

The Journal of Commerce

MONTREAL, CANADA

VOL. XLVII, No. 14.

GARDEN CITY PRESS, TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 1919.

Price 10 CENTS

Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Que.

The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to

CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE
AND FINANCE.

Published every Tuesday Morning by

The Journal of Commerce Publishing Company,
Limited.

Montreal Office: Room 30-B, Board of Trade
Building. Telephone Main 2662.

Toronto Office: 412 C. P. R. Bldg., Toronto. Tele-
phone: Adelaide 3310.

Vancouver Office: 507 Board of Trade Bldg., Van-
couver.

Printed at The Garden City Press, Ste. Anne de
Bellevue, Que. Telephone: 165 St. Anne's.

HON. W. S. FIELDING,

President and Editor-in-Chief.

Subscription price, \$3.00 a year.

Advertising rates on application.

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A Labor Commission

LET us hope that more than usual good will come from the appointment of a Royal Commission announced in the Senate at Ottawa by Hon. Gideon Robertson, Minister of Labor. In many cases the appointment of a Royal Commission is a means of shelving a troublesome question. Something happens to give the question immediate importance. "Something must be done," people say, though what that "something" is nobody has any very clear idea. In this situation somebody proposes the appointment of a Commission, and this course is settled on. Something has been done, the demand of the moment has been met. The Commission proceeds very leisurely to inquire into the matter. By the time it is ready to report, the question, if not wholly forgotten by the public, has been superseded by others that seem more interesting, and the report is buried in archives of Parliament that are rarely disturbed. Operations of this kind are part of the system of democratic government, and they are not always a waste of money.

Mr. Robertson's announcement indicates that the Government are following the example of the British Government in an effort to bring employers and workmen together. What is proposed is that a Commission representing all interests concerned shall travel through the Dominion, inquiring into the relations between capital and labor, and as to the remedies desired by the complainants for whatever grievances are found, and reporting to the Government with such advice as may seem best. It is a large order, the full execution of which would require more time than the present situation allows. While, happily, the character of our Canadian people justifies the belief that we need have no fear of the disorders which are occurring in some countries, there is even here a degree of unrest that calls for the gravest consideration. Hence the Commission are to be instructed to make a report not later than May 15, at which time Parliament will still be in session. The Commission will have to be busy to comply with this condition of their appointment. Probably hearings will have to be confined to one or two places in each Province. If the Government are able to

secure the services of capable men representing the varied interests concerned the work will be one that will have the hearty sympathy of the public. A little while ago there would have been small hope of an agreement by a Commission of this kind. But all industrial and social questions are in these days being approached from new angles, and interests that too long regarded each other as hostile are recognizing the fact that sympathetic co-operation is essential for the good of all. Let us hope for the best results from the movement proposed by Senator Robertson. Whether it is to succeed or fail, the effort is worth making.

An Alleged Interview

IF Mr. Harold Begbie, a reputable English journalist, is to be believed, the ex-Emperor of Germany, from his place of refuge in Holland, has deemed it expedient to plead before the bar of public opinion through an interview. True, he still talks grandiloquently of his responsibility to God only, and pretends to laugh at the talk of any tribunal trying him for his war conduct. But the fact, if it be a fact, that he has given the interview shows that he is beginning to understand that he, like everybody, has a responsibility to civilization that cannot be ignored. Except that it is a recognition of this fact the interview is not likely to advance the ex-Kaiser in the world's opinion. There is too much whining of his own irresponsibility and too much of the not uncommon tendency to blame other people. He expresses disapproval of the Lusitania outrage and the murder of Edith Cavell. But when these horrors occurred the world heard no word of condemnation of them from him or any other German authority. On the contrary, all that was heard was in the way of defence and attempted justification. Indeed, it is well known that in the case of the Lusitania a medal was struck in commemoration of the sinking of the ship, and the submarine's officers who committed the crime were treated at Berlin as heroes. The ex-Kaiser's pretence that Russia was responsible for bringing on the war is entirely hypocritical. The man who was German ambassador at London before the war