

WORK IN THE WEST

While the Western Mayors are on their way home from Ottawa, where they consulted the Government on unemployment, The Winnipeg Free Press asks the Western farmers how they are going to secure enough labor to harvest what promise to be the heaviest crops ever grown. The Free Press says that if present expectations are only partly fulfilled "there will be the greatest shortage of labor in Western Canada two months hence that has ever been known."

For the great crop of 1913, 25,000 harvest hands were imported from Eastern Canada. The requirement will be greater this year, because thousands of young men have left Western farms for the war. Ontario will not be able to supply as many hands as usual, because this Province has also suffered from the war drain, and because there is an increased demand here, as in the West, for additional farm help.

The Free Press continues: "With far more work to do, and fewer men on the farms to do it, the demand for outside help will be more acute than ever before. From what source can this help be obtained? It will be necessary to look to the unemployed in the towns and cities for the help that will be required. The poor fellows who are walking our streets, footsore and hungry, looking vainly for work, will be in great demand by the beginning of August." But The Free Press would not have the farmers wait till then. It urges them to act at once. It contends that those who are wise enough to plan ahead will at once provide themselves with help for the harvest.

The progressive farmer "will not wait until his wheat is ready for the reaper and then expect some outside agent, Governmental or railway, to supply him upon demand with help to the extent and of the nature he requires. He will get the men now, when they are easy to be got, and will employ them in the interval in needed work about the farm. Farmers of this type will pay no more for the service of helpers for the next five or six months than their improvident neighbors will for a much shorter period. Once the harvest rush is on and the shortage of labor becomes apparent, farmers in their desperation will be forced to pay fancy wages for possibly inefficient help."

The Free Press concludes: "This whole unemployment problem could be handled without much difficulty if the farmers of Western Canada would begin without delay to employ their harvest help, en-

gaging the men for a period that will carry them over the harvest and, if necessary, the time of threshing." Most of the men out of work in Western towns came from European farms and if the farmers now take them back on the land a great proportion may stay there, either as laborers or homesteaders—perhaps with financial aid from the Provincial or Dominion Government: