

PROVINCES CAN LOOK AFTER UNEMPLOYED

Worst Situation at Present in Montreal—Government is Having Census Made

(Special Despatch to The Globe.)

Ottawa, Nov. 2.—The Minister of Labor is having a report made by special officers of his department on unemployment conditions in the chief industrial centres of Canada, and is corresponding with the various Provincial Governments as to their co-operation in looking after the many thousands of unemployed during the coming winter. With the exception of Quebec and Saskatchewan, which have not yet definitely replied, all the Provincial Governments have given assurances that they will be able to look after their own unemployed.

The largest amount of unemployment at present seems to be in Montreal, where approximately 13,000 men are now out of work. Of these some 2,000 are Austrians, more than 1,000 are Italians, 1,000 are Germans and 1,000 are Poles. The investigating officer reports that the Austrians and Poles are in dire need, but the Germans appear to be getting along all right with the help of their more fortunate compatriots.

In the Maritime Provinces the chief place of unemployment is Sydney. Elsewhere in the Maritime Provinces comparatively little trouble is reported. In Toronto there is said to be no serious unemployment which cannot be coped with by the municipal authorities. In Winnipeg the number of unemployed is given as approximately 3,500, while other western cities show corresponding figures. A fairly complete census of the unemployed will be available for Government consideration within a few days.

Big Deputation Sees Cabinet.

Ottawa, Nov. 2.—A big deputation from Montreal waited on the Cabinet at noon to-day and discussed with the members of the Government the question of unemployment and other war problems.

Controller Macdonald, on behalf of the city of Montreal, introduced the delegation. Mr. W. D. Lighthall, Secretary of the Union of Municipalities, spoke on behalf of that organization and read a number of telegrams from various parts of Canada and particularly the west, urging that the Government should take steps to deal with the problem of the unemployed.

The Mayors of Saskatoon and Regina suggested that the unemployed be enlisted and drilled.

Controller Macdonald congratulated the Government on the speedy and effective manner in which it had handled the present crisis. He also congratulated the Government on the way it had dealt with the problem of the alien enemies, which was one of the main reasons for the deputation originally. He asked that the militia protect the public works and waterworks of Montreal. He also asked that the control of explosives be made more rigid.

Mr. Lighthall urged the appointment of a commissioner to take charge of the unemployed problem. He should take a census in the various centres.

Stricter Immigration Laws Wanted.

Mr. J. T. Foster, President of the Trades and Labor Council of Montreal, said there were some 15,000 out of employment in Montreal. Many of these were aliens. There was considerable feeling because in many cases aliens were at work while Canadians were out of work. He urged that the immigration laws be made stricter. Men had been brought into the country who had no right here. He believed the Government had risen to the occasion and there was no cause for much criticism so far. Other spokesmen were R. J. Dale, Rev. Dr. Barclay, and Ald. Giroux of Montreal.

Sir George Foster replied on behalf of the Government. He was pleased that there was not much criticism up to the present. If they had been seemingly sometimes slow in making up their mind, it must be pleaded that the situation has been grave and complicated. As far as dealing with the problem of alien enemies in the country they had decided on the principle; they were now working out the detail. As far as relief of alien enemies they appreciated that this was a problem which the Dominion Government had to handle.

Primary Responsibility is Local.

The Dominion Government is co-operating where there is great distress, said Sir George, as for instance in the west at points where there is destitution amongst the settlers through crop failure. The primary duty, however, rests on the municipalities and Provinces of attending to the unemployed.