

## Social Problems

It is clear that after the war the most important question with which we shall have to deal, in Canada as in other countries, is the condition of the workers. It is estimated that the armies in the field now contain thirty million men. When peace is restored these men will suddenly be withdrawn from the field, and they must either be idle, or engaged in productive employments. In the long run this will be beneficial, for it stands to reason that constructive work is as good as destruction is bad. But the process of readjustment will mean disturbance and probably distress.

We in Canada will have our share of the anxiety and the responsibility connected with readjustment. Our own returned soldiers must be provided for. Employment must be found, not only for them, but for the army of workmen who are turning out munitions and supplies for soldiers, and whose work will be brought abruptly to a close.

Not only is this true, but throughout the British Islands, and in fact throughout all Europe, there will be a tendency to look to Canada as a land of opportunity. We are suffering far less from the war than the countries of Europe. Trade is better than it was before the war. We have a fertile country, abounding in natural resources, and apparently capable of sustaining ten times our present population. This will be known in Europe. There may be a rush of immigrants to Canada from Great Britain and from the allied countries. How shall we deal with it? We cannot leave it to chance. It is for this reason that the recent meeting of Liberals at Ottawa was of such importance. It was dealing, not with party questions, but with national questions, including the condition of the workers of Canada.

For many years Canada sought to attract immigrants and met with little success. The favorite theme of our statesmen and writers was the abundance of our natural resources, combined with the lack of people to develop them. At last the people came, and we found ourselves faced with some of the problems of older lands. The war checked immigration, and in fact caused a flow of our able-bodied men back to Europe. After the war the flow of population will be westward again. Where now it is difficult to find men for the work, in a year or so it will be difficult to find work for the men.

And no mere talk of our vast resources and our splendid future will solve the problem. The question will not be the position of Canada a generation hence, but its position immediately at the close of the war; and for several years afterwards. The vast army of men who will be seeking employment and their families cannot be fed, clothed, and sheltered by promises of future greatness. The work must be done promptly, and we must prepare for it at once.