

aided; our tariffs to be adjusted to help trade; our proper commercial representation at important points within the Empire and in foreign countries to be maintained; and many other subjects directly bearing on the business of the future, all pressing for attention, the department of trade and commerce could become the leading department of the Dominion government. What also has been realized in Great Britain, and is equally important here, is a more intimate knowledge by the department of the various industries and their needs through frequent visits to the business centres and personal conferences with the industrial leaders.

Government Ownership of Railways.

G. H. Roberts, the British minister of labor, and one of the leaders in the labor party, confessed, on January 26th last, that in his propagandist days he thought state machinery the one panacea for overcoming all ills. Experience had taught him that that belief was not very sound. Those who formerly clamored for state control now showed, he found, resentment against it, and were asking for decentralization and the ability to control their own affairs. In Ontario and the western provinces the easily-led public, which so often appears to think only superficially, if at all, over government and municipal problems, has been persuaded by sections of the press and by some ambitious men, who have closed their eyes to past experience, to approve of government ownership of railways. That Great Britain and the United States, in taking over control of the railways, have in view only co-ordination of the traffic in the interests of the war, and that there is to be no interference with corporate ownership and enterprise, are now settled. The Canadian government has, however, a different and a difficult problem before it, arising from its own construction and ownership of railways, legacies from the past and financial conditions before, as well as occasioned by the war. It is one of the functions of government to encourage and stimulate individual and corporate enterprise, and not to displace it, or even encroach upon it. That a limited control should be exercised by it in seeing that the public was reasonably served can be at once admitted, but, with conditions as they have long existed under our political systems, it is not possible for governments to plan, construct and operate railways with that single regard for economy in construction and operating, financial returns on the capital expended and future development which characterize private corporations. This has been the invariable experience in Canada with government ownership of railways, whether in case of the Dominion or of the provinces. A suggestive plan for the consideration of the Dominion government would be the leasing of its railways, presently owned, to private corporations under reasonable conditions that will admit of the payment of the operating expenses and maintaining the lines at a high standard, whatever surplus accrues being divided with the government; and, as to the two transcontinental lines now in difficulties, providing by legislation for temporary delay in meeting the interest on their bonds and for the 15 per cent. increase in rates being extended to several years to permit of gradual development of the traffic, and to give these roads that financial strength that will enable them without assistance to raise the necessary funds for renewals and improvements to the permanent way and for more ample rolling stock to meet the expected better conditions of the future in the western provinces.

Other Important Matters.

A great public work of equal interest to Canada, to the American states bordering and west of the Great Lakes, and to the shipping interests and in the food supply of Great Britain, awaits the action of the Dominion government in the deepening of the St. Lawrence River between Lake Ontario and Montreal, thus completing an uninterrupted highway of about 2,000 miles for great ocean steamships from the sea to almost the centre of the continent at the head of Lake Superior. To make each large city on the Great Lakes an ocean port for seven months of the year means for them a vast accession of direct Empire and foreign business.

The post-office department at Ottawa might well take advantage of the new developments in aerial services to have letters, newspapers and parcels carried by aeroplane between the larger cities in the interest of both economy and quick delivery. The automobile would also be a valuable aid in the same business with the smaller towns. Extensive automobile services are projected by the United States post-office department, and even twenty years ago parcels were carried by post-office vans every night in England between certain

leading points, reasonably distant from each other, as between Oxford and London.

The opportunity awaits both the Dominion and provincial governments of giving partisan appointments and patronage in government orders and contracts their final death-blow and burial. Let it no longer be a slur on Canadian governments that ability is constantly ignored in order to give party followers a recompense for services, and that, in the issuing of contracts firms of the highest standing here and abroad are passed over because they or their representatives are not on the party patronage lists.

ONTARIO WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION IN 1917

The third year of operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act closed December 31st, 1917. The number of accidents and the amount of compensation show a considerable increase over the prior year.

The total amount of compensation awarded during the year was \$2,913,085.81, as against \$2,011,468.94 during 1916; the total number of accidents of every kind reported during the year was 36,514, as against 26,092 during 1916.

The increase is partly the result of increased industrial activity and partly of increased rate of wages, which automatically increases the workmen's compensation. The most marked increases in compensation and accidents were in munition manufacturing in schedule 1 and in operation of railways in schedule 2.

The compensation in schedule 1 industries amounted to \$2,289,529.44, and the accidents reported numbered 30,701; the compensation in schedule 2 amounted to \$623,556.37, and the accidents reported numbered 5,813.

Of the total 36,514 accidents reported during the year, 454 were fatal cases.

The average number of notices of accident received each working day during the year was 126, and the average amount of compensation awarded each day was \$9.071.

CANADA'S VICTORY LOAN

The following is a statement made by Messrs. Green-shields and Company, of Montreal, in the April issue of their monthly review:—

"The final instalment on Canada's Victory Loan will fall due on May 1st, and the present understanding is that no new issue will be placed on the market until the autumn.

"It is quite probable that the investment situation could not stand the strain of a major loan operation without the period of recuperation that will intervene on the present plan. Granting that for this and other reasons—chiefly the disturbance to ordinary business which a big loan operation involves—a new issue will be deferred until the autumn, the need for something to keep alive the spirit that animated the Victory Loan campaign is self-evident. Full payment by investors of all but a very small fraction of the Victory Loan will be completed next month. From then until the autumn the danger is real that, so far from further progress being made, habits of thrift and saving developed and encouraged by the Victory Loan will become impaired unless some national effort is made to keep the necessity of such habits constantly before the country."

The opinion is expressed by the review, "that in the interval between the final instalment of the Victory Loan next month and the new loan in the autumn there is opportunity for a successful movement directed along the lines of the thrift campaigns of Great Britain and the United States. Great Britain has raised no less than \$1,400,000,000 through sales of war savings stamps and war savings certificates. The United States figures are approaching the billion-dollar mark. Canada's effort along the same lines has been absurdly feeble. The last figures as to sales of war savings certificates showed a few millions. The war savings stamp idea, once announced as part of the government's programme, is never heard of.

"Politicians and the government departments they direct are very busy these days, and it is easy to dismiss suggestions worth while with the plea that there is already too much to do. Outside of political circles there is an army of workers ready to put their best effort into any plan that will further the war. The success of the Victory Loan was made by just such workers. What they need for a new effort, preliminary to and in furtherance of the next war loan, is a little leadership from official quarters."