

[Machinery for Handling Industrial Disputes]

The most satisfactory model of a machine for handling industrial disputes that so far has been put before the country is offered by the President's Second Industrial Conference. It is to be hoped that it will be adopted before too many boog-a-boos have been invented to scare the public from it.

To be sure the machinery offered deals only with the handling of troubles; and, I take it, what we need most is ways of preventing irritations and dissatisfactions coming to the point where a tribunal is needed to settle them, that is, what we must have is as large a degree of prevention of difficulties as is possible in human affairs.

May it not be that the machinery which is before us could be as easily adapted to preventing disputes as to adjusting them? Among the duties of the regional tribunals could easily be included the regular study of industrial conditions of the district covered. Reports of these conditions could be regularly placed before employers, employees and the public, with practical advice about changing or improving them, if that were what were needed. The headquarters of each regional tribunal could be easily made a clearing house for information on the proper handling of the particular industries represented in the territory as well as the best methods of cultivating a truly human cooperative relationship between employer and employee. Thus these tribunals for handling disputes would become, in part at least, tribunals for preventing disputes; and there is no doubt that experience in the second would contribute substantially to wisdom in the first.