

After-the-War Problems

PROBLEMS THAT WILL CONFRONT US WHEN PEACE IS ESTABLISHED.

The question uppermost in the minds of business men as the New Year opens is, what conditions must be faced in our own country when—as sooner or later must occur—the greatest of the world's wars end? The Journal of Commerce has invited the views of men who admittedly are representative of our various national activities—men identified in a large way with finance, trade and industry—on this concededly large subject. Their statements, which are appended, will repay careful perusal.

BY MR. J. S. DENNIS,

Assistant to the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and President of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers.

Although at the present time, owing to absence of our men at the front and our national war prosperity, we are handicapped in certain industries by a shortage of labour, at the close of the war we shall face a different situation. In addition to the labour already in the country we shall have to provide employment for our own returned soldiers—many of whom were out of employment when they enlisted—as well as a large percentage of the soldiers from the British army.

Of the 1,000,000 men in Great Britain fighting for us, a great number will not be satisfied to return to the home surroundings after the war. Their whole attitude has been changed by their experiences at the front, and they will wish opportunities to develop along new lines. They will have heard much of the free life in the colonies from their Canadian companions in the trenches, and the very name of Canada already appeals strongly to every British soldier. They will come to us in thousands, men seeking work.

Great Britain will not be in a position to give employment to all of her returned men, and in many cases the returned soldier will be no longer fit for civil life. A further complication to the situation in England will arise from the fact that large numbers of women have entered into the industrial life of the country. Employers have found that women in many positions give better service than men, and therefore they will not be willing to displace them even for patriotic reasons.

That there will be a large increase in our population in Canada, seems to be a reasonable supposition. The very fact that within one year after the close of the South African War, no less than 120,000 of the 300,000 British soldiers discharged from the army emigrated to America, amply justifies this statement. Thus, if we are to be guided by past experience, we should be preparing now for a heavy influx of immigrants as soon as the war ends.

Quite apart from the question of British emigration, we must take into consideration that the people of Northern Europe will probably flock to this country. It is true that their labour will be needed at home and their government will pass laws prohibiting emigration. Nevertheless, that will not hold them back. It has always been illegal for the men of Russia, Austria, Italy, and Germany to leave their country before performing their military duty, and yet 1,200,000 to 1,500,000 men from Northern Europe have arrived each year in America, having evaded the authorities of their home lands.

In Canada we need all the agriculturists we can get. As the Northern European usually has an agricultural vocation and therefore makes a good settler, we should welcome him and send him where he is most needed—to our North West. The returned British or Canadian soldier is a more difficult proposition. It is a fallacious dream to imagine that any large proportion of these men will settle down on the land. They will not. Our greatest problem will be to provide work for them. In the radical readjustments of our wage scales we shall find further complications.

The Canadian Government unfortunately has not yet dealt with the important matter of establishing labour bureaux and making other practical preparations for the return of our men and the immigration that will follow the close of the war.

BY MR. J. R. DOUGALL,
Editor of The Montreal Weekly Witness.

The great effects will be the moral ones.

It is strange how often good comes out of evil. Out of this horrible Ottawa school war that threatened the life of our nation has come this blessed *bonne entente* movement. Honor to all who have part in it, and may we yet become a nation indeed. Canadians are feeling that they must draw together if they are going to hold control of their own country against unbaked foreigners. The war has also aided this good-will movement. Canadians of both races have fought well side by side, in much more even numbers as to native Canadians than would appear from the size of the English and French speaking battalions, and have learned to respect one another.

Are we to be swamped by a new population? Well, let us do all we can to make ready. But we shall yet have time to draw breath. In the countries from which strangers come labor has been immensely depleted and there are cities laid waste and industrial plants in ruins. There will be a crying demand for labor—much less in America.

The migration that will tax the world's shipping for months and years with our soldiers.

These are our problems. In five years Canada will be in their hands. What will they be, and what will they want? Will they be a league of pension demanding parasites, like those of which the United States has been prolific, or will they come back tempered by the realities through which they are passing for higher citizenship?

I wish the churches had not postponed union till after the war and were free from divisive problems to plan for initiating these strong young men who shall have overcome the wicked one into the services of clean, honest and progressive citizenship. On these the country's future largely depends.

BY SIR WILLIAM PETERSON,
Principal of McGill University.

The problems that will confront us when peace has been established do not seem so pressing to me as the winning of the war. That is the only thing that matters. Canada is not yet awake to the real seriousness of the conflict and it is time she was. The critical stage of the struggle has not passed. I do not wish to seem to belittle the glorious part which our sons have played thus far. When the call came in 1914, to the lasting credit of the Dominion let it be said she did not hesitate, but rose to the occasion brilliantly. To-day, however, we seem to be sitting back viewing our achievements with satisfaction instead of continuing in our good works, and that attitude will never win the war.

I do not advocate conscription, though I think the Government might at least put the Militia Act in operation. A good deal of nonsense is being talked about our need of men at home to make munitions, to keep up the industries of the country, etc., but what good will be accomplished if we sustain the business of the country while we allow the Germans to conquer?

Education after the war?

If our Government could only be persuaded to continue, for six months, to expend for education what is now being contributed for war expenses, this terrible war would have conferred a great benefit upon the Dominion.

BY MR. J. T. FOSTER,
President of The Montreal Trades Council.

Allowing from a year to eighteen months for readjustments I anticipate an era of unprecedented prosperity for Canada, after the war.

We workmen do not fear military conscription but we do fear and should resent industrial conscription without a simultaneous conscription of wealth.

There is no scarcity of labor. Of course, some trades are having a little difficulty in getting skilled workers but what I might call our staple industries are very inactive and have been since 1914. And as a matter of fact some branches of trade, for instance, the building trade, are practically extinct.

There has been no necessity for utilizing interned men as laborers. When that has been done the mo-

tive has been economy on the part of the employer. Skilled men are a little scarce in some trades but semi-skilled and unskilled labor is plentiful—too plentiful. Higher wages are being demanded by the workers to meet the higher costs of living and that accounts in most cases for the employment of interned men. There is a tendency to employ women to drive men from their positions and that is usually done for reasons of economy also.

Allowing a year or a year and a half for readjustments after peace has been established I expect an era of unusual prosperity for Canada. Why? Because, the money raised to meet Canada's share of war expenses contributed by Canadians has been spent largely in our own country. Then Britain and the Allies are expending vast sums of money in Canada, so that Canada should be richer, not poorer after the war.

When peace comes the capitalists who have been enriched by the munitions boom are bound to find something in which they can invest their accumulated money. Capital cannot be allowed to remain idle, therefore, new industries must be developed. And depend upon it the means of utilizing the munition factories and plants will be found.

Our attitude to National Service? We do not fear military conscription but we do fear industrial conscription. However, we should not resent industrial conscription if the Government conscripted the profits instead of allowing the capitalists to be enriched at the expense of conscripted labor.

By MR. HUNTLEY R. DRUMMOND,
President of Canada Sugar Company and a Director of the Bank of Montreal.

My ideas as to what conditions will follow the declaration of peace are so vague I would not venture any prophecy: That I leave to others.

It seems to me sure that if this terrible war should lead to a revival of a style of living requiring the practice of those old fashioned virtues, thrift, honesty and hard work—virtues that we had partly discarded—we will be making the best possible preparation for anything that may occur in the future.

Let us give up electro plate for the solid silver.

Whether we have prosperity or depression after the war, we certainly will have tremendous problems to cope with, and heavy burdens for years to come.

Morally fortified in this way against the worst that may happen, we are also amply prepared for the best should it come.

Thrift, honesty and hard work should be our watch-words.

By MR. A. O. DAWSON,
Vice-President and Managing Director Canadian Cottons, Limited.

The outlook for trade in cotton piece goods is hopeful for the next few months: All the cotton mills are well sold ahead, and further orders are obtainable when wanted. As the cotton crop of the United States this year will run about 3,000,000 bales below the requirements of the world's spinners, this staple is likely to rule very high in price throughout the year. Add to this the enormous prices being paid for dyestuffs, chemicals and all other supplies, and it can be seen that the mills will be compelled to obtain very full prices for their products.

If the war should by any means come to a speedy close, it is believed that raw cotton would reach a very high figure, due to the fact that the Central Empires are desperately in need, and the demand for at least a few months would be unprecedented.

England is taking a large quantity of cotton, considering that she is badly handicapped through a shortage of textile workers, and because of this shortage and the increased difficulty of shipping, there is sure to be a heavy shrinkage in the imports of cotton cloths from England into Canada during the period of the war.

The quantity of cotton being used in the manufacture of automobiles, tires, cushions, etc., is enormous, and most of this business has developed since the outbreak of the war.

There is still a great shortage of help in the cotton mills, and these industries will doubtless be able to absorb some of the workers who will later on be liberated from the munition factories. The same may be said of other industries, so that it would appear as if there will not be any great surplus of labor for many months after the war has come to a close.