

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER.

the richest and most varied resources. Yet it has the smallest population. Why?

British Columbia pays the highest wages for skilled and unskilled labor in Canada. Yet labor agitation is the most acute in that province. Why? Here are several instances of that. The minimum wage for unskilled labor in B. C., whether "a shovel stiff" or orchard picker, is from \$2 to \$3 a day. The minimum wage in the other provinces is from \$1.50 to \$2. I met a railroad construction man doing piece, or station work, on a tunnel. After ten days of labor, when he had deducted his board, he had only 30 cents left. Not fifty miles away from the place where this man had worked I saw eleven Montenegrins, who formerly earned 50 cents a day in their own land, also doing piece, or station work, in a tunnel. The lowest wage earned by any of the eleven was \$4 over and above board, and one fast worker was earning from \$11 to \$17 a day. Yet both gangs joined the strike. Any one who wants details of these two examples can get them by writing to Mr. Ed. Gilbert, of the I. W. W. Hall, Cordova Street, Vancouver, and Mr. Gwyer, the engineer for the railroad that advocated the dog-eat-dog policy for contractor and worker. Mr. Gwyer has nothing whatever to do with contractors and workers except to see that they live up to the railroad's specifications. Last year when the coal strike was investigated at Crow's Nest exactly similar discrepancies were reported, and the explanation of them may have some bearing on the present case. By good judgment of soil and rock and dynamite, the piece worker may so economise his shots and bring down big masses with small expenditure for powder and labor that \$1 worth of labor and dynamite may bring down \$50 of rock and gravel. In other cases, the condition of the ground may be such or the man's judgment so poor that \$1,000 of dynamite may not accomplish \$300 of work. Where the piece workers fail to clear expenses they are supposed to be paid the day rate, less board and outlay for clothes.

Construction work is to-day costing \$25,000 a mile for plain grade where it used to cost only \$8,000, and is now costing \$125,000 a mile for the mountain sections. Of this total, the provinces guarantee bonds for over \$30,000, the Federal Government for these difficult sections grants \$12,000, and the railroads find the balance. We have a fashion of saying that the corporation pays for all this. It doesn't! The public pays first in stocks and bonds, last in freight to pay dividends on the stocks and interest on the bonds. Interest at 4 per cent. on cost of \$25,000 means charges for freight and passengers up to \$1,000 a mile. Interest on cost of \$125,000 at 4 per cent. means charges of \$5,000 a mile. This is where the vital concern of the public comes in.

Where do the higher wages go? I am not now stating matters of opinion but of facts. Take two little typical places—Yale and Hope, places normally of 40 to 100 population. The postmasters reported that the Austrians and Montenegrins sent a good portion of their wages home to wives and families. The other workers didn't. What