

Canada's Parliament of Industrial Captains

CANADIAN Manufacturers' Association Convention at Toronto Covered a Wide Range of Important Subjects—Workmen's Compensation, Shell Making, War Orders and the Business Outlook Were Among the Topics—Germany Wanted to Drive a One-sided Trade Bargain With Us Shortly Before the War

THE farmer and the manufacturer are helping materially to transform an adverse into a favorable trade balance. The exports of manufactures particularly are increasing at present, during the past fiscal year their value having changed from \$57,000,000 to \$85,000,000. Several hundred representatives of the three thousand members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association met in annual convention at Toronto last week. They heard a large number of their committees' reports. They listened to addresses about the new Canadian industry of making shrapnel shell. They heard an exposition of the world's trade position, of the outlook, and of the possibilities for Canadian manufacturers abroad. An address was delivered by the retiring president, Mr. E. G. Henderson, and it covered everything from the call of duty to the shortage of machinists in Canada. The convention expressed their opinion that national business should not be done on lines of political favor; that corruption in war munitions was not general; that Sir Robert Borden did well to abolish the patronage list; and that present high prices are not likely to be maintained after the war. They put on record the fact that a protest had been sent to Premier Borden, against a war-time election. The various reports presented dealt with proposed freight rate increases; workmen's compensation; tariffs; company licensing; patent law reform; ocean freight rates; export trade, and a hundred other things.

The manufacturers, as a class, are by a sort of tradition, usually supposed to be antagonistic to the interests of labor. It is the old story of capital versus labor, with the fact overlooked that the more tolerant and helpful each is of and to the other, the better is it for both. The manufacturers of Canada are strongly organized but despite popular opinion, they do not wield as much power as some of us are sometimes led to believe. Indeed, in certain directions and upon occasions, they have not been given their measure of fairness. In the annual report of their special committee on workmen's compensation, it is recalled that after the Ontario act had been in operation for only two months, an amending act, consisting of 34 sections, was adopted. As most of the amendments affected the interests of employers rather than workmen, the manufacturers thought they should have been consulted. No opportunity was afforded them of taking part in the discussion of the amendments. Before any amending bill had been introduced in the provincial house, they presented to the government certain suggestions for amendments but were informed that it was too late, the amendments having already been drafted by the government's workmen's compensation board. This apparently is one of the incidents which is to spur the manufacturers to having greater strength in legislative representation. The report of the manufacturers' committee says in this connection: "Your committee desire to advert again to a subject which was discussed at the last annual meeting, namely, the absence of any adequate representation in the legislature, not only of Ontario but of the other provinces

and for that matter the parliament of Canada, of the manufacturing interests of the country. It is sufficiently difficult under a party system of government for practical business men to secure fair and reasonable legislative treatment, but the difficulty is almost insuperable when, instead of having their fair proportion of representation in the legislature and caucuses, the business interests are represented inadequately or not at all. If business men do not interest themselves in legislative and political affairs it is perhaps not to be wondered at if politicians fail to give the opinions of business men that serious consideration which they are entitled to by reason of the magnitude of their interests."

The Canadian Manufacturers' Association is one of the best organized, most powerful and influential bodies of its kind. The deliberations of this parliament of industrial captains, for such is their convention, have an interest, not only for manufacturers, but also for banking, finance, business and labor. Some of the principal features of the convention are summarized by *The Monetary Times* in the following columns.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION IN ONTARIO

Manufacturers Point Out Defects of the Act and of Administration

The disposition of employers in Ontario has on the whole been to give the Ontario workmen's compensation act a fair chance and to extend to the government authorities, their sympathy and support in its administration. This is the conclusion recorded in the annual report of the special committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association on workmen's compensation. The report, however, discusses among other things, the defects of the act, and the defects and expenses of administration. On these points, it says:—

The act has shown in its initial operation precisely the defects that were anticipated by your committee and discussed in the last annual report. The vagueness of the provisions of the act has left many of the most important matters to assume definite form in practice either by ill-considered determination or by pure chance. An instance of this is the method of assessment. As was repeatedly pointed out by your committee the method laid down in the act was impossible. It was so found by the board, and methods and policies largely accidental were adopted in defiance of the provisions of the act. The manufacturers had been assured by the government that the necessary changes would be made to place the system on an assessment basis, collecting each year what was required for the year, with such reserves, either on the capitalized or current cost plan.

Are Disappointed Here.

The government having failed to make the promised amendments last year, it was hoped, says the report, that either the government or the administering board would see that the proper practice was worked out and was duly authorized by amendment. Nothing of this kind has been done. So far as there can be said to be any system of rating it is on a premium rate basis. The premiums that have been collected from the different employers are apparently not regarded as assessments but as premiums for carrying their "insurance" for the year. The money that has been collected is set aside