The garment strike is over, much to the relief of most New Yorkers, who realize that the city is bound to suffer from any stoppage of so important an industry. Now that the walkout has ended, and the I. L. G. W. U. has pulled in its pickets, it may be pertinent to ask whether the strike was necessary in the first place. After all, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and the dress industry had a record of twenty-five years of peace, during which both management and labor had prospered. To see such a fine labor relations record shattered is a little bit sad.

Two principal issues were involved in the strike—wage scales and contract enforcement. On wages, the union obtained a direct pay rise of 8 per cent, plus fringe benefits which will push labor costs much higher—too high for safety, in the view of many employers—and which will in turn be transmitted to the long-suffering public in the form of higher prices. The contract enforcement issue is still more complicated, because here the employers charge that the union has not cracked hard enough at non-union manufacturers outside the city who compete with New York manufacturers. The union has promised to do something about this. Furthermore, the I. L. G. W. U. says it is going to crack down on evasions and corner-cutting which allegedly flourish among some New York manufacturers.

Amid all these complexities, the outsider is left wondering why the labor relations machinery of the industry itself couldn't avert a strike, and why the city's officials failed to intervene successfully before the strike started. Everybody seemed resigned to a strike, even cheerful about the prospect of one. And when the strike came, it passed off peacefully enough and was settled with reasonable promptness. True, it enabled Mayor Wagner to strike a hero's pose briefly. But the city could have done without that, too. It can be grateful for the able work of former Senator Lehman in bringing about the agreement which ended the strike.