

CHAPTER I.

Investigation of Munition Plants.

The writer first began investigations by visiting the munition plants. It was not possible to examine every one, but the largest were selected. The Imperial Munitions Board in Montreal declared the number of plants which were surveyed to be 35% of the munition plants of Montreal, but that the number of employees in these plants was 50% of the total munition workers in the city. The conditions existing in the plants which were visited are taken as representative of the whole. The elucidation of these plants is as follows:—

Plant No. 1.

This is a munition plant manufacturing shells. It was in existence before the war as a general machine shop. It employed at that time about 80 men and no women.

Female labor was hired for the first time on October the fifth, 1916, to help fill a contract for making fuses. Previous to that date there were 400 men in the plant engaged in the production of shells. Women numbering about 300 were added to the 400 male employees already in the service, and all began the manufacture of fuses.

It took these 700 workers about one year to fulfill the contract. During that time the highest wages paid to the women were \$.27½ per hour, the lowest wages were \$.18 per hour, while the average were \$.25 per hour.

The highest wage paid to the men was \$.40 per hour, the lowest was \$.22 per hour, and the average was \$.30 per hour, for the same work as that done by the women.

Out of these 300 women workers 15 were married. Almost all the women were French-Canadians.