

Labor in the Province of Quebec

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In these days when the relations of producers and those who have been able to offer facilities for production are sometimes in the melting pot, it is a rest from the unravelling of a perplexing problem to turn to the conditions in the oldest Province of the Dominion, QUEBEC, where stability and industrial peace reign as usual. What is the reason that dissatisfaction with one's lot is not the rule here as elsewhere? The answer is simple—the people ARE satisfied, and when this is so, why the restlessness cannot exist. Go into the country; go into the city; go into the home of your French-Canadian, and you will find a home, children, yes, many indeed, each a shaft in the quiver of happiness and each well cared for, a home to work for and to come back to for the joys of home life.

Why should the desire for changes come into such homes unless instilled by demagogues or demagogic papers; the land is fertile, the population native and bred for centuries to love the land and more especially the climate. It takes your recent settler or their children to rave against the cold of the winter and the heat of the summer, but your French-Canadian has been acclimatized for three hundred years, and does not long for the mists of Scotland or the blue skies of Italy, or the Shamrock of Erin, which after all is back of much of the restlessness of our newcomers.

There are other reasons for this attitude of content, notably, education and religious teaching. It has been truly said by Lord Leverhulme that a great measure of the unrest in Europe is due to education up to standards of expectation which can not be reached owing to the impossibility of producing the facilities for the enjoyment of such standards. To be specific, if everyone is taught to drive an automobile there will be a longing half-fulfilled for a large percentage of people with its concomitant restlessness—someone has to wash the dishes. The educational system in Quebec Province has long ago recognised this and does not fill the minds of all its scholars with the desire to drive automobiles, but on the contrary with the knowledge that work honestly fulfilled is the noblest task of humanity.

The availability of intelligent and industrious labor in the Province is an eye-opener to those who have required men. In the farm and rural districts there are thousands of young men and women reaching maturity each year who are ready and anxious to find regular employment. The history of the munition industry in the cities has verified this. The city of Montreal increased its population over 100,000 during the four years of war, almost all from the Province. The work turned out in all lines of industry has been excellent, no strikes, no explosions, no arson, uniform production, adaptability of both sexes to the requirements of the situation, steady work and amicable relations at all times.

Practically the whole of the textile industry is in the Province with mills at various points, and all the rubber, cement, the shoes and other industries requiring ample and intelligent help.

Strategically Quebec with its summer ocean ports and its proximity in Winter to the ports of St. John, Halifax, Portland, Boston and New York is placed as no other part of Canada for the development of

an export trade and with its contented labor it is safe to predict that the next 25 years will see the development of the Province at a greater rate than any other part of Canada.

The enormous reservoir of labor in Quebec Province has been neglected in the past because of want of capital in the smaller centres. The French Canadian is somewhat sceptical of easy fortune, unskilled in the arts of high finance, unwilling to trust his capital in new enterprises and somewhat afraid of the banks, anxious to get on, glad to welcome new enterprises, but hampered by diffidence in forecasting prosperity for investors in his territory because of lack of knowledge as to the usual result of labor wisely expended in producing staples at a low cost.

There are many signs, however, that the Province is about to come into its own, and now that ample Electrical Power is available in almost every town between the St. Lawrence and the United States border, capital is turning its attention to this, so far almost unscratched, industrial field.

As Adam Shortt said recently: Production is the only road to prosperity, prosperity being the enjoyment of manufactured products by the mass of the people only available when production is maintained. The French-Canadian is of all things a worker and for Canada's future prosperity this rapidly increasing population must be kept employed at home, otherwise we must expect a continuous emigration of this native labor to fields afar, and its final replacement by immigrated labor with its undesirable features.

The Twentieth Century is Canada's and the next quarter of that century will be Quebec's.

SOME INTERESTING COMPARISONS.

The Public Utilities Commission of Kansas has been hearing the case of the Kansas City street railways, which are petitioning for an increase in the present five cent fare on the "Kansas side." An argument presented by the company was the cost of producing electricity at its Kaw River plant, which it showed to be \$12.51 for a thousand kilowatts. The company's case suffered a severe jolt when James Donovan chief engineer at the municipally owned electric plant at Kansas City, Kansas, testified that the average cost of a thousand kilowatts at the city's plant for the same period had been \$7.28, or \$5.23 less than at the company's plant.

GOVERNMENT OWNED ROADS A SUCCESS IN JAPAN.

Dr. Jurclin Soeda, of Japan, who has made a great success as director general of the government owned railroads in the Island Empire, is an enthusiastic advocate of government ownership of railroads.

Speaking of the experience of the Japanese government in ownership and operation of its railroads, Dr. Soeda says:

"Some ten years ago Japan decided that the only economical method of solving the railroad problem was by their purchase by the government. This was consummated, and to-day every trunk line in the Empire is government owned and operated. The undertaking has proved a huge success.

"There are over 6,000 miles of such railroads in Japan, which is considered large for the size of territory covered. Since the government took over the lines we have lowered rates, increased revenue, and have given more efficient service to the people. In one year alone we made a profit of \$50,000,000. Now we are building more roads, intersecting the entire country, developing new districts and solving the intricate problems of our rural districts."