

the eastern provinces will not be disregarded. There need be no sentiment in the answer. Good sentiment between East and West is not as a rule helped much by matters of trade. In past years harvesters' excursions were the most exciting episode in Canadian transportation problems. The yearly trek of harvest hands and homeseekers was a rollicking adventure. Thousands of men went on these cheap long hauls because they had never seen the West, and never knew when they might take a notion to homestead or buy land in that country. The Eldorado beckoned and the harvesters went, the noisiest army of impossibles that ever screamed a path through a new country.

PART of the lure was the wages. Much of it may have been the land. Most of it was the West, the country to which polyglot peoples from Europe and the United States were going in a grand crescendo under the guidance of Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver. The world's hands and feet were in the West. To go West was a popular passion. Not to have seen the prairies was to be counted a mossback or a stick-in-the-mud. And those who came back from the harvest fields of Western Canada to get rid of their wages at \$2.50 to \$3.00 a day had seen part of a wonderful country to which in the decade 1904 to 1914, 2,500,000 people had gone from half the lands of civilization.

More immigrants, more wheat; more wheat, more labour wanted in the harvest. The aggregates were never just what might have been expected. But it is a matter of great popular interest to have a look at the comparative figures of immigration and wheat. For the period between 1904 and 1914; just as interesting as the moving-picture of any ant-hill or beehive. Here they are:

Total Immigration.	Total Wheat Production.
Fiscal year 1904-05 . 146,266	1904 69,029,266
" 1905-06 . 189,064	1905 113,978,215
Fiscal period (9 mos.) 1906-07 . . . 124,667	1906 125,505,491
Fiscal year 1907-08 . 262,469	1907
" 1908-09 . 146,908	1908
" 1909-10 . 208,794	1909
" 1910-11 . 311,084	1910 132,045,782
" 1911-12 . 354,237	1911 230,924,000
" 1912-13 . 402,432	1912 224,159,000
" 1913-14 . 384,878	1913 231,717,000
" 1914-15 . 144,789	1914 161,280,000

Then in 1915 comes this startling comparison:

Total Immigration.	Total Wheat Production.
144,789	345,000,000

In the year of our lowest immigration since the fiscal period 1903-04 we produced in the West 140,000,000 bushels more wheat, as well as a corresponding increase in other grains, than we produced in the highest crop year in the decade 1904-14.

The way that mammoth harvest was handled with very little help from the surplus of immigration was a revelation of what Canada could do in an emergency; just as great a proof of Canadian efficiency under unusual conditions as the raising of our army or the financing of our war loans.

THERE is another test chance awaiting the Canadian people in the harvest of 1916. Wheat is once more to the front. In Winnipeg, if you begin to trace the fortunes of milady's \$1,000 fold-platinum hand-bag stolen in Crescentwood, you are sure to land up in a wheatfield or an elevator or a box-car. The wheat of the West belongs as much to Halifax as it does to Winnipeg and Regina. Its value at the seaboard and at Liverpool is what determines its value to the whole of Canada. It represents a national investment of capital and labour, of people and government, of farm labour that belongs to the West and harvest labour imported from elsewhere and paid for by the wheat.

Last year the wages of harvest labour in the wheat-belt worked out to an aggregate somewhat as follows:

Forty-four thousand harvesters were employed for a total period of about three months. The full maximum of this wage-army's operations covered a period of about three weeks. But it would be a conservative estimate to reckon that the wages paid by wheat in

1915 represented the labour of 40,000 men for a level period of two months or nine weeks. The wages ran from \$2.50 to \$3.00 a day, or an average of say, \$20 a week. To this must be added the cost of board and lodgings—such as the latter might happen to be—not less than \$5.00 a week to each man. This makes a total of \$25 a week per man paid by the wheat-producers to the harvest men. For an average period of nine weeks this means to one harvester \$225 for the harvest. To be conservative, make it \$200. Multiply \$200 by 40,000 and you have a grand total of \$8,000,000, representing the part of wheat production paid to harvest labour in 1915 on a crop whose total worth was approximately \$250,000,000.

While I write figures are not available of wages paid by our basic industries, such as iron and steel, textiles, lumber, railroading and shipping. But we must set down the wages value of wheat in this country between the standing crop and the local elevator as a colossal item in the yearly dividends paid to Canadian labour. Add to that the yearly bill of wages paid to railway workers, elevator operators and transportation hands for the handling of Canadian wheat, leaving out entirely the freight charges, and it is easily seen that the yearly wages of wheat in this country becomes a huge factor in our national economic situation.

The wheat wages of 1916 will fall below those of 1915, but will rank as a good second up. Last year was a very open season. Harvesters worked later than usual. Otherwise so great a crop could not have been handled by 44,000 men.

Assuming that 1916 will be an average season for length, it is estimated that about as many men will be needed as last year. But suppose we make it 4,000 less. That still leaves 40,000 men of an army needed to gather the 1916 crop.

Last year 15,000 men went from east of Fort William. That was 7,000 less than the greatest crop exodus that ever took place from the East—in 1912 the year of the labour-glut that never will happen again.

THE West has learned considerable since 1912.

Whatever romance still hangs over crop estimates, estimates for labour are figured with mathematical care. In the office of the Dominion Commissioner of Immigration, the relative figures of crop, immigration and labour are all carefully tabulated. The estimate of 40,000 minimum needed for 1916 is conservative.

Of this total, 8,000 are expected from the military camps. Cities and towns in the West may furnish 2,000. Minnesota, Dakota and contiguous States may supply 2,000 or 3,000, though last year American imported harvesters numbered only 800. British Columbia proposes to export no labour to the prairies unless said labour decides to remain there; the logging camps are short of men. Unemployed anywhere in the West are curiosities, except among the few idle rich.

This leaves a total of perhaps 27,000 men needed from the East, unless steps already taken in Alberta provide more men for that area than are expected in the Dominion Immigration offices at Winnipeg. This is at least 10,000 more easterners than were needed last year. The reason is obvious. The war has dragnetted the prairies of men. Last year enlistments had not reached the proportions of 1916. In the fiscal year 1914-15, there were 145,000 immigrants into Canada. 1915-16's immigration is much less, though from the United States for the summer months it is almost double that of last year. There is always an available surplus of harvest labour from immigration. With low immigration and high enlist-

history of Canadian labour, unskilled and unorganized workers in Winnipeg struck for a heavy increase in wages.

Such are the mathematical outlines of a situation that promises to be the most acute harvest-labour shortage ever known in this country. What will the East do to meet it as a national problem? No heavy contributions of labour can be expected from Ontario, whose farmers are already short-handed. The Maritime Provinces, where harvesting is on a much smaller scale according to total population, may furnish a good number, though nothing to compare to the boom days when the Maritime harvest hands were among the most important corps organized for western labour.

THE one remaining great possibility is Quebec. And Quebec ought to rise to the occasion. Enlistment has not depleted the Quebec farms of men. The Quebec harvest, being to a great extent hay, will be all off before the full swing of the western harvest is on. There are more workers to the square mile in populated Quebec than in most other parts of Canada. Wages as a general thing are lower there. A good habitant worker can make more in a week on the western harvest fields than he could make in a month on the St. Lawrence. And he would see, besides, a country which comparatively few Quebecers have ever seen.

There may be plausible arguments why the French-Canadian does not to any great extent enlist. There can be no argument why he should not join the grand army of western workers in the harvest. The Department of the Interior has already begun a newspaper campaign in the French language in Quebec. Three—yes four great railways are accessible to the French-Canadian who, after he reaches Montreal at a half cent a mile from where he lives, gets a \$12 rate one way to Winnipeg with a reduced rate beyond that to the point where he gets his job.

In the name of good citizenship and the chance to make a good wad of pocket money, it is to be hoped that Johnnie Courteau will rise to the occasion. There should be at least 10,000, at most 15,000 men easily available from Quebec for the western harvest.

Here again a little figuring may be of interest. Suppose that Quebec should send 15,000 men to the West. The total amount of harvest money earnable by that 15,000 men is not less than \$3,000,000. Of this total amount an aggregate of \$900,000 to \$1,000,000 would be spent in railway fares. There would be easily a balance of more than \$2,000,000 for the French-Canadians to take back to Quebec over and above the regular revenues of that province.

In the interest of thrifty Quebec, it looks as though that \$2,000,000 net is very much worth the while of Quebec to go after.

"SOME day," a westerner said to me, as we listened to the music in a certain hotel rotunda, "some one of these fine days the people that are elected to run this country will hit on the right scheme for solving our farm labour problems. In the first place they'll come to a better understanding of the labourer himself. They'll learn that he isn't just a drudge, but an important factor in the community. Then they'll study the rotation of crops in various parts of the Dominion and make the supply of labour fit the demand as nearly as possible."

"But how?"

"Well, take Quebec, Ontario and the West, for example. Each of these sections has a sort of 'peak load' to meet every year. The great demand for farm labour in Quebec comes of course in the hay-ing season chiefly, in June and early July. Now,

in Ontario, the peak load of farm work comes in, say, the last three weeks of July and the first two in August. That is in connection with the hoeing season—attending to the turnips, mangolds, corn and other feed crops for Ontario's dairy herds.

"The West's peak load starts a little before the Ontario demand is over and lasts until all the wheat is in. There's an overlapping of needs there

that perhaps may never be done away with. But the relation between Quebec and the West is dear and friendly needs don't overlap. There should be closer co-operation."

This speaker was right. There should be.

