

PROCRASTINATION.

Considerable sympathy ought to be felt with the Mayor of this city. As its chief magistrate he is, at normal times, the bearer of many burdens which ought rightfully to fall on other shoulders. In these days which are abnormal and in which problems bristle on every hand, the office of Mayor becomes more than usually heavy with responsibility and vicarious troubles. But the manufacturers and traders and lawyers and doctors and all the other classes—all the citizens—have a duty towards their mayor. They are under moral obligation to come to his aid, as their chief executive, whenever a public emergency arises.

That such an emergency exists today no one may doubt who has heard the views of the returned men and who has witnessed the disorders of a week ago. Great efforts are undoubtedly being put forth by the officers of the returned soldiers' organizations to maintain order and to promote an attitude of patience and reasonable consideration. They are, in this manner, doing their duty by the Mayor. But what is the attitude of the other influential classes in the city? With few exceptions the attitude which the Mayor's statement suggests is being taken up is that of procrastination, of shelving responsibility and calling upon someone else to deal with the difficulties which have arisen.

Upon whom the responsibility for the existing state of affairs must be placed is a matter of far less importance at the moment than is that of taking steps to improve conditions in the city. In this the Mayor is entitled to the support of everyone. He has called for that support and it should be forthcoming without delay. Equally it is the duty of the Provincial Government to take the situation into its cognizance. And it is the duty, also, of the Dominion Government and its executive departments, distant as Ottawa is and out of touch with local conditions, to speed up the machinery of administration before it is too late.

The complaints of the returned soldiers as to alien labor and the employment problem cannot be simply ignored. To appeal to their forbearance owing to the natural difficulties to be overcome and to enlist their aid in maintaining order is to recognize that something must be done to remove the causes from which impatience and disorder have arisen. To this end the Mayor has taken certain measures and he should receive the fullest co-operation of the citizens in whatever action he proposes to establish permanently sound conditions.

Compliance with the demand for the discharge by employers of alien workers will not lessen the difficulties of those responsible for dealing with disorder and unemployment. These aliens have to be fed, housed and, it may be, deported. But all this presupposes an agency or agencies to carry out these duties. It is of no means certain that the returned men will be satisfied to do the work now being done by aliens or to do it under the same conditions. The further inquiry penetrates the larger become the problems to be solved.

All the employing interests of this city must wake up to a sense of their responsibilities: so also must the Provincial Government. There should be a joint conference of all the interests, including the representatives of the repatriation agencies in this city, to which have been entrusted the official means for dealing with the employment and general welfare of the returned men. If necessary this conference should call upon the Government at Ottawa to declare its policy in regard to matters which fall distinctly into its province and with which no other authority can deal justly and adequately.

If some such action is not taken and that immediately all the efforts of the Mayor and the comparatively limited supporters of his action will be worse than futile. This morning's meeting, called for 10 o'clock, ought to be fully representative of all the interests involved, including the governmental agencies for repatriation and reconstruction.