

# GENERAL REVIEW OF THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION

The Labor Situation, Strikes, Prices.

## The Labor Situation.

Employment at the beginning of August, as indicated by the employment of labor, showed a further upward movement, although the expansion was not very pronounced. At the beginning of August the percentage of unemployment among the members of trade unions was 2.9, as compared with 3.4 in the beginning of July, and with 4.1 per cent at the beginning of August, 1922.

The Employment Service of Canada report an increase in the volume of daily business transacted during July by the offices in the various provinces, as compared with the previous month and as compared with the corresponding month of last year.

The following is a brief survey of employment at the end of August, 1923, as reported by the superintendents of the offices of the Employment Service of Canada.

In the Maritime Provinces the construction group continued fairly active with many additions to staffs on sewer, water works, street paving, and provincial highway operations. There was a large demand for railway laborers, section hands and bridge builders. Calls for general farm laborers were numerous with sufficient applicants to meet the demand. No decrease was reported in the requests for casual workers were filled without difficulty.

There was a fair demand for farm help in Quebec, with a slight decline from the number of vacancies offered during last month. Little change was reported in the building industry, a considerable number of vacancies for plasterers, plumbers, building laborers and road workers being offered. Orders for bushmen were received in increasing numbers at the Quebec and Hull offices, while longshore work at Montreal was active.

The demand for harvest help in Ontario was brisk, with a few calls for general farm laborers and fruit pickers for the Niagara Peninsula. In some sections harvesting was nearly completed, with a consequent falling off in the demand. Numerous orders for bushmen were received, with the lumber camps ready to absorb all the men available. Progress was reported in the building and construction groups, many tradesmen and laborers for the construction and maintenance of roads, highways and railway lines, being placed. Calls for factory hands and skilled mechanics were reported in increasing numbers.

A keen demand for harvest help and thresher hands were reported from the offices in Manitoba, with a fair supply of workers available. There was a further increase in the vacancies offered and placements made in railway construction and maintenance work, while activities in the building group were much improved. Skilled building tradesmen were in demand for urban and rural districts, while posthole diggers, groundmen, and transmission line laborers were placed from Winnipeg. Mill laborers and bushmen were required in large numbers from all points.

Harvesting and threshing continued to absorb numbers of workers in Saskatchewan, although inexperienced applicants were very difficult to place. There was a fair demand for building mechanics and skilled laborers, while road work, paving, and railway maintenance and construction, provided employment for many.

A shortage of experienced men to meet the active demands for harvesters and thresher hands was evidenced at most of the Alberta offices. There were several requests for building laborers and mechanics and placements were effected without difficulty. The number of vacancies available for railway construction was greatly in excess of the supply, due to the number of laborers now helping with the harvest. In the mining group a few coal miners were required at Lethbridge and Drumheller.

In British Columbia general farm laborers were required throughout the province, although no large demand was felt. Vernon, Kamloops, and Penticton offices, reported a slight scarcity of pickers and packers for fruit harvest. Road construction and municipal repairs continued to provide employment for a few, while logging showed signs of improvement, with only a small number of positions offering.

**Employers' Reports.**  
There was a further small increase in the volume of employment as reported by employers of labor to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics at the beginning of August. The expansion was recorded largely in the construction, transportation, communication and service groups, and was principally of a seasonal character. Quebec, the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia registered improvement, but in the Maritime Provinces and Ontario the tendency was downward. Four of the six cities for which special tabulations are made reported increased activity, these being Hamilton, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver, while in the remaining two, Toronto and Ottawa, contractions were indicated. The improvement in Montreal was registered largely in railway work and other iron and steel works and in construction; on the other hand, rubber factories, ship-

ping and stoving and retail trades were slacker. In Toronto, textile and other manufacturing plants were less fully engaged and curtailment in personnel was shown in retail trade. The declines in these industries were partly offset by increases in building construction and on electric railways. In Ottawa the changes were slight, the losses in retail trade being most extensive. The resumption of activity in textile works in Hamilton, together with increased employment accounted for the revival in that city. In Winnipeg, small additions to staffs were reported in a number of industries, more particularly in construction. Shipping and stoving, saw mills and trade absorbed the majority of the extra workers in Vancouver. An analysis of the returns by industrial groups shows that manufacturing as a whole was less active than at the beginning of July, in spite of continued seasonal gains in saw mills, in electrical current plants and in fruit and vegetable canneries. Large losses in staff were indicated in rubber works and declines on a smaller scale occurred in leather, textile, iron and steel factories and in fish canning. Further curtailment of operations was indicated in logging camps; coal mining and trade afforded less employment, but continued seasonal improvement was reported in construction, transportation, communication, in the mining of metallic ores and in hotels and restaurants. The level of employment in almost every industry was higher than during the same period of 1922 and 1921.

## C.B.R.E. Officers Were Re-Elected at Calgary Session

**Brotherhood Will Affiliate With International Transport Workers.**

The Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employees have concluded their session in Calgary, and A. R. Mosher was again elected president of the organization. Murdoch McLeod of Charlottetown, P.E.I., was re-elected vice-president and M. M. Maclean of Ottawa was re-elected secretary-treasurer. The entire executive board was re-elected in a body.

Recommendations relative to the future policy of the board, contained in the report of A. R. Mosher, president, were unanimously concurred in by the convention as were all of the important recommendations presented by the president, secretary-treasurer, and the executive board.

The Canadian Brotherhood have decided to affiliate with the International Transport Workers' Federation, in response to an invitation received from the International Secretary, Edo Himmon, of Amsterdam, Holland.

**Disapprove Action of N.S. Govt.**  
Censure of the Nova Scotia Provincial Government for the treatment accorded to the striking miners during the recent strike in that province by the police and militia, formed the gist of a resolution passed by the delegates, who took the stand that the attitude of the striking miners and steel workers did not warrant the use of military force, and they wished to go on record as strongly disapproving of the action of the government. Another resolution in connection with the same matter was also passed asking that the powers of magistrates under the militia act be curtailed it being suggested that the magistrates in the strike affected areas of Nova Scotia had become panicky, and had led the riot act and called out the troops without real cause.

**Public Ownership.**  
The principle of ownership of public utilities by the people was endorsed by the convention. During an informal debate this matter was thoroughly discussed on the floor of the house.

J. S. Woodworth, Labor M.P. for Winnipeg, addressed the delegates on Saturday afternoon and told them of some of the difficulties which the labor members in the house of commons had to contend with. At the conclusion of Mr. Woodworth's address, the convention passed a resolution of thanks for the manner in which Messrs. Woodworth of Winnipeg and William Irvine of Calgary had advocated the cause of labor in the house.

Toronto was chosen as the next meeting place and the Dominion convention will be held there in 1925.

**U. S. A. WORKERS EDUCATION INVITATION TO FRANK HODGES.**

The Workers' Education Bureau has invited Frank Hodges, secretary of the British Miners' Union, and of the International Miners' Federation, to make a tour of the States. Mr. Hodges will also discuss with the officials of the United Mine Workers a project for international co-operation of miners in every strike.

The New Zealand Miners' Federation is about to demand the abolition of the contract system in the mines, and the substitution of a weekly minimum wage.

## International Federation of Working Women.

With regard to the resolution, quoted in our last number, in which the above Federation declared its willingness to transfer its activities to the International Federation of Trade Unions under certain conditions, the report of the Secretary of the I.F.W.W. concludes with the following words: "The work done during the last two years shows the importance to our activities of the incorporation of the International Federation of Trade Unions. This body is the international centre of the greater part of the trade unions of the world, and it must naturally take the lead in the development of the industrial organization. We look forward to a steadily increasing cooperation, in which the International Federation of Working Women will continue to perform its special tasks within a great international organization of the workers of the world."

These clauses, which met with opposition from the American section, were dealt with by a commission, which then drew up the following resolution, which was passed unanimously, with the exception of the Americans:

"The Commission on Rules resolved to submit the following proposals to the Congress:

1. That the Congress should recommend to adopt both the above clauses of the report of the Secretary.
2. That the Executive Committee should be instructed to enter into negotiations with the International Federation of Trade Unions, in order to carry into effect in the following manner the principles previously laid down:
  - (a) The development of the present Working Women's Department of the I.F.T.U., and the appointment of a woman secretary.
  - (b) The establishment of a Working Women's Committee consisting of representatives of the trade union movement of the various countries; the co-operation of this committee with the Women's Department and the Executive organs of the I.F.T.U., in order to promote and develop the working women's movement from the international trade union point of view. The Committee will meet at least once a year, and oftener if necessary.
  - (c) The convening of a Working Women's Congress every two years, if possible before the meeting of the Congress of the I.F.T.U.
  3. That the resolutions and measures adopted in respect of the above-named points by the Congress of the I.F.T.U. (1924), should be published to all affiliated organizations through the intermediary of the Executive Committee. The above-named committee would decide the question of the continued existence of the autonomous International Federation of Working Women on the basis of the answers received."
4. In view of these proposals, the International Federation of Working Women will continue its activities in accordance with the statutes adopted at Geneva in the year 1921.

The American organization made the following declaration in this connection: "The American delegation of the Congress is not empowered to vote for the proposals and recommendations made in the report of the Rules Commission respecting the revision of the rules of the International Federation of Working Women."

The American delegation calls the attention of the Congress to the fact that America's relations with the I.F.T.U. are quite other than those of the other countries. The National Federations of these countries are already affiliated with the I.F.T.U., while the American Federation of Labor does not belong to it. We are therefore abstaining from voting on the report.

As the International Congress of Trade Unions will be held in April, 1924, the Biennial Congress of the National League of Trade Union Women, which is held in June, 1924, will be able to learn the attitude of the Trade Union International to the proposals of the Commission, so that we can then examine the situation and take the necessary decisions."

A short visit to Berlin on August 19 and 20 resulted in the completion of the following information in respect to the rise in prices:

On the 19th a tram-ride cost 50,000 marks, on the 20th 100,000. The authorities were moreover considering a proposal to raise tram fares to 200,000 marks, as the daily deficit even when fares are 100,000 marks, will be some 80 millions of marks. In all probability the trams will be forced to stop running; which will mean that hundreds of thousands of people will be compelled to spend hours every day in walking to their work. And it now costs over 4 million marks to have a pair of boots soled.

A journey on the municipal railways of Berlin cost on August 19, 4,000, and on the 20th 40,000 marks. That is to say, the fares went up ten fold, as did those of all the railways over the whole country. Freight rates, have increased twenty-fold which drive up the prices of coal and food.

A glass of beer cost 85,000 marks on the 19th and 125,000 on the 20th. On the 19th, Trade Union House was still able to let a small room containing a bed for 300,000 marks; on the 20th the Amalgamated Laundry's Association announced that the washing of the linen of a single bed would henceforth cost 350,000 marks.

The gas rates rose as follows: From July 30 to Aug. 5, 6,000 marks per cubic meter; from August 12 to named price means that one jet of gas costs about 60,000 marks per 18, 100,000 marks; from August 20 to 25, 200,000 marks. The last hour, and that the cooking of the mid-day meal for a family of average size will cost about a quarter million marks. The rise in the price of coal due to the twenty-fold increase in the cost of transport and to the increase in wages will drive the gas prices still higher.

The price of a cubic meter of water has been raised to 100,000 marks. Electricity was costing 300,000 marks per hour per kilowatt, instead of the 30,000 of the previous week. In the normal contributions, although 'automatically' raised, are scarcely enough to enable the unions

to meet their liabilities, since, by the time that the money has reached their union coffers, it has depreciated further. Some unions may even be forced to suspend the issue of the newspapers, for drastic economy have already been made. This means that they will lose much of their influence over their members.

There is also danger that the fiscal press will be ruined, since as are fast decreasing owing to the rise in prices. "The Berliner Tageblatt" already costs 80,000 marks. On the other hand, Stinnes will undoubtedly still be able to bring out his papers. Industrial undertakings everywhere are being forced either to stop work or to limit their output, so that unemployment is also increasing to alarming degree.

A bath in Municipal Baths no costs 175,000 marks. The private bath enterprises were forced to close their doors on August 20th, as they would have had to ask half a million.

With the rising prices rise in misery and despair of the great masses of the people, suicides are increasing, and the future generation is physically and mentally enfeebled. With dire foreboding men look ward to the coming winter, hunger will be added coldness.

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## Germany and Unemployment.

(L.F.T.U. Press Service.)  
The National Economic Committee of the Reichstag has decided that unemployment benefit shall be 'automatically' adjusted to the depreciation of the currency. As soon as the new wages scales have been fixed, they are to be raised every week in accordance with the National Index of the Rise in the cost of living, which will be issued weekly.

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