

## The Control of Labor

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With the enforcement of the Military Service Act there has naturally arisen a demand for the conscription of wealth and labor. It is instinctively felt that the whole power of the nation should be called into action. It is unfair to put the whole burden of service and risk upon one class. When those who can fight go forth to fight it is time for those who cannot fight to do whatever thing they can which will assist in the fight.

We are assured that the battle in Europe is only one part, though the most insistent part, of the national duty. There is also the duty of finance, which locates the part which wealth should play. Something has been done to conscript wealth for this purpose. There is a third duty, however, which is the duty of production, and this calls for the enlistment of the working-power of the Dominion. The food controller requires to have behind him an authority which can reach the labor-slackers and force them to earn, if not their bread, at least their share of the world's liberty, in the sweat of their brows.

There are many portions of Canada where such compulsion is needless. The majority of our population are still under the stress of nature's law that those who do not work shall not eat. Their needs hold them in chronic conscription. No doubt their energies are heightened and their tasks ennobled by their participation in the campaign of production to help win the war. Four-fifths of our gallant soldiers at the front came from this class of our population, and we need not doubt the ardor and faith of those still among us. Most of the skilled labor of the country, and much of the unskilled labor, is now doing all that can be expected of it to speed production. We should no more think of imposing any further control upon these than we should think of sending the Military Service Act to the trenches.

But there is at least one class of worker for whom some control is needed. It is the class of foreign labor. I take the word foreign in its natural sense, as meaning something which is strange among us. It is the labor of men who do not speak our language, nor think our thoughts, nor accept our standards, nor appreciate our national aims. Some of these men have been years in the country, some of them have been naturalized and have played a leading role in elections, but they are unassimilated.

None of them are flatly refusing to work. They cannot afford to do that. But the dearth of labor at the present time has given them such an advantage in the labor-market that they are imposing their will upon employers, to the detriment of production. In a journey through the farming areas of the prairies one constantly hears complaints of farmers being held up by foreigners.

One instance I know of where a group of foreigners had hired with a farmer at the beginning of harvest. He contracted with them for five dollars a day, with board and lodging, till after the threshing. This was high wages for harvest work. They worked without rebellion till the threshing gangs began to come in, paying six dollars a day. They did not then break their contract, which would have involved them with the law, but deliberately and wantonly scamped their work till the farmer was driven to discharge them. This was what they wanted, and they immediately joined a threshing crew near at hand. The farmer, in his anger, refused to pay them what wages were due, whereupon they sued him before a magistrate and won the case. It is such occurrences as this which illustrate the need for some control of this class of laborers at the present time.

Again, during last winter there were known to be in the city of Winnipeg between one and two thousand foreigners out of work. Little groups of them could be seen every day in front of the boards of the employment agencies. They were looking for work in the city. If they could pick up a day's work with a bucksaw or a snow-shovel they were pleased. But they would not leave the city. To the many applications from farms and lumber camps they paid no attention. These men had a little money, the savings of the past summer's employment. On this they lived, herding ten or a dozen in a shack, waiting for spring.

It is but fair that consideration be paid to the other side of the story. These foreigners commonly complain that they are not treated well by their employers. It is not necessary to deny their allegations.

Indeed, where they have been employed in gangs it is quite probable that they have been cheated at every turn. Such is the report upon similar conditions in the United States, and there is no reason to believe that they are treated any differently in Canada. On the farms no doubt there are some places where they do not get a square deal, and, besides, the lone foreigner in a typical Canadian home presents an unhappy social situation at the best. But we are at such a crisis in our national history that ordinary comforts and conveniences count for little. The great need at home is production, and every one whose natural task is to help produce should be at that task.

One should say also, in justice to the foreigner, that it is not to be wondered at that he does not rise with utter nobility of self-abnegation to the requirements of the crisis. Many who should know better than he have failed to meet that test. Why should not he profiteer as well as they? Moreover, it is only a couple of years since the profiteer was the admiration and glory of his age. It is quite possible that he may mount his throne again immediately after the war. Few of us probably recognize how radically popular thinking has changed on the subject of making money during the last few months. One wonders, sometimes, as he reads the glib maledictions upon the chosen victims of the public scorn, how much of it is genuine. Our system of business is essentially one of profit-seeking, without limit except by law. It may not be the best system. It may not be a just system. But it is the accepted system, the going concern of the world's self-supporting activities. One wonders whether the rage against the rich is really a cry for justice, or but a shriller scream of envy.

It is only the thoughtless who can be unsympathetic with the lot of the foreigner in Canada at the present time. He came amongst us years ago in response to our earnest invitation. Possibly we proved our desire for his company by assisting his passage. And, when he arrived, though the welcome may not have taken quite the form he expected it was of the most generous fashion. We said to him, on the wharf at Quebec or Halifax, practically this: "No, we won't help you find work or a farm. That is not our way. You must look out for yourself. But we offer you an unequalled chance for you to look out for

yourself. Work anywhere you can, for all that you can get. You will find people trying to get the better of you, so see to it that you get the better of them. We do not promise much to many of you, but there are golden rewards for the few of you who can seize opportunity or power. Canadian wages are low, but Canadian prizes are rich. So look out for number one. Besides, we urge upon you at the earliest moment the power of the vote. This is our dearest and most potent possession. It is the symbol of our freedom and the instrument of our sovereignty. We do not expect you to comprehend it, but we ask you to take and use it. Many will fawn upon you and court your favor because you possess it."

Now, consider the astonishment of the foreigner to-day when he finds himself deprived of the vote and branded as an alien enemy to boot. There is still left to him, however, the commercial opportunity. What can we expect of him but that he will act as he has formerly acted, as he was told to act, and as his Canadian neighbors used to act? It is really too much to expect of him that, exiled and disowned and suspected, he should offer himself as a living sacrifice on the altar of our national aims.

For his own protection, as well as in the interest of larger production, his labor should be under control. It always should have been under some measure of control, pending the time that his knowledge and acceptance of Canadian standards of life fitted him for participation in the general life of the country. How this control should be exercised is a problem for statesmen. It should not be done in such a way that it will hurt or exploit the foreigner. He is not to be made the slave of his employer. The employer himself should be also under control wherever his activities touch those of the foreigner. The chief matters to be attended to are the prevention of idleness, the fair distribution of the labor throughout the Dominion, and an equitable arrangement as to wages and conditions of labor.

This must be done by the Dominion Parliament, if at all. The Provinces cannot do it. Several of them have been supporting Labor Bureaus with only qualified success. It is surprising that they have succeeded as well as they have. For the Province is not the unit of labor distribution. Labor moves as freely and readily across provincial as across country boundaries. Montreal is a labor market for much of Ontario. Winnipeg is a labor market for Saskatchewan and Alberta. It is to be hoped that, for the reconstruction period, an extensive system of labor exchanges with a central headquarters will be set up for the whole of Canada. As a step in that direction, and a valuable experiment in labor distribution, the direction and control of foreign labor might be entered upon at once.

### EXPORTS OF PRINCIPAL MANUFACTURED GOODS FROM CANADA IN 1917, 1916 AND 1914.

	1917.	1916.	1914.
Manufactures of grain .....	\$51,942,056	\$40,433,503	\$25,114,512
Automobiles and carriages .....	14,397,347	11,372,331	4,014,512
Clothing and wearing apparel .....	6,356,750	9,148,878	446,524
Cotton fabrics .....	224,946	614,739	82,636
Drugs, dyes, chemicals .....	1,823,350	1,222,592	1,730,203
Electric apparatus .....	1,357,824	573,044	106,816
Canned goods, all kinds .....	17,673,170	13,211,452	10,121,759
Munitions .....	240,302,414	73,904,586	13,353
Explosives .....	40,917,856	7,080,926	228,312
Rubber goods .....	2,666,506	3,081,874	686,231
Hats and caps .....	226,597	134,912	21,521
Leather and manufactures of .....	7,408,721	14,575,322	3,213,941
Agricultural implements .....	3,576,124	3,353,635	7,219,520
Gasoline engines .....	133,673	85,641	88,266
Guns, rifles, etc. ....	2,234,021	617,795	130,568
Hardware .....	943,755	888,120	201,319
Machinery .....	2,260,714	1,522,579	1,459,876
Pig iron .....	343,906	307,721	347,347
Wire and wire nails .....	9,038,143	4,483,263	.....
Total iron and steel and mfg. of .....	49,065,299	54,483,597	11,374,981
Plumbago, manufactures of .....	352,906	141,348	40,076
Condensed milk .....	1,371,610	770,566	666,941
Musical instruments .....	232,936	354,992	282,707
Paints and varnishes .....	962,988	349,298	133,356
Paper .....	26,123,215	20,039,550	12,686,896
Cheese .....	36,721,136	26,690,500	18,868,785
Butter .....	2,491,992	1,018,769	309,046
Bacon .....	43,011,439	25,710,767	3,763,195
Gasoline launches .....	15,149,926	147,050	9,545
Ships .....	624,966	44,100	128,493
Sugar, etc. ....	3,931,933	313,684	220,098
Lumber and manufactures of .....	47,563,296	43,352,973	33,272,876
Furniture .....	344,418	396,223	411,074
Wood pulp .....	20,404,053	10,376,548	6,304,824
Manufactures of wood .....	21,378,798	11,497,870	7,245,211
Woollen goods .....	725,148	657,475	81,555