

Mr. Lloyd George has found it necessary to state that this report was "unauthorized and inaccurate." Similar denial probably could be given to much of the alleged news that is coming over the cables. The newspapers are not to be blamed for not having reliable news of these affairs. They have the enterprise and would get correct reports if there were any available. But they are to be blamed for pretending to have the news and thus misleading the public. Quite an army of correspondents have gone to Paris and some of the journals which they represent have gravely stated that these writers are to report the Conference for them. Nobody will report the Conference for them, or for any other journals. When the Conference meets the authorized leaders of it will from time to time give out to the press statements which will be found to be devoted to formalities and contain little or no real news. For trustworthy statements of what is actually done we shall have to wait patiently. In the meantime all that the army of correspondents can do is gather up what gossip is current outside and supplement it by guesses as to what is going on at the meeting. If it is clearly understood that this is the character of the reports that come over, no harm will be done. But if some folks make the mistake of treating it as reliable news they may have to regret their error.

Welfare Work and Wage Reductions

IN the reconstruction problems facing the civilized world, the probabilities are that welfare work among employees will receive a new incentive. Labor to-day is more conscious of its power than at any time in its history and there is apt to be a little feeling between employer and employee unless the readjustment process is diplomatically handled.

We all know that it causes less trouble to advance wages than to reduce them. Employees who have been getting war wages for the past four years will be reluctant to face a reduction. That such reductions are bound to come sooner or later is generally admitted by all who have in any way looked into this matter or are at all familiar with economics. A possible solution of the difficulty will be found in the substitution of welfare work for the reduction in wages. The average employee would rather live under pleasant normal conditions with a moderate wage than to receive much higher wages and live in a community that was not suitable for the up-bringing of his family. Employers of labor are finding that it pays to treat their employees as human beings. From an economic standpoint, light, airy factories, proper housing, the providing of wholesome recreation, good schools and other institutions that make life worth while, pay in dollars and cents. In some communities the labor "turn over" or change is as high as 60 per cent. This is due to a spirit of restlessness. The quotation, "wages are good but the living is poor," is a familiar one to employers of labor, and means that while wages as such are satisfactory the living conditions are far from what they ought to be.

The building of modern, properly equipped houses, with gardens attached, that will rent for a reasonable sum, the establishment of good schools, churches, places of amusement, combined with a well lighted sanitary factory mean much, both to employer and employee. Perhaps through the emphasis of this welfare work, dissatisfaction among wage earners will be reduced to the minimum. The experiment is well worth making.

Public Works

WHEN a Government has an abundance of money it finds a great many people ready to assist in expending it. Owing to the very large over-subscription of the Victory Loan the Government is, for the time at least, on Easy Street so far as finances are concerned. Coincident with this fact is the greater one that the war has ended, a situation which creates an assumption, not wholly justified, that there will be an immediate large reduction of war expenditure.

There was a holding up in war-time of certain classes of public works expenditure. There are signs now of a pretty wide demand for the opening of the dam. The company promoter who was obliged to suspend operations for a while thinks the time has arrived when his enterprise, with the help of the Government in one form or another, should be launched. The contractor who has found little employment of late for his plant thinks it is now time to undertake big things. The locality which has a favorite scheme, the chief value of which is that it will call for a large distribution of public money, will not be slow to press its claim for action. The construction of public works, good, bad and indifferent, will be pressed upon the Government.

It is a time when much caution is needed in deciding on the works that should be undertaken. An Ottawa telegram, referring to the intentions of the management of the consolidated Government railways, says:

"The programme by which it is expected to give employment to from 40,000 to 50,000 men and by which it is proposed the Government system will be brought up to a proper standard of efficiency and service, includes increased equipment, betterments, branch lines, and terminals.

"The proposals will be classed under three heads:

- "1. Those necessary to be carried out.
- "2. Those considered desirable, if financial conditions permit.
- "3. Those not of immediate necessity but which may be gone ahead with if the Government considers it necessary to provide labor."

These will be good rules not only for the railways, but for all branches of the service connected with public works. There have been rare cases in which the necessity of finding employment for people has been so great that work has had to be undertaken with little regard to its usefulness. There is not likely to be any excuse for such a policy now. There will be considerable opportunity for giving em-

ployment, when it is most needed, on works that will be of substantial value to the country. The temptation to enter upon large expenditures on works which have no greater merit than that they will cause a distribution of public money and give employment to the people is one that needs to be watched and resisted.

British and Canadian Fisheries

A SHORT time ago a number of people particularly interested in the development of our fisheries complained of that branch of our public business being associated for administrative purposes with other things, such as marine and naval affairs, under one Minister, and advocated the creation of a special fisheries department. It is interesting to note that while British administration of the fisheries is often referred to here as efficient, in England there is a movement for change of exactly the same character as has been advocated in Canada. The British fisheries come under the direction of the Minister of Agriculture, an office at present filled by Mr. Prothero. A few days before the close of the Parliamentary session a large deputation waited on him to urge that the fisheries be separated from other affairs and be placed under the direction of a Minister whose entire time would be given to the fishing industry. There, as here, the service to be rendered by a Minister specially devoted to the industry was estimated very highly. "Given a Ministry administering an efficient service," said a report submitted by the deputation, "the possibilities of the future are very great. We anticipate a catch of at least double the pre-war maximum in a few years. A very large stock of fish has accumulated in the sea during the war, both bottom fish and surface fish. The problem is to see that it is all brought to the consumer without waste, and that problem will occupy the full attention of a special minister, who will have no time for business other than fisheries." Strange to say, while some in Canada, as we have noted, regard our fisheries administration as unsatisfactory, the British fishermen cite the fishery policy of Canada as something to be admired. The proposed change, the report said, "will imply expenditure heavy in comparison with previous expenditure, but not heavy in comparison with that of the United States, Japan, Canada and other countries, who awoke to the needs of the fishermen while Great Britain slumbered."

Thus Canada envies the efficient fishery policy of Great Britain, and Britain envies the policy which Canada has adopted "while Great Britain slumbered." Perhaps on both sides it is a case in which

Tis distance lands enchantment to the view
And robes the mountain in its azure hue.

Mr. Prothero, in replying to the deputation, suggested that the change that was sought might not prove as effective as they thought it would be. He advised a further study of the subject and an effort to make greater use of the machinery already existing.