

MUST TACKLE LABOR ISSUE

Important Task of Conference Between Federal and Pro- vincial Governments

HOW TO DEAL WITH ALIENS

Two Serious Difficulties Have to be Overcome—Farm Needs Urgent.

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

Ottawa, Feb. 11.—One of the big and complex problems which the Federal Government will discuss with the representatives of the Provincial Governments at the coming conference here at the end of this week will be in regard to the extent to which alien labor in Canada, or labor not regularly and adequately employed in the more essential industries, can be mobilized to the best advantage. It is recognized that there are many thousands of uninterred aliens in Canada, especially in the West, who are now exempt from any military service and who are now under no obligation to do State service. They work when and how they like. As a rule they are making abnormally high wages, and as their standard of living is decidedly economical many of them are very spasmodic in their periods of employment. They draw big money in the mines for a few weeks or months and save up enough to live at ease in idleness until they choose to work again.

Suggestion Seems Reasonable.

The Government has exercised no compulsory power yet to direct or control this labor to meet the urgent needs of increased agricultural production, or to relieve the labor situation in other industries. The suggestion that when Canadian citizens are forced to do military service at \$1.10 per day, aliens enjoying the protection of Canadian citizenship and the profits of labor scarcity should likewise be compelled to do home service at a fixed wage, seems on the surface of it reasonable.

But International Agreements.

But there are certain complications which have to be considered by the Government. There are, for instance, international agreements with regard to citizenship rights, and the violation of these agreements might invite reprisals on innocent British subjects in alien enemy countries.

Furthermore, there is to be considered the fact that organized labor has declared against the application of the compulsory system to other than military service, and many of these aliens are members of international labor unions. Precipitate action by the Government along compulsory lines in regard to industrial labor rights, as may readily be seen, lead to undesirable results.

Urgent Need of Farm Labor.

There is an urgent and well-recognized need of more labor for the farms if there is to be any increased production this year. How to secure this labor in the best practicable manner, how to insure steady employment and reasonable wage among the class of labor that does not voluntarily respond to patriotic appeals, and how to reconcile economic needs with international and individual considerations, will be

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MUST TACKLE WORK PROBLEM

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the subject of some specific recommendation by the Federal Government to the Provincial Governments looking to uniform co-operative action.

One development that is pretty certain to ensue is that consistent idleness on the part of any able-bodied man in Canada will before long bring him up against the stern hand of the State. The coming compulsory registration scheme may be so devised as to show the working habits of the whole civilian population individually. Industrial slackers will probably find that if they will not give voluntarism a fair show, their lack of industry and patriotism will justify and necessitate measures to make them work where and how the national need directs.