

the careful attention of hon. members of the House.

The letter goes on:

If this declaration of policy on the part of operating officials and employees of railways, against intoxicating liquors, is essential to the highest railroad efficiency and the greatest measure of safety to the travelling public, then it would seem equally essential to the highest efficiency in, and conservation of, all other industrial enterprises throughout the Dominion. This being true, it would further seem that, at this time of stress and strain, when every available resource was being taxed to its maximum limit in order to call forth the highest national efficiency in the protection of those high ideals for which our Empire is struggling to maintain, it is an economic folly to further permit the existence of a traffic which has so retarded industrial development, and impaired human efficiency, while making a few men rich and making many thousands poor.

Hundreds of our Canadian railway men were amongst the first to offer their services in defence of those great principles involved in the titanic struggle in which the Empire is engaged, and many of them have already made the supreme sacrifice of their lives upon the altar of loyalty and patriotism.

Therefore, I have the very highest commendation for the splendid results that have thus far crowned the untiring efforts of our military, and other national leaders. But it has sometimes occurred to me that this military spirit engendered by this awful European conflict has had a tendency to cause some of our legislators to, in some measure, exaggerate the need of guns, munitions, money and battleships when the question of national defence is being considered. In my humble judgement, national defence does not altogether depend upon guns, munitions, money and dreadnoughts alone—essential as these are to our liberty—but in the productive capacity, the industrial efficiency, the character and christian fortitude of the men who work on our farms, in our factories, on our railways, and in other industrial enterprises; men who are well equipped for all the duties of the highest type of citizenship. This seems most essential in this great world conflict, and it is equally essential in times of peace.

I feel sure that every Member of Parliament realizes—perhaps more than ever before—that the object and duty of every good Government is to advocate and promote that which will be for the general welfare of the people by the encouragement and protection of whatever makes for the public good, and that it is equally their duty to discourage, suppress, and if possible exterminate, whatever tends to the public disadvantage.

Again complimenting you on your proposed measure, and wishing the contemplated legislation the most favourable consideration and approval by the Government,

I remain,

Very truly yours,

Wm. L. Best.

Canadian Legislative Representative, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen.

Those sentiments, expressed by this representative of labour, are worthy of the utterance of the highest statesmen of any land,

[Mr. Stevens.]

and well merits our consideration. These letters are the expressed opinions of the men in Canada best able to judge of what is in the interest of labour, and I invite this House to the careful consideration of these words from such a representative source.

The other evening, at a meeting of a labour organization, the question was asked: Why not pay attention first to the elimination of child labour and the betterment of labour conditions for children and women? Mr. Speaker, if we eliminate—and I am not talking cant or nonsense, but sober truth—if we eliminate the liquor business from Canada or from any other nation, we will take the greatest step forward towards the elimination of child labour, or conditions of labour for women that are inconsistent with their position in society, and strike the greatest blow that could be struck at child labour and other deplorable things.

I wish to direct the attention of the House to what our Allies have been doing about prohibition. I feel a little jealous for Canada; I feel that Canadians, a young and virile people, ought to be in the vanguard rather than lagging behind in any problem which is considered of importance in this great war. I find that Russia has done a great deal in connection with prohibition in the interest of the efficiency of the nation, and again I am going to ask the House to bear with me while I quote certain views which will, I think, influence the House a great deal more than any words which I could speak. The right hon. David Lloyd George said in September last:

Russia has enormously increased her resources by repressing the sale of alcoholic liquors. It is hardly realized that by that means alone she has increased the productivity of her labour by something between 30 and 50 per cent. It is as if she had added millions of labourers to her labour reserve.

These are the words of the Right Hon. David Lloyd George, who has given, not only since the war broke out but prior to the war, acute study to the conditions of labour and to industrial problems, and I do not think there is a member in this House who would dare stand in his place and question the opinion of Mr. Lloyd George on these subjects, because his opinion is backed up by accomplishments which were thought to be an utter impossibility before the outbreak of war. Therefore, I quote his opinion with a great deal of confidence. I quote further the opinion of Mr. Bark, the Finance Minister of Russia, as the words of a man who has the responsibility of handling the finances