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CURRENT COMMENTS

The Demand for Men

ONLY a few years ago we heard much of the "armies of the unemployed." There seemed more men in the country than there was work for them to do, and one of the most natural results was that large numbers of men left the country and sought work elsewhere. Some of them are coming back now. Times have changed, and instead of a surplus of men and a scarcity of work, there is to-day an inconvenient, yet in some ways, a satisfactory, labor problem facing the manufacturers and farmers of Ontario particularly. It is a shortage of help. There is an abundance of work to be done, on all hands, but the men to do it are not forthcoming in as large numbers as required. For the man of sound health and mind, there is at the present time but little excuse if he is without employment.

There are very apparent reasons for this shortage in the labor market. The opening up of new lands in New Ontario and Western Canada has attracted hundreds of men from the older portions of the country, and many are still going. Their departure, which no doubt will mean prosperity for themselves and development for newer Canada, leaves a temporary vacancy behind, and this in the

face of an increased demand for laborers in all our industrial centres. The factories in many of our largest towns are greatly in need of more men; the farmers of Ontario want 10,000 farm-hands; and the beet sugar industry is asking for 5,000 men at once. The Government has taken the matter up, and is endeavoring to meet the problem by encouraging immigration. Reports from all parts of the country are to the effect that unless large numbers of immigrants can be brought in and settled in Ontario within the next few months, the farming and manufacturing interests of the province will be greatly handicapped.

A lack of laborers is certainly an inconvenience, and unless the demand is met it will become a serious matter. But at the same time, it is an evidence of the increasing prosperity of the country. Such a state of affairs has come about so recently that the country has not yet been able to adjust itself to the changed conditions, but a balance between demand and supply will come gradually. Meanwhile it is infinitely more satisfactory to Canadians to know that the present shortage is caused by the building up of another part of our own country, than by the building up of a foreign nation, as it was a few years ago.