

LABOR SHORTAGE GROWS SERIOUS, AGENCIES AVER

Employment Men Say Foreigners Refuse To Work Even For High wages

Male help was never so scarce as it is at the present time and it will become scarcer when the men drafted are called to the colors, employers assert. In many cases women are being utilized to fill the gaps caused by the war, but there are some lines of employment which they cannot follow.

All union men are working, records of the various business agents show. They are authority for the statement that twice as many men could be found work if they were obtainable. Plumbers are working overtime and many people have to wait days before they can have jobs attended to and members of the union say that this is due to the fact that more than half their members have left for the war, and also is accounted for by the freeze-up which has put many pipes out of business.

Carpenters, painters and even bricklayers are all employed, the union men say, while work could be found for a number of extra metal trades workers if they were available, but the aviation corps has depleted the ranks of these unions.

Unskilled labor is also scarce. It is true there are many aliens who are not wanted for war purposes now in Winnipeg, but it appears that many of them prefer to loaf rather than work, having made their pile during the summer months when wages were high and work more congenial.

When the war started there was not a woman running a passenger elevator in Winnipeg, but today there are more than two dozen of them who have released men for work they can attend to better. Several of the large apartment blocks are now about to employ elevator girls, rental agents say.

Since the war started the banks, insurance companies and similar institutions have been hiring female help. In most of the banks only the most important positions are filled by men, most of whom are ineligible for active service, it is said.

Men for the bush are almost unobtainable, representatives of the lumber companies say. They have been advertising for men for this work for weeks past, offering as much as \$3 a day with board, but even at that wage cannot be obtained, employment agents say. "We can use 3,000 bush men at once," said C. S. Drake, of the Prince Albert Lumber Co., today, "but cannot get more than a very small percentage of that num-

ber. The result of this shortage will be, I expect, that several companies will not be able to cut this winter."

Women will have to be used in the fields next spring, for by that time the men drafted in Class 1 will be overseas, according to present arrangements, so that no assistance can be expected from the military authorities by the release of trained men to help in the seeding.

The worst phase of the labor shortage, employers say, is that there are hundreds of allens in Winnipeg who will not work.