

Monetary Times

Trade Review and Insurance Chronicle
of Canada

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THE COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY

INDUSTRIAL difficulties of the past few decades have demonstrated essential differences in the relations between various industries and the public. The tying up of railroad or street railway service or of that of a telephone company results in an obstruction to all classes of business of a most serious kind.

In the early days of the capitalist system public sympathy was, generally speaking, with the capitalist; he was supposed to be the only responsible party interested in the dispute and the law was entirely on his side. It soon became apparent, however, that a combination of workers was not necessarily any more in restraint of trade than a combination of employers and the right to form unions and to strike was gradually obtained by the labor forces; in other words, it was recognized that there were two parties who had an interest in industrial disputes. With the growth of large scale industry, a third group grew up, the managing class; this group is allied to the wage earners in as much as its members themselves work for a fixed remuneration; on the other hand they are allied to the employer because their remuneration depends in large degree upon the success of the undertaking. For the latter reason this group has generally been regarded as being on the side of capital. Meanwhile no consideration was given to the interest of the citizen upon whom in his capacity of consumer the success of any industry is built.

In many industries an industrial war may be carried on until either party is forced to succumb without causing the public grave inconvenience. With the increasing solidarity of economic life, however, the number of such industries has been gradually reduced. The Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King is right in emphasizing the fact that there are these four parties to industry and that the recognition of the interests of the first three must be supplemented by a recognition of the fact that the community is also a constructive factor in the control of industry, not merely a body of consumers ready to be served when an industry so chooses and when its members can agree.

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL HYGIENE

IT is not generally known, at least not well enough known, that in the early days of the war a group of Toronto medical men and others launched the National Council for Mental Hygiene that now concerns itself not merely with mental deficiency problems in Ontario but in the whole of Canada. It is worth while referring to the work of the council not merely because of the solid and splendid work already done but of the economic possibilities of that work in the future. From the economic point of view alone the activities of the council for mental hygiene, if wisely directed, are of vital significance. Recently a survey was undertaken of conditions among the mentally deficient in Manitoba; and while, at the time of writing, the results have not been published, sufficient is known to indicate that Canada has a very serious economic and social problem on its hands. Like most difficult and disagreeable questions of national importance only the light of publicity and scientific investigation will get us anywhere.

There is no reason to believe that the Canadian situation is any better than that obtaining in the United States. With the drafting of men into the army of the Republic it was discovered that, of the 2,500,000 soldiers examined, upwards of 50,000 had finally to be rejected because of mental deficiency. In addition to that it is calculated that 500,000 persons frequent the larger towns and cities and 500,000 the country villages and highroads who, although ordinarily called "tramps" and regarded as merely idlers, are mentally deficient or suffering from alcoholism, the drug habit and the like. That means one person in every 110 of the population for that class alone. A recent study, just concluded, in several of the richest and most prosperous counties of Indiana shows that 2.4 per cent. of the entire population is made up of the mentally deficient. As remarked above, there is no reason to assume that conditions in Canada are any better.

Neither in Canada nor the United States has the problem been squarely faced before. These deficiencies have been a fertile source of crime, poverty, moral depravity and economic waste. They have placed a tremendous financial