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W. V. NEWSON,  
Deputy Provincial Treasurer,  
Parliament Buildings,  
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## Industrial Commission Receives Suggestions

(Continued from page 1)  
present M.R.'s would be shut out if this rule were adopted and actual producers of wealth made the only men eligible for election.

**A Definite Policy**  
Rev. F. E. Mercer pointed out to the commission that the workmen were now reading and studying widely, and were well informed on economic and industrial questions. They had a definite policy, and the employing interests had no such policy, but were divided among themselves.

Some type of guild socialism was favored by Mr. Mercer as a means of running the industries rather than nationalization. The present competitive system was very wasteful. Watered stock should be entirely squandered, and the control of the industries put in the hands of the men really doing the work. The state would still have taxing powers for the good of the public. In the profit-sharing schemes so far tried out the largest share of the profits went to the owners. No system that preserved capitalistic control would prove satisfactory. Profits must be honestly revealed in the weekly reports or in any scheme of investigation adopted.

**Meat Packing Industry.**  
A joint committee to look into the conditions of the meat packing industry was thought by Mr. Mercer to be desirable and urgent. This committee should represent both the employers and employees. In Edmonton about 600 workers were engaged in the industry at the present time, about 60 per cent. of whom were aliens. The minimum wage was 32½ cents an hour. As to housing conditions among the employees of the plants, there was great need of investigation and improvement.

Mr. Mercer expressed approval of a change in the system of electing representatives to parliament. He thought that some system of geographical boundaries as at present, but there should be provision for group representation, possibly involving two houses, one of producers and one of consumers.

**Claim Unfair Treatment**  
Conditions at the packing plants had become very uncomfortable for the returned soldiers, testified H. Hawkins. Numbers of the veterans had taken work there and reported unfair treatment. They were offered 32½ cents an hour, while aliens and orientals were being paid 35 cents. In many cases the soldiers had been discharged and the aliens kept on.

Mr. Hawkins thought that industrial councils, through which employers and employees might get together at frequent intervals for a discussion of labor questions, would contribute to a settlement of the industrial unrest. Unemployment was one of the main causes of that unrest, but even the men at work were more or less uneasy, because there was general uneasiness throughout the country. The high cost of living was largely responsible for the prevailing dissatisfaction.

There was a danger that the present unrest might come to a head in a physical way that would have serious results for Canada, said Mr. Hawkins, though he did not look for such a development in the immediate future. Questioned as to the One Big Union, the witness said it would be a grave menace to the country if it should gain control of the situation, but he did not think it would do so.

**In Dairy Industry**  
George M. Hall, of the Edmonton City Dairy company, argued that the prevailing unrest was due mainly to two factors, the lack of unity between classes, for which the employers and employees were equally to blame, and the unusual state of mind obtaining in the country at large. There was not as much unemployment as there had been. In his own company, Mr. Hall said, 212 employees were now on the roll for practically the same amount of work as done a year ago by 175 persons.

The prices of eggs and butter, the witness explained, were regulated by the prices in the United States. Farmers were receiving ten cents more per pound for butter fat than a year ago.

Some of the unrest in the country was due to the educational system, thought Mr. Hall. An equal chance was not given to all under the present system.

**Profit Sharing**  
As to profit-sharing, the witness told of the plan now being followed by his company, by which \$8,000 was recently divided among the employees. So far as he knew, there was general satisfaction with present conditions in this particular case.

**Commission No Remedy**  
E. J. Thompson, representing machinists of the G.T.P. local, said that as producers the men were not getting what they produced, and to this he prescribed reason for a great deal of unrest. He said he did not place much faith in the commission on industrial relations for he had seen and appeared before similar boards before, and the result had been nil so far as he was concerned. "We are at the mercy of a class and I for one do not consider that this commission will remedy matters much. The results you obtain will be taken up by the same old class and will be dealt with by them," Mr. Thompson told the committee.

He spoke of his impossibility of procuring a six roomed house under a rental of less than from \$30 to \$40 per month and thought that something should be done in the way of a remedy. His children, he also considered, should have the best education provided by the state, but that on account of the high cost of the necessities of life and the

smallness of the wage to meet them, his financial status debarred him from giving his children the training he would like.

Speaking of an increase in wage that was expected by his local, Mr. Thompson said that immediately this increase was made that the cost of living would go up correspondingly. "We are chasing in a circle," he said, "and the only remedy is that all industries be taken over by the working classes."

**Must Be Co-operation**  
Mr. Mathers, chairman of the committee assured E. E. Roper who appeared as the next witness and who represented the Trades and Labor Council, that the work of the commission was sincere.

Mr. Roper spoke of the important co-operation among employed and employees, and considered that where the chances were provided for workers to express themselves, possibilities for unrest were greatly minimized. He spoke of the organization of the printing trades which had reached a high standard and said that both the master printers and the printers themselves realized the value which were to be derived from mutual consideration of difficulties.

**Coal Dealers Handicap.**  
The failure on the part of the government to encourage the work of Canadian industries was spoken of by G. G. Sheldon, Secretary of the Humberstone Coal Co. He said that his company as a result of a statement issued by the government that coal would be needed for southern markets, made preparations to meet the demand. Their energy was combated by the entry into Saskatchewan and Manitoba of two and a half million tons of American coal. He spoke of the railway rates as being too high and that on account of the freight rates being higher than those of the south, that it was hard for their company to compete in Saskatchewan and Manitoba markets.

Questioned as to the number of aliens employed by the Humberstone concern, Mr. Sheldon stated that it reached 80 per cent.

Labor conditions during the past two months were said by Edward Drummond, consulting engineer of the Mountain Park Coal Company, to have been fairly satisfactory but that during the past five or six years it had almost been impossible for them to get the number of men required. He said that the company he represented had experienced no trouble with labor but suggested the co-operation of the two classes for mutual betterment to all concerned.

Mayor Clarke's statement to the commission, summarized, is as follows:

In order to save time, I wish to place before your commission some of the reasons that, in my opinion, caused the present unrest, particularly amongst those who work.  
In the first place, the time consumed in making the preliminary arrangements to undertake very necessary reconstruction work in Western Canada at the present time, seems unnecessary at least to those who are waiting for actual labor upon such works.

Another major reason for dissatisfaction and unrest is that while it requires negotiations, threats, arbitration and all manner of delays to secure an increase in the price of wages, that is the commodities sold by the majority of the people, when it comes to increasing the cost of necessities of life which laboring men purchase with the wages thus obtained, the most extortionate and indefensible increases in such commodities appear to be made over night, without consultation or notice, and those who purchase such commodities are left without redress and the method of investigation provided by the federal government in placing the initiative for investigating the increases in the cost of the price of necessities is utterly inadequate.

**Fix Retail Prices**  
Unless some better method is suggested at once, the practice carried on by the government during the war must be followed in peace, that is, the price of all commodities which are necessities, must be fixed, that is, the retail price.

So long as men who cannot provide their families with the necessities of life, are satisfied that beef produced in Edmonton is sold cheaper in Europe than it is in Edmonton, unrest and dissatisfaction will continue to exist. Every day the farmers know that machinery necessary to carry on their business, manufactured in Canada is sold cheaper in other countries, it will be impossible to have complete satisfaction.

**Labor Must Be Fair**

A broad criticism toward the actions of organized labor was made by Rathbone Smith, general manager and chief engineer of the Edmonton and Dunvegan railway, who claimed that, by reason of its power since the war labor had made encroachments and had demanded the acceptance of its views to the detriment of the country. So far as the road he represented was concerned, it had almost been driven into bankruptcy as a result of labor's exceptional demands and the consequent increase in the cost of operation. If labor wanted to participate in the profits of the organization with which it was connected, it must also be ready to share in its loss, he claimed.

Mr. Smith spoke of the unfairness to the employer, in that when a man was discharged, the employer, by law of a dozen unions before he could make a replacement. "I claim the democracy of organized labor to be the greatest organized autocracy in the world," said

### PLUMBING FIRM IN NEW QUARTERS

The firm of Kelly & Kokott Co. plumbers and contractors are moving to more central and commodious quarters in the Muttart Block, 10350 97th street. For the past six years they have been conducting their business at 120 Norwood Boulevard. The firm have already a number of large contracts in hand and look for an unusually busy year.

### EIGHT HOUR DAY FOR SUNNY ITALY

Have Been Working As Long As 72 Hours Per Week

The 48-hour movement inaugurated last year in Milan, Italy, by the organized workers has resulted in an agreement with employers in machine establishments, ship yards and allied trades which reduces hours from 60 to 55 to 48 a week. In foundries where continuous work is carried on hours are reduced from 72 to 48 a week by adopting the three-shift system.

Time rates are to be adjusted so that earnings for 48 hours shall be equal to the present earnings for 55, 60 or 72 hours. Piece work rates are to be increased 16 per cent where hours are reduced from 60 to 48 and 10 per cent increase where hours are reduced from 55. Works committees are to be formed whose functions are defined in rules agreed to between the employers and employees. Both parties will be represented on a committee which will investigate the cost of living in relation to the question of a minimum wage. It is estimated that 500,000 workers are affected by this agreement.

Demands for a 48-hour week have been presented by workers in the textile, chemical and paper-making trades. At a meeting of employers and employees in the printing trades it was agreed that the 48-hour week would be established without a wage reduction.

### BOOKBINDERS UNITE

The International Brotherhood of Bookbinders secured 304 new members during the past month. The total membership on that date was 17,411.

Mr. Smith, continuing he said: "Organized labor tells me that one man is as good as another, but I know different." Questioned as to his proposed remedy, Mr. Smith said: "Co-operation with labor sharing equally in the profits and the loss and being given the right to audit the company's books at the end of the year." Mr. Smith was asked how he thought it possible for a man to share in a company's loss on a wage of \$1,400 a year.

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