

Labor After the War

The condition of labor after the war is under consideration in the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, now being held in Toronto. The recommendations made are the nationalization of railways, mines, and other public utilities; the building of an extensive system of highways; a plan of land settlement which will guarantee the settlement on the land of those adapted to or adaptable for farming, and for close settlement so that social amenities be enjoyed; shortening the work-day to provide opportunity for the employment of every unemployed person; the disbanding of enlisted men to be gradual, covering a period of at least two years after the termination of the war, to enable their being absorbed into the industrial life of the country.

The condition will be the reverse of that which now exists. Instead of a scarcity of labor, there will be a surplus; and there are appalling possibilities of misery and discontent unless the situation is wisely handled. Of the ultimate future of the Canadian people we have no fear. There will eventually be abundant employment for all. But "eventually" is a poor word of consolation to an idle man, in want of the necessaries of life for himself and his family.

The highway--by which is meant, not a railway, but a road for horses, automobiles, and pedestrians--may do good in two ways. It would furnish employment, and it would assist in the development of New Ontario. Better than a single highway would be a network of roads through Northern Ontario, giving the settlers easy access to railways, and means of communication and social enjoyment.

Soldiers should be taken care of until employment is found for them, but the process of absorbing them into civil life should be as rapid as possible. We are considering here, not the question of expense, but the welfare of the soldier. The longer employment is delayed, the more he is handicapped in the race and battle of life.

Immigration must be very carefully handled. There will be no kindness in encouraging immigrants for whom there will be no early prospect of work.