

CANADIAN WEEKLY BULLETIN



INFORMATION DIVISION
 DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
 OTTAWA - CANADA

Vol. 9 No. 43

August 27, 1954

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WEEK'S EVENTS IN REVIEW

LABOUR OUTLOOK: Study of Canada's unemployment insurance program with a view to improvement and moves to combat seasonal unemployment were announced by the Minister of Labour, Mr. Milton F. Gregg, in his address before the convention of Canadian Trades and Labour Congress, in Regina, on August 24.

He told the delegates to the 600,000-member organization that the level of investment in Canada this year, might well exceed last year's record total; business men were making strong plans for the future, and that in May of this year the total income received by labour in Canada was higher than ever before, even though employment was below last year's level.

The Minister paid tribute to the retiring President of the labour body, Mr. Percy Bengough, who has served over 20 years in executive capacities, and he mentioned with satisfaction the recent agreement to refer Canadian railway labour-management differences to arbitration.

Following is the partial text of Mr. Gregg's address:

"Private investment has continued at a level that is surprisingly high in view of the economic downturn from which the United States is now emerging. In Canada, the level of investment may well exceed last year's record total. Business men are continuing to make strong plans for the future - and this means jobs for workers. The outlook for the development of our country's resources has seldom been brighter than it is today."

"Another encouraging feature is the confidence the Canadian people generally are showing in the outlook for the future. They are spending their money at a very high rate on consumer goods and services. Their level of income continues high. This is particularly true of wage and salary earners. In the last month for which we have statistics - May, 1954 - the total income received by labour in Canada was higher than ever before in our history for this time of year. This was the case, even though employment was below last year's level.

"At the present moment our unemployment insurance programme is under study and we hope to bring legislation in at the next session of Parliament, with a view to making it a more effective instrument of social policy....

"This healthy underlying situation means that most businesses can look forward to good markets for their products. They must, however, be sure their production plans and prices are right, and this obviously requires more attention on the part of both management and labour to such matters as productivity. The implications of this changed set of economic circumstances are not something which can be left to any one agency or group in the Canadian economy. Rather, they must be the concern of all of us, whether we be in labour, in management, or in government....

"As Canadians, we have passed the point where we are prepared to accept prolonged or avoidable unemployment. We all, however, have our separate responsibilities and I would like