

LESS UNEMPLOYMENT IN CANADA TODAY THAN YEAR PRIOR TO WAR, DECLARES SENATOR G. D. ROBERTSON IN NEW YORK

Government Employment Offices Secure Work For Many Toilers—
Labor Department Watches Immigration—Employment
Service National Necessity.

There is less unemployment in Canada today than there was in the year previous to the war, Senator G. D. Robertson, Canadian Minister of Labor, declared in an address delivered to the fourteenth annual convention of the American Association for Labor Legislation, at New York recently.

Senator Robertson avoided direct discussion of the labor problems which confront the citizens of the United States, confining his address to a general statement of what the Canadian Government has done in dealing with labor conditions in the Dominion. "Should our experiences suggest anything useful to you which would seem useful to me, I shall feel both honored and pleased with having had the opportunity of presenting them," he said.

Forecast Difficulties.

In part, Mr. Robertson said: "Our Federal Government has been studying the question of organizing to cope with unemployment early in 1918, knowing that when the European war ended the re-establishment of our soldiers and civilian workers would be a gigantic task. In June, 1918, every person over sixteen years of age resident in Canada was required to register, showing their age, nationality, occupation, etc. The male population over sixteen in Canada at that time was 2,655,544, of whom 200,000 men and 69,000 women were engaged in war work in Canada, in addition to 550,000 men engaged in war work in the United States and 1,000,000 men in various stages of convalescence.

"These facts give one an idea of the task confronting us when it came to re-establishing in civil life over half a million men in a country where the total male population, including those who had been absorbed, was less than three and one quarter million.

Employment Service.

"In 1915 legislation was passed by the Federal parliament empowering the Federal Department of Labor to organize and carry on a government employment service, in cooperation with the provincial authorities. Regulations were drafted applicable to the needs and the service was established. The provincial governments opened offices where necessary, adopted the Federal Government's general regulations, and both shared equally in the cost of maintenance. Some twenty free employment offices were established throughout Canada, in all cities, beginning in March, 1919. During the first 18 months of their existence over 400,000 persons were placed in positions, without cost to the employer or workman, and at a cost to the Government of less than one half the amount per person that was formerly paid by the individual as commission to the private employment agent.

Relieve Private Agencies.

Five provinces have, by legislation, abolished private employment agencies and others have substantially reduced the number of agencies. Another province proposes shortly to abolish private employment offices altogether. Offices in each province report to a provincial superintendent, and a telegraph synopsis of labor supply and requirements is wired daily to the federal clearing house. By this clearing system a surplus supply of labor in one locality or province can readily be transferred to another where it is in demand. Without this connecting link, the surplus labor would exist in one locality and a demand for labor in another, without either the unemployed workman or the employer knowing where their needs could be met. Special rates were arranged and are still in effect whereby a workman sent employment over a hundred miles distant travels at reduced rates on railways, on presentation of a certificate from a government employment office, showing destination and indicating that the bearer is sent by the employment office.

More than 30,000 men have been placed in employment at distant points who could not have been provided with employment within the territory served by an individual office. Neither does this include the annual harvest migration from Eastern Canada to the western provinces.

Skilled Labor.

"Another good service worthy of mention is that much skilled labor of a particular kind which employers have asked to import from Europe or elsewhere, has been located in Canada and supplied locally through our clearing house service. During 1920 applications to import some 3,000 skilled workers of various sorts under contract, were received by our immigration department from employers, who could not obtain the labor required locally. The Immigration Department first refers such requests to the Department of Labor and Immigration, which is authorized only when requirements cannot be filled in Canada. As a result only in 770 cases was it necessary to go outside Canada to fill the requirements. Our present unemployment situation is, therefore, easier than it would have been had these precautions not been taken.

The employment service also served a useful purpose during the winter of 1919-1920 when the Federal Government rendered aid by way of cash gratuities to unemployed returned soldiers. Each was required to register at one of the 90 unemployment offices and was only entitled to aid on presentation of a certificate that employment was unavailable. It was estimated that \$45,000,000 would be necessary to meet this situation, but largely owing to this precautionary measure the actual cost was less than \$5,000,000.

Loss Time Before War.

"During the summer of 1919 when the Canadian wintering season had employment in October indications of serious contraction in business appeared; not until December, however, was there any substantial amount of unemployment in Canada. Today there is less than on the same date of 1913-14. The Federal Government is carrying on works of various sorts to aid in providing employment, appropriations for this work for aggregating a substantial number of millions. Provincial and municipal authorities are also doing considerable work in the same direction. Private employers have been urged and many have adopted the policy of reducing hours of work or the number of days per week rather than reduce the staff.

"Finally the Government has said that whenever emergency relief is necessary, to care for people who cannot be employed, the necessity for an extent of relief must be determined by municipal authorities, and that the Federal Government will pay one-third of the money so disbursed, provided relief is given only on presentation of a certificate from our employment service indicating that the bearer has applied for but could not be given employment.

conducting such a courageous campaign in Great Britain against the fallacious theories of underproduction and "let canny" says: "Everything depends upon production. Standards of living cannot be raised, nor can existence be maintained unless mankind accepts this contention. Education, reformation or legislative action, whether acting separately or collectively, cannot make the corn grow, or build houses, or feed children, or clothe humanity. Only working and thinking can provide the things essential to life and comfort."

Purchasing Commission.

"If ever a system of unemployment insurance is adopted in Canada, the employment service will be undoubtedly the instrument used in administration.

"Our purchasing commission, which supervises the buying of Government supplies, is kept posted by our director of employment service when Morris Livessley industry is slack so that orders can be placed when employment is most needed and also aid in getting best possible quotations as to prices.

"Our population and industries are of course small indeed as compared with this great country, but this fact only seemed to intensify the need of a Government employment service, because of the great distances and comparatively limited opportunities for employment in many localities."

Letters to the Editor.

INDUSTRIAL EFFICIENCY AND MAXIMUM OUTPUT.

Sir:—With Canada facing a period of declining prices it is imperative that the amicable relations between capital and labor which have existed during the past twelve months should be maintained. The present calls for industry for industrial efficiency and maximum output to balance profit losses by greater production.

The importance of industrial production is repeatedly emphasized in "Labor, Management and Production," which has just been issued by the American Academy of Political and Social Science. It contains a comprehensive review of the valuable material contained in the publication, which is edited by Morris Livessley. It is a book of many valuable contributions from "leaders of the organized workers" and the "scientists of the industrial world" to present a comprehensive and fundamental program for American industry. It is noticeable that a joint agreement has been reached on the necessity of "production in ever increasing measure." In an Editor's Foreword, Mr. Samuel Gompers says: "Production is the great world problem of today. . . . We must meet it and come as near to a solution as may be possible, or we shall suffer."

Mr. Matthew Wolf, President of the International Photo-Engravers' Union and Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor, says: "With the guarantee of labor world almost everywhere, with many nations of the world thrown into industrial chaos, and with securities of a greater extent and larger amounts than the world has ever realized, much less conceived, there is the greatest possible need for production to meet the requirements of the people of all nations and to prevent a social and industrial catastrophe, which will surely follow a failure to validate existing financial and commercial obligations."

Mr. William M. Leifson, Imperial Clothing Market, is equally emphatic: "As a general proposition, the desirability and need of securing increased production cannot be questioned," he says. "Even in normal times that may be accepted as a foremost aim of industry for increased production means potentially, at least, a larger measure of well-being for all within the industry as well as for the community. Today with all the wastage and losses of the war to be made good, the need is peculiarly urgent."

Mr. W. A. Ansell, Secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions (English) and President of the International Federation of Trade Unions, who has been contributing such a courageous campaign in Great Britain against the fallacious theories of underproduction and "let canny" says: "Everything depends upon production. Standards of living cannot be raised, nor can existence be maintained unless mankind accepts this contention. Education, reformation or legislative action, whether acting separately or collectively, cannot make the corn grow, or build houses, or feed children, or clothe humanity. Only working and thinking can provide the things essential to life and comfort."

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months. There is no justification for any undue apprehension, but it is imperative that there should be no radical changes in national fiscal policy and that there should be active support of the home market. The Canadian Reconstruction Association, which has just issued an appeal to "Produce, Purchase, Protect Canadian Goods," says:

"Prosperous industries and prosperous workers make prosperous communities. Canadians should give effective preference to Canadian goods and smaller unit production. By patronizing Canadian industries, the Canadian public will reduce the dangers of the price readjustment period to a minimum. Increased demand for Canadian-made products will enable Canadian factories to produce at minimum unit costs and sell at lowest possible prices.

"Industries abroad are looking to the Dominion to absorb their surplus production. Canadian industries are deluged from many foreign markets by high protective duties. If a substantial part of the limited Canadian market is secured by outside industries, the reduced demand for Canadian-made products must result in higher unit production costs, lower prices, and consequent unemployment in many Canadian factories. Adequate tariff protection is vital for Canadian industries employing labor.

Yours, etc.,

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HALIFAX LONGSHOREMEN ELECT 1921 OFFICIALS.

At the annual meeting recently of the Halifax Longshoremen's Association, officers as below were elected and the reports presented showed the association in a healthy condition. It was decided to sign up with the employers a new working agreement for the year 1921, embodying two changes in working conditions conceded by the employers, namely, double time for Saturday nights and two hours for men called out ready. Honorary president, John T. Joy; president, M. D. Coolen (re-elected); vice-president, Wm. Purcell; treasurer, Michael McGrath; recording secretary, Peter Garner; assistant recording secretary, C. Lamphier; financial secretary, M. Shea; auditor, D. Craig; executive committee, Jas. O. Young, Jos. Morash, F. McDonald, H. Gray; board of trustees, Frank Collins, Irwin G. Boyle, F. Wilkie; auditors, P. J. Grant, Jos. Martin, D. Finn; delegates to Trades and Labor Council, M. D. Coolen, E. Garner, Wm. McCarthy, M. J. Murphy, Wm. Morash.

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ST. JOHN PRINTING PRESS—MEN'S ELECTION RESULTS.

At the annual meeting of the St. John, N.B. Printing Pressmen's and Assistants' Union, No. 36, the election of officers was held with the following results: President, William Howard; vice-president, J. Maxwell; financial secretary, William Green; recording secretary, M. Hastings; treasurer, H. Whelan. Delegates to the Trades and Labor Council, J. McIntyre, A. Dever, A. Elison, M. Hastings and W. Ward; delegates to the Allied Trades Council, A. Dever, M. Hastings and P. Brown; audit committee, W. Ward and A. Dever. The reports of the various officers showed the union to be in a flourishing condition, both financially and numerically.

Government officials says a cyclone isn't like halibuts because they come to sleep in their own time.

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