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Volume Author/Editor: Leo Wolman

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Chapter Author: Leo Wolman

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CHAPTER II

CHANGES IN UNION MEMBERSHIP, 1880–1923

The year 1897 may conveniently be chosen as the beginning of the contemporary phase of the American labor movement. By that time the struggle for supremacy between the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, begun in the early eighties, had been settled with a victory for the Federation. In the middle nineties the Knights of Labor, which had pursued so spectacular a career in the decade from 1880 to 1890, had practically disappeared from the field, to remain thereafter a shadow of its former self with only a handful of members. The independent and insurgent railroad workers' movements of the early 1890's had likewise ended, leaving the conservative railroad brotherhoods in full command of the situation. Old and new trade unions, adhering now to more conservative strike and organization policies, took measures to build stronger foundations for the future. And the serious business depression, with its concomitants of extensive business failures and vast unemployment, was about to turn into recovery.

For the purposes of statistical analysis it is essential to comprehend the nature of the labor movement in the period from 1880 to 1897. The Knights of Labor, which was for a time the dominant factor in the field, had all the characteristics of an unstable and impermanent organization. It owed its striking growth from 1884 to 1886 to participation in a wave of country-wide strikes which brought into the organization thousands of unskilled workers, hitherto unorganized and apparently not then in a position to adhere permanently to a labor organization. The machinery for consolidating these great gains the organization of the Knights lacked. The energies of its officers and members were dissipated in a great variety of coöperative and political enterprises, for the successful conduct of which the Knights had neither the financial resources nor the administrative skill. Its accessions in membership, at the

height of its success, were not of the type to yield a large treasury and a disciplined and stable rank and file.

The Knights were not, moreover, in unchallenged control of the enterprise of organizing the unorganized workers of the country. For many years there had existed more or less powerful organizations of skilled workers, such as the bricklayers', printers', cigarmakers', iron molders', steel workers', and railroad workers' unions, which were drawn into the strikes of the period, without being able to dictate their strategy or to control their duration. These organizations manifested then, as they do now, a strong inclination for autonomy in the management of the affairs of the industry or occupation over which they happened to have jurisdiction. To be drawn into strikes, which they frequently considered ill-advised and for grievances which they sometimes regarded as not their own, became a source of constant irritation and of growing resentment.

In November, 1881, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions was organized in the city of Pittsburgh. This organization, the direct precursor of the American Federation of Labor, had as its principal moving spirit, Samuel Gompers. Whatever may have been the motives and intentions of its founders, the Federation became the rallying point for the unions of skilled workers, the trade unions. Before long it was involved in open conflict with the Knights of Labor. By the close of this decade, organizations affiliated with the Knights were calling strikes against those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and vice versa. The Haymarket disaster was the beginning of the end of the Knights of Labor. For all practical purposes the struggle for supremacy was over by 1890; and the trade-autonomous labor organizations, in their confederation of unions, the American Federation of Labor, had won.

It was, however, in the activities of both the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor that the foundation was laid for the organization of the many trade unions that are now an integral part of the organized labor movement in this country. The years from 1885 to 1895 were exceedingly busy ones in the founding of new labor organizations which later became the national and international trade unions of today. In a formative period like that from 1880 to 1890 the spectacular successes of the Knights

of Labor were enough to fire the imagination of workingmen and to pave the way for the creation of more lasting organizations. In 1886 and 1887 alone, nineteen new national unions were formed.[1]

Statistics of membership during such a period must naturally be severely discounted. Diverse cross-currents in the labor movement were simultaneously in operation, workingmen at the same time held membership in more than one of the competing unions, and joining a union was often only a temporary incident in the conduct of a strike. Such were the characteristics of the fifteen years after 1880. Warring organizations, also, with the smell of blood still fresh in their nostrils were not beyond making claims for their fighting strength, which it would be impossible now to substantiate. Nor were the records of unions, except in a few instances, in such shape as to constitute the source of adequate and reliable data. Such figures for the period as can be used should for these reasons do no more than give an impression of the general order of magnitude of the labor movement in the eighties and early nineties.

The following table is by no means complete. It does show, however, the reported membership of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor and of a number of the more important trade unions, in existence at that time. The most significant item in the table is the evidence of the very rapid recession in membership experienced by the Knights of Labor after 1886. Its imposing numbers, even if all allowance is made for inflation, it held for little more than two years. At its peak the gross membership in this decade of all American labor organizations probably did not exceed 1,000,000 and of this number, as has been said before, at least 250,000 represented a strike membership decidedly ephemeral in character.

[1] In 1886 the following national trade unions were formed: the National Union of Brewery Workers; the Metal Polishers', Buffers', Platers' and Brass Workers' International Union; the Order of Railroad Telegraphers; the Machinists' National League; the National League of Musicians; the International Musical Union; the Protective Fraternity of Printers; the Tailors' Progressive Union; the Mutual Association of Railroad Switchmen of North America; the Glass Blowers of North America; in 1887: the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators; the Horse Collar Makers' National Union; the Building Laborers' National Union; the Saddle and Harness Makers' National Association; the Silk Workers' National Union; the Umbrella, Pipe and Cane Workers' National Union; the Paving Cutters' National Union; the Pattern Makers' League; the Brotherhood of Section Foremen. Commons and Associates, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. II, p. 396.

TABLE 1. — MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED AMERICAN LABOR UNIONS, 1880–1896

Year	Knights of Labor[a]	A. F. of L.[b]	Iron Molders[c]	Bricklayers[d]	Cigarmakers[e]	Railway Conductors[f]	Typographical[g]	Locomotive Firemen[h]	Railroad Trainmen[i]	Carpenters[j]	Steel Workers[k]
1880	28,136	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,050	6,520	.....	.....	.....	9,550
1881	19,422	40,000	.....	2,500	.....	1,420	7,931	3,160	.....	2,042	10,359
1882	42,517	65,000	10,000	.....	11,430	2,014	10,439	5,125	.....	3,780	16,003
1883	51,914	76,000	.....	.....	13,214	3,298	12,273	7,888	.....	3,293	11,800
1884	60,811	105,000	.....	.....	11,871	6,109	16,030	12,246	901	4,364	9,242
1885	104,066	125,000	.....	7,000	12,000	7,944	16,183	14,694	4,766	5,789	5,702
1886	702,924	138,000	13,000	.....	24,672	10,330	18,484	16,196	7,993	21,423	7,219
1887	510,351	160,000	.....	.....	20,566	11,947	19,190	17,047	8,662	25,466	11,426
1888	259,578	175,000	16,000	.....	17,199	13,224	17,491	18,278	11,413	28,416	14,946
1889	220,607	210,000	.....	.....	17,555	13,720	21,120	17,087	.....	31,494	16,117
1890	100,000	225,000	23,000	24,000	24,624	14,453	22,608	18,657	13,562	53,769	20,781
1891	.....	238,000	.....	.....	24,221	17,906	25,165	22,460	20,409	56,937	24,068
1892	.....	255,000	.....	.....	26,678	20,224	28,187	25,967	28,540	51,313	20,975
1893	74,635	260,000	.....	.....	26,788	20,356	30,454	28,681	22,359	54,121	13,613
1894	.....	275,000	.....	.....	27,828	19,827	31,379	26,508	.....	33,917	10,000
1895	.....	270,000	20,000	19,500	27,760	19,737	29,295	21,408	.....	25,152	10,000
1896	.....	265,000	.....	.....	27,318	19,810	28,838	22,461	22,326	29,691	11,000

[a] Commons and Associates, *History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. II, pp. 339, 343–4, 381, 413, 482, 494.
[b] Estimated by reading from bar chart in annual convention proceedings.
[c] Frank T. Stockton, "The International Molders' Union of North America," *Johns Hopkins Studies*, p. 23.
[d] *Report of Officers*, 1911, p. 534.
[e] Report of President Perkins to 22d Annual Convention, 1920.
[f] E. C. Robbins, *The Railway Conductors, A Study in Organized Labor.*
[g] G. E. Barnett, *The Printers, A Study in American Trade Unionism*, p. 375.
[h] *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen's Magazine*, May, 1922.
[i] D. L. Cease, "Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen," in *Gunton's Magazine*, March, 1901.
[j] *Convention Proceedings*, 1916, p. 77.
[k] J. S. Robinson, "The Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers," *Johns Hopkins Studies*, 1920, p. 21.

Beginning, roughly, in 1897 the American labor movement thereafter pursued a steadier and apparently a more permanent course. In the last twenty-seven years trade union membership has experienced marked growth. In 1923 membership was roughly 3,330,000 greater than at the beginning of the period and a little more than a million greater than at the beginning of the World War. As the next two tables indicate, except for the large recession since 1920,

TABLE 2. — TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF AMERICAN TRADE UNIONS 1897–1923

Year	Membership	Year	Membership	Year	Membership
1897	447,000	1906	1,958,700	1915	2,607,700
1898	500,700	1907	2,122,800	1916	2,808,000
1899	611,000	1908	2,130,600	1917	3,104,600
1900	868,500	1909	2,047,400	1918	3,508,400
1901	1,124,700	1910	2,184,200	1919	4,169,100
1902	1,375,900	1911	2,382,800	1920	5,110,800
1903	1,913,900	1912	2,483,500	1921	4,815,000
1904	2,072,700	1913	2,753,400	1922	4,059,400
1905	2,022,300	1914	2,716,900	1923	3,780,000

this growth was a steady and almost continuous one. Losses in membership were in each case associated with and were probably, in part at least, the effect of business depression. Thus the periods of loss in membership, 1904–1906, 1908–1909, 1913–1915, and 1920–1923, correspond roughly with the periods of business decline. There is no question that monthly statistics of membership would show even closer correspondence. Except, also, for the year 1923 and possibly 1922, the years of business revival are generally those of gain in membership. Except again for the period, 1920–1923, which presents peculiarities and the result of which is still uncertain, the recessions of the past were more than made up by subsequent rises in membership.

The detailed data of the membership of all trade unions, from 1897 to 1923, are shown in Table I.[1] In this table the unions are classified in the groups used by Professor Barnett in his two articles. While some unions, like the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, which includes in its membership factory woodworkers as well as outside carpenters, properly fall into several classes, no attempt

[1] Appendix. All tables designated by Roman numbers are in the Appendix.

was made to distribute the membership of any union among the various groups. The Maintenance of Way Employees were unwilling to submit their membership for the years 1920, 1921, and 1922. Since the figures for 1919 and 1923 were available, the estimates in the table were derived by simple interpolation on the assumption that there was in the period a gradual drop in membership. This assumption is not far from the truth. The Amalgamated Textile Workers were likewise reluctant to give any figures for the years after 1920. In this case no reasonable basis for estimate

TABLE 3. — CHANGES IN TOTAL MEMBERSHIP
1897–1923

Period	Gain or Loss in Membership			
	Number		Per Cent	
	In period	Average per year	In period	Average per year
1897–1904	+ 1,625,700	+ 232,243	+ 363.7	+ 52.0
1904–1906	− 114,000	− 57,000	− 5.5	− 2.8
1906–1908	+ 171,900	+ 85,950	+ 8.8	+ 4.4
1908–1909	− 83,200	− 83,200	− 3.9	− 3.9
1909–1913	+ 706,000	+ 176,500	+ 34.5	+ 8.6
1913–1915	− 145,700	− 72,850	− 5.3	− 2.6
1915–1920	+ 2,503,100	+ 500,620	+ 96.0	+ 19.2
1920–1923	− 1,330,800	− 443,600	− 26.0	− 8.7
1897–1923	+ 3,333,000	+ 123,444	+ 745.6	+ 27.6

could be found. It is known, however, that this organization lost heavily in membership in the past three years. The net effect of this omission is to underestimate the recent membership of the textile group and to exaggerate somewhat, but not greatly, the degree of the fall since 1920.

Changes in total membership over the period were not shared alike or at the same time by the component unions. The time and extent of recession and of recovery varied widely among the groups and among particular organizations. Practically all of the groups participated in the steady growth that began in 1897, when the

majority of the unions were small and just getting on their feet, and was interrupted by the decline in business of 1903–1904. Only two important groups of unions moved up and down within this period, the mining and quarrying, and textile groups. Both have been subject to violent and frequent fluctuations in membership throughout their history. While the progress of the coal union, the largest union in the mining and quarrying group, has been steadily upward, it has experienced in its conflicts with coal operators many vicissitudes, it has engaged in frequent strikes, and has often launched vigorous organization campaigns in both the anthracite and bituminous districts which have alternately failed and succeeded. These engagements have resulted in accessions and losses in membership, more frequent than those of unions which have had a more quiet development. The important textile unions have been and are notoriously weak. Their industrial relations, like those of the miners, have often been dotted with great strikes and organization campaigns that have meant a fluctuating membership.

The steadiest growth is found in the three important groups of building, transportation and printing unions. In all of these groups, the dominant organizations are the old and well-established unions which were operating with considerable force even before 1897. After the first phase of rapid growth, terminating somewhere between 1904 and 1905, these unions were only slightly affected by the business recessions prior to that of 1920. Unions in the building trades dropped 4.8 per cent in 1904, 4.2 per cent in 1908 and 3.7 per cent from 1913 to 1915. The printing unions lost 7 per cent from 1904 to 1907, 4.5 per cent in 1908 and had no losses again until 1921. Similarly the transportation group had an unbroken rise from 1909 to 1920, but fell 5.6 per cent in 1905 and 6.8 per cent in 1908. Two other groups, still relatively a small part of the total membership of American trade unions, had the longest periods of uninterrupted increase. The early rise in the membership of the musical and theatrical unions is due wholly to the steady growth of the musicians' unions and of the theatrical stage employees' organization; while the increase in the membership of the public service group is a function almost entirely of the growth of the letter carriers' and post-office clerks' unions, both of which had in 1900 a membership of only 15,400.

Conditions affecting the growth of trade unions in the years 1915 to 1923 are of particular interest. In this period were felt the effects of the war, of the post-war boom, and of the subsequent depression lasting from 1920 to 1922. It is clear that, during this whole time, the labor movement worked under circumstances not likely to be soon duplicated. Because of heavy foreign purchasing in the United States, the depression of 1914 was converted rapidly into intense business activity. The European conflict made greater and greater demands on American industry and agriculture. With the entry of the United States into the war in April, 1917, our war requirements led to the development on a vast scale of so-called war industries, produced some diversion from civilian to war industry production, and left the output of strictly non-war goods at its previously high level.

Accustomed to draw a large part of its increments of labor from the immigrant labor market, this country met these extraordinary new demands for additional production with the supply of immigrant labor practically cut off by the various war blockades. The cessation of this influx of immigrants, which before the war had amounted to almost 1,000,000 a year, was bound to produce amid conditions of intense business activity a stringent labor market, full employment and rising wages. These results, already apparent before the beginning of 1917, became more manifest after the American declaration of war.

The urgent need for uninterrupted production and the fear that competitive bidding for labor, high labor mobility and threatened strikes would impede the war program led to the swift adoption of schemes of government controls over industry and to the active participation by the government in the processes of collective bargaining and industrial relations. Government labor boards were set up in the transportation, clothing, shipbuilding, leather and other industries. On these boards the representatives of organized workingmen had both a seat and a voice. Impending disputes were in many cases resolved by submission for settlement to the representatives of trade unions, who in this manner gained in prestige and influence.

All of these factors, naturally, were highly favorable to the spread of labor organization. The slackening of immigration and the

activity of business produced a rising labor market. A high level of employment among factory workers is a condition peculiarly favorable to the vigorous and successful conduct of campaigns of organization. Workers then do not fear discharge and they are generally anxious to avail themselves of their collective bargaining power and of the skill of trade union officials in winning concessions in wages, hours and working conditions. Furthermore, to a greater degree than at any time before, unions were operating more or less under the ægis of the government. The result was a continuous and substantial rise in membership.

These conditions of business prosperity and of a tight labor market did not end with the signing of the armistice in the fall of 1918. There was, to be sure, a period of lull in business and industry lasting some three or four months. But after the first quarter of 1919 industrial activity increased again and prices and wages rose to new high levels. The fresh revival and boom continued into 1920 when it stopped short in the early months of that year, first in one industry and then in another. By the middle of the year some industries were already in a deep slump which soon spread over industry in general. During 1921 the volume of unemployment was large and wages were falling.

Revival set in once more in the last half of 1922. Prices began slowly to rise; industrial operations were resumed; and at the beginning of 1923 business and industry were again in full swing. While a perceptible slackening took place in April or May of 1923, that year as a whole is now generally regarded as a prosperous one. In it there was full employment, rising prices and wages, and a high level of business earnings.

To all of these changes in business and to other pertinent factors, union membership reacted promptly and perceptibly. From 1915 to 1920 labor organizations gained 2,503,100 members, a gain almost as great as their total membership in 1914. Again, in the next three-year period, more than one-half of this gain, or 1,330,800 members, were lost. Industrial depression and revival do not strike all industries at the same time or to the same degree. Various groups of unions, consequently, may be expected to show marked variation in the rise and fall of their membership. The broad facts concerning these differences are shown in the following table.

TABLE 4. — PER CENT OF GAIN OR LOSS IN MEMBERSHIP 1915–1923

Group of Unions	1915–1920	1920–1921	1921–1922	1922–1923
Mining	+ 25.7	+ 6.5	− 14.5	+ 9.2
Building	+ 66.7	− 2.1	− 4.9	+ 2.2
Metal	+ 283.1	− 15.2	− 30.5	− 29.1
Textile	+ 565.6	− 40.9	− 58.1	+ 1.6
Clothing	+ 113.2	− 12.1	− 4.1	+ 1.0
Leather	+ 113.8	− 14.7	− 6.2	− 18.9
Transportation	+ 118.1	− 1.3	− 16.2	− 8.7
Paper	+ 41.9	+ 10.7	− 11.6	− 5.8
Lumber	+ 15.6	− 17.6	− 38.8	− 13.9
Chemical	− 2.6	+ 2.7	− 6.4	− 8.8
Food	+ 4.0	− 1.6	− 18.1	− 7.4
Restaurant	+ 75.4	− 16.5	− 32.3	− 28.6
Theatre	+ 13.7	+ 7.5	+ 1.1	+ 0.3
Public Service	+ 78.3	+ 6.4	− 0.6	+ 0.9
Total	+ 96.0	− 5.8	− 15.7	− 6.9

Among the more important groups of unions, obviously, the most striking growth in membership from 1915 to 1920 was made by the textile, metal, transportation, clothing, leather and building groups. The great rise in textile membership is not so significant as it seems, because the base is so low, its membership in 1915 being only 22,400. The rise in the other groups, however, is large in either absolute or relative terms. The total rise in the membership of the building trades unions should not properly be credited to the construction industry alone, since, as it has already been said, unions like the carpenters, electrical workers and painters have a substantial membership outside of the building industry. Many members, likewise, of the metal trades unions worked in railroad shops and would have contributed appreciably, if materials for distributing the statistics had been available, to the increase in membership of the transportation group.

Some of the groups which contributed most heavily to the rise were most severely hit in the subsequent drop in membership. Thus both the metal and textile groups suffered uniformly large losses in each of the three years from 1920 to 1923. The transportation group also incurred substantial losses. The large varia-

tions in the degree of loss in each of the years from 1920 to 1923 are probably more apparent than real and are at least partly due as much to defects in the statistics as to fact. In the first place, practice among unions varies with regard to their treatment of members who fail to pay dues. Keeping large numbers of such members on the rolls of the union will produce a considerable lag between a drop in business and a fall in union membership. Secondly, a great many unions submit their membership statistics in the form of the average membership for the fiscal year ending somewhere toward the middle of that year. In this case, the prevailing method of reporting probably underestimates the magnitude of the fall from 1920 to 1921 and exaggerates it from 1921 to 1922. On the other hand, it is no doubt true that there is actually a considerable lag between the incidence of unemployment and the surrender of union membership. In any event, the data in the table indicate a slackening in the rate of fall in membership during the past year. Thus a loss from 1920 to 1921 of 295,800 members rose to 755,600 in 1921 to 1922 and fell to 279,400 in the last year of the period. Moreover four important groups show slight increases in membership from 1922 to 1923. While the loss in total membership was 279,400, the mining, building, textile and clothing groups gained; the mining group substantially and the rest only slightly.

Although the great rise from 1915 to 1920 and the severe decline in the next years was shared by all of the important groups of unions, there is no question that the unions claiming jurisdiction over industries most directly affected by the war felt both the rise and fall most sharply. As the next table indicates, almost three-fourths of the whole gain in membership after 1915 was made in industries that experienced large expansion during the war and that were subject to some form of public control. When, however, the drop came, the largest losers both absolutely and relatively were the transportation and metal groups, which together were responsible for more than 60 per cent of the total loss of 1,330,800 members in that period. The metal unions, accordingly, lost almost five-sixths and the transportation unions nearly one-half of their previous gains. The building and clothing unions, on the other hand, suffered substantial but proportionately much smaller declines.

Gain in Total Membership, 1915–1920	2,503,100
Gain in following groups:	
Transportation	680,000
Metal	634,600
Building	355,200
Clothing	192,400
Total for above groups	1,862,200
Loss in Total Membership, 1920–1923	1,330,800
Loss in following groups:	
Transportation	307,800
Metal	500,500
Building	43,500
Clothing	54,000
Total for above groups	905,800

The explanation for this concentrated loss in membership is certainly not a simple one and cannot be made in terms of business depression alone. Many and diverse factors helped to shape the course of trade union membership between the collapse of the post-war boom and the recovery of 1922–1923. The business history of the building industry differed widely from that of almost all other industries after 1920. Extensive war restrictions on private building construction resulted after 1920 in an early resumption of activity in the building industry and finally, even before the general industrial revival had begun, in an imposing building boom which has not yet altogether ended. This prolonged period of intense activity was accompanied, particularly in the larger cities, by a shortage of skilled building trades workers and consequently by a rise in the membership of the building unions. The clothing unions which encountered severe business depressions in their industry in 1921, 1922 and again in the last half of 1923, kept their losses down by prosecuting extensive organization campaigns and by engaging in strikes which for the most part were successful enough to enable them to hold the bulk of their membership.

In the steam transportation industry the efforts to retain the strength of the unions by challenging the employers in strike were equally vigorous but not so successful. The net effect of the shop-

men's strike was the loss of control over many railroads and severe decreases in the membership of the machinists', railway carmen's, boilermakers', blacksmiths' and sheet-metal workers' unions. Water transportation unions, like the longshoremen, and other organizations, like the teamsters, lost heavily in membership through sheer weakness in tests of strength with the employers. Resistance, in all of these groups, to demands for wage concessions and revisions in working rules culminated in strikes which left the unions smaller than they were before.

The puzzling problem in this whole period of business recession turns on the extent of the permanent readjustment in industry that attended the liquidation of the purely war industries. The evidence on this matter is naturally not entirely convincing, but it is sufficient to permit some generalization. The year 1921 probably differs from the years of ordinary depression in business in that some of the losses in industry were more or less permanent or long-

TABLE 5.—DECREASE IN NUMBER OF WAGE EARNERS IN SELECTED GROUP OF INDUSTRIES
1919–1921

Industry	Average Number of Wage Earners		Per Cent Change
	1919	1921	
Metal, Machine Products, Shipbuilding[a]	1,903,797	1,158,657	− 39.1
Lumber	610,346	474,875	− 22.2
Printing and Publishing	287,278	268,081	− 6.6
Rubber Goods	158,549	103,273	− 34.9
Leather and Products	349,362	280,071	− 19.8
Clay, Glass, Cement Products	219,298	188,541	− 14.0
Wearing Apparel	975,780	884,035	− 9.4
Textile[b]	942,610	899,969	− 4.5
Slaughtering and Meat Packing	160,996	117,042	− 27.3
Smelting and Refining (non-ferrous)	39,620	19,014	− 52.0
Total	5,647,636	4,393,558	− 22.2

[a] Includes the following industries: farm equipment, ship and boat building, textile machinery, machine tools, typewriters, steam and electric railroad cars, railroad repair shops, electrical machinery, cast iron pipe, carriages and wagons, brass, bronze, copper and allied products, ammunitions and firearms, motor vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles, engines, locomotives and aircraft.

[b] Includes cotton manufactures, knit goods, silk manufactures, wool manufactures

time in character. This was unquestionably the case with such industries as shipbuilding and machine shops, which were either direct or auxiliary war industries and which had, therefore, abnormal expansion during the war. The preceding table, compiled from the bulletins of the 1921 U. S. Census of Manufactures, shows the drop in the number of wage earners from 1919 to 1921 for a selected group of industries. All of them together had an average factory working force in 1921 almost one-fourth less than in 1919. But the most striking drop took place in the metal, machinery and shipbuilding group, where there was at the same time the heaviest fall in trade union membership. Within this group, moreover, those industries, in which some of the metal unions had previously made their most substantial gains, dropped even more heavily. The ship and boat building industry had in 1921, 280,000 less wage earners than in 1919, or a decrease of 72.5 per cent [1]; the machine tool industry fell 30,000 or 59.9 per cent; and the engine, locomotive and aircraft industry more than 40,000, or 54.2 per cent. It is, of course, not feasible to correlate directly these contractions in

[1] The following table, taken from Douglas and Wolfe, "Labor Administration in the Shipbuilding Industry During War Time" (*Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. XXVII, 1919) shows how entirely the increase in the number of employees in shipbuilding was a war phenomenon:

Month	Total Employees in Shipyards on Emergency Fleet Corporation Work
1917	
October	88,000 (est.)
November	120,000 (est.)
December	146,000 (est.)
1918	
January	191,000
February	204,000
March	228,000
April	258,000
May	281,000
June	314,000
July	332,000
August	352,000
September	371,000
October	375,000
November	385,000

industry with the decreases in membership of specific labor organizations, without identifying the individual members who in these years forfeited their membership. Such identification is plainly impossible. Common knowledge on the matter, however, indicates that unions like the machinists and the boilermakers and iron shipbuilders lost markedly in precisely the failing industries.

No interpretation of the course of trade union membership after 1920 can be complete without some hypothesis regarding the relative levels of industrial capacity in this country at the peak in 1920 and in the years following. It may indeed be that the war and post-war expansions brought temporarily into industry large numbers of persons who gradually left with the collapse of business and did not, for the most part, return again. This certainly happened, probably on a large scale, in the shipbuilding industry where revival did not make up for the losses in depression. Unfortunately the data of the U. S. Census of Manufactures for 1923 are not yet available in sufficient number to permit a detailed comparison of the average numbers of wage earners employed in selected

TABLE 6. — GENERAL INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT IN MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES[a]
1920–1923

Month	1920	1921	1922	1923
January	116	77	87	98
February	115	83	88	100
March	117	84	84	102
April	117	84	83	102
May	117	85	85	102
June	118	85	87	102
July	110	85	87	100
August	110	86	88	100
September	107	87	91	100
October	103	89	93	99
November	97	89	94	99
December	91	90	97	97

[a] *Monthly Labor Review*, U. S. Department of Labor, July, 1924, p. 153.

industries in 1921 and 1923. What statistical straws there are indicate that the pay rolls of manufacturing industries were uni-

formly lower, with reference to the numbers employed in 1923, also regarded as a year of prosperity, than in the year 1920. Thus the accompanying table on average monthly employment from 1920 to 1923 shows that average numbers of persons on the pay rolls of manufacturing industries in the United States in 1920 were 10 per cent greater than in 1923; and that the peak numbers were almost 15 per cent greater in 1920 than in the later year. The same general conclusions are supported by similar data on fluctuations in employment in New York State, collected by the office of the New York Industrial Commissioner. In that state the number on factory pay rolls was roughly 7 per cent greater in 1920 than in 1923; and the peak number in the earlier year was about 10 per cent higher than in the later year. So far as these figures have any meaning at all they would seem to indicate a general contraction in manufacturing industry in the United States since 1920, which reflects itself in the widespread and appreciable employment of fewer persons. It is unfortunate that the available statistics still throw but little light on the nature of the absorption of this excess industrial population that must have taken place in these years. But it would seem to be reasonably clear that such a contraction did occur and that it accounts, in part at least, for the precipitate drop in the membership of labor organizations from the peak of business in 1920 to the next year of business prosperity, 1923.

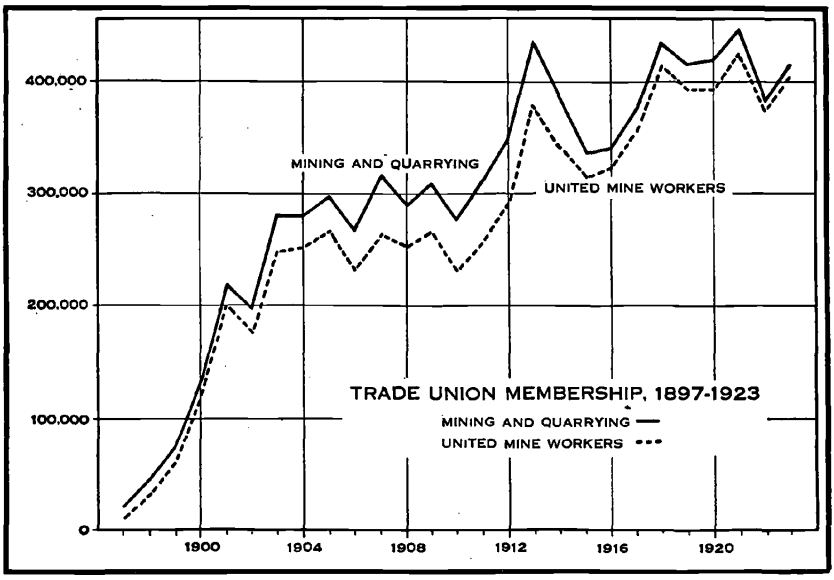
In general, old established labor organizations are less subject to marked fluctuations in their membership than recently organized and weak unions. Whether the general movement is upward or downward, the strong unions as a rule contribute relatively less to the total gains or losses. This was not true, of course, in the earliest periods when the great majority of unions were all small and had just begun to organize their trades or industries. It is also not true even in the later phases, when a strong and well-established organization is forced to face the problem of holding its control over an industry that is rapidly undergoing a technical revolution. But, with this exception, the extreme and striking movements of more recent years are due almost entirely to the changes in membership either of new and young unions, or of organizations

that had not yet achieved real strength. To understand the position of these types of unions in the American labor movement it is necessary to undertake a somewhat more detailed description than has yet been given of the changes in membership of the 14 groups of unions and of the most important unions within each group.

Mining and Quarrying

Union membership in this group has throughout, as the next chart shows, been dominated by the career of the United Mine Workers. In the last year the membership of the United Mine Workers constituted more than 97 per cent of the total membership of the group. For a time, roughly from 1902 to 1911, the

CHART 1



Western Federation of Miners, which claimed jurisdiction over mines other than coal, rose to a position of importance. After 1911, however, it was beaten by the employers and it has since lost consistently. Its successor, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, has never achieved real strength. The statistical history of the United Mine Workers is the story of the effect on membership of

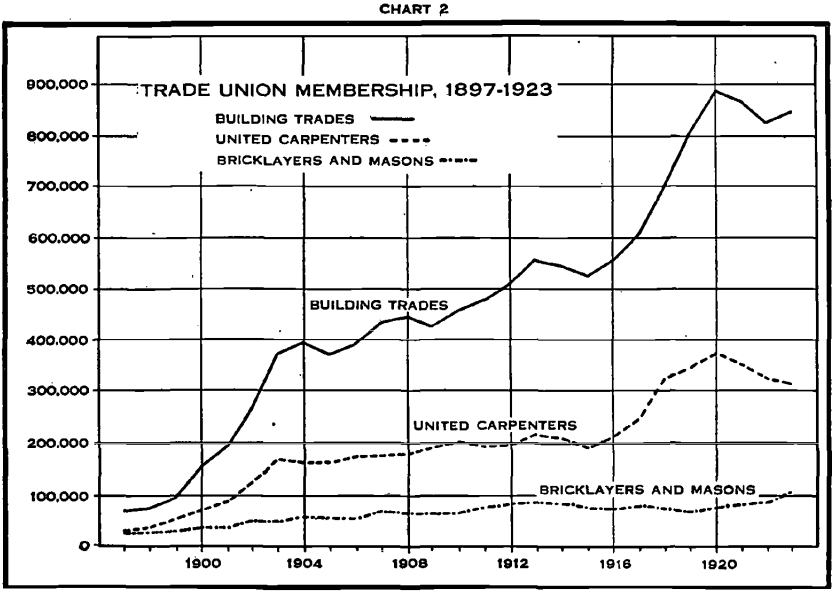
a long succession of strikes and organization campaigns, which generally yielded more members. The first of the strikes, in this period, occurred in 1897. In two years membership rose more than 50,000. Both in 1900 and in 1902, the vast anthracite strikes, designed to establish the unions in the hard coal industry, terminated with the appointment of the Anthracite Coal Strike Commission, with the practical recognition of the union, and with a rise in membership from 1899 to 1905 of almost 200,000. Another anthracite strike took place in 1912 and in that same year the union was able to effect the resumption of the interstate conferences in the bituminous industry, which had for some years been suspended. From 1912 to 1913, membership rose about 90,000. The miners' union was affected during the war and post-war periods by much the same type of circumstances as influenced the growth of labor organizations in general. High levels of industrial activity and the restriction of immigration proved factors favorable to a rising membership, although the rise was interrupted in 1919 to 1920, when the union struck for wage increases in both the bituminous and anthracite fields and received from government commissions wage awards, which it regarded as unsatisfactory, and again in 1921 when it suffered the effects of severe depression in the industry. Another strike in 1922 for the purpose of organizing the non-union fields, particularly of West Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the successful issue of wage negotiations in 1923 contributed to a partial recovery from previous losses.

Building Trades

Except for the breaks due to business recessions membership in the building trades unions shows a continuous upward movement and was in 1923, 290,000 greater than in 1913. It is one of the few groups which experienced a rise after the large drop of 1920 and is also one of the few whose loss after 1920 was comparatively slight, amounting only to 6.9 per cent. The bricklayers' union, which is an old and remarkably steady organization, hardly participated at all in the general rise in membership that came after 1915. Being almost purely a building industry organization it suffered from the lull in building activity that prevailed nearly through-

out the war. But for a slight rise in 1917, its membership fell until 1919, and then, stimulated by the new revival in construction, reached in 1923 a membership of 103,700, the highest point in its history. The carpenters, on the other hand, the largest union in the building trades, went up steadily until 1920 and has declined, without a break, since. This difference in the course of the membership of the bricklayers' and carpenters' unions is no doubt due to the fact that the carpenters' organization, having jurisdiction over factory workers in the lumber and other industries as well

CHART 2

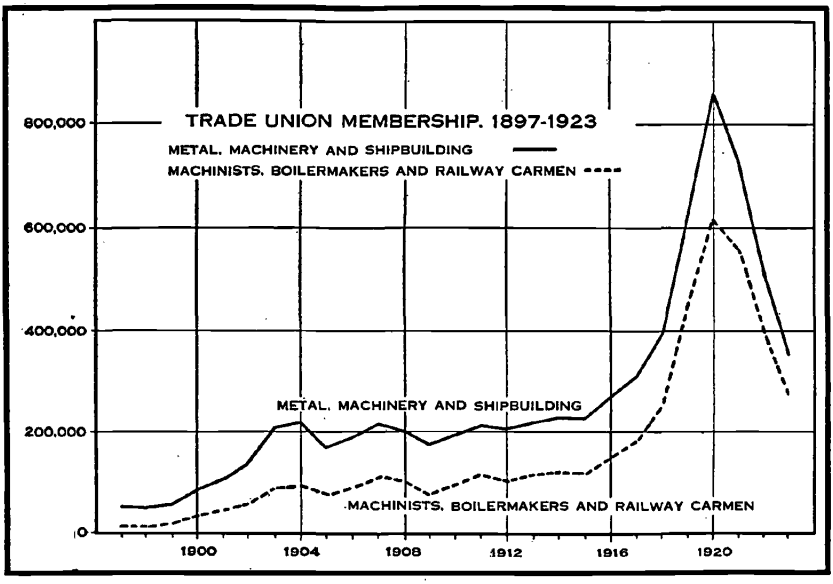


as over carpenters in the building industry, participated to a greater extent in the general rise and also in the subsequent widespread loss in membership. The carpenters' and electrical workers' unions alone were responsible for about 280,000 members out of the total gain by the building trades, from 1915 to 1920, of something more than 300,000 members. The electrical workers held their gain but the carpenters lost about 60,000 members between 1920 and 1923. In the last year, however, the carpenters were still roughly 100,000 larger than in the pre-war years.

Metal, Machinery and Shipbuilding

In this group membership after 1915 was of an entirely different order of magnitude from what it was before that period of extraordinary gain. For almost a decade prior to the war, the numbers in this group remained somewhere around 200,000, but by 1920 its membership had risen to more than 800,000, the most spectacular growth

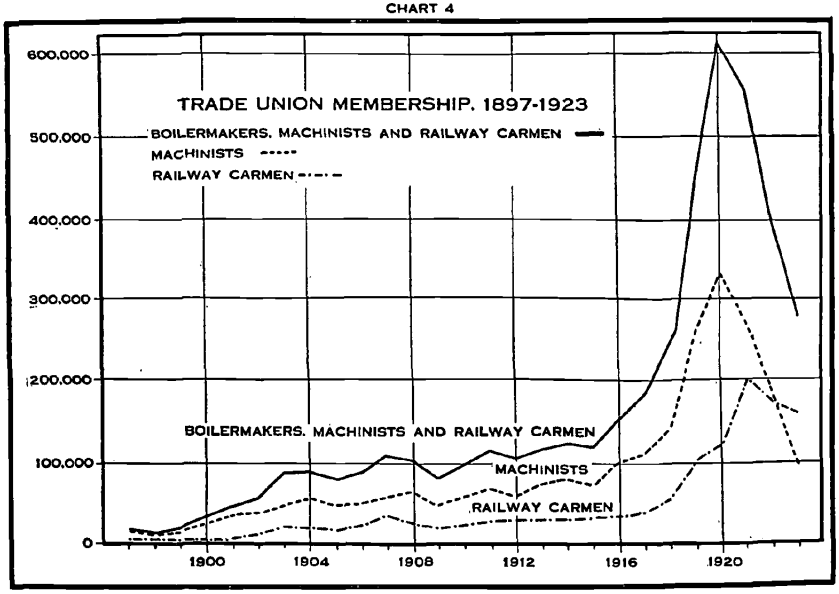
CHART 3



of all. This rise has already been attributed to the marked expansion of the war metal and ship industries and to the securing of a firmer foothold in the railroad shops by some unions in this group. Although this class includes a large number of organizations, substantially all of the gains and, later, the bulk of the losses were those of only a few unions: the blacksmiths, boilermakers and shipbuilders, iron, steel and tin workers, machinists and railway carmen. The machinists alone gained more than a quarter of a million members; the railway carmen, 170,000; the boilermakers over 80,000; and the blacksmiths and steel workers, smaller amounts. In the next period of loss the machinists, blacksmiths, boilermakers

and steel workers suffered most heavily; the machinists alone losing more than 230,000 members. The railway carmen also declined to the extent of 40,000, but of all of the important organizations in the group, it was the most successful in preserving its war and

CHART 4



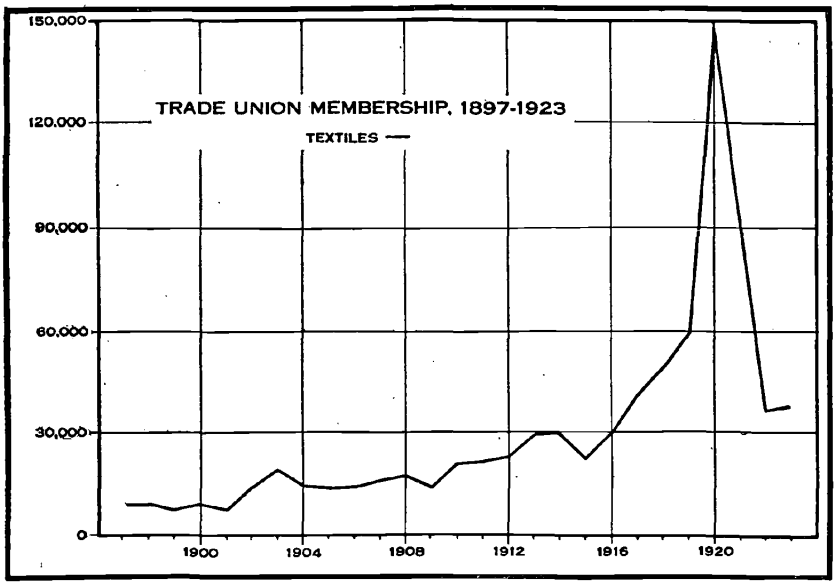
post-war gains. At the close of this period, in 1923, the membership of the railway carmen was 132,000 greater than in 1913; while the total membership of the metal group stood at, roughly, 140,000 above 1913.

Textiles

Organized labor in this group has for years been weak since there are large sections of the industry into which the unions have failed to penetrate. The large increase in membership in the years 1915–1920 of about 125,000 was due entirely to spurts in organization in which the older organization, the United Textile Workers, and the newly organized Amalgamated Textile Workers shared. Nearly all the gains were lost soon after 1920 and the whole group stood in 1923 less than 10,000 members larger than before the war. The inclusion of the figures which the Amalgamated Textile Workers

refuse to give for the years 1921, 1922 and 1923 would have raised the total membership in these years little, if at all. The slight rise in membership in 1923 is due entirely to increases in the small lace operatives' and silk workers' unions. The tables on which the textile chart is based nowhere include the statistics of the membership

CHART 5



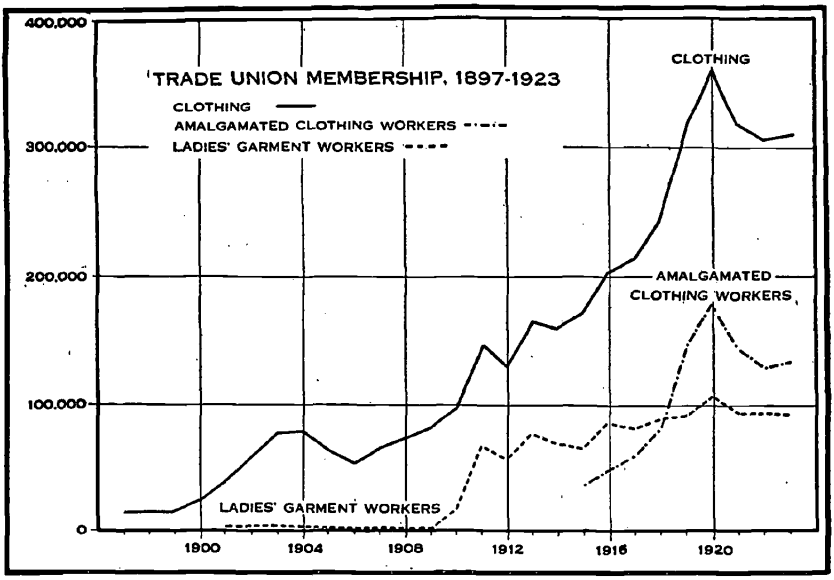
of the I. W. W. in the textile industry. It has been impossible to obtain anything but incomplete data from that organization; but it is known that the membership of both the Chicago and Detroit I. W. W.'s was less than 5,000 in 1910 and that the present organization known as the I. W. W. claimed no membership in the textile industry in 1920.

Clothing

The history of trade union membership in the clothing industry is distinguished by two important episodes; one concerned with the organization of the women's and the other with the organizaiton of the men's clothing branches of that industry. The two episodes followed one another with an interval of only a few years. Prior to 1910 there was practically no organization in the manu-

facture of women's clothing. The International Ladies' Garment Workers, the union claiming jurisdiction over that branch of the clothing industry, had, before 1910, a membership little larger than 2,000. In 1910 a great strike was called, which led to the rapid spread of organization and to a membership in 1911 of almost 67,000. Thereafter this union grew, except for temporary setbacks during business recessions, until it reached its peak of 105,000 in 1920.

CHART 6



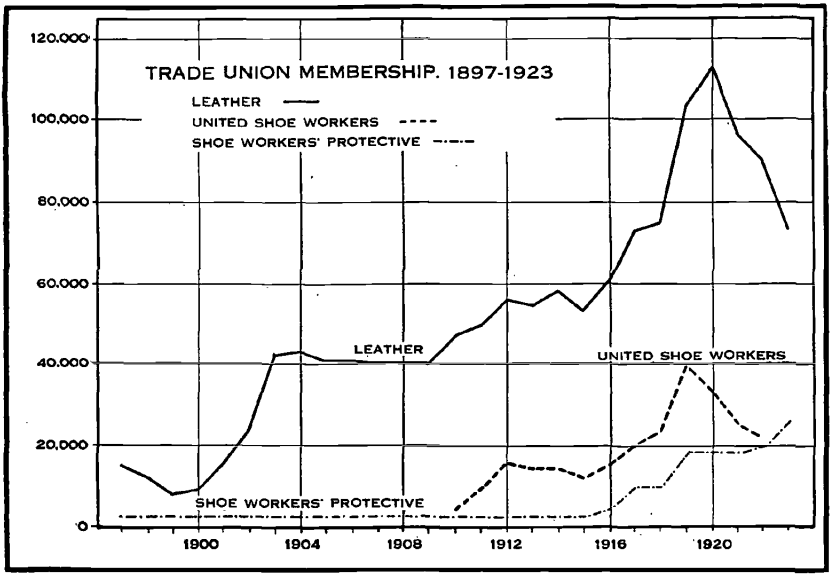
The second important incident in the history of this group came late in 1914 when the Amalgamated Clothing Workers split from the United Garment Workers and claimed jurisdiction over the men's clothing and shirt industries. While the United Garment Workers also had jurisdiction over the same industries, its membership there had always been uncertain and small, whereas it kept a fairly steady membership in the overall industry. The coming of the Amalgamated, however, brought a rapid spread of unionism in the men's clothing industry and by 1920 that union had organized the Chicago and Rochester markets, the last of the large non-union markets, and had increased the number of its members to more than 170,000. It is this increase that accounts largely for

the rise in the membership of the total clothing group from 1915 to 1920. In this industry as a whole there was heavy liquidation, beginning late in 1920 and lasting for several years thereafter; and through this period both the Ladies' Garment Workers and the Amalgamated lost heavily in membership. By 1923, however, the Amalgamated showed a slight increase, whereas the movement in the women's industry was still slightly downward. The United Garment Workers and the Hatters do not appear to have been affected by the recession of business in these last years.

Leather

The course of unionism in this industry is relatively simple. After the first substantial rise in membership, in the formative

CHART 7



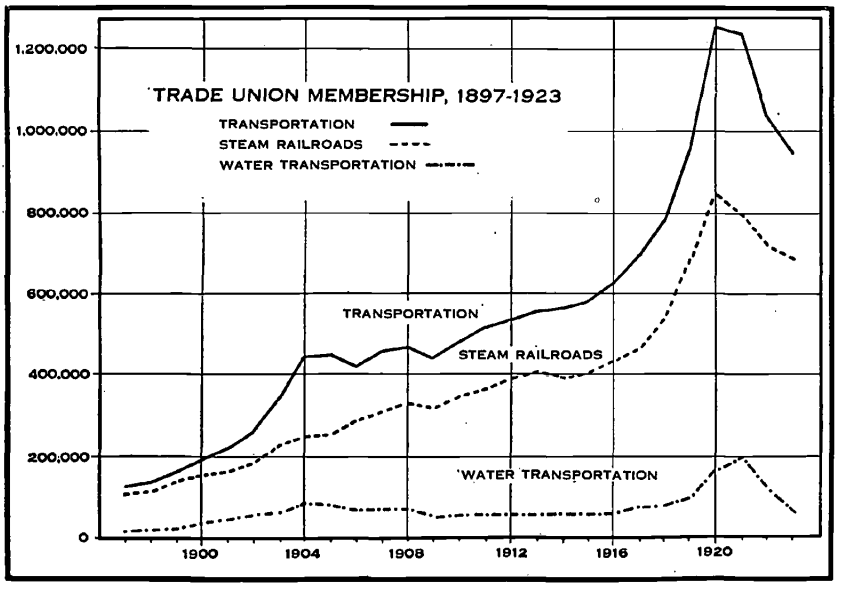
period from 1899 to 1904, the membership in this group remained practically stationary until 1910. In that year the membership of the United Shoe Workers, an independent organization which challenged the old Boot and Shoe Workers' Union for jurisdiction over the shoe industry, appeared for the first time and added substantially to the number of trade unionists in the leather group.

During the period of war expansion this organization grew somewhat more rapidly than the older union. But after 1920 all of the important unions declined, and in 1923 the United Shoe Workers' and the Shoe Workers' Protective unions were amalgamated.

Transportation

Many quite diverse elements enter into the constitution of this group. It includes such elements as the employees on steam railroads, in water transportation, teamsters and chauffeurs, workers engaged in the building of roads and streets, and the employees of street and electric railways. The movement of membership has, naturally, not been the same for all the groups, since they are

CHART 8



confronted by different industrial circumstances. The most striking differences are to be found in the variations in the growth of the group as a whole and of the group of unions described here as the water transportation unions. This group, composed of the longshoremen, marine engineers, masters, mates and pilots, pilots' association, and seamen, had practically a stationary membership

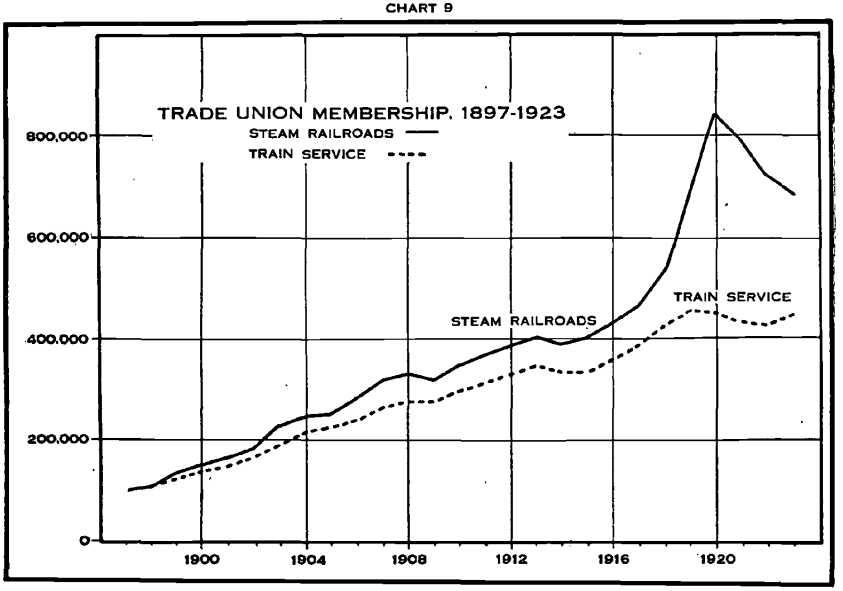
from 1904, when its number stood at 79,800, to 1918 when it was a little above 75,000. Then for three years membership rose to the height in 1921 of over 197,000, due mainly to the great growth of the longshoremen's and seamen's unions which between them gained more than 100,000 members. Soon after there was a sudden drop, the seamen losing nearly 90,000 members, and in 1923 the membership of the group was less than it had been in 1904. Both of these large gains and losses were, in part at least, due to government intervention. The street and electric employees' union and the teamsters' organization each participated in the large rise from 1919 to 1920; the electric railway employees gaining 40,000 members and the teamsters 55,000. But in the subsequent period of general decline, the teamsters lost almost 40,000, while the electric railway employees more than held their own.

Within the steam railroad group there are, also, a variety of organizations, ranging from the stable brotherhoods, through the shop crafts, to a variegated group of organizations like the maintenance of way employees and the railway clerks. The nature of the growth and decline of organization among the shop crafts has already been discussed, so far as the available materials made it possible, in the analysis of the changes in membership in the metals group. Prior to 1917, the growth in membership of the unions on steam railroads, as is indicated in the next chart, was dominated by the changes in the membership of the four railroad brotherhoods, the locomotive engineers, locomotive firemen, railway conductors and railroad trainmen. As early as the nineties these organizations were established and their subsequent history was one of slow but steady growth. The other organizations in the industry were, however, weak and represented, in membership, but a small proportion of the whole. By 1917 the picture changed. Stimulated in large measure by the extension of government control, the formerly weak unions shot up in membership and for the period from 1917 to 1923 the two curves stand wide apart. While the increase in membership was general, the maintenance of way employees, railroad telegraphers and railway clerks contributed most of it. The maintenance of way employees rose from 5,600 in 1918 to 54,000 in 1919; the telegraphers from 27,000 in 1917 to 78,000 in 1920; and the clerks from 6,800 to 186,000 in the same period.

When the break came, all lost heavily, but they still stood in 1923 considerably above the level of 1917–1918.

The unions of the train service employees pursued a steadier and more even course. Before 1920 this group lost in membership only during the period 1913 to 1914. It reached its peak in 1919 when it had 455,700 members; fell to 425,200 in 1922; and then increased again in 1923 to 444,300.

CHART 9

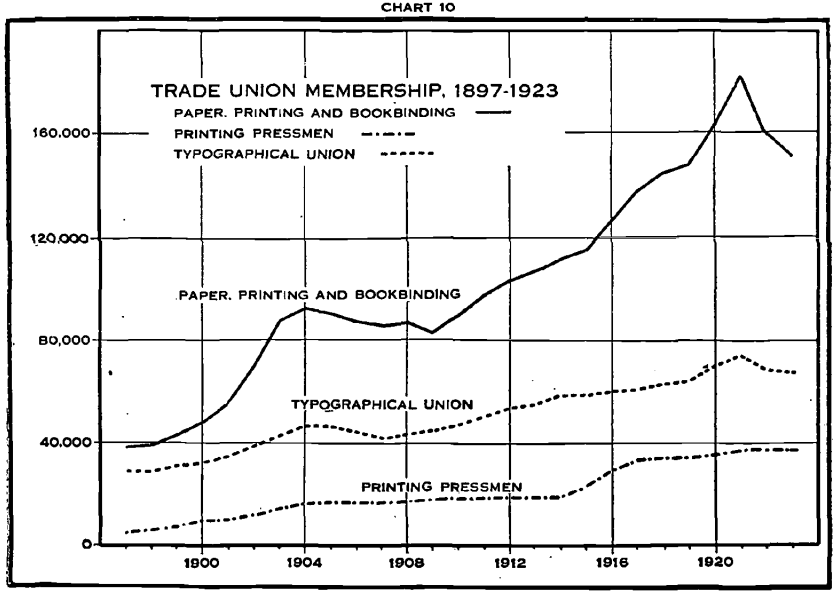


Paper, Printing and Bookbinding

While this group as a whole appears to have in 1923, even after the drop in 1921, a much larger membership than in the pre-war years, it is in reality largely the skilled printing unions that retained most of their gains. The two paper unions were in 1923 not much above their level in 1914 and 1915. The bookbinders while they gained over 16,000 from 1915 to the peak in 1921 lost nearly 12,000 in the next two years. The Typographical Union, on the other hand, although it had had a very steady and substantial growth in years before 1915, kept 9,000 members, or considerably more

than half of its total rise from 1915 to the peak year, 1921; whereas at the same time the Printing Pressmen's Union added over 14,000 members and has suffered no loss since.

CHART 10



Lumber and Woodworking

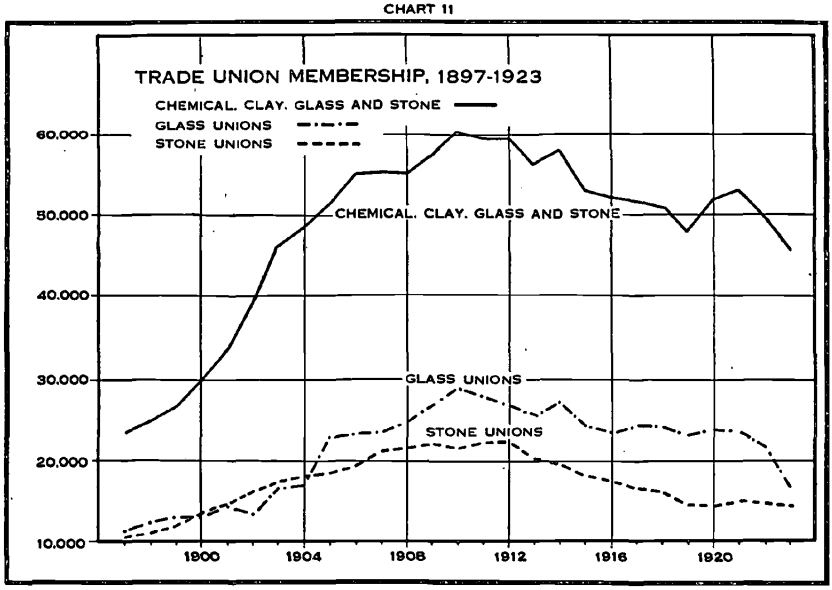
Fluctuations in the membership in this group as it is now constituted are of no great significance because of the increasingly important part that the carpenters' union has come to play in the woodworking industry. The carpenters' union now not only claims jurisdiction but actually enforces its claims over "carpenter or joiner, ship-carpenter, ship-joiner, ship-caulker, shipwright, boat-builder, railroad carpenter, bridge carpenter, dock carpenter, wharf carpenter, stair builder, floor layer, cabinet maker, bench hand, furniture worker, millwright, car-builder, boxmaker, reed and rattan worker, or engaged in the running of woodworking machinery." [1] Even as early as 1910 one-fifth of the 200,000 members of this union were employed in the lumber and woodworking industrie . The data for distributing the membership of this union in later years are not available.

[1] *Constitution*, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, 1917.

Chemical, Clay, Glass and Stone

This is one of a few groups of labor organizations which, when their long-time history is regarded, are steadily declining, in spite of occasional but temporary revivals. The majority of the unions in this class are to be found in industries which are undergoing technical revolutions, through the introduction of machinery, as in

CHART 11

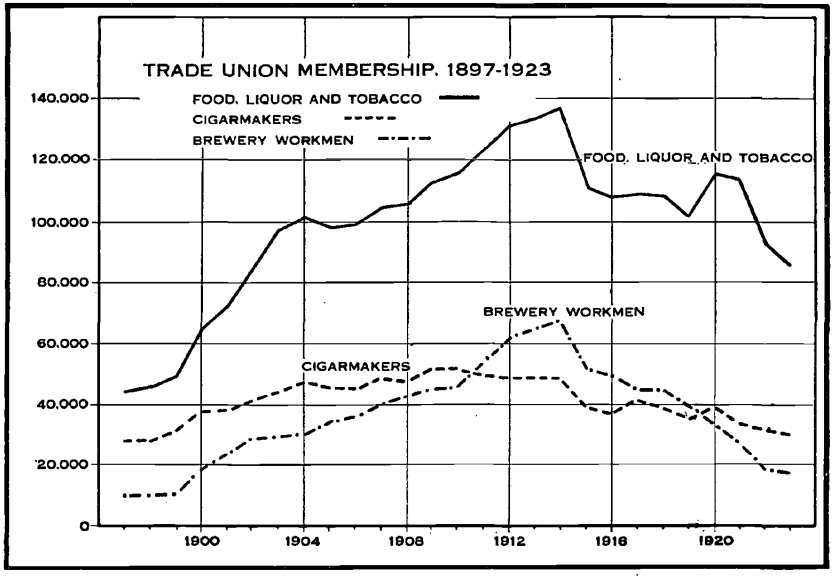


the glass industry; or whose product is in large measure being replaced by other materials, as in the stone industry. Since the middle nineties there has been a steady introduction of machinery into all branches of the glass industry; and for some years now, many new forms of building materials have replaced stone. Accordingly both the glass and stone unions show for a considerable period of years a gradual decline of membership. This decline would probably have been even more marked than it is had not a union like the Glass Bottle Blowers reported an unchanging membership of 10,000 from 1910 to 1921, when, as a matter of fact, its trend during this period was probably downward. In 1922 and 1923, however, it reports a drop first to 9,700 and then to 7,000.

Food, Liquor and Tobacco

The course of events in this group is in important respects similar to that in the preceding one. The brewery workers' union which was before prohibition one of the most powerful organizations in the country and had in 1914 a membership of more than 67,000 is now down to 16,000, although it has extended its jurisdiction claims over flour, cereal and soft drink workers. Membership statistics since 1914 for the cigarmakers' union, probably exaggerate their losses, in that they report a smaller membership to the American

CHART 12



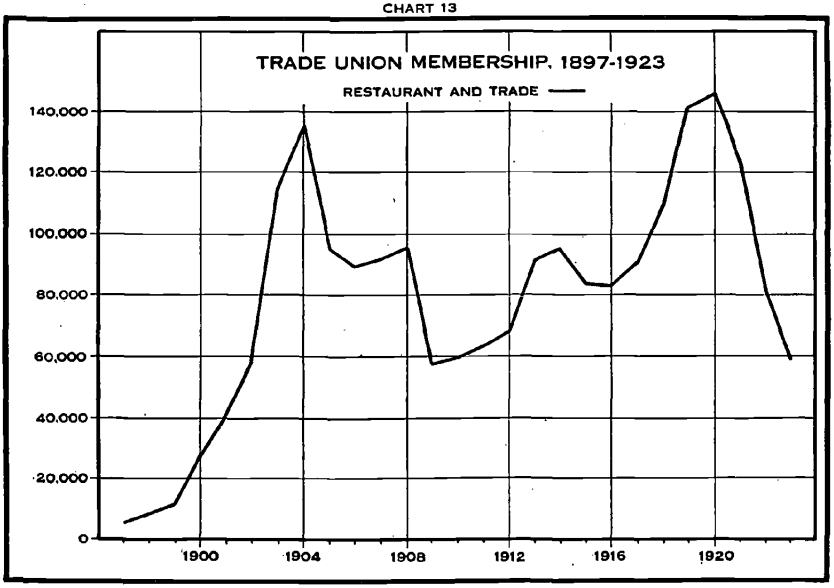
Federation of Labor than they actually have; but here, too, it is reasonably certain that the union is feeling the effects of the inroads of machinery and new industrial processes.[1] The bakery workers' union, while it had a substantial increase during the war, has practically no membership in the large baking companies, and was never in its history successful in organizing candy workers.

[1] Report of President G. W. Perkins to 1920 Convention.

Restaurant and Trade

The important organizations in this group are the hotel workers and the meat cutters. The first union has a membership composed largely of waiters and until recently had a very solid membership among bartenders. The latter group is no longer so important. The union of meat cutters, which claims jurisdiction over slaughter and packing-house workers, conducted during the war

CHART 13



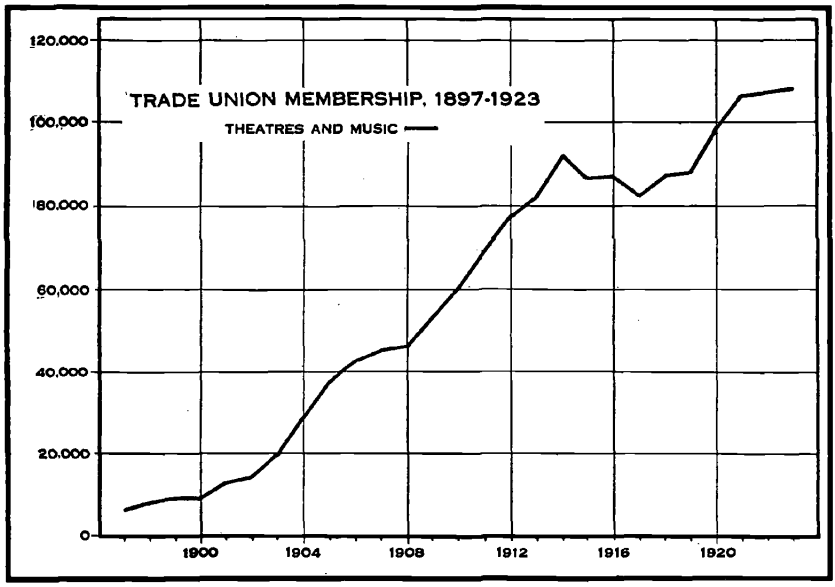
years a vigorous organization campaign in this industry and attained great strength at the peak of industrial activity in 1919 and 1920. Since then, however, it engaged in a losing strike and it has now become almost extinct in the packing industry. Organization among retail clerks, which attained before 1909 substantial proportions, has since amounted to very little.

Theatres and Music

The outstanding feature of changes in membership of the theatre and music unions is the steady growth of the musicians' and theatrical stage employees' unions, which was almost unbroken from the beginning. It is, of course, to be expected that their move-

ment would be less affected, if at all, by the variations in business to which other types of labor organizations are so sensitive. The recession from 1914 to 1918 was due to the omission of the Musical and Theatrical Union and to a slight fall in the actors' union. The

CHART 14



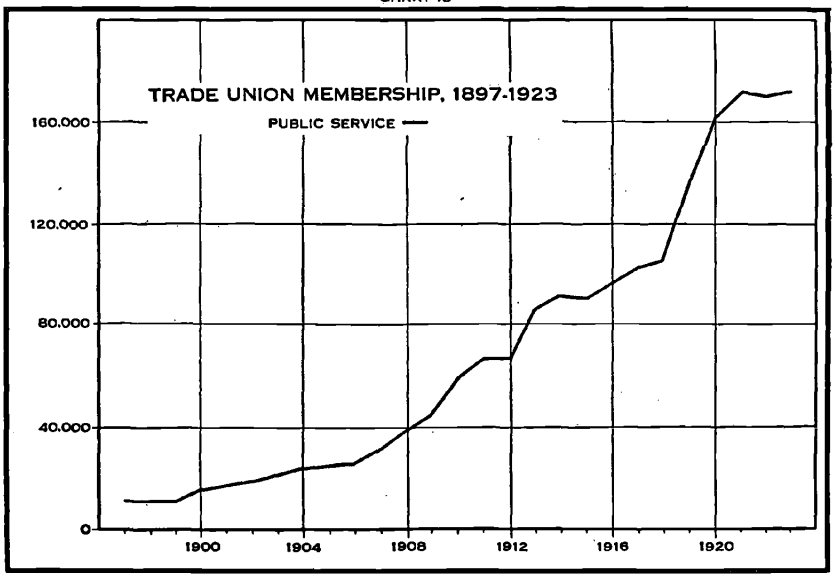
growth in membership among actors' unions is probably greater than is here indicated, since the present tables do not include all of the existing actors' organizations.

Public Service

Except for the unions of letter carriers and post-office clerks, this group is composed largely of organizations which have come into the picture within the past decade. This accounts in large measure for the striking spurt in members during the years immediately preceeding 1920, when the statistics for the federal employees', fire fighters', and teachers' unions are included for the first time in the table of membership. The losses incurred by these unions after 1920 were more than made up by the gains of the letter carriers and the two unions of post-office clerks.

Nearly half of the total membership of American unions has since 1897 been in the groups of building trades and transportation unions. The transportation unions which, at the beginning and end of the period, constitute just about one-fourth of the total membership, fell a little behind in the intervening years because of the rapid growth of unions in the building and mining

CHART 15



industries. By 1920, however, the transportation and metal unions had added so substantially to their absolute membership, that the building unions fell relatively in the scale to their position in 1900, although they gained more than 340,000 members from 1914 to 1920. Their position was again restored in 1923, due to the heavy losses of the metal unions and to their retention of much of their war gain. The mining group likewise lost position, not so much by reason of a drop in its own membership as because of the great absolute rise in the number of members enrolled in the other four leading groups, transportation, building, metals, clothing. The relationship among these groups in the last three years shown in the following table is further illuminated by the second table which gives for each group its actual membership. In the final year

TABLE 7.—PER CENT OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP IN EACH GROUP OF UNIONS IN THE YEARS 1897, 1900, 1910, 1914, 1920, AND 1923

Group	1897	1900	1910	1914	1920	1923
All Groups	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Transportation	26.1	21.8	22.0	20.7	24.6	25.1
Building	15.0	17.6	21.0	20.0	17.4	22.3
Metal, Machinery and Shipbuilding	11.2	9.3	9.0	8.3	16.8	9.5
Food, Liquor and Tobacco	9.9	7.6	5.3	5.0	2.3	2.3
Paper, Printing and Bookbinding	8.5	5.5	4.1	4.1	3.2	4.0
Chemical, Clay, Glass and Stone	5.2	3.5	2.8	2.1	1.0	1.2
Mining and Quarrying	4.7	15.0	12.6	14.0	8.2	11.0
Leather	3.4	1.1	2.1	2.1	2.2	1.9
Clothing	3.3	2.9	4.4	5.8	7.1	8.2
Public Service	2.5	1.8	2.7	3.4	3.2	4.5
Textile	1.8	0.9	0.9	1.1	2.9	1.0
Theatres	1.5	1.1	2.8	3.4	1.9	2.8
Restaurants and Trade	1.4	3.2	2.7	3.5	2.8	1.6
Lumber and Woodworking	1.2	2.9	1.3	0.9	0.5	0.3
Miscellaneous	4.3	5.8	6.3	5.6	5.9	4.3

building has again risen to its position of 1910 and 1914, mining once more occupies third place, and the clothing group has now forged ahead so that it is only a bit below the metal unions in rank. The food and glass and stone groups show a considerably

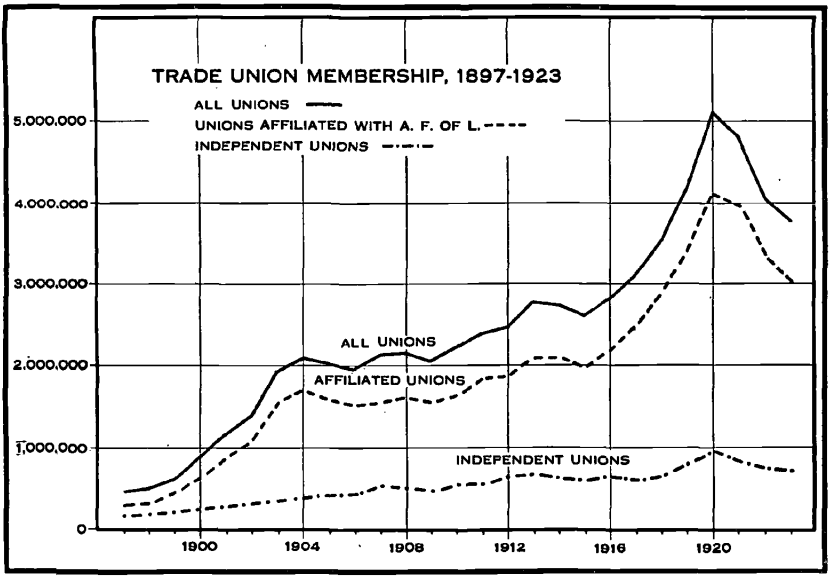
Group	1914	1920	1923
Transportation	561,700	1,256,100	948,300
Mining	380,200	417,700	415,400
Building	542,000	887,900	844,400
Metals	225,900	858,800	358,300
Clothing	157,000	362,400	308,400

lower rank because of both absolute and relative drops in membership.

Little need be said regarding the relative growth of the unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor and of those inde-

pendent of that organization. The essential facts appear in the chart below. Until 1900 the affiliated unions were just getting under way, whereas the independent organizations, dominated largely by the independent railroad unions, were already fairly well established. But after 1900 the spurt of the affiliated unions,

CHART 16



particularly the United Mine Workers, proceeded at an accelerated rate. Thus from 1897 to 1900, the mining and quarrying group moved from seventh to third place in the ranking of the groups, for its membership rose from 4.7 per cent to 15.0 per cent of the total union membership. At the same time, the transportation group fell slightly from 26.1 to 21.8 per cent of the total. During this whole movement the affiliated unions naturally gained more rapidly than the independent ones. In fact, in 1897, independents accounted for roughly 40 per cent of the total union membership, while in 1901 they constituted only 24 per cent.[1] This latter proportion has obtained practically throughout this whole period, 1901–1923, except on those occasions when the less strong affiliated unions, as from 1915–1920, made startling gains in

[1] See Table II.

membership. At those times, independent union membership represented something like one-fifth of the total. In 1923 independent membership is 19 per cent of the total. But for the effects of a major movement for independence of the American Federation of Labor, which is by no means likely, it is to be expected that the independent unions will grow more slowly than the affiliated. For the course of independent membership is almost wholly determined by the growth of the railroad brotherhoods which are by far the largest element in the independent group and which are now and have for some time in the past been near the peak of their potential maximum strength. The only perceptible and unexpected rise in the curve of independent membership in late years appeared after 1917 and was due to the inclusion of a new independent organization, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers.

An adequate interpretation of the meaning of the growth of the American labor movement in its last phase, when the changes upward and downward were of such a great magnitude, would not be complete without noting that changes of this character were apparently not limited to the United States. The period from 1914 to the present was indeed one of striking fluctuation in the membership of labor organizations throughout the world. Doubtless numerical measurement of these fluctuations will not yield accurate results, because the statistics vary considerably in reliability and because the statistical agencies of each country employ different criteria of accuracy and inclusiveness. In spite of the lack of any standards of statistical comparability, there is no avoiding the conclusion that labor organizations everywhere have experienced since the beginning of the World War an unprecedented increase in their membership.[1] The English unions, which were already very large in 1914, more than doubled their membership and by 1920 had 8,328,000 members. In Germany, France, Italy and even in South America,[2] the gains would appear to be equally striking.

As in the case of the American unions, foreign labor organiza-

[1] See Table III.

[2] Membership in Argentine, for example, is reported in the *International Labor Review* (July–Sept., 1921, p. 81) as follows: 1915, 21,000; 1916, 41,000; 1917, 159,000; 1918, 429,000; 1919, 476,000; 1920, 750,000.

TABLE 8. — MEMBERSHIP OF TRADE UNIONS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1914–1923

Country	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
Australia[a]	523,271	528,031	546,556	564,187	581,755	627,685	684,450	703,009	702,938	.....
Canada[b]	134,348	113,122	129,123	164,896	201,432	260,247	267,247	222,896	206,150	203,843
France[c]	1,026,000	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	1,580,967	.....	1,768,461	.....
Germany[d]	2,166.820	1,518,744	1,496,058	1,930,810	3,801,222	8,527,187	9,192,892	.....	12,530,238	13,308,721
Italy[e]	962,000	806,000	701,000	740,000	.....	1,800,000	3,100,000	.....	.....	.....
Holland[f]	266,000	273,400	298,900	352,300	420,500	514,600	683,500	651,200	640,000	572,000
United Kingdom[g]	4,143,000	4,356,000	4,640,000	5,496,000	6,530,000	7,920,000	8,328,000	6,612,846	5,579,739	5,405,000
United States[h]	2,716,900	2,607,700	2,808,000	3,104,600	3,508,400	4,169,100	5,110,800	4,815,000	4,059,400	3,780,000

[a] *Official Year Book*, 1918, p. 989; 1923, p. 537.

[b] Department of Labour. *Labour Organization in Canada*, each year.

[c] France, Ministere du Travail, *Annuaire Statistique*, 1922, p. 217, gives the membership for *syndicats ouvrier* figures for 1914; *Bulletin*, Vol. XXX, Av-Je, 1923, p. 153, gives figures for 1920 and 1922.

[d] Germany, Statistisches Amt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch fur das Deutsche Reich*, gives the average membership for 1914 in the volume for 1916, p. 131; for 1915 in 1917, p. 179; for 1916 in 1918, p. 153; for 1917 and 1918 in 1920, p. 271; 1921–22, pp. 457 ff., figures for 1919 and 1920 are the totals of the free and Christain unions and the Hirsch-Duncker. The *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, Nichamtl. Teil, January, 1924, pp. 20–2, gives figures for 1922 and 1923.

[e] Italy, *Bolletino del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale*, Vol. XXXV, Jan–Je. 1921, pp. 1–258, gives figures for 1914–1917 and 1919. The figure for 1920 is taken from the *International Labour Review*, Vol. VIII, No. 1–2, p. 79.

[f] Figures obtained from Dr. Levenbach, representative in the United States of the Dutch Ministry of Labor.

[g] Great Britain, *Labour Gazette*, 1923, Vol. 31, pp. 358, 383; and 1924, Vol. 32, pp. 352, 379, gives membership figures for the end of the year. These figures exclude the Irish Free State.

[h] From Table I.

tions were also severely hit by the industrial depressions which at one time or another after the war spread nearly throughout the world. The statistics of membership for a few selected countries, drawn from original sources and presented in the preceding table, show how recessions in business and employment were accompanied by large losses in membership. English unions lost almost 3,000,000 members from 1920 to 1922. In all cases membership remained in 1922 and 1923 far above the pre-war level; and only in Australia and Germany does membership appear to have been little affected by the post-war liquidation of industry. The case of Germany is, of course, peculiar, since the labor movement after the war is placed in a setting radically different from that which prevailed in Germany before 1918.

The relation between these like movements in diverse countries is, to be sure, largely a speculative one and can be estimated finally only by an analysis of the social, economic, and political forces that appear to bear on this condition. It is important, however, in studying the situation in this country, not to overlook and, consequently, disregard the possibility of contagion in the spread of trade unionism.