

TWENTY YEARS OF STRIKES AND LOCKOUTS.

BY FRANK J. SULLIVAN.

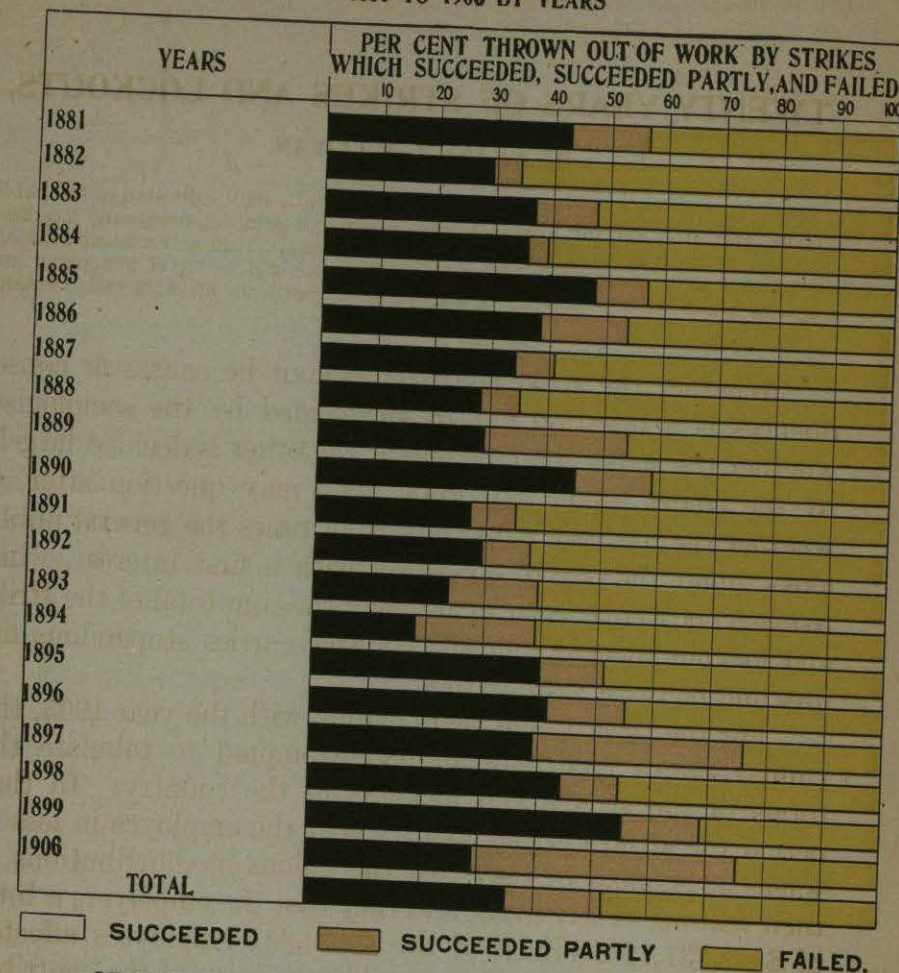
[Frank J. Sullivan, author; born Oshkosh, Wis., June 7, 1870; educated in the public schools, and after serving apprenticeship became a printing pressman; has been president of the Chicago branch of the International Printing Pressman's union; swimming instructor at the Y. M. C. A. of Chicago, and writer of newspaper and magazine articles chiefly on topics of interest dealing with the life work and ambitions of the worker.]

Whether the strike and the lockout be causes or consequences is a question yet to be decided by the sociologist; whether the strike shall be one or the other is decided largely by the trades union individual, who may question after all whether the measure pays; but at all times the general public looks upon the strike condition with a first interest, while to everybody concerned in any way the sum total of the strike and lockout measures of the country carries stupendous figures and facts for assimilation.

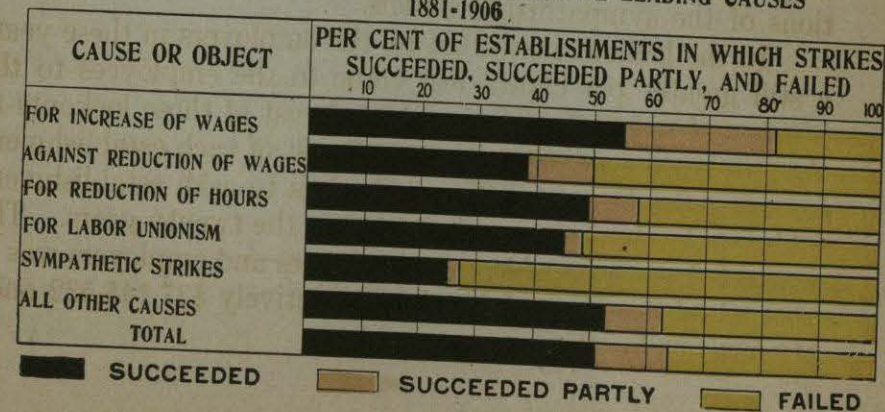
For the twenty-five years ending with the year 1905, the United States labor bureau has attempted to tabulate the totals of the strikes and lockouts of the country. In that period the strikes of the country cost the employee in loss of wages \$344,550,000; they cost the unions in contributions to their fellows, \$16,174,793; and they cost the employers a total of \$122,731,120. Each of the 8,703,824 employees affected in these strikes lost \$42 in wages, irrespective of the contributions of the sympathizing unions.

In the lockout instituted by the employers in these years a still greater per capita loss came to the employees to the number of 825,610. The individual cost of these lockouts to the employee was \$97, with \$4,915 cost of each establishment imposing the lockout. The strike loss to each establishment under strike duress was only \$2,194 in the twenty years. The greatest single year of loss to employees and employers was in 1894 when the sum totals were respectively \$37,145,532 and \$18,982,129 for the year.

RESULT OF STRIKES TO EMPLOYEES THROWN OUT OF WORK
1881 TO 1906 BY YEARS



RESULTS OF STRIKES UNDERTAKEN FOR FIVE LEADING CAUSES
1881-1906



It is admitted that these loss figures are to a degree speculative and necessarily arbitrary, for the one great reason that the working year is not the possible 313 days, but rather from 200 to 250 days as the practical extremes. In many of these strikes a certain holiday and laying off period merely has been anticipated by the workingmen, while on the side of the employers, time has been given for the overhauling of a plant for improvements and repairs. Not infrequently the employer under such circumstances may profit by a short strike which ends favorably to him and his cause.

Considering the strike and the lockout as the force measures of the two sides to labor troubles, it is a toss up as to which is the more successfully carried to a finish. Recognizing that the strike involving only a handful of men in a single establishment is much more likely to be settled, the lockout under similar conditions is much harder of adjustment agreeable to the employees, and in this manner the general figures, irrespective of numbers involved in the labor troubles, may not mean all that is on their face. But for the strike and lockout lists of twenty-five years in the United States, the percentage of success and failure is shown in the following tabulations:

	Successful	Partly successful	Failed
Strikes.....	47.94	15.28	36.78
Lockouts.....	57.20	10.71	32.09

Statistics of strikes and lockouts show some interesting comparisons for twenty-five years. The lockout lasts more than four times as long as the strike, while involving scarcely one-twentieth of the establishments that are strike affected. The average term of the lockout in 1900, for instance, was 265 days, as against a strike average of only 23.1 days for that year—an average for the year below the average for the twenty-five year period.

Tabulated for the twenty-five years considered one may read at a glance a good deal of the history of the strike and the lockout in that time:

	STRIKES.		LOCKOUTS.		
	Establishments involved.	Days duration.	Establishments involved.	Days duration.	
1881.....	2,928	12.8	1881.....	9	32.2
1882.....	2,105	21.9	1882.....	42	105.0
1883.....	2,759	20.6	1883.....	117	57.5
1884.....	2,367	30.5	1884.....	354	41.4
1885.....	2,284	30.1	1885.....	183	27.1
1886.....	10,057	23.4	1886.....	1,509	39.1
1887.....	6,589	20.9	1887.....	1,281	49.8
1888.....	3,506	20.3	1888.....	180	74.9
1889.....	3,786	26.2	1889.....	132	57.5
1890.....	9,424	24.2	1890.....	324	73.9
1891.....	8,116	34.9	1891.....	546	37.8
1892.....	5,540	23.4	1892.....	716	72.0
1893.....	4,555	20.6	1893.....	305	34.7
1894.....	8,196	32.4	1894.....	875	39.7
1895.....	6,973	20.5	1895.....	370	32.3
1896.....	5,462	22.0	1896.....	51	65.1
1897.....	8,492	27.4	1897.....	171	38.6
1898.....	3,809	22.5	1898.....	164	48.8
1899.....	11,317	15.2	1899.....	323	37.5
1900.....	9,248	23.1	1900.....	2,281	265.1
1901.....	10,908	29.2	1901.....	451	27.0
1902.....	14,248	25.4	1902.....	1,304	158.9
1903.....	20,248	29.1	1903.....	3,288	53.5
1904.....	10,202	35.5	1904.....	2,316	69.4
1905.....	8,292	23.1	1905.....	1,255	41.7
Totals.....	181,407	25.4	Totals.....	1,8541	84.6

Considered by states, New York naturally leads in number and importance of these labor disturbances, while Illinois takes an unexpected third place, Pennsylvania being second. Massachusetts and Connecticut show evidences of a New England puritanism in their exaggerated proportion of lockouts as compared with their strikes. The order of importance in the six states leading in strikes is:

	Strikes.	Lockouts.
New York.....	10,199	326
Pennsylvania.....	4,159	164
Illinois.....	3,624	141
Massachusetts.....	2,774	128
Ohio.....	2,570	110
Indiana.....	1,126	53

Notoriously the building trades have been involved in more strike troubles than have any other organization, though lockouts against them have been comparatively few.

These trades and industries involved in greatest numbers are as follows:

	Strikes.	Lockouts.
Building trades.....	9,564	255
Coal and coke workers.....	3,336	67
Foundries and machine shops.....	1,668	83
Clothing.....	1,787	99
Tobacco.....	1,809	153
Transportation.....	803	12
Stone quarrying and cutting.....	1,057	54
Boots and Shoes.....	1,101	67
Printing and publishing.....	1,001	115

There are 1,402 causes for strikes listed in the twenty-five years considered. Perhaps one of the least of these was a strike because a foreman swore at a workman; another because a man who had been discharged for drunkenness would not be reinstated by the manager of the establishment. But among the chief causes for these disturbances, that of the simple salary or wage question is first, while it is also mixed up with a number of other qualified demands.

A tabulation of the causes for strikes in the order of their number is:

Increase of wages.....	33,731
Increased wages and reduced hours.....	13,201
Reduced hours.....	13,116
Against wage reduction.....	8,423
Sympathetic strikes.....	4,078
Against employment of nonunion men.....	2,751
New rules and scales.....	2,742
Recognition of union.....	1,649
Increased wages and recognition of unions.....	1,111
Enforcing union rules.....	1,068
For reinstatement of discharged employees.....	868
Adoption of union scale.....	928
Against task system.....	917
Against reduction of wages and overtime.....	750
Increase of wages and Saturday half holiday.....	729

From these carefully prepared figures of the country the individual union man may draw some conclusions of his own. As a twenty-five year record of strike and lockout measures they are full of possibilities.