

READJUSTMENT OF INDUSTRY

How to maintain efficient production with competitive co-operation was the second problem discussed by Colonel David Carnegie, M.I.C.E., F.R.S., Edin., at the recent annual meeting of the Canadian Mining Institute, Montreal. Colonel Carnegie, who is a member and ordnance advisor of the Imperial Munitions Board, Ottawa, had first considered as to how to secure remunerative trade without unrestricted competition.

The problem of the maintenance of efficient production with competitive co-operation affected two classes of labor, said Colonel Carnegie, the employer and the employed. "The intelligent employee to-day not infrequently becomes the prosperous employer to-morrow." He continued. "Such boards of control as we are now considering (outlined in these columns last week), would encourage this tendency.

"While in considering the first problem the curse of unrestricted competition is revealed and condemned, I wish to emphasize just as strongly the true value of maintaining efficient production with competitive co-operation, and, further, that regulated competition in production is a healthy inspiring incentive, producing the best results without having any of the evils attending that unfair competition which secures trade. Competitive co-operation is indeed the life of industry when applied to efficient production. It inspires the best service in the individual worker while producing contentment.

"This condition is not overdrawn, and I am sure that much unrest exists regarding the future relations of capital and labor. Since the war began commissions have been appointed to investigate the far-reaching problems of industry, and recommendations have been made concerning the relationship between capital and labor, the development of industrial research, the employment of the best kind of machinery, the best methods of manufacture, buying and selling products, transportation, facilities, domestic and foreign commercial relationship, together with a host of other subjects of vital importance to the industrial prosperity of the Empire.

"For years past there have been constant conflicts between capital and labor on one or other of the issues I have named. Prior to the war in the United Kingdom strikes were so common and so virulent that they threatened to menace the public safety.

"In March, 1917, the Whitley report of the Joint Standing Industrial Councils was presented to the British parliament. In that report recommendations were made for improving the relations between masters and men and for establishing joint standing industrial councils composed of employers and employees, to obtain harmony and better means of production. Ever since the war began committees and commissions have been at work to solve the problems. It is hoped that the work of these bodies will be of service to the reconstruction committee of the cabinet of the Dominion government.

"These investigations instituted by government indicate the need of changed conditions. It is unnecessary for me to go into details regarding the causes of mutual distrust and suspicion between employers and employed. I would rather, if time permitted, exalt the spirit which is changing daily, the relations of employer and employed, and making possible a speedier union of their efforts in the general harmony of their interests. I believe the way to secure that harmony is by recognizing organized labor and letting them share in a larger manner the responsibility of the output, quality and profits of industry. The following proposals for the formation of production boards are suggested with the hope that they may meet the need.

"1. That production boards be formed for each industry in the same number as the district trade boards, and be incorporated by law to deal with specific duties defined in the articles of association.

"2. The boards to be independent in their control and operation of all matters under their jurisdiction, but to work in direct and harmonious association with the industry trade boards.

"3. Each board to consist of elected representatives of the employers and employees of each industry from the same number of manufacturers and within the same geographical boundaries, as determined by the scope of the industry trade board.

"4. Equal numbers of employers or their representatives, and employees or their representatives, to be elected by the

district employers' association, and employees of the industry, whether the masters or men belong or do not belong to employers' associations or trade unions. The idea being to have full representation of each side belonging to the industry of the district in question. The method of election is a detail of organization.

"5. The chairman and vice-chairman to be nominated by the board as a whole. The chairman to be nominated from the elected representatives of the employers and the vice-chairman to be nominated from the elected representatives of the employees. Approval and election of both to be sanctioned by government and for the period of their election their services to be secured by the government.

"1. The acceleration of output by the introduction of the most important processes and plant used in any part of the world in the same industry. The consideration of this phase of the board's work to be placed in the hands of a committee who would investigate all modern improvements, review current scientific journals and reports of investigations relating to the industry. The committee to report periodically to the board, making recommendations for improved production. The board would consider and submit such recommendations to manufacturers associated with the board, and leave it to them to make such improvements as they consider desirable. The board would not accept responsibility for the results.

"2. To consider the provision of suitable industrial, technical and commercial training for boys, girls, men and women, with the object of improving the output and the quality of the product. A small committee of the board to investigate this subject, always with a view to training for the specific industry represented by the trade board. This section of the board's work would cover a very wide but necessary field of operation. It would embody:—

"(a) The vocational training of the child in preparation of his or her entry into the industry; (b) the education of the actual producers (principally manual); (c) the education of the directors of production (both manual and technical); (d) the education of the distributors of production (principally financial and commercial).

"3. To consider the classification, certification and valuation of labor. Another committee of the board could be formed for this definite object, having in view:—

"(a) The classifying of apprenticeship or in drafting boy and girl labor from vocational schools into those sections of industry best suited for their health, aptitude and age.

"(b) The certification of apprenticeship after probationary period in works, or office, to satisfy all concerned that the right employment has been selected for the child.

"(c) The classification of boys and girls after completion of apprenticeship for further training as draughtsmen, foremen, managers, salesmen, accountants, etc., according to the quality of the talent they had developed during their apprenticeship.

"(d) The classification of craftsmen of the same vocation, such as moulders, pattern makers, machinists, gauge makers, etc., into different skilled classes—say, 1st, 2nd and 3rd class moulders. The classification would distinguish between the good and very skilled moulders. Such classification is common in the civil, military, naval and professional services, where each receives a diploma, certificate or badge, indicating his ability, class or rank in the services. Labor unions classified their trades but not the ability of one individual as compared with another, although there are widely marked differences between the skill of moulders for instance. This neglect of classification has been one of the greatest causes of friction between the employer and the employed. The complaint has been that the skilled worker has not done more work than the indifferent worker. To initiate this work by one of the committees of the board with proper means for the certification of all labor by examination (manual or oral), by craftsmen in the art, would be a great service. The board to issue certificates indicating to what trade and class they belong, just as 1st, 2nd and 3rd class certificates are issued to the marine and land stationary engineers, sailors, miners and to others in different vocations. Arrangements to be made for the periodic renewal and O.K.'s of certificates. Such certificates to carry the board's district rate of pay. Should the holder of the certificate wish to leave the district over which the board presides, the certificate to be presented to the board to be O.K'd, so that on presentation to a new employer in a different district his value would be known at once.