

the lowest tenderer. This has always been a hobby of mine.

From a contractor's standpoint I suppose you would say that the work had better be divided around. Personally I would like to see more of it handed out to everyone in the country and to see the work well distributed, if I thought it were good business to do so.

All Government work should be let by contract. When given out on force account the workmen get that easy Government feeling, that comfortable feeling that they are working for the Government. If anybody can show me how to correct that feeling and to make the men see that they should work with more than ordinary energy because they are working for the Government, then I would change my policy.

Now I have discussed the policies of the Government as much as I can. You must remember that it is only two weeks since the armistice was declared. We have reached no concrete decision of policy, and no individual member of the Government can lay down matters of policy beforehand, but I have simply been stating what has been running in my mind, namely that as much work as possible should be done and that as much labor as possible should be employed.

With the closing down of munition industries there will be much unemployment unless we put our shoulder to the wheel and furnish opportunities for labor. There is nothing worse for a country than lack of work and charity. It unmans and unnerves the recipient of the charity.

There may be certain times and certain communities when and where men cannot get work, and plans will have to be made to ameliorate any such condition to the greatest degree possible.

It is the individual duty of every manufacturer and of every employer of labor,—these things are as much his duty as the duty of the Government—to see that men are employed, and to take on contracts and work at less profit than ordinarily, and to think not too much of profit in order to tide all over this period.

We must realize the difficulties in way of construction work during the next year and possibly two years. To begin with there is the cost of labor. This is based on the cost of living, which is abnormally high. The cost of labor cannot go down until the cost of living goes down, and the cost of materials and building depend on labor.

The cost of building is now higher than it has ever been in the life-time of any of us, but is really not abnormally high compared to what goes into a building. If the materials cost 50% more and the labor 50% more, we must surely expect to pay the contractor 50% more for the building.

We must not find too much fault with labor until the cost of living goes down. By next spring it will probably go down, but pretty slowly. Because of these things it is our duty to employ as many as we can, and at as good a wage as possible, in order to tide us over this serious state of affairs.

It is good of you men to have come together to play your part in the solution of these problems.

Minister of Labor and Head of Labor Congress Discuss "Joint Control" of Industry

SENATOR G. D. Robertson, the new minister of labor, told the members of the Association of Canadian Building and Construction Industries last week at Ottawa, that he feared that he had taken over the Labor Department at a period when the work of that Department would be more than ordinarily difficult. Senator Robertson was the chief guest of honor at the luncheon held last Thursday.

"Intensive efficiency will be needed to compete in foreign markets," said the Senator; "efficiency on the part of both employees and employers. That this efficiency should be attained is desirable from the standpoint of all interests concerned."

Negotiation By Trades

There has been a labor unrest during the past couple of years because as supplies grew scarcer and the cost of living increased, the workman required an increase in his wages, but there was no uniformity of action by the laborers as a whole nor by their employers. Had they all been able to sit down trade by trade and negotiate, it would have tended greatly to contentment in all lines.

If it were possible for the employers to meet with duly accredited representatives of labor and to sit down and agree regarding rates of pay to be adopted in a given territory, we would start out on the season's work to the advantage of all concerned. This would be very preferable to a continuation of the present discontent caused because one employer is paying a little more than another, thus causing dissatisfaction throughout a whole industry and tending to impair the efficiency of all.

By co-operation between the provincial governments and municipalities, something should be arranged to provide more comfortable and sanitary homes at a rental or purchase price within the means of the workmen.

If the soldiers return and find it impossible to obtain a reasonable home, it will add greatly to their discontent. They will expect to be able to maintain their families in the same condition as previous to the war and will see no reason why they should not be able to do so, and this condition should be met by a supply of comfortable, sanitary homes within their reach. It must be done by the assistance of the state, both federal and provincial. All members of the Association of Canadian Building and Construction Industries should urge their respective municipalities to discuss this matter with the provincial governments to a point where action may be taken.

It might be advisable to make some such arrangement as this: That upon proof of his own- ing the lot upon which he proposes to build, the state should lend to any returned soldier the money with which to enable him to establish his home, or at least some portion of the required money. This principle might be extended to all workmen, and would lead not only to contented workmen, but would pave the way for better generations to follow and would so advance industry and tend to the increased efficiency which is necessary if we are to compete with other countries in trade throughout the world.

Labor Leader's Address

Following the Minister of Labor, Tom Moore, president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, de-