

For a farmer or manufacturer, times of unemployment are those in which, definite work having been accomplished, he may rest from his labors and take satisfaction in the result. For a community, such times are far different. We have over production. Collectively we are well stocked with all we need to eat and wear. And still such times are those of anxiety and street walking and nicker pinching and feverish job hunting. Before the war unemployment was one of our most serious problems and all events point in the direction of its recurrence. The next such period will be further complicated by the presence of the returned soldier. On all sides there is evidenced a feverish desire to get him on the land and to put him to work. In view of our past experience and the improvements in methods and organization brought about by the war, it is hard to see, in the name of common sense, why these men should ever again be asked to turn a hand. If we can support them in France and supply them with millions of dollars' worth of material to shoot away, why the great anxiety to get them so busy at home? I am not attempting to solve the returned man's problem for him from his own viewpoint. I would not suggest that we seek to force upon him against his will and in order to make our own jobs secure, any species of enforced idleness. But I would voice emphatically the personal opinion that if we permit the worship of any threadbare conceptions regarding capital to stand in the way of giving these men the very utmost of what we can create by our creative genius, in our spare time, with our own raw materials, we shall go down in history as the supreme example of collective selfish boneheadedness.

The best efforts of the engineer are just those which will precipitate times of unemployment, his own included. His work makes for more and better production in less time, less drudgery, more work by machinery and less by hand, more work of a higher order and less of a low order. All of which, without making too fine distinctions, could be boiled down into some such expression as—"More pay for shorter hours." But there are factors which limit his best efforts. An engineering proposal is seldom tested on its ability to increase general prosperity, bring better living conditions or add to comfort and leisure. It will be opposed on one hand if it tends to throw people out of jobs. On the other hand, it must pay individual capital to embark on it.

It is a singular fact that the labor party have the only practical solution of our most difficult problem. It is nothing short of disgraceful that the engineering profession does not come right to the front with the utmost co-operation and solid support. We cannot always defend the spirit in which the demands of labor are made or the opportuneness of the times for their presentation but at that there are many excuses possible.

Engineers can profitably spend much time seeking ways and means of storing present work against future want which will lay no tribute against or restrictions upon the medium which we believe to be so necessary to fruitful industry and endeavor.

A great inventory of the resources of the British Empire is now under way to the end that British goods be sold in every corner of the earth. Canadian engineers might well supplement such an inventory with an engineering analysis of the amount of time, energy and raw material necessary to bring Canadian living conditions up to a certain minimum standard. When reconstruction commences, it would be a calamity if any group of individuals no matter how wise and powerful, would be allowed to stampede us into a subordination of our

internal relationships to our external ones. Home is the place where our friends are, where we laugh and cry, where we feel hot and cold, where we are hungry or satisfied. National policy might be expected to originate there and not in a feverish desire to supply the South Sea Islanders with red handkerchiefs and mouth organs.

The aims of the engineering profession are too little understood. Engineers are too often content to moil on in dumb and dignified silence while big issues go by. They are thankless indeed if they let labor carry their banner. They are as fellow travellers for the same destination, too proud to speak. A little advertising would do no harm. If I had my way engineers would have a bill board at every cross-roads with some legend as follows:—

THE ENGINEERS OF CANADA WISH TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE PEOPLE

Success to their efforts means higher standards of living and working and more of an intelligent leisure. They are Democratic. They desire to make "The greatest good for the greatest number," an accomplished, practical fact. They believe that great progress in material things has come since man began to apply scientific principles to the manipulation of the inanimate. Of animate things, they believe the human mind to be the highest manifestation of earthly force. They believe the human mind to develop by exercise. They believe that the raising of the standard of our daily tasks will have a profound effect upon the future of the human race. They see certain obstacles in the way of the realization of their ideals. They are making a definite effort to remove them. They are asking the co-operation and support of everyone.

A postscript after the manner of Stephen Leacock might also be in order, somewhat as follows:—

In olden days the people said "See the good Baron. He lets us gather up the dry sticks out of his forests. We live on poor and stony ground but we must be content." Which, being interpreted in modern language, is: There is evidence of great activity in financial circles to the end that vast consolidations of capital may meet all the demands of industrial reconstruction and that the masses may not lack employment.

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Assistant City Engineer
of Port Arthur.

Port Arthur, Ont., November 9th, 1918.

Despite labor troubles and strikes British Columbia's coal production for the eight months ended August is estimated at 1,821,681 tons. In September the output of the province is placed at 167,301 tons, bringing the total for the year up to September 30th, or nine months' output, up to nearly two million tons.

The saving of a piece of coal the size of an ordinary egg on each scoopful of coal used in locomotives in the United States would amount to 1,500,000 tons a year. Even when firing a freight locomotive on a heavy grade, one less scoopful of coal every fifteen minutes, or one less scoopful every three or four miles, would effect a similar saving. The Engineering Experiment Station of the University of Illinois has issued a circular, the title of which is "The Economical Use of Coal in Railway Locomotives," to present some suggestions concerning ways in which large coal savings may be made. The circular is printed in four colors. The facts presented in this circular have been compiled by a special committee of the research staff of the Engineering Experiment Station, assisted by an able advisory committee of railway men.