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## Prospects and Trends in Provincial Business

**Doubt and Uncertainty of Labor Only Deterrents to Increased Business in the Province—Review of Conditions in the Principal Industries.**

The turn of the half year is a stock-taking period. Merchants, bankers and business men generally are looking back over the history of the first six months of 1917, and are looking forward to the second six months to try and gauge trends and conditions as best they can. Just what does retrospect and present conditions in British Columbia indicate for the future?

The biggest piece of business before the country is winning the War. Yet the country as a whole does not regard it as a serious matter. Business men regard it as a far-off event that, except for making a profit if they have munition orders or have a friend or relative at the front would not know it existed except as they read of it in the press. Thrift, saving, economy are not a part of their everyday programme. Luxury and waste are a shocking condition in these stern days. Labor at the same time regards the war as an opportunity to strike for higher pay and, after labor gets it, spends it uselessly and becomes less efficient than before. These conditions must be remedied by stern action.

If the war is a condition in business, which assuredly it is, then merchants may safely count that war will not be over this year. Notwithstanding a new Russian offensive, a permanent peace cannot safely be looked for until the close of 1918, unless some extremely fortuitous circumstances arise. It appears to be playing safe to expect a continuance of war for at least another year.

The outstanding characteristic of 1917 in business in Canada, in fact all over North America, is labor disturbance. Increase of wages simply wets the appetite for war while not yielding commensurate returns in output or general efficiency. Strikes, labor scarcity, and general tendency to take holidays are increasing and from present indications the labor situation will continue to get worse. It presents a grave menace to business and industry and is the chief obstacle to industrial advancement. So long as war lasts the labor factor will be a controlling element in business. With this in view, the business outlook must be always clouded in uncertainty. It is, however, the only cloud on the financial and industrial horizon.

Industry and general business in Canada is undoubtedly on a high level of activity. This fact is responsible for the increasing business which British Columbia is transacting. The interdependence of East with the West is such that the Pacific Coast cannot lie long dormant while the Atlantic is thriving with industry. It may take months before activity in one place is felt in another, but the result is inevitable. Thus while British Columbia lagged behind in 1915, the Province is nearly up in mark of activity relatively to the industrial East in midsummer 1917.

The major industries of British Columbia which are namely its natural resources should be enjoying astounding activity. In a measure they are very active except for labor troubles.

Intimately connected with war business the mining industry should be turning out record production yet the actual yield is for the present below last year. Happily the coal strike in the Interior is well nigh settled with the return of miners in the Crow's Nest to work. But it will take some time to get the mines operating to full blast, to turn out coal, to be burned into coke, to be delivered to the smelters, to produce metal. Apart from the strike the coke situation is not satisfactory. The smelters and the coal operators will have to come into more harmonious relations for mutual benefit if a serious condition does not arise after the high price is off of metals. Low priced coke and an adequate supply will permit British Columbia to compete in the future where there is grave doubt it will not be able to otherwise.

Mineral development is progressing at a rapid rate. New mines are steadily being brought to the shipping point and promising prospects are readily taken in hand. Capital for development is apparently available in very large amounts and is chiefly of Eastern or United States origin. The future of the mining industry is bright, labor and the difficulty in getting prompt delivery of mining machinery are the only obstacles.

The lumber industry is active and prosperous. Increased costs of supplies and labor tend to equalize the increased price of lumber. The demand is active and comes from everywhere. The deep sea trade is handicapped by shortage in tonnage and the Eastern demand is affected by shortage of cars. Despite both shipments are expected to surpass the figures of any previous year. High prices and

### LUXURIES PROHIBITED

IN GREAT BRITAIN SHOULD BE  
BARRED IN CANADA.

The importation of luxuries into Great Britain was stopped when the Prime Minister announced the new tonnage restrictions required by the German submarine campaign. He warned the House of Commons that expenditures on such commodities were larger than was dreamed of by the members. Canada should stop the purchase of luxuries. Greater sums are spent daily on extravagant purchases than the people have any idea of and this despite the seriousness of the war situation. All such extravagances should be stopped until the end of the war. The military and financial needs of the moment are too great to permit careless expenditures. Canada will be required to raise \$600,000,000 this year. Over half a billion dollars has been added to the national debt since the war began. There must be united effort amongst all classes if the financial burden is to be carried. The National Service Board is appealing for national thrift and national saving. Put your money in Government War Savings Certificates and help your country.