

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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The Canadian Labor Press

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IMMIGRATION NOT EMIGRATION

It is a regrettable situation that just at the time we are in need of a policy of selective immigration to help carry the burdens of our fellow countrymen and to assist Canada to broaden out and take its place in the field of commerce where it belongs, there arises the necessity for a large number of artisans to leave the country and earn their daily bread on the other side, thus assisting in the prosperity of the United States and retarding the growth of Canada. While we trust that the situation is only temporary, occurrences of this nature are a serious drawback to the progress of Canada because if our workmen are offered attractive wages and special inducements by industry in the United States, they are just as liable to stay there and make the United States their permanent abode. If there is a surplus of labor in Canada in certain trades and a deficiency in the States in those same trades, it is inevitable that there should be an exodus to the other side, but this condition shows a lack of either backbone or initiative on the part of Canada, for have we not unlimited natural resources and facilities to absorb any surplus of labor which might occur? It would be foolish to blame industry alone for not taking the initiative to see that Canada keeps going ahead, for industry is made up of a number of individuals who alone are loth to take the necessary steps, and in fact it would be useless for them to do so because it is a three-cornered proposition involving everyone of us, that is—Industry, The Government (representing the people), and the individual citizen. If it is left to industry alone to work out the problem and to see that there is no unemployment, we will be a long time arriving at a solution, as they are only one of the three spokes necessary to complete the wheel of Canada's Industrial Life, and without the other two spokes functioning, it is impossible to avoid the difficulty which exists at present.

CO-OPERATION MEANS SUCCESS

In the words of the old Irishwoman, we were "tickled to death" at the "Get-together" dinner given to Labor by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario on Saturday, May 5th, at Government House, and the splendid spirit of fellowship and enthusiasm that permeated the atmosphere. It is noteworthy that many leaders of labor bodies holding opposing views were present and mingled with each other forgetting for the time being at least that they were rivals and everyone following out the basic truth that "Co-operation means Success," and endeavouring to maintain the principle, which is the motto of the Canadian Labor Press, that a "True understanding of the rights of both Capital and Labor is absolutely necessary to Industrial Peace."

OUR MONTHLY TRADE REVIEW

An impressive feature which a world-wide survey of economic conditions is the contrast which exists in the business conditions of the various countries. An effort to picture the whole situation would involve a study in extremes—a striking variation from conditions of marked prosperity on the one hand to deep depression on the other. At the one extreme is the business revival which the United States is enjoying and which along certain industrial and commercial lines approximates boom conditions. From all sections of the country come reports of improving business. Despite the fact that manufacturing plants are operating on a capacity basis in nearly all industries the demand for certain products is

so great that deliveries are falling behind. Labour costs are advancing along with other prices, and labour shortages are now rare. The United States Steel Corporation has recently advanced wages of common labour from 36 cents to 40 cents an hour despite an increase of 20 per cent last fall. Wages in the building trades are approaching the peak of 1920, yet in spite of this, keen building activity exists. In practically all branches of industry with few exceptions, the situation is similar. According to figures recently published by the Chase National Bank of New York, the output of pig iron increased approximately 275 per cent from July 1921 to February 1923. The production of automobiles has in-



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creased 240 per cent since December 1921. According to Bradstreet's Index Number of prices there has been an increase of 31 per cent in the general price level since June, 1921. Since the beginning of the year, the stock market has remained particularly buoyant. Retail business is reported as excellent and wholesalers, for the most part are placing orders for many months ahead.

This striking recovery in industrial activity and business naturally suggests a brief survey of conditions precedent to the present movement. During the period of depression which existed through the summer of 1921, the process of liquidation was drastic, and a period of greatly reduced business substantially lowered production costs. Accumulated stocks of goods were gradually sold at lower prices and forward buying and speculation were cut to the minimum. In the latter part of 1921 and the early months of 1922 production fell off to such an extent that the surplus stocks were largely used up. The slate was thus cleared and early in 1922 the upswing of business in some lines began, but did not become general until the fall of 1922. The present activity is perhaps based primarily on the necessity of catching up on the shortages in building and certain other lines in which demand caused postponement of current needs. The depression previously referred to rendered liquid a large part of the enormous increase in wealth resulting from the war and furnished the means to finance further development, while the increased tariff tended to shut out foreign competition in this most important market. It is timely to consider what will be the probable duration of the present upswing. In this regard, opinion in the United States is rather definitely divided. Despite the shortage of supplies which exists in many lines and the high degree of purchasing power of the American people, one hears, here and there, a note of caution lest the period of expansion may soon spend itself, preceding a turn in business. In fact, there is some similarity between the present situation and that prior to the slump of 1921. As previously mentioned, the costs of labour and materials are rising substantially, although this rise is not yet relatively apparent in general retail prices, and its cumulative effect may have a very decided influence towards limiting consumption. How important this factor is could be determined only by an exhaustive analysis of the entire situation. The fact that orders are still increasing should not be overestimated in an attempt to forecast the future, since such a situation always exists in a similar upswing, and a wholesale cancellation of orders usually follows when the reaction sets in. As we shall attempt to show later, foreign demand, speaking generally, cannot be depended on to continue in even normal proportions. However, it is reasonable to expect a gradual improvement in the agricultural industry which has lagged behind other lines of business, and the other features of the situation referred to above are of such strength as to lead to the view that a continuation of existing conditions may be expected for a considerably longer period, but by no means indefinitely unless the general world situation generally improves.

Conditions in Canada. A survey of conditions in Canada discloses the fact that the Dominion is not enjoying any such prosperity as has been outlined above with reference to the United States. The earlier months of the year brought forecasts of coming improvement, but this improvement is rather more delayed than was anticipated. Retail buying has been disappointing for the most part in all sections of the country, and this naturally has been reflected in wholesale orders. Prices of agricultural products have been unusually low for some time and little improvement has as yet taken place. Lumber operations during the winter and early spring were interfered with by the lateness of the spring. Why is Canada not experiencing the prosperity which exists in the United States? In the first place if the business activity during the war period resulted in a net increase in the wealth of the nation, such an increase bears no proportion to the financial benefits realized by the United States. Canada is dependent to a proportionately greater extent on agriculture than is our neighbour to the south. Further, the movements of the business cycle are never so pronounced or violent as in the United States, and relative movements in Canada usually occur after an interval, averaging probably six months. There is no doubt evidence of a revival of industrial activity in practically all lines. Our export trade continues to improve, and it is interesting to note that on a per capita basis it was three times as great as that of the United States during the last calendar year. Recently substantial orders for steel and other products have been received by certain Canadian manufacturers from buyers in the United States at prices higher than those ruling in (Continued on Page 4.)

Tabloid of International Labor News

CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
Volunteer firemen of Czechoslovakia will hold their first general Congress in Prague, from June 30 to July 2, 1923, at which time similar organizations in America, England, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Switzerland and Yugoslavia are expected to have delegates present. Work and organization will be the principal topics under discussion.

DENMARK.
Latest available figures on unemployment show a total of 48,286 unemployed persons in March, 1923, which is a decrease of 15,000 under the previous months total.

ENGLAND.
That labour is becoming restive in the Essex and Norfolk districts is apparent in strikes of the agricultural workers of Norfolk County and a protest movement on the part of the Essex workers who are in sympathy with the farm workers' demands. Augmenting these difficulties are disputes in the building trades and protests of the railroad men against further wage reductions.

An exhibition of silver plate, bought in various markets of the world, was given last month at Sheffield University, with a view of comparing the products of competing countries with the famous Sheffield output. Germany and America sup-

plied the most of the samples. Judges decided that the American exhibits rivalled Sheffield's, particularly in workmanship, while the German exhibits were poorer and less costly designed. While Spanish, French and Brazilian articles were considered, the American industry was voted the chief competitor.

SCOTLAND.
March, 1923, unemployment figures for the Glasgow district showed a slight reduction under those for January, 1923, the 80,000 unemployed in March being 3,500 less than the January total.

SOUTH AFRICA.
According to the latest census of the Union of South Africa, relating to housing conditions, there were 147,750 dwellings occupied by the European or white inhabitants in the urban areas of South Africa as compared with 138,780 dwellings in 1918.

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