

## Building Trades, 1910-1918

Figures compiled by the Department of Labour, Ottawa, show that during the year 1918 there was a slight increase in the volume of employment in the building trades compared with 1917 as indicated by the value of building permits issued in the 35 cities with populations of 15,000 or over. The estimated cost of the building work in these cities in 1918 was \$36,838,270 as compared with \$33,936,426 in 1917, an increase of \$2,901,844, or 8.56 per cent. In the comparative table which accompanies the report and which groups the cities by provinces, increases are shown in all the eight provinces included except New Brunswick, Quebec and Manitoba. The greatest increase, 149 per cent., was shown in Nova Scotia, and substantial increases were also reported in Alberta and British Columbia. Of the larger cities, Halifax, Ottawa and Calgary showed marked increases, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria also reported increases, and Montreal and Winnipeg reported slight decreases. Of the smaller centres, Brantford, Kingston, St. Catharines, Regina, and Moose Jaw recorded gains as compared with the previous year.

The figures show that the pre-war level of employment in the building trades has been better maintained in Nova Scotia than in any other province. In the years 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918 the total for the two Nova Scotia cities was higher than in any of the other five years of the record. In New Brunswick, however, the total for 1918 was less than it has been for any year since 1910. In the province of Quebec there has been a steady decline from the high level of 1913. The yearly percentages of decrease for 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917 and 1918 are approximately 28, 50, 20, 10 and 22 per cent.

The total for the 14 Ontario cities fell from \$50,000,000 in the record years of 1912 and 1913 to \$18,000,000 in 1918. The lowest level was reached in 1915 when there was a falling off of over 60 per cent. from 1914. In 1916 there was an increase of 41 per cent. over 1915, but in 1917 there was a decrease of 14 per cent. over 1916 and in 1918 an increase of only 6 per cent. over 1917. The figures for 1918 show a decrease of 63 per cent. from the record year of 1912 and an increase of 29 per cent. over 1915 when the volume of building permits reached the lowest figure since 1910. In the four western provinces the highest figure was reached in 1912 and the lowest figure in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in 1915, while in British Columbia the lowest figure was reported in 1917. In Manitoba the amount for 1918 shows a decrease of 113 per cent. over 1912 (the record year) and an increase of 15 per cent. over 1915 (the year building permits reached lowest amount.) In

Saskatchewan the corresponding decrease and increase amount to 89 per cent. and 279 per cent. In Alberta the decrease is 95 per cent. and the increase over the minimum amount since 1910 is 236 per cent. In British Columbia the decrease from the maximum figure in 1912 is 94 per cent. and the increase over the minimum of 1917 is 85 per cent.

The statistics quoted above are for 35 Canadian cities only and do not include a number of smaller industrial centres such as Welland, Niagara Falls, Woodstock, Chatham, Galt, Owen Sound, Belleville, Brockville, Pembroke, and other growing manufacturing towns. It is safe to estimate that the building operations in the smaller cities and towns not enumerated and in the villages and farming districts, would equal as much, if not more, than the total shown for the 35 urban centres.

## Building Prospect 1919

One of the most promising features of the building outlook is the volume of public improvements to be carried out during the present year. Within the past month a very comprehensive program has been announced by the Ontario Government involving an expenditure of \$25,000,000 of which \$20,000,000 will be devoted to building work alone.

Projects definitely decided upon include new buildings and repairs to the existing Provincial buildings at Toronto cost \$658,500, and similar undertakings elsewhere in the Province as follows: Brockville, \$76,800; Hamilton, \$70,620; Kingston, \$110,000; London, \$104,500; Mimico, \$89,600; Whitby, \$482,800; Woodstock, \$128,500; Ottawa, \$38,550; Normal Schools, London, Hamilton, North Bay, Peterboro and Stratford, \$20,200; Belleville, \$50,500; Brantford, \$71,500; Guelph, \$12,100, other expenditures under this classification, \$139,460.

New construction and repairs in Northern Ontario districts it is estimated will reach approximately \$204,670.

These improvements it is figured will furnish employment for 40,000 men during the summer months, and refer to Ontario alone. They do not take into account the programme of improvements to be carried out by the Dominion Government, which will substantially contribute to further take up the present labor slack due to demobilization.

Besides the \$25,000,000 which has been made available for improving the housing conditions, it is the intention of the Federal authorities to proceed with other work of direct benefit to the building trades, including alteration and repairs on an extensive scale to existing government

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