

Such was the measure of Canadian governmental experience in the organization of the labor market at the beginning of the war, unless we include the municipal employment bureaux of a more or less eleemosynary character, established for the most part during the depression of 1913-4, in Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, New Westminster and Victoria. For the most part the field was left to the commercial employment agent¹ and a heavy toll was taken in the turnover of hundreds of thousands of British and alien navvies, imported to do the rough work of a decade of railroad and city building. It was estimated on the basis of reports in the Department of Immigration that seventy-seven commercial agencies placed about 100,000 persons in 1913 and the Ontario Commission on Unemployment was of the opinion that 60,000 of the total of 70,000 placements made in the Province in 1914 were due to private agencies.² The native worker, particularly in times of good trade, was almost independent of the commercial agent. The trade unionist could depend for placement on his union, especially if he were a member of a city union employing a business agent, and the unorganized worker could at least compete with his fellows for the jobs in the "Help Wanted" columns or he might hawk his services among the factories in defiance of the "No Help Wanted" signs. It was only after failure by these methods and when a job had become a prime necessity that he scanned the blackboards of the employment agency, rubbed shoulders with the "bohunks" and at last found himself in a malodorous colonist car consigned to a distant construction camp.

The private agent no doubt rendered a service to both employer and worker in these expansion days but his offences were many, running the gamut the whole way from the petty

¹Mention should be made of the work of various philanthropic agencies, such as the Young Women's Christian Association, which in the year 1913-14 placed 5329 persons—*Labour Gazette*, 1915. p. 1073.

²An estimate of 200,000 placements per annum by all the commercial agencies of the country is given in *The Labour Gazette*. March, 1915. p. 1068.