

Capital—Labour—The Community

The Minister of Labour in his announcement that as a final step towards the "getting together" of capital and labour, a small representative commission would visit the principal industrial centres and report on the local conditions, opened a new epoch in Canadian industrialism. It is very evident from the Minister's address to the Senate that both employers and employees are willing to try out the ideas embodied in the famous Whitley report under which over fifty industries are working today in the Old Country—the principle being equal representation and equal responsibility of both capital and labour in each industry. If the system can be made to work in Canada—and there is no reason why it should not—it will relieve much anxiety in the minds of the citizens and eliminate the spirit of bolshevism, that is spreading even in this country. There is one phase, though, of the new order of better understanding between capital and labour that must not be lost sight of, namely the responsibility of both to the community; otherwise the pact will not be complete. The worker to-day is desirous not only to earn more but to live better, and it is to the employer's interest to see that the worker has that op-

portunity to live better by surrounding him so far as possible with decent and healthy environments. Every factory or works should have a model community for the workers within easy walking distance, and every worker should feel it his or her duty to see that the community is well governed. That is what we mean by the responsibility of capital and labour to the community, and without detracting from the importance of the commission appointed by the Minister of Labour we do suggest that such a commission would have been strengthened by the selection of a municipal man—someone who understood the social and civic conditions of the country. That the civic side of industrialism is as important as the other two, is well illustrated in an inquiry that was made recently by an American manufacturing firm desiring to locate in Canada. This firm asked all kinds of questions about the social conditions of the municipality, but nothing about a site. The reason given for such questions being that unless the employees could live comfortable lives, all the wages in the world would not be sufficient inducement for them to leave their present homes, which formed part of a community built along modern town planning lines.

A Dominion Health Department

At the present moment legislation is being enacted at Ottawa for the establishment of a Public Health Department for the Dominion and while some of the clauses are not perfect and want amending the Act is a good one on the whole. The whole idea of the Hon. N. W. Rowell, whose scheme it is, is to make a serious attempt to raise the standard of the health of the Canadian people, and whether we agree with his methods or not, such an attempt cannot help but receive the sympathy of enlightened citizens.

One of the saddest phases of Canada's part in the war was the large percentage of men found to be medically unfit for service—over fifty per cent—which is strong evidence that there is something wrong with our present public health systems, and as we understand that a large part of the work of the proposed department will be in correlating the best hygienic and medical evidence of the world and laying the same before the provincial and municipal authorities through their respective health departments or officers, there is no necessity for resentment against the bug-bear of federal interference in what is supposed to be purely provincial affairs. What is wanted in every municipality in Canada is more enlightenment on hygiene and health, and it is immaterial where that enlightenment comes from. Our health officers are not specialists in their work—to many, their public duties are but a side-line—with the consequence that they have not been the factors they should have been in reducing the infant mortality of the communities. Canada, with its wonderfully invigorating climate, should be the healthiest country in the world, with the lowest death rate. But the death rate is not the lowest, largely because of the lack of proper sanitation in our housing and sewage systems, and proper provisions against over-crowding. Our too low standard of

public health is a reproof to good government, and most local authorities feel the reproof keenly, but they have been and are handicapped by the limitations of their own officers. They at least will welcome any system that will help them to solve their local health problems.

WAR MEMORIALS.

Now that the war is over there is a desire on the part of every municipality to commemorate in some permanent way the spirit of sacrifice that sent so many of our best to France and who now lie in "Flanders Fields." This is as it should be, for too much honor cannot be given to our brave dead. The question then is as to the form the memorials should take. In the old days they took the form of monuments or mausoleums, but since a new idealism has arisen through this war in which our men have laid down their lives such memorials are meaningless. Could our glorious dead but speak it would be to urge good works so that the lives of the living may be made better for their sacrifice. Works such as hospitals, homes of the aged, endowed beds, etc., do far greater honor than do monuments and we would urge the councils and citizens of Canada to so construe the meaning of memorials.

MUNICIPAL PLANT REDUCES RATES.

After becoming so accustomed during the past two years to repeated raises in rates by all Publicity Unity companies, it is almost a shock to learn of reductions in rates. The municipally owned and operated electric light plant of Chicopee, Mass., had such a successful year in 1918 that the charge for electricity for street lights for the coming year will be reduced from 4¼ cents to 4 cents per kilowatt hour.