

## The Problems of National Reconstruction

About twelve months ago there was started in Montreal, by a small number of business and professional men, a movement having for its primary object the creation of small groups of men and women from every walk of life, for the purpose of making special studies of the new problems that have been forced upon every country by the war—including Canada. To better enable the groups to give intelligent study to the problems the organizers prepared a summary of the reconstruction activities that have been and are taking place in different parts of the world. This summary has just been published in the form of a pamphlet under the general title of "The Problems of National Reconstruction," and while the compilers are careful not to claim any originality in the work itself nor to express any definite opinion on any of the subjects discussed, yet as a presentation of the problems of reconstruction, in their broadest and yet most concrete form, the summary is by far the most instructive work of its kind for the average citizen.

The summary is classified into nineteen chapters, each chapter dealing with one subject, such as: "Employment—industrial councils—education—health and housing—the state in its relation to industry—taxation and finance, and so on. The last chapter contains a bibliography of sixty-two published works dealing with certain phases of reconstruction, and referred to in the summary itself; the whole giving a fair perspective of world-wide economic conditions as they are, together with many finger-posts suggesting the splendid potentialities of our national heritage, if advantage be taken of our great opportunities. Much of the value of the work lies in the make-up of the committee responsible for its compilation. These men are not faddists, but sane intelligent citizens who would resent very keenly the name "socialist" being applied to any of them, and in particular would I draw the attention of the reader to the principal compiler, Mr. Francis Hankin (the secretary), and to the President, Mr. Warick Chipman, K.C., who ably assisted him. These two men are not even hobbyists with radical tendencies, but self-respecting Canadians of the younger school. So that we may take it that the work has been well thought out; that much study has been given to its possible effect on the Canadian people of to-day and to-morrow, and that the compilers are willing to accept the responsibility, and yet such a propaganda for reconstruction as suggested in the summary would have been ridiculed as smacking of "socialism" two months before war broke out. But war has brought about great changes in the minds of the people and today socialism has a new meaning. It is opportune then that the summary should be published at this moment—to counteract the baneful influence of Bolshevism, which we have even in Canada. It will certainly be more effective in directing public opinion along sane lines of democracy than will even the government keeper of "public morals."

To-day labour means much more than it did when it first began to organize for its own protection. Then its ranks were limited to those who worked with their hands—now its ranks are open to those who work with their brains; that is, in Great Britain. Canada has not yet got to this stage. The consequence is that organized labour in the Old Country realizes its responsibilities to the State—the community. And British capital by the war has also been forced to realize that it too has responsibilities to the State—and no doubt this will come in Canada—when the soldiers come home. And it is the utilizing of this dual responsibility that will build up Canada for the benefit of the employers, the employees and the community. The Whitley report, which the summary makes much of, fully recognizes the dual responsibility. This famous report says in effect, that each trade should have a standing Industrial Council made up of representatives of employers and employees in equal numbers, with special powers to control that trade. So far, twenty-six trades have adopted the report, and so has the British government in its relations to its workers. The great value of the Whitley report would seem to be that it eliminates suspicion between employer and employee, by not only bringing them together but by thrusting joint responsibility on them. A sign of the times in Canada is that Sir John Willison, President of the Canadian Reconstruction Association strongly advocates its adoption in this country.

The summary takes note of the report of the Canadian

Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education. This commission appointed in 1910 under Dr. G. W. Robertson, visited all the large industrial centres in Europe and the United States as well as making a complete tour of Canada, and the exhaustive report which followed has never been taken advantage of. This is a pity, for there is valuable information and advice in the five volumes that make up the report.

Taking up the housing question the summary notes that in Great Britain it is proposed that the Government set aside 200 million pounds (\$1,000,000,000) for housing purposes—to equal 20 per cent of the cost of building workmen's houses. Canada proportionately is much worse off in housing accommodation, and it is to be hoped that not only will the other provinces follow Ontario's example, the government of which has allotted \$2,000,000 to be loaned to the municipalities conditionally at the rate of 5 per cent, but that the Federal Government will see its way to loan to the municipalities for the same purpose.

To sum up the summary, it would have Canada the paradise for workers, economically and socially, and there is no doubt that if she would progress she must realize that the only way is to encourage the worker "to live."

### MR. HARRY BRAGG AND REPATRIATION.

After a long agitation on the part of this Journal the Dominion Government, through the new Repatriation Committee, has at last decided to appeal to the municipal councils of Canada for their co-operation in the demobilization and repatriation of our soldiers and in offsetting as far as possible the lugbear of unemployment during the transition period. The method to be adopted to bring about such co-operation has not yet been decided upon, but as a start the Union of Canadian Municipalities has been invited to select four of its members as a special committee to work with the Repatriation Board at Ottawa, and Mr. Harry Bragg, of the Journal, has been appointed as municipal representative on the staff of the Director of Repatriation. Mr. Bragg, who has given up all official connection with the Journal so as to give the whole of his time to his new work, is specially qualified for the position. As editor and latterly as business manager, he has devoted fourteen years to the service of the Canadian Municipal Journal, during which time he has visited every part of the Dominion, and made for himself a host of friends among the municipal men of the country. As a colleague he has served the Journal well—full of municipal information, he has been ever ready to oblige any member of the staff. His duties have been as much a work of love as necessity, and his many visits to attend municipal conventions were a real holiday to him. He is a true municipal enthusiast, and now that he has entered the larger arena of Federal employment it will be as much to the benefit of the country as of himself. Outside his purely municipal work, Mr. Bragg has for long taken an active interest in education, and is at the present moment President of the Quebec Association of Protestant School Managers. He is also an ex-President of the South Shore Board of Trade, which covers four municipalities opposite Montreal.

### LATE MR. S. R. TARR.

(Editor of Canadian Finance.)

By the death, after a brief illness, of Mr. S. R. Tarr, Editor of Canadian Finance, and Chairman of the Winnipeg Citizens' League, municipal Canada has lost one of its keenest students. Mr. Tarr in his journal did much constructive work in municipal finance, and his chairmanship of the Citizens' League gave him special opportunities to put into practice what he had been preaching. Though his criticism was often sharp, it was always fair. It is such men as the late Mr. Tarr that help to build up along sane lines our municipal superstructure.