the planks which individual progressives had been putting forward since that time.

This development had been uneven, for progressivism had first been a moralistic reform movement dependent entirely on individual groups being able to agree. As we have seen, many progressives had not bridged the gap between 1916 and 1924. Beveridge had given order a greater priority than further reform in endorsing the Kansas Court. Lenroot of Wisconsin reflected a broad trend in progressivism by remaining a moderate, unwilling to accept a new role for government while still motivated by his conscience. This too had been the tenor in the Democratic party although urban progressives such as Smith seemed to augur a continuing leftward trend here. In the centre of political opinion were men such as James Couzens who represented a moderate posture, not tied to any philosophy but prepared to consider any proposal and accept whatever a majority of the population wished. He believed that America did not want nationalisation of the railroads.

The P.L.S. therefore represented the most radical of independent progressives willing to accept the platform announced at the C.P.P.A. Convention. There remained many progressives who, while not prepared to accept its sweeping nature, still supported

trade unionism. The strain on progressives who for so long had jealously guarded their individuality was apparent. William Borah remained aloof from the La Follette movement while George Norris concentrated on particular issues rather than becoming an enthusiast of the movement in general. Despite this the P.L.S. formed a vanguard of congressional progressivism.

Yet an Independent campaign might not necessarily further the progressive course; the radicalism might be too extreme for milder progressives, split the movement and if rejected in 1924, raise serious questions about the population's desire for reform. Additionally while endorsing the platform and espousing its planks, few P.L.S. members were enthusiastic about breaking from their respective parties to join La Follette. In order to avoid presenting his progressive colleagues with such a choice, La Follette gave strong assurances that there would be no attempt to draft an Independent slate for congressional or local elections. La Follette frankly did not wish to have his organisation become overloaded by such considerations. He hoped rather that his campaign would demonstrate that a strong enough feeling existed in the nation that the two-party system was no longer relevant. He hoped to show that in fact the population was ready to vote in the progressive/conservative framework, so that leaving the old parties would not result in loss of support for Senators and Congressmen who wished to do so, or who would back La Follette's proposals as President. It was a compromise which suited all parties. Talk of an emergent third party was also discouraged; the line was that any such move would be considered only after November 1924.

As the P.L.S. was the vanguard of congressional progressivism, so the C.P.P.A. represented the most politically committed section of the trade union movement. In the summer of 1924 it was for the rest of the trade union movement to make the decision about its position on the new political situation. Samuel Gompers had long been identified as an ardent admirer of Woodrow Wilson and his loyalty to the Democratic party remained, if less obvious, in 1920. In 1924 there were three candidates. This unique situation made necessary the unprecedented move for the A.F. of L. of making an official declaration on the election, perhaps to the extent of endorsing one or other of the candidates. The fact that the C.P.P.A. was by and large a labour-dominated organisation put pressure on the A.F. of L. to hold ranks and endorse La Follette. Given that the Democratic and Republican parties had practically ignored labour, such a decision appeared more likely. In fact the Independent platform completely satisfied the demands made by the A.F. of L.'s Non-Political Campaign Committee. It had demanded a Child Labor Amendment; an end to injunctions; a guarantee of the right to bargain and organise; the repeal of Esch-Cummins; the ability of Congress to re-pass legislation declared unconstitutional; an inheritance tax and a graduated income tax. On all these planks the Cleveland Convention satisfied the aims of the A.F. of L and its constituent unions.

In only two particulars did the Independent platform not echo the A.F. of L. position. The first was the question of amending the Volstead Act to allow for light beer, a plank which both major parties straddled and the progressives did not breach. The second was immigration. These paled into insignificance beside

the overwhelming support of trade unionism in the Independent platform. The main reason for the A.F. of L. withholding immediate endorsement was the fact that such a move was unprecedented. As has been pointed out, however, the situation was such as to demand a clear exposition of the A.F. of L.'s position. Consequently the A.F. of L. declared that the best interests of labour lay in a vote for La Follette and Burton K. Wheeler, his Democratic running mate. In its circular to unions arguing for the recommendation, all the similarities were listed. The Independents were plainly friends of the labour movement, which Coolidge was not, and which the Democratic party in its continuing Wilsonian rhetoric had failed to make clear. For Gompers, formal endorsement of a candidate for President did not in any way abridge the 'friends and enemies' policy of the unions. Support for La Follette was a result of what he had done and could be counted on doing for unionism. In the situation a formal endorsement was necessary to clarify a . confused election race. In fact, the A.F. of L. support for Wilson had been formal in all but open declaration - the endorsement of La Follette was a small step. The C.P.P.A. condemnation of the two old parties had also deeply affected the trade union decision. To have endorsed either party would have deeply divided the labour movement, particularly given the ambivalence of the Democratic platform and despite vigorous statements by Davis.

Gompers was at pains, however, to make clear that the endorsement was of the two candidates and not of any nascent third party. It was as ever the endorsement of an individual, the core of the non-partisan policy, not any political creed. Thus, he had to write to William English Walling running in Connecticut's fourth

district for the Democrats against Schuyler Merritt, the Republican incumbent, that he should stay in the race and not give way to any Independent who might emerge. "The congressional campaign should be kept separate and apart from the campaign for the election of the executive of the United States."¹⁵ Regardless of who was running, labour would stay loyal to its friends. As Gompers wrote to James Duncan, a vice-president on the Executive Council: "Organized labor is not going down with any candidates. The American Federation of Labor will follow its non-partisan campaign this year as in years past, no matter which party may be in power, will continue to carry on its . . . work . . ."¹⁶ The A.F. of L. was not about to burn its boats by backing only one party. In fact, La Follette had never asked it to make such a commitment. The fuss the A.F. of L. made only served to weaken the force of their endorsement, and the message it might otherwise have broadcast to the major parties. Ultimately, indeed, it also damaged the credibility of any hope of a distinct progressive organisation emerging from the La Follette campaign.

There were issues, for which the Independents stood, about which the A.F. of L. was still dubious, principally their willingness to encourage central control. With the U.M.W. and the Railroad Brotherhoods supporting the nationalisation of their industries, the A.F. of L. could not but back their wishes. Nonetheless, their reservations about centralised power remained. They were as concerned as any business to minimise regulation, a basic ambivalence which further undermined the relationship with progressives. As was pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, since 1919 the A.F. of L. had returned to a particularist

attitude to politics which attempted to eschew any ideological content. The A.F. of L. nonetheless could wholeheartedly endorse the main thrust of the La Follette campaign which he himself characterised as "the encroachment of the powerful few upon the rights of the many".¹⁷ Endorsement by the A.F. of L. was a major boost to the La Follette campaign yet the act was significantly diminished by Gompers' incessant need to 'clarify' the decision. "We have acted in strict accordance with our long-established policy of non-partisan political action. We have never endorsed a political party or organization and we stand by that refusal in the present instance."¹⁸ Gompers was unhappy about the endorsement. He felt pressured into the action and had reservations about the radicalism of the La Follette platform. He therefore was anxious to minimise the implications of the announcement. It was with this ambivalent support from the A.F. of L. that the La Follette-Wheeler campaign was launched in July 1924.

The Republican response was to focus attention not on the issues which La Follette represented but on the possible consequences of a tied election as a result of his intervention. They argued that this would result in the election being thrown to the House where Charles Bryan, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate would be the likely compromise victor. In addition to these scare tactics, to raise partisan hackles and keep Republicans loyal, they accused La Follette of revolutionary intent, and his record of opposition to the war was endlessly repeated, for example, ex-Governor Allen of Kansas charged that the La Follette-Wheeler campaign was "a partnership on the ideas of Lenine (sic)".¹⁹

These Republican attempts at drawing attention away from the issues of the campaign were at the outset being frustrated by none other than Charles Dawes, Coolidge's running mate. Given Coolidge's reluctance to speak, Dawes had taken on the task of stumping the country. He was giving sharp speeches on Republican ideology, upholding, for instance, the right to use injunctions in labour disputes: "A labor injunction restrains men who want to assault and kill from carrying out their purposes."²⁰ In an effort to deflect the likely consequence of Dawes' barn storming, the Republicans enlisted William Borah to speak. Unfortunately, Borah proceeded to denounce "this thing of apologizing for class legislation or closing your eyes to the demands of privilege because they happen in your own party."²¹ He attacked the attempt to brush the oil scandals under the carpet and contrasted this with the incorruptible La Follette. An engagement tentatively set for Borah to speak in Des Moines was promptly cancelled. Instead the Republicans turned to the faithful and famous. James Davis went on a hectic tour praising Coolidge, while Charles Evans Hughes emphasised the new Republican prosperity which La Follette was threatening to destroy. Essentially the Republicans left no stone unturned in an effort to defeat La Follette, although Hoover remained largely silent throughout the campaign.

Yet, their great fear was that La Follette would sweep the board west of the Mississippi and this perception caused a significant shift in attitude amongst some key members of the party, which Nicholas Murray Butler had presaged in Indianapolis in a major speech to the Republican State Editorial Association on 8th February 1924. He called for Republicans to end their

unthinking reaction to movements for reform. Their reaction had contributed greatly to the radicalism of La Follette, the popularity of new progressive ideas and the upset of 1922. In a statesmanlike speech Butler argued that: "The democratic system can not maintain itself indefinitely against these attacks by ignoring them or by refusing to deal frankly and courageously with the problems of modern industrial life . . . Political indifference brings no strength but rather weakness and danger to the democratic system."²² Equally significant was an article in The Survey of 15th August 1924 by Senator Pepper of Pennsylvania in which he stated that picketing, a major issue for the labour movement:

may be conceived of as the protective action of a great social group who feel outraged at what seems to be to them a betrayal of their claims . . . In a community which so conceives of it, picketing is not a thing to be stopped. It is rather a thing to be domesticated.²³

The Republicans were keen to deflate the La Follette claim by whatever means were available. There was an attempt made at the Chicago-based investigations into campaign funding to implicate La Follette's campaign in irregularities. The progressive threat, however, was regarded seriously enough by many Republicans for them to re-assess their previous attitudes towards labour. Whatever else the La Follette campaign might do, it made the political system consider seriously the nature of industrialisation for the nation. It also made labour votes more valuable prizes.

While some Republicans moved significantly, if tentatively, towards a newly-sympathetic attitude to labour, the Democrats were

fighting hard for the workers' vote. This was in addition to the need to win attention, which was the party's greatest problem throughout the campaign. In his acceptance speech Davis had strongly endorsed the right of unions to organise and bargain collectively and that: "They must not be impaired either by injunction or by any other device."²⁴ It was also emphasised that Davis had been instrumental in drawing up the Clayton Anti-Trust Act. Davis further argued that agreements between management and labour should be voluntary: "Anything other than this I believe to be impossible, undesirable, corrupting and tyrannical."²⁵ Yet, despite this clear statement by the Democratic party's leader of its commitment to labour wishes, concrete forms such support would take remained lacking while publicity of even this position remained a problem. There was, moreover, a strong labour mistrust of the major parties, a factor instrumental in the organisation of the C.P.P.A.. Despite Davis's statements, they no longer appeared credible to many trade unionists.

There was much debate within the Democrats as to how best to conduct the campaign. In the West there was a strong belief that "only a political miracle can turn those states to him (Davis),"²⁶ and that he should therefore concentrate on the East. Yet the urban machines there had been deeply angered by the Convention and were feared to be less likely to work efficiently in 1924. In the South and Mid West, Davis was able to achieve widespread coverage, unfortunately, by his denunciation of the Ku Klux Klan. The situation was made still more difficult by the belief that La Follette would carve up the West with Coolidge. Moreover, La Follette was also working hard in the East to capture disaffected Republicans and Democrats.

While Democrats struggled for public attention, the labour vote and the unity of their party, the La Follette campaign also had major problems to face. The shortage of funds made a Southern drive practically non-existent. La Follette's outspoken opposition to the Ku Klux Klan caused some difficulties in the West as did the participation of socialists in the independent campaign. Indeed in California, La Follette's name headed the socialist ticket having failed to satisfy California's electoral law with an Independent's ticket. This latter problem did not apparently cost the campaign too much support. Indeed, John Nelson of Wisconsin believed that: "These socialists have been the most energetic workers everywhere, but of course they are also a liability. I believe however that they are more of an asset than a liability in this campaign."²⁷ Another significant difficulty faced by the La Follette campaign was the duplication of effort between the C.P.P.A., the unions, and local Independent Progressive organisations. Perhaps the greatest difficulty was the fact that La Follette's campaign did not have its own slate, so that confusion and complication stood between the Senator and the voters. Indeed, many Republicans, lacking a local election fight, were unlikely to desert a party in which their progressive views were represented by local progressives. The key to La Follette's success would ultimately rest on the depth and extent which voters felt disillusioned enough to break with old party ties.

Aloof from the sound and fury of the campaign charges and counter-charges, stood President Coolidge. If he had sought a situation which could emphasise his calm, he could not have found anything more suitable than the campaign of 1924, with its third

candidate adding to the cacophony. The newspapers also added to the clamour, predicting week in and week out until the last in the campaign that La Follette would run second to the President.

There can be little doubt that the majority of Americans voted for Coolidge in November 1924, in addition to endorsing the booming prosperity of 1924 regardless of the party in power. The result was a thumping victory for the Republican party. Votes for Coolidge amounted to 15,725,016, for Davis 8,386,624 and for La Follette 4,870,478, a plurality over both Independent and Democratic parties of $3\frac{1}{2}$ million votes. As Samuel Gompers put it: "The American people decided it wanted a conservative administration."²⁸ This might not be strictly true; the conservative Coolidge benefited from his personality being unobtrusive at a time when "Politics, religion, education, the fine arts and other human activities had to compete for third at best"²⁹ behind making money, sport and recreation. Change, the normal theme of elections, was exactly what America did not wish in 1924. A scant 52% turnout attested to the lack of concern Americans felt in 1924. Inevitably, this hurt most directly the only party concerned with present issues. Their campaign was greeted apathetically rather than enthusiastically by all but the most committed.

While the mood of the nation worked against Democrat and Independent candidates and for Coolidge, the third party candidate also tended to take votes from Democrats rather than Republicans. This was due in some degree to Western Republicanism already feeling that its progressivism was integral to the Republican party among Senators and Congressmen. There was a striking parallel in

Arizona, Colorado, Indiana and Nebraska between how far the Democratic nominees ran behind their Congressional tickets and the La Follette vote. Democrats swung to La Follette; Republicans stayed loyal to their party. Also, however, the fact that La Follette won significantly more from the Democrats throughout the country, but particularly in States such as Pennsylvania, with its large U.M.W. presence, in New Jersey and Ohio, and Illinois bears testament to the likelihood that the labour vote almost certainly switched from the Democratic party to La Follette. In Ohio, almost all La Follette votes were from the Democrats and similarly in Michigan and Massachusetts. La Follette did win votes in the West, but not in the numbers he might have been justified in expecting. Republican progressives did not switch, in many cases because they believed that he had gone too far. Borah's individualism was more akin to their outlook. The rationalisation of coal did not concern them as much as the burgeoning central bureaucracy that this was likely to occasion. In the South, similarly, Davis's vote held up, although not so steadily as he might have liked, particularly in States such as Tennessee. In the one Southern State where La Follette won a significant proportion, Missouri, his biggest vote in any Southern State, it was enough to give the State to Coolidge. Throughout the rest of the South, where white supremacy was a priority which forced progressivism to be absorbed, progressives stayed loyal to the Democratic party. The 1924 election seemed to prove that Gompers had been correct in believing a third party movement would simply split the progressive vote, and that the power of the traditional parties would not be broken. In 1924 the vote was split three ways. Progressives had already achieved a modus vivendi within the

two major parties, a position which they did not wish to forsake, particularly within the Republican party. The vote would also bear out the increasing radicalism of Democratic progressivism.³⁰ It appeared in 1924 that most progressive voters were happy to accept the system as it stood. The most disillusioned in 1924 were rural Democrats, and here they tended to vote for La Follette. The Eastern situation was much less clear, but the losses of Democratic representatives, particularly in Pennsylvania, also points to La Follette gaining most from disillusioned Democrats, many unionists among them.

The election of 1924 was a mixed blessing for Gompers. Though it had been a disappointing result, this very disappointment could only reinforce the traditional non-partisan line of the A.F. of L. under threat from the La Follette campaign. In many ways the A.F. of L. endorsement was at all times presaged on an expected disappointment to puncture third party hopes particularly if the progressive presence could hold up in the Congressional elections. In 1924 the Presidential election, when a tide of contentment was generally apparent, was less crucial to labour than these results. Indeed, in the House although the Republican majority was increased from 15 after 1922 to 59, these successes were spread fairly evenly, throughout the nation, generally single seat victories with the exception of Pennsylvania where the Democrats lost all their seats. It was practically impossible to guess what effect these Republican gains would have on progressivism in the House.

In the Senate the Republican majority was increased from 6 to 16. Whether even this majority could defeat the progressive group

was far from certain. An increase in Republicans did not necessarily mean a parallel increase in conservative strength. What it did do was to lessen the ability of the Democrats to join progressives in frustrating conservative Republican legislation. Thus, the victory of Republican Rice W. Means over Alva B. Adams in Colorado, Republican Arthur R. Robinson over Samuel M. Ralston in Indiana; George H. Williams over Democrat Selden Spencer in Missouri, did not significantly affect the progressive strength in the Senate, More serious, however, was the loss of progressive Democrats such as A. Owsley Stanley in Kentucky and D.I. Walsh in Massachusetts to Republicans Frederic M. Sackett and William M. Butler respectively. Most disturbing for progressives, however, was the loss in their Western heartlands of two major figures in the P.L.S., of Magnus Johnson to Republican Thomas Schall in Minnesota and Edwin Ladd to Gerald P. Nye in North Dakota. In the latter case this was not in fact a further depletion of progressive strength. More serious was that another member of the P.L.S., Robert Owen, a Democrat, had been defeated in Oklahoma by Republican W.B. Pine. These defeats were setbacks to the progressive movement but in terms of the wave of support for Coolidge these losses were not as serious as might otherwise have been expected, particularly given the contemporary mood of the population. With the exception of the losses of Ladd and Johnson the losses were Democrats. Progressives suffered mostly because of disillusion among the Democrats. The progressive movement itself had survived the Coolidge deluge, if nothing else. This survival in the face of the La Follette result served to strengthen still further Gompers' position in the A.F. of L. and dampened all enthusiasm for independent politics.

All that could be done now was to await the new session of Congress to see how well the progressives could hold up, and how much moderates would be prepared to endorse progressive positions as regards the Howell-Barkley Bill. Although the parties' strengths had been affected, the moderates still held the key to the success of progressive legislation. If progressives and Democrats could combine to convince moderates on an issue then, as William Allen White put it, though this was something of an overstatement: "The representatives and advocates of the underdog minority even in the big boom of the twenties held the balance of power."³¹ Conservative Republicans still did not have the command which victory at the polls might have suggested.

Labour leaders felt that 1924 proved that a non-partisan policy was more promising than putting all their eggs in one basket. As was to be expected, the election had barely allowed the important issues of Supreme Court reform or Howell-Barkley to emerge. La Follette had raised these issues in a series of powerful election speeches, but they had failed to attract serious debate or become centres of interest in the campaign. Labour had to take these issues up again in 1925 fearing that the crest of the progressive wave had already passed with the discharge of the Howell-Barkley Bill. The election results gave warning that this would be an uphill battle. Prosperity by now appeared to be taking a firm grip on the nation's political attitudes.

The struggle for political consideration would now be undertaken by the trade union movement without full commitment. Ambivalent as labour had been to the political avenue in the past,

the 1924 election had served to puncture what expectations had existed. The result of the election returned the initiative on the future of trade unionism to Samuel Gompers and the conservative leadership of the A.F. of L.. Their attentions were turning inwards. In the first instance they sought to defeat what they feared was Communist infiltration, and the agitation of radicals for structural reforms of trade unionism. This debate was already becoming heated within the United Mine Workers. Secondly, jurisdictional disputes mainly involving the Carpenters consumed much energy. Thirdly, the trade union movement had to face the problem of declining membership. The losses of 1921 and 1922 were seen largely in terms of the recession and the shaking out of workers recruited in war-time. When prosperity arrived and membership did not recover, concern began to grow. By late 1924 labour's thinking and concerns were shifting quickly from politics, upon which it had been focused to quite an uncharacteristic degree in the previous year, back to industrial and internal questions. This tendency was accelerated by the hopes held out by the co-operative idea, an idea which also had a tendency to encourage unionists to adopt a more conciliatory outlook.

Gompers had re-established his leadership and his pre-1919 predominance. Over the issues of trade unionism and its involvement in politics and the response of its friends and enemies in the political system there fell a deafening silence. 1924 marked a peak both in terms of trade unionism's political interest and the political response to trade union demands. Whether this could be maintained or developed remained to be seen. The 1924 election result ensured that it would not be conducted with the intensity of

the previous six years. Stalemate once more appeared to be the most likely outcome in both the industrial and political arenas over the questions surrounding trade union legitimacy, as it had been the outcome of the majority of confrontations and disputes since 1919.

NOTES

1. Coolidge papers, E.O.F., c.f.103, Benjamin Felt. Felt to Coolidge September 15th, 1924.
2. White, W.A., A Puritan in Babylon, p.37.
3. Coolidge papers, E.O.F., c.f.15, Department of Labor, Davis to Slemp March 31st, 1924.
4. Machinists Monthly Journal, Vol.36, No.7, p.319.
5. Tumulty papers, Box 79, Wilson to Tumulty April 10th, 1922.
6. Bainbridge Colby papers, Box 4, Wilson to Colby, April 22nd, 1924. Wilson claimed that "the time is ripe for launching and aggressive program such as the document sets forth".
7. Ibid. The document, p.4.
8. Ibid.
9. Baruch, B., The Public Years, p.66. Baruch was a staunch McAdoo supporter in 1924. Thereafter he avoided pre-convention politics.
10. Josephson M & H, Al Smith: Hero of the Cities, p.277. For detailed discussion of the rise of urban liberalism see J.D. Buenker, Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform and D. Burner, The Politics of Provincialism. The main theme of this thesis has been the development of the progressive, reforming movement in the 1920's. The P.L.S. and the C.P.P.A. and thoughts of a re-alignment of the political system around a new party are the dominant trends. In fact, the change in U.S. politics occurred with the rise of an urban power base in the Democratic party. The party's own troubles in 1924 obscured this trend.
11. Ibid. p.295.
12. P.L.S. Records, Box 2, C.P.P.A. Convention, Cleveland, July 4th - 6th 1924, p.26.
13. Ibid. p.232.
14. Ibid. p.269.
15. A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.315, August 25th - November 20th, 1924, Gompers to Walling October 23rd, 1924. Walling was a frequent contributor to the Federationist.
16. Ibid. Gompers to Duncan September 6th, 1924.
17. La Follette family papers, Box 204B, Statement to the Progressive Convention July 4th, 1924.
18. American Federationist, Vol.31., No.9, pp.741-742. Gompers' qualified endorsement revealed the ambivalence of many trade

unionists. La Follette clearly represented a commitment to the union movement. However, Gompers feared state power would undermine union control. Yet not to back La Follette would have caused the split in the A.F. of L. to widen, since the C.P.P.A. were running the La Follette campaign.

19. P.L.S. Records, Box 1, quoted from the Southern Republican, Durham, S.C. October 18th, 1924.
20. Ibid. quoted from the Wisconsin Farmer, October 23rd, 1924.
21. La Follette family papers, Box 205A.
22. Congressional Record, 68th Congress, first session, Senate Document No.55 presented by Lodge and printed February 28th, 1924..
23. J.J. Davis papers, Box 52, Scrapbooks. This article was from a Pepper speech in August to the Pennsylvania Bar Association.
24. Key Pittman papers, Box 14, October 10th, Release for Davis's Campaign, p.4. Pittman was director of Davis's Western campaign.
25. Ibid. October 31st, Press Release, p.7.
26. Ibid. Box 12, Political Correspondence, Dill to Pittman August 30th, 1924.
27. La Follette family papers, Box 100, Letters Received, Nelson to La Follette, August 6th, 1924.
28. A.F. of L. letterbooks, Vol.315, August 25th to November 20th, 1924, Gompers for Coones' Newspaper Syndicate, November 8th, 1924.
29. Slosson, P.W., The Great Crusade and After, p.270.
30. Pittman papers, Box 14, Michelet, S., Third Party Vote in the Presidential Election of 1924 gives a breakdown of the votes in the election. His conclusion was that "the net loser as a result of a third party . . . was . . . plainly the Democratic Presidential ticket", p.6. See Appendix 4. To confirm these figures see Clubb and Allen, The Cities and the Election of 1928, pp.1213-1214 which gives figures for the Democratic vote in 1920, 1924 and 1928 - See appendix 4(i) - in other words progressive Democrats left their party for La Follette.
31. White, W.A., A Puritan in Babylon, p.323.

CONCLUSION

Samuel Gompers died in December 1924. As the only president the American Federation of Labor had had, his death signified the end of an era in the history of the trade union movement. The structure of the A.F. of L. greatly contributed to the significance of the event. In the absence of any bureaucracy or effective countervailing power the president had a striking freedom to air his personal views on the nature and purposes of the movement. In turn this absence of alternative bases of power elevated the public prestige of the presidency as the only practical mouthpiece of the A.F. of L. organisation. The longevity of Gompers' tenure had highlighted the pre-eminence of the presidency. For these reasons the tenor of the A.F. of L. was bound up inextricably with the personality of the president. Despite William Green's declared intention to perpetuate Gompers' policies, his presidency would inevitably change the nature of the A.F. of L.'s leadership, even if only qualitatively.

The election of 1924 marked the climax of a chain of developments in the immediate post-war years. This in itself makes

that year deserving of acknowledgement as the definitive end of the period. Indeed the independent campaign of Robert M. La Follette and the A.F. of L.'s endorsement of his candidacy was an event which would itself modify political perceptions thereafter, redoubling the impression that this year was indeed a turning point. It is for these material reasons that the thesis concluded in 1924.

The often-repeated purpose of this thesis has been to modify the historical treatment of the nature of the American political system and trade unionism's contribution to its dynamic from 1919-1924. The study of the success or failure of union demands serves only to reinforce the impression that these were barren years for labour. Therefore, the express purpose in this study has been to analyse the process of political development and similarly the processes within the trade union movement and industrial relations which influenced this development. In doing so it is hoped that certain trends emerge which may lead to a renewed study of the period and to a better appreciation of the complexity of the American political process in these years.

Trade unionists as a whole regarded 1919 as a year of opportunity. The depth of the determination to have expectations satisfied, however, revealed a basic divergence of views within the movement. The president of the A.F. of L. had undoubted prestige for the reasons outlined above, but for the same reasons he lacked any effective control. His views and those of his Executive Council did not rule the actions and opinions of constituent unions or their members.

In his denunciation of American socialism, Samuel Gompers had always maintained that the trade union movement could exist and its membership prosper within the capitalist system. There was a purely economic organisation which, given industrial power, could achieve its aims without recourse to the political system. Yet guaranteed use of industrial power required legal reform. Gompers accepted this, but continued to deny that any overt ideological drives motivated these demands or that such drives were necessary to the granting of such reforms. The ratification of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act by the Wilson administration ostensibly confirmed the Gompers' model. The impact of the participation in the running of the war however fundamentally revised this conservative outlook. In the post-war years the idea of an industrial struggle against employers was replaced by a belief that unionism's future could best be ensured by a demonstration of the movement's responsibility and dependability which would gain public approval and administration support. Consequently, the rash of strikes which erupted early in 1919 gained no endorsement from the A.F. of L.. In the past Gompers had scoffed at many unionists' hopes for a political solution; his model envisaged a virile, independent trade union movement. By 1919 conservative unionists had overturned their own model. Creatures of moderation and expediency, they now frowned on industrial action and reproved unionists for their rashness.

The most glaring example of this divergence of viewpoints was in the debate surrounding the decision to call a strike in the steel industry. While Gompers might have access to President Wilson, the rank and file could see no concrete benefits. It was their view

that unionism must continue to fight against hostile employers to win their goals. Power, not co-operation, would be the precursor of success.

Ultimately these divergent opinions derived from differing attitudes towards the position of trade unionism in the economic and political systems. The conservative viewpoint was underpinned by the wish to gain acceptance with the belief that little disruption or change of these systems was required. They now viewed it primarily as an issue of reason and individual acceptance, pointing to the reforms of Wilson as evidence that the process of acceptance was already under way. Other unionists, however, believed that the entrenched position of employers would not be surrendered voluntarily. It was not the choice of employers, but the power of the trade unions which must achieve success. They were frankly unconcerned about the preservation of the capitalist system. If it were possible, so much the better; if not then it was irrelevant. In any case many were skeptical of the sympathy of the Wilson administration for their need for power. They could not see that acceptance was under way. It was these perceptions which led to the divergence in industrial tactics, as it would influence opinions on purely political issues.

In 1919, however, this divergence of perceptions was submerged. The violence inflicted upon the strikers and the degradation to which they were subjected forced conservatives to accept that moderation would not win the hearts of deeply hostile employers. Their moderation was swept aside by outrage, as they were forced to grasp the reality of industrial relations. Furthermore the First Industrial

Conference in October 1919 allowed radical and conservative to form a united front in proposing the fundamental change which they all supported. These changes were basic to the unions' effective functioning and were not an issue within the movement. It was their method of achievement and the different perceptions on which this depended that divergence occurred.

In the following years this divergence continued over industrial tactics. Appreciation of the radical unionists' position was sustained by the obduracy of employers, most notably in the N.A.M.'s open shop campaign which was launched in 1920. Such opinions as it expounded could only serve to confirm the radical view that union legitimacy required action to denude the employers of economic power.

While this was the case, however, the conservative case for moderation and integration was also gaining in credibility. This was due firstly to the rise of the Engineering movement and the hope that the value of unions in the production process would be confirmed thereby. Once more this required the co-operation of employers and since this was not forthcoming those hopes remained unproven. It was the onset of recession in 1920-1921 which strengthened the conservative hand. Recession completely undermined the effectiveness of industrial action and concentrated unionists' minds on the defence of their movement and not how best to expand it. In turn this led to new thinking on how best to preserve wage levels. Radical, aggressive thinking was abandoned in this atmosphere. The strikes of 1922 did not cause further ructions in the union movement. Primarily defensive, they won the wholehearted backing of the A.F. of L..

Radical thinking on industrial tactics did not return to the trade unions. Moderation dominated their outlook in 1923 and 1924, aided considerably by a growing apathy among the membership and the effects of returning prosperity and the consequent reduction in the willingness of employers to seek confrontation. More settled conditions were not conducive to further radicalism.

In any event trade unionists were uniformly opportunistic. Any means where legitimacy could be achieved was quickly accepted. Thus, unions with radical traditions such as the International Association of Machinists and the International Ladies' Garments Workers' Union both successfully launched co-operation plans. The Brotherhood of Carpenters conversely, had strongly attacked the idea that America was a classless society and that employers and workers had an identity of interests. In industry the divergence of opinion was always vague. The true gauge was in the action taken and its extent.

Most importantly, however, the lack of industrial action and organising campaigns from 1923 onwards was due to a new preoccupation with the political avenue as a means to gain satisfaction. Radical opinion was now concentrating in this area and it was here that the divergence between radical and conservative became most apparent.

In this case the conservatives reverted to their traditional scorn of any dependence on political aid. They accepted that political help was desirable, but held that the friends unionism already had were loyal enough. There was no need to be more rigorous about the commitment or political influence of these men. In line

with their attitude to industrial relations, radical unionists were less enamoured with the support which politicians gave unionism. They felt only politicians with a much more concrete commitment to the power of trade unions warranted their support. They regarded many of the contemporary politicians as at least unsound in this respect. In 1920 agitation for labour parties emerged in various areas such as Indiana, Detroit and, most notably, Chicago. John Fitzpatrick was definite in his belief that unionism could only find satisfaction from politicians much more committed, not simply to their organisation, but also believing in the need for fundamental reforms of the economic system. Gompers denied that this was the case, arguing that progressives were already sympathetic to the union cause.

Although Fitzpatrick's view was to the left of most unionists, his condemnation struck a chord with a good deal more who were disappointed by the failure of the Clayton Act and by Wilson's failure to launch a N.W.L.B.-type board in peace time. Thus, while the resolutions calling for an independent labour party at successive A.F. of L. conventions from several State confederations, including Pennsylvania, were overwhelmingly defeated, in 1922 several unions combined to form the Conference for Progressive Political Action. The railroad brotherhoods and the United Mine Workers had both decided in 1919 that only nationalisation of their industries could satisfy their aims. Invariably this led to an increasing interest in the political arena. The railroad brotherhoods, although quiescent at first, were soon complaining bitterly about the Railroad Labor Board set up by the 1920 Transportation Act and were determined to have it scrapped.

As has already been noted, the recession had frustrated unionists ability to act in the industrial milieu. This, combined with the heightened interest of the two largest union organisations and the convictions of men such as Fitzpatrick and a shared frustration with the reluctance of the A.F. of L. to champion their opinions, to provide the motivation for the foundation of a new political pressure group. As the conservative outlook was mostly influenced by immediate factors, so the C.P.P.A. also grew to a large extent from immediate circumstances. From that time in February 1922 political issues dominated the thoughts of many unionists, including conservatives. The moving force of this concentration was undoubtedly provided by the C.P.P.A. both in terms of the commitment of unionists and the need for conservatives to respond. This became particularly important after the striking wave of progressive success in the mid-term elections of 1922. The conservatives in the A.F. of L. were stung into political action in order to deflect attention from the C.P.P.A. and minimise the threat it represented for the political posture of their organisation.

The issues which Samuel Gompers chose to pursue to demonstrate the virility of the A.F. of L. were those of the powers of the Supreme Court and the continuing use of injunctions in industrial disputes. By 1924, however, it was clear that the C.P.P.A. had seized the initiative and that the future of the political aspect of trade unionism would be bound closely to the outcome of the 1924 election.

Ostensibly, this organisation was simply a pressure group seeking to forge a closer relationship between unions and politicians.

Participating unionists, however, made clear that the C.P.P.A. had a much more serious implication. It effectively demonstrated that unionists believed that politicians needed to believe in the importance of acting positively to defend the working classes. It essentially symbolised a recognition of the need for trade unionism to be seen in terms of an ideological framework. In responding to this initiative the conservative leadership, as in 1919, was forced to stiffen its position. In 1922 Gompers gave clear backing to the United Mine Workers and Shopmen's strikes. Although they were qualitatively different actions than those in 1919, his unequivocal posture was notable. More indicative of the effect of the C.P.P.A. were the renewed attacks on the Supreme Court which Gompers launched and continued in the pages of the American Federationist in 1923 and 1924, despite the quiet which had overtaken industrial relations.

The final measure of the success of the C.P.P.A. was in forcing the A.F. of L. to endorse the campaign of Robert La Follette in 1924. The anomaly of this action was that, in doing so, Gompers claimed that this in no way meant the abandonment of the traditional friends and enemies policy. La Follette was being endorsed as an individual, not because of the ideological implications of his campaign.

Since 1922 the radical position of the C.P.P.A. set the tone in the political outlook of trade unionists, so that conservatives were forced to compromise their position. Yet the latter continued to deny that trade unionism required an ideological rationale for the political success of its aims. This was, in fact, the

fundamental implication of the foundation of the C.P.P.A. and La Follette's 1924 campaign. The result in 1924 was of crucial importance to the political posture of trade unionism. Trade unionism not only continued to have a major influence on the political system during these years but increasingly forced politicians to seek more radical solutions to the problems the movement highlighted. Whether this process would continue and develop and whether politics would continue to be accorded such attention from trade unionists were all at stake.

The result of the 1924 elections was of vital importance for the tenor of American political debate, over and above its relationship to trade unionism as already described. During this period the divergence in the trade union movement was closely mirrored in the emergence of a split in American politics between conservative and progressive. Following the war it became apparent that the nature of President Wilson's progressivism prevented him from being able to endorse the demands for trade union power. Such an acceptance required an ideological outlook which neither he nor his administration could accommodate. The labour problem was regarded by Wilsonian progressives as requiring the establishment of some means of arbitration. The first and second industrial conferences were the result of this perception. In this thinking the government was neutral, there was no conception that the pre-war reforms should not have attained the equilibrium that these progressives sought. The further granting of extra-parliamentary power was diametrically opposed to Wilson's

purpose of minimising such power in order to liberate individual initiative. The inability of Wilson and his style of progressivism to bring about any reconciliation revealed the political nature of the dispute between the two sides.

The effect of this failure by Wilson and the examples of success of government intervention during the war, however, caused a significant number of progressives in Congress to question the nature of their ideals and whether they could achieve the type of egalitarian, free society they sought. The disputes of 1919 and the palpable fact that the trade union movement was still unable to organise or picket freely played a significant part in progressives' disillusionment. No clear conclusions were immediately apparent in this process of re-assessment. The hearings of the Committee on Education and Labor did, however, reveal that several far from radical progressives were willing to countenance a continuation of a good deal of the government's war-time activities. The most striking example was the championing, by Senator Kenyon, of the continuation at war-time levels of the U.S. Employment Service. The question which progressives had to answer in this case was whether an egalitarian society could spring merely from individual liberty or whether the federal government had a responsibility to intervene and support the less privileged. Many progressives now concluded that the latter course of action was necessary. The extent of such a responsibility remained unclear. The power of business had also been a significant force in the development of progressivism. Again, after the intervention during the war, the efficacy of Wilson's regulatory approach was questioned. Instead of acting as an umpire, many now felt that only economic intervention

could redress the imbalance of power in American society.

Conservatives, conversely, denied all such thinking and called for the scrapping of as much of the government's war-time commitments as possible.

In this context, the trade union disputes with employers had a significant bearing. Given the reassessment which many progressives were making, the position of trade unions appeared to bear out the need for stronger government support. Similarly, the treatment of workers by employers and the latter's denial that wages were anything other than a cost of production, convinced many progressives that only positive action to curtail the power of employers and the strict adherence to the freedoms unions had ostensibly gained under the Clayton Act could bring any equality to society. The labour problem thereby did much to illustrate for progressives that further federal action was required.

This process of development in progressivism was based in part on the Bull Moose platform of 1912, which had called for more affirmative government action. The extent to which such proposals were adhered to at that time is open to question. In 1919 there was little doubt that La Follette for one sought this type of government and placed a new emphasis on economic factors. The process of this development was slow and incoherent and occurred piecemeal as individual issues arose and individual progressives expressed their views. There was no indication of a thematic or ideological framework for their opinions. La Follette formed the People's Legislative Service to remedy this.

The reaction of progressives to this initiative revealed the fundamental difficulty which confronted any effort to weld these individuals into an ideologically coherent movement. Southern progressive Democrats continued to argue that to split the party would simply damage the progressives' base. They sought to change from within. Independent Western progressives argued that they were happy with their independence. Despite this reluctance to enter any formal coalition, the tone of Congressional debates continually emphasised the development of an ideological split in American politics. Discussions centred consistently on attitudes to the role of the government and the extent of its responsibility for the less fortunate among the population. This applied not only to debates caused by industrial disputes but also emerged in other debates; tax reform, for instance, and in 1921 the proposals of Kenyon for the deliberate manipulation of federal expenditure to respond to economic conditions. Importantly for the momentum of progressive reform was the growing disquiet among farmers due to their growing indebtedness. Together these confirmed progressives in their calls for much greater federal activity. La Follette's belief that a fundamental shift in the nature of partisanship was under way was echoed by many conservatives who were frustrated by the confusion in Congress. The Republican party was unable, despite its majority, to effectively control the legislative agenda or ensure the passage of their bills. They saw progressives within their party cross to the side of the Democratic opposition.

In 1922, the crisis brought on by the coal and rail strikes served to radicalise still further progressive opinions on the necessity of federal intervention to establish order on an

increasingly chaotic economic system. The mid-term election in that year gave a further boost to progressive hopes that their radical solutions were finding a response from the population. As a result, La Follette's P.L.S. began to take shape and win support. Crucially, the formation of the C.P.P.A. appeared to these radical progressives as an endorsement of their position by the trade union constituency. Despite the quiet in industrial relations, radical progressivism continued its momentum in 1923 and 1924 through the questions of the agricultural crisis, the powers of the Supreme Court, the corruption in the Harding administration and their championing of the Child Labor Amendment and the Howell-Barkley Bill. In all these issues the divide between those who believed in an interventionist state and those who did not dominated the discussions and revealed the ideological basis of politics in the early 1920's. In this development, despite the denials of trade unionists, support for unions was predicated upon the belief in a broader role for the government and that further economic reforms were necessary to establish equality in society.

The effect of this development upon politics in the 1920's was that Congress largely ground to a halt. The few successes which the Harding and Coolidge administrations achieved were in issues which broke down the split between progressives and conservatives, as in the Tariff debate. It should be pointed out, moreover, that neither Harding nor Coolidge pursued or attempted to formulate any policies with regard to industrial relations. Stalemate best characterised the political balance of power in the 1920's.

It is argued here that this outcome was due to the fact that many Democrats also supported the progressive position. They were not opposing conservative Republicans on a traditional partisan basis. James Cox in 1920 and John W. Davis in 1924 were progressive standard-bearers for the Democratic party. The leading candidates in 1924 for the Democratic nomination William G. McAdoo and Al Smith were also both unashamed progressives. The only difference between radical progressives and Democrats was in the extent of the radicalism and the broader implications they perceived in the progressive movement. Democrats were wary of this kind of ideological argument. Similarly the kind of wholesale nationalisation radicals proposed could not be endorsed by Democrats. Yet individually, tax reforms, the nationalisation of coal and railroads, and the municipal ownership of water power had all found support from Democrats. George Huddleston of Alabama, as an example, was a key member of the P.L.S. but remained a loyal member of his party. More importantly, despite the tone of radical progressivism, the actual proposals in agricultural and tax reforms, the Child Labor Amendment and the Howell-Barkley Bill were essentially moderate in nature and therefore able to gain progressive Democratic support. As the votes on the discharge of the Howell-Barkley Bill demonstrated, the Democrats were also split by ideological loyalties.

The balance of power in Congress was not held by the P.L.S.. They were on the left of the political spectrum, as extreme conservatives were a minority on the right. As issues arose, less extreme but nonetheless committed progressives and conservatives gravitated towards these two sides. As the Howell-Barkley Bill demonstrated, the balance of power was held by moderates.

By the time of the election race in 1924 La Follette had developed his progressive outlook to a point where he believed that only an independent campaign could be considered. To do otherwise would be to compromise his beliefs. The result of the election in 1924 would be of major importance for the momentum of neo-progressivism and not simply for La Follette's radical campaign.

The election race never reflected the seriousness of its implications for the future of the American political system. The conservatives in both Republican and Democratic parties were muted in their campaigning. La Follette was generally denounced as a danger to the nation, but none of the topics he represented were debated in detail. John Davis had difficulty in getting attention at all. At the end of the race, Coolidge was a long way ahead of both of his rivals. Although five million votes was easily the best performance of any independent campaign, the magnitude of the Coolidge victory obscured any appreciation of this achievement. As Gompers saw it, the population had endorsed conservatism.

This was not entirely the case. The bulk of La Follette's support came from disillusioned Democrats, but many of those who had voted for Davis had voted for a man who helped draw up the labour sections of the Clayton Act and who had throughout the campaign been voluble in his support of labour. La Follette's failure was in not weaning the millions of mid-western progressive voters away from the Republican party. They remained satisfied with the position of independent progressives such as Borah and Norris representing their opinions within the Republican party.

Samuel Gompers was certainly of this opinion. He believed the result upheld what he had argued all along, that independent action was not only futile but damaging to the chances of success offered by the friends and enemies policy. He believed the result vindicated the conservative position. The abandonment of the C.P.P.A. in February 1925 demonstrated that this was a perception shared by many in the trade union movement. The result appeared to discredit the radicalism in both politics and the trade unions.

The impact of the election upon the attitudes of trade unionists and politicians in the following years is not the immediate concern of this thesis. What is important is that in the very nature of the post mortem on the result it is evident that there had been heightened expectations as to the outcome. These expectations arose from the reality of a more radical trade union outlook coinciding with and stimulating a continuing development of progressive politics which remained a significant force in American political debate in the years 1919 to 1924.

Implicit within the purpose of the thesis lie two assumptions which constitute the central analytical themes. The first is the belief that there continued to be important political developments during these years. The second assumption is that the labour movement and its aims were an integral and participating force in this development. It is hoped that the thesis has demonstrated the legitimacy of these assumptions and that this will lead to a renewed study of the nature of the relationship of trade unionism to the political system in America.

This is an aspect of the history of this period which has not received sufficient study in the past. As discussed in the introduction, there are several reasons for this, most important of which is the perception of the years 1919 to 1924 as a period of conservative resurgence and dominance. It is hoped that the thesis goes some way to modify this perception. Even if it were the case, there is no reason why political developments should not still have occurred. The thesis goes further to demonstrate that progressivism was changing to an acceptance of the need for the government to act affirmatively on behalf of the people and that this was far from being a minority opinion in Congress. The result of the 1924 election however crushed the possibility of any conscious political realignment in America. The efforts of both unionists in the C.P.P.A. and the Progressives of the P.L.S. while having provided the dynamic of political discussion up to 1924 had failed to realign the political system. If labour was to receive more effective political backing it would derive from social change in America. The broader union movement had always been ambivalent about the political posture it favoured. After 1924, the possibility of further political initiatives from unionists appeared unlikely.

The primary issue raised by the agitation of trade unionists was not in respect of their claims for the rights to strike, bargain collectively or represent the workforce. These were constituent parts of the broader political question of where power lay in American society. Many progressives, faced by this issue, concluded that power was a function of the economic position one held. This meant that the idea of individual liberty ensuring an egalitarian society could no longer remain credible. Increasingly, progressives

accepted that the economy was the vital arbiter of power and that the government must therefore intervene and the trade unions must be allowed to exercise their rights if a truly equal society were to be established. This outlook had the effect of radicalising the political spectrum in America. The result was not conservative dominance, or even that progressives held a balance of power. Progressives and conservatives were in fact in rough equilibrium. The balance of power lay with moderates in both the Democratic and Republican parties. The overall effect was of stalemate. Neither Harding nor Coolidge was able to affect this situation.

The trade union movement reflected this split in politics. There too a radical minority was providing a momentum to which the leadership of the movement was forced to respond. The period from 1919 to 1924 was a period of gradual but significant change in the nature of American politics, a change fuelled by the demands of trade unionists.

The friends and enemies policy of the trade union movement was increasingly brought into question during these years. It served to confuse the message trade unionists wished to communicate to politicians. Radical unionists held that only an ideological commitment to the working class could constitute true friendship. Conservative unionists, including Samuel Gompers, denied this. All who were prepared to vote for particular trade union proposals were regarded as friends. This non-partisan policy was based on traditional party lines still being of relevance. Yet the fact was that progressives generally could support union issues. It became a question of the depth of support and on this radicals were

dissatisfied. The friends and enemies policy tended to confuse the political impact of trade unionism. It was not the number of friends labour had but the nature of that friendship which exercised radical trade unionists. This outlook and La Follette's radical response started the momentum leftwards. In effect La Follette went too far in his proposals thereby alienating the majority of progressives. This ultimately punctured the progress which had been made during these years. Importantly, however, the conservative unionists minimised the need for progressives to adopt La Follette's radicalism by continuing with their traditional friends and enemies policy. This provided milder progressives with a constituency and thus deprived them of any motivation to endorse La Follette's position. The friends and enemies policy thus not only diluted the impact of the trade unionists' demands but also confused the political debate during the period. Nonetheless it can be concluded that the political discussions of the period resulted in a leftward trend in progressive thinking which tended to confirm the friendship of progressives for unionism. It was in this context that the trade unions took their place in the political spectrum. Far from being excluded, the conservative unionists were well represented in numbers if, by the very nature of their moderation, politicians were unable to meet their demands fully. Furthermore, radical unionists found a response from the P.L.S. whose campaigning was gradually influencing milder progressives.

The stalemate in politics was mirrored by stalemate in industry. The unions could not extend their organisation and employers could not diminish the presence of unions by direct action. The recession of 1920 to 1921 badly affected union

membership. The boom in new industries such as chemicals and automobiles resulted in a relative decline of the percentage of unionists in manufacturing industries. Finally, the shift of textile manufacturing from the North East to the South and in coal from unionised to non-unionised fields reduced union membership without any victory over unionism per se. These moves were motivated largely by economic factors. Nonetheless, the consequence of these economic considerations was the apathy and lack of organising activity which overcame trade unionism from 1923.

Economic factors weakened the trade union movement in this period, not any conservative campaign against it. Indeed the trends pointed to a growing progressive concept of federal action which included the acceptance of trade union power. The trade union movement had friends in the political system. The change in the American political system, however, meant that the questions of greatest importance during the period was how effective these friends were and how they were chosen. These questions had never been answered by the friends and enemies policy of the A.F. of L.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

President's First Industrial Conference

Representatives of the Public

Fuller E. Calloway, Lagrange, Ga

Thomas L. Chadbourne, 14 Wall Street, New York City

Henry S. Dennison, Framingham, Mass

H.B. Endicott, Dedham, Mass.

George R. James, W.R. Moore Dry Goods Co., South Third and Monroe Streets, Memphis, Tenn.

Thomas D. Jones, Marquette Building, Chicago, Ill.

A.A. Landon, American Radiator Co., Buffalo, N.Y.

E.T. Meredith, editor Successful Farming, Des Moines, Iowa

Gavin McNab, Merchants' National Bank Building, San Francisco, Calif.

L.D. Sweet, Carbondale, Colo.

Louis Titus, 544 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif.

Charles Edward Russell, 5 East Twenty-seventh Street, New York City

John Spargo, Old Bennington, Vt.

Bert M. Jewell, A.F. of L. Building, Washington D.C.

Paul L. Feiss, Cleveland, Ohio

Representatives of Women

Ida M. Tarbell, Pen and Brush Club, Gramercy Park, New York City

Lillian D. Wald

Representatives of Chamber of Commerce of the United States of America

Harry A. Wheeler, Union Trust Co., 801 Otis Building, Chicago, Ill.

Ernest T. Trigg, Federation of Construction Industries, Philadelphia, Pa.

Herbert F. Perkins, International Harvester Co., Chicago, Ill.

John J. Raskob, Du Pont Powder Co., Wilmington, Del.

Homer L. Ferguson, Newport News Shipbuilding & Drydock Co., Newport News, Va.

Representatives of Farmers' Organisations

J.N. Tittlemore, American Society of Equity, Omro, Wis.

T.C. Atkeson, National Grange, 303 Seventh Street, Washington D.C.

C.S. Barrett, Farmers' Co-operative Union, Union City, Ga.

Representatives of Investment Bankers' Association of America

Edgar L. Marston, Blair & Co., 24 Broad Street, New York City

Howard W. Fenton, Harris Trust & Savings Bank, Chicago, Ill.

Representatives of Organised Labour

Samuel Gompers, A.F. of L. Building, Washington D.C.

Frank Morrison, A.F. of L. Building, Washington D.C.

Daniel J. Tobin, 222 East Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Ind.

Joseph F. Valentine, Commercial Tribune Building, Cincinnati, Ohio

W.D. Mahon, 104 East High Street, Detroit, Mich.

T.A. Rickert, 175 West Washington Street, Chicago, Ill.

Jacob Fischer, 222 East Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Ind.

Matthew Woll, Council National Defense, Washington D.C.

Mrs Sara Conboy, 86-87 Bible House, New York City

William H. Johnston, A.F. of L. Building, Washington D.C.

Paul Scharrenberg, 525 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif.

John H. Donlin, A.F. of L. Building, Washington D.C.

M.F. Tighe, House Building, Smithfield and Water Streets,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Representatives of Railroad Brotherhoods

H.E. Wills, for the engineers

Timothy Shea, by P.J. McNamara, for the firemen

W.G. Lee, for the trainmen

L.E. Sheppard, for the conductors

Representatives of National Industrial Conference

Frederick P. Fish, chairman National Industrial Conference Board,
patent attorney, ex-president American Telephone & Telegraph Co.,
Boston, Mass.

J.W. O'Leary, secretary-treasurer Arthur J. O'Leary & Son, manu-
facturers iron and steel products, president National Metal Trades
Association, Chicago, Ill.

S. Pemberton Hutchinson, president Westmoreland Coal Co.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Edwin Farnham Greene, treasurer Pacific Mills, Boston, Mass.

L.F. Loree, 32 Nassau Street, New York City

Representatives of Railroad Managers

R.H. Aishton

Carl R. Gray

APPENDIX 2

President's Second Industrial Conference

Chairman: William B. Wilson Vice-chairman: Herbert Hoover

Martin H. Glynn
Thomas W. Gregory
Richard Hooker
Stanley King

Samuel W. McCall
Henry W. Robinson
Julius Rosenwald
George T. Slade

Oscar S. Straus
Henry C. Stuart
William O. Thompson
Frank W. Taussig.

Henry J. Waters
George W. Wickersham
Owen D. Young

APPENDIX 3

Record Vote on the Discharge Motion on the Howell-Barkley Bill

YEAS - 194

Abernethy	Doyle	Lozier	Robsion Ky.
Allen	Eagan	Lyon	Romjue
Allgood	Evans Mont.	McIntic	Rubey
Almon	Favro	McKeown	Sabath
Arnold	Foster	McReynolds	Salmon
Ayers	Frear	McSwain	Sanders Tex.
Bankhead	Fulbright	McSweeney	Sandlin
Barbour	Fulmer	MacGregor	Schafer
Barkley	Funk	Major Ill.	Schall
Beck	Garber	Major Mo.	Schneider
Berger	Gardner Ind.	Manlove	Seger
Black N.Y.	Garner Tex.	Mansfield	Shallenberger
Bloom	Garrett Tex.	Martin	Sherwood
Boies	Gasque	Mead	Simmons
Bowling	Gilbert	Miller Wash.	Sinclair
Box	Glatfelter	Milligan	Sites
Boylan	Greenwood	Minahan	Smithwick
Brand Ga.	Griffin	Montague	Steagall
Briggs	Hammer	Mooney	Stedman
Browne Wis.	Hastings	Moore Ga.	Stevenson
Browning	Hayden	Moore Va.	Summers Wash.
Buchanan	Hill Ala.	Morehead	Summers Tex.
Buckley	Hill Wash.	Morrow	Swank
Bulwinkle	Holaday	Nelson Wis.	Swing
Busby	Howard Nebr.	Nolan	Tague
Byrnes S.C.	Huddleston	O'Brien	Taylor Colo.
Byrns Tenn.	Hudspeth	O'Connell N.Y.	Taylor W.Va.
Canfield	Hull Iowa	O'Connell R.I.	Thomas Ky.
Cannon	Hull Tenn.	O'Connor La.	Thomas Okla.
Carew	Jacobstein	O'Connor N.Y.	Tillman
Carter	James	O'Sullivan	Tucker
Casey	Jeffers	Oldfield	Underwood
Celler	Johnson W.Va.	Oliver Ala.	Vinson Ga.
Clancy	Jones	Oliver N.Y.	Vincen Ky.
Collier	Keller	Parks Ark.	Voigt
Collins	Kelly	Peavey	Watkins
Connelly Tex.	Kent	Peery	Weaver
Cook	Kindred	Pou	Wefald
Cooper Oh.	King	Prall	Weller
Cooper Wis.	Kopp	Quayle	Williams Ill.
Corning	Kvale	Quinn	Wilson Ind.
Crisp	La Guardia	Ragon	Wilson Miss.
Croll	Lampert	Rainey	Wingo
Crosser	Lanham	Raker	Wolff
Cullen	Lankford	Rankin	Woodruff
Davey	Lazaro	Rathbone	Woodrum
Dickinson Mo.	Lee Geo.	Reed Ark.	Wright
Doughton	Lilly	Reid Ill.	
Dowell	Lindsay	Richards	

NAYS - 181

Ackerman	Fish	Little	Stephens
Aldrich	Fisher	Longworth	Strong Kans.
Andrew	Fitzgerald	Lowrey	Strong Pa.
Anthony	Fleetwood	Luce	Sweet
Aswell	Fredericks	McDuffy	Taber
Bacharach	Free	McFadden	Temple
Bacon	Freeman	McKenzie	Thatcher
Beedy	French	McLaughlin Mich.	Thompson
Beers	Frothingham	McLaughlin Nebr.	Timberlake
Begg	Fuller	McLeod	Tincher
Bixler	Garrett Tenn.	MacLafferty	Tinkham
Black Tex.	Gibson	Madden	Treadway
Bland	Gifford	Magee N.Y.	Underhill
Blanton	Goldsborough	Magee Pa.	Vaile
Boyce	Graham Ill.	Mapes	Vincent Mich.
Brand Oh.	Graham Pa.	Merritt	Wainwright
Britten	Green Iowa	Michener	Watres
Browne N.J.	Griest	Miller Ill.	Watson
Brumm	Hadley	Mills	Welsh
Burdick	Hardy	Moore Ill.	Wertz
Burtness	Harrison	Moore Ohio	White Kans.
Burton	Haugen	Moores Ind.	White Me.
Butler	Hawes	Mudd	Williams Mich.
Cable	Hawley	Nelson Me.	Williams Tex.
Chindblom	Hersey	Newton Minn.	Williamson
Christopherson	Hickey	Newton Mo.	Wilson La.
Clague	Hill Md.	Paige	Winslow
Clarke N.Y.	Hoch	Parker	Wyant
Cleary	Hudson	Patterson	Yates
Cole Iowa	Hull Morton D.	Perkins	Young
Cole Oh.	Hull William E.	Phillips	
Colton	Humphreys	Porter	
Connolly Pa.	Johnson S.D.	Purnell	
Cramton	Johnson Ky.	Ramseyer	
Crowther	Johnson Wash.	Ransley	
Darrow	Jost	Reece	
Davis Tenn.	Kearns	Reed N.Y.	
Deal	Kendall	Roach	
Dempsey	Kerr	Robinson Iowa	
Dennison	Ketcham	Rogers Mass.	
Dickinson Iowa	Kiess	Rouse	
Driver	Kincheloe	Sanders Ind.	
Dyer	Kurtz	Sanders N.Y.	
Edmonds	Larsen Ga.	Scott	
Elliott	Larson Minn.	Shrieve	
Evans Iowa	Lea Calif.	Sinnott	
Fairchild	Leatherwood	Smith	
Fairfield	Leavitt	Snell	
Faust	Lehlbach	Speaks	
Fenn	Linthicum	Sproul Ill.	

NOT VOTING - 57

Anderson	Greene Mass.	Morris	Swoope
Bell	Hooker	Murphy	Taylor Tenn.
Clark Fla.	Howard Okla.	Park Ga.	Tilson
Connery	Johnson Tex.	Perlman	Tydings
Cummings	Kahn	Rayburn	Upshaw
Curry	Knutson	Reed W.Va.	Vare
Dallinger	Kunz	Rogers N.H.	Vestal
Davis Minn.	Langley	Rosenbloom	Ward N.Y.
Dickstein	Lineberger	Sears Fla.	Ward N.C.
Dominick	Logan	Sears Nebr.	Wason
Drane	McNulty	Snyder	Winter
Drewry	Michaelson	Stalker	Wood
Gallivan	Morgan	Stengle	Wurzbach
Geran	Morin	Sullivan	Zihlman

APPENDIX 4

PRESIDENTIAL VOTE OF 1924 BY STATES AND

POLITICAL PARTIES

State	Republican	Democratic	Progressive	Other	Total
Alabama	45,005	112,966	8,084	569	166,624
Arizona	30,516	26,235	17,210	-	73,961
Arkansas	40,564	84,795	13,173	-	138,532
California ...	733,250	105,514	424,649	18,365	1,281,778
Colorado	195,171	75,238	69,945	1,906	342,260
Connecticut ..	246,322	110,184	42,416	1,373	400,295
Delaware	52,441	33,445	4,979	20	90,885
Florida	30,633	62,083	8,625	7,813	109,154
Georgia	30,300	123,200	12,691	386	166,577
Idaho	69,879	24,256	54,160	-	148,295
Illinois	1,453,321	576,975	432,037	7,744	2,470,077
Indiana	703,042	492,245	71,700	5,403	1,272,390
Iowa	537,635	162,600	272,243	4,482	976,960
Kansas	407,671	156,319	98,461	-	662,451
Kentucky	398,966	374,855	38,465	3,046	815,332
Louisiana	24,670	93,218	4,063	-	121,951
Maine	138,440	41,964	11,382	406	192,192
Maryland	162,414	148,072	47,157	987	358,630
Massachusetts	703,489	280,831	141,284	4,311	1,129,915
Michigan	874,631	152,359	122,014	11,415	1,160,419
Minnesota	420,759	55,913	339,192	6,232	822,146
Mississippi ..	8,546	100,475	3,494	-	112,515
Missouri	648,486	572,753	84,160	2,586	1,307,985
Montana	74,138	33,805	65,876	604	174,423
Nebraska	218,585	137,289	106,701	1,594	464,169
Nevada	11,243	5,909	9,769	-	26,921
New Hampshire	98,575	57,201	8,993	-	164,769
New Jersey ...	676,277	298,043	109,028	4,706	1,083,054
New York	1,820,058	950,796	474,905	18,172	3,263,931
New Mexico ...	54,745	48,542	9,543	-	112,830
North Carolina	191,753	234,270	6,651	13	482,637
North Dakota .	94,931	13,858	89,922	370	199,081
Ohio	1,176,130	477,883	357,948	4,271	2,016,237
Oklahoma	226,242	255,798	41,141	5,234	528,415
Oregon	142,579	67,589	68,403	917	279,488
Pennsylvania .	1,401,481	409,192	307,567	26,479	2,144,719
Rhode Island .	125,286	76,606	7,623	595	210,155
South Carolina	1,123	49,008	620	-	50,751
South Dakota .	101,299	27,214	75,355	-	203,868
Tennessee	130,382	158,537	10,656	200	300,275
Texas	130,023	484,605	42,881	-	657,509
Utah	77,327	47,001	32,662	-	156,990
Vermont	80,498	16,124	5,964	326	102,912
Virginia	73,359	139,797	10,379	191	223,726
Washington ...	220,224	42,342	150,727	7,756	421,549
West Virginia	288,635	257,232	36,723	1,072	533,662
Wisconsin	311,614	68,115	453,678	7,419	840,826
Wyoming	41,853	12,868	25,174	-	79,900
United States	15,725,016	8,386,624	4,830,478	157,013	29,099,131

APPENDIX 4 (1)

**Democratic Percentage of the Total Vote for President
in Selected Metropolitan Areas, 1920-36**

	1920	1924	1928	1932	1936
Boston	36.3	35.5	66.8	67.1	63.9
Providence	35.3	38.6	52.9	57.4	55.1
New York					
Bronx	24.4	33.6	67.7	70.4	67.2
Kings	25.9	31.9	59.5	66.9	63.6
New York	29.1	39.6	60.8	66.9	67.5
Queens	25.7	31.0	53.4	61.5	61.6
Richmond	33.2	42.0	53.4	61.1	62.6
Buffalo	25.6	21.3	44.9	46.3	52.0
Rochester	24.7	20.5	41.2	44.8	48.2
Newark	25.0	22.3	41.0	45.6	54.7
Jersey City	36.7	47.0	60.2	71.9	77.7
Philadelphia	21.5	12.1	39.5	42.9	60.5
Pittsburgh	20.1	8.7	42.4	52.9	65.2
Cleveland	30.5	9.1	45.6	50.1	65.4
Detroit	17.6	7.1	36.8	57.2	64.5
Chicago	22.1	20.3	46.5	55.2	62.4
Milwaukee	17.8	9.7	53.7	65.6	74.6
Minneapolis	20.6	6.3	38.8	54.8	58.8
St. Paul	30.8	10.1	51.2	61.2	66.0
Seattle	16.2	6.6	31.9	59.1	66.0
San Francisco	22.1	6.4	49.4	64.8	74.1
Oakland	20.3	6.1	33.6	52.1	63.6
Los Angeles	21.6	7.3	28.7	57.3	67.0

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