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THE LABOR OUTLOOK.

From letters appearing in the public press, and from the increasingly large numbers of unemployed who are to be met with on our streets these days, it is daily becoming more evident that the coming winter will be one of hardship for the workingman.

Since 1905 building operations in Toronto have been steadily increasing until two months ago, when the building permits began to show a falling off. Notwithstanding the fact that Toronto has fallen from seventh to fifteenth place among the cities of the continent with regard to house building, yet those engaged in the building trades have had plenty of work. New operations, however, especially in speculative building, have fallen off considerably on account of the stringency of the money markets in Canada and the United States.

There are other causes which labor men declare have materially affected the various trades, namely, the influx of unrequired immigrants who, they allege, are being dumped into Canada at the rate of a thousand a day, and the laying off of mechanics in almost every city by big corporations for the purpose of curtailing expenses for the winter.

A glance over the table of building permits issued during the past three years reveals the fact that Toronto has had its share of prosperity. But during October the permits were al-

most half a million short of the corresponding month last year, and \$300,000 less than for the same month in 1905. Each month for the current year, beginning in March, when building operations opened up, and then on till August, showed general increases over the corresponding months last year, an increase for ten months of almost \$2,000,000.

The following table shows how the building permits issued by the City Architect's Department have increased during the past three years:—

	1905	1906	1907
Jan.	\$ 289,488	\$ 492,065	\$ 782,166
Feb.	305,295	344,775	781,135
March ..	594,025	1,081,397	1,508,530
April	898,196	1,427,939	2,044,870
May	1,104,154	1,502,160	2,457,964
June	1,303,208	1,350,142	1,445,525
July	1,157,298	1,193,435	1,219,435
Aug.	1,417,155	1,271,620	1,207,440
Sept.	887,005	902,803	763,440
Oct.	1,009,005	1,536,595	776,555
Nov.	788,771	1,087,692
Dec.	604,950	969,783

Total. \$10,357,950 \$13,164,397 \$12,980,730

There is scarcely any speculative building going on at present in Toronto, the great bulk of the permits issued during the past couple of months being for warehouses and commercial buildings.

MEN OUT OF WORK.

It is estimated that between 1,500 and 1,800 men in the building trades are out of employment, which does not include those who are not affiliated with any union. Local labor leaders say that it is a difficult problem to form an accurate idea of the number of men that are idle, but so far as they can ascertain from reports the following table would indicate approximately how each union is affected:—

	Union strength.	Out of work.
Plumbers.....	650	120
Carpenters, Amalgamated..	1,300	160
Carpenters, Brotherhood ..	700	75
Painters and Decorators ..	600	10
Plasterers	300	50
Bricklayers.....	950	350
Builders' laborers.....	935	210
Plasterers' laborers	220	75
Stonecutters	175	40
Structural iron workers	150	65
Electricians	130	20
Stonemasons	260	120
Total	6,360	1,495

With immigration, the closing of navigation, factories here and there curtailing their number of employees, the influx of farm hands, there is a congestion of labor in the city, known

to labor leaders as a floating population. The result is that labor conditions are not so favorable for the men in the building trades. Many buildings, for which permits were issued within the past three months, are not yet completed, and some branches of the building trades hope to work into the latter part of next month.

The unions that are first to feel the effects of a stoppage of building operations are the bricklayers, stonemasons and stonecutters, whose work is almost completed when the carpenters, plasterers, plumbers and electricians take possession of the buildings. The bricklayers, having a membership of almost a thousand, declare that the immigration from England and Scotland has resulted in an over-supply in the trade in Toronto, and consequently many of them have been obliged to seek employment elsewhere. So far as the builders' laborers are concerned, they are in hopes of being able to keep busy for a few weeks yet, though the outlook generally to them is not very promising. The carpenters' locals anticipate a dull season. Many of the members of the Brotherhood organization are leaving the city—this organization being composed chiefly of Canadian and American workmen, who, according to the local business agent, have no trouble in finding employment when they go across to Uncle Sam's domain.

"The registration of the unemployed a few weeks ago, when some 500 names were enrolled, is sufficient evidence that labor will have to face a hard winter," said one of the promoters of the scheme. "Many of these were mechanics who have been out of the city for employment, but were forced to return. The bulk of them are plumbers, machinists and other mechanics who were shipped out here while strikes were on. Some are good workmen, others are of the inferior grade. This scheme was inaugurated in order that the actual conditions existing in the labor market here might be brought before the labor bodies in the old country, as an intimation that Canada is now overstocked with undesirable immigrants and mechanics who are practically useless in this country."