

THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OF CANADA.

"It was easy, in the village, or even in the small town, with scant variety of occupation, for employers and wage earners to be aware of all vacancies and of all available men. But in the huge wildernesses of London and other great cities, with the bewildering multiplication of occupations and specialisation of employment, a deliberate organization of means of communication between employers and employed is as indispensable, if time is not to be wasted in endless runnings to and fro, as the central sorting room of the Post Office or the Telephone Exchange."¹

It was not until the depression of 1913-4 that Canada began to take serious thought for the better organization of the labor market, although hard times in earlier years had given rise to some half-hearted effort. The few part-time employment agents, appointed by the Ontario Government during the slackness of 1907-8 accomplished little. In the years just before the war there were six of these agents in as many cities, and together they made 100 or 125 placements monthly. The Ontario Department of colonization did much better work in the placement of agricultural labourers recruited by its agents in England. In 1912-13, the last year of normal operation, 3,927 workers were placed on Ontario farms and nearly seventy-five per cent. of the engagements were for the year. Assisted passages were granted to these emigrating English farm hands in many cases, as much as \$25,000 having been advanced in one year. The workers were evidently selected with care as ninety per cent. of this sum was repaid.² Somewhat more pretentious beginnings were made in the Province of Quebec in 1910 when an "Act respecting the Establishment of Employment Bureaux for Workmen" was passed. At the beginning of the war the three offices established under this

¹Great Britain, Minority Report, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and the Relief of Distress. (London, 1909) p. 1180.

²Report of the Ontario Commission on Unemployment. p 117.