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THE MANPOWER MUDDLE

In a recent issue The Northern Miner touched on the idea that there was likely to be a surplus of labour at an early date in Canada. The Northern Miner is always thoughtful and able in its consideration of industrial questions and has the habit of seeing the facts in the case a little earlier than most. A writer in The Financial Post last week suggests that the man power crisis has vanished and that there seems probability that in the near future there will be men without places. Next, there comes The Ottawa Journal with concrete proof to uphold the idea that there is either a surplus of labour right now, or there is a very decided muddle and mess in the handling of man-power in this country. The Journal refers to the news that the government has just granted leave to 500 men in Canada to cross over from New Brunswick to Maine to cut logs. People have been led to believe that there is a serious shortage of men in the lumber industry in the Timmins district. The lumber industry here could easily have taken that five hundred group that went to Maine. After taking that five-hundred there would still be places for another five hundred here before the lumber industry in this district would be adequately manned. The Ottawa Journal does well to ask the question as to the identity of the interests in Maine that can secure five hundred Canadians by order-in-council or similar plan. The Journal also wishes to know if a Liberal member of Parliament from a neighbouring province has some particular interest in the Maine lumber industry that secured five hundred of Canada's surplus labour. This is a question, however that should be asked on the floor of parliament, and an answer should be demanded.

Whether The Northern Miner, The Financial Post and others are right in suggesting that there is a probability of a surplus of labour is worth consideration. Anything can happen here. Certainly there are industries and businesses being burdened and endangered by lack of sufficient staff. In any event there is no doubt at all that the whole manpower question is in a desperate muddle. It would appear that everything has been done in a piece-meal fashion. One minute men are needed for the armed forces, and there is such a drain on Sudbury that there is a manpower crisis there. To fix that, a crisis is unnecessarily created in the gold mining areas. The same holds true of different war industries, alternating between feasts and famines in the way of labour. Key men in industry are serving as privates in the "play-at-home" forces. All sorts of absurdities are evident. Apparently Canada jumps at doing something or other, in something or other in some particular line, only to find that this is impossible without disorganizing everything else. The sensible procedure would be for the government to have a broad general plan, all within the possibilities of Canada's resources. Then this plan should be adjusted and carried out, so that Canada would do its best in every line. The "steady-by-jerks" procedure has been a flat failure. The whole plan should be co-ordinated, so that one branch after another does not cripple and ruin some other branch in succession. It may be that Canada may be attempting something beyond its power in one or more particular lines. This is a real detriment to the war effort. Canada should give its maximum. The people demand that. But the maximum can not be attained by attempting the impossible in some particular line for party or other reasons. What appears to be the great need of the moment is skilled and impartial planning from the top down, and The Advance still believes this is impossible so long as the war effort remains a political plaything, with partyism the main consideration in every department.

NO CAUSE FOR PRIDE

The Toronto Globe and Mail last week gave some prominence to the news item that Edward Stephenson, editor of The Northern Tribune, of Kapuskasing, had been committed to jail for one month in default of the payment of a fine of \$50.00 for failure to make out some of the interminable forms that pester honest people in these days. The Kapuskasing editor had been before the court on a similar charge last year. On that occasion he had explained that he was too busy to attend to all these form-filling jobs in addition to making an honest living. At that time he intended to refuse to pay the fine but planned to go to jail as a protest against the burden of the red tape of form-filling that has made it necessary these days for big firms to maintain extra staff to look after this chore and for the smaller firms not able to afford extra staff, or not able to secure this boon, to work a little more and worry a little more. However, on the occasion last year, friends stepped forward and paid the fine, and that con-

cluded the matter for the time being. In the meantime, apparently, those forms have gone unfilled, despite all the pressure exerted from Ottawa. The final result has been that the Kapuskasing editor last week was again before the court on the charge of failing to comply with the law in regarding to form-filling. The court had no recourse but to impose a \$50.00 fine, and failing the payment of that fine to commit the accused to the common jail for one month.

In no part of the incident does there seem to be any cause for pride for anyone.

As Magistrate Tucker stated in passing sentence, it seemed unfortunate that one who professed to mould public opinion in his own community should adopt an attitude of open and persistent defiance of the law. True, as that may be, there is also something to be said in the Kapuskasing editor's contention that it was impossible for him to take the time to fill in the forms, his ordinary duties being so onerous at the present time. The Kapuskasing editor last year and in previous years of the war lost all his staff through enlistments for active service, and it is worthy of note that his chief loss in staff was through the enlistment of his own sons and daughters for the service of the same country that the father himself had served at great cost to himself in the last war.

It is the fact that it is the small business that suffers most from all the forms that have to be followed in these days when bureaucracy is gaining so strong a hold on Canada. The present, however, is not the opportune time for drastic measures to oppose the tendency. The minds of men are so filled with the vital matter of the war that a protest against red tape at this time loses most of its force. Also, with all the press of other startling news, there is almost sure to be failure to secure the publicity that would ordinarily follow and perhaps lead to necessary changes.

It would have been the part of wisdom and good judgment at this particular time for the Kapuskasing editor somehow or another to have taken the time and trouble from what must be needed for sleep or rest to comply at least in appearance with the law in regard to form filling. Last year The Advance emphasized this point while referring to the case then. At the same time who can take any pride in the fact that a hero of the last war, still suffering from the effects of wounds and illness encountered in that conflict, with sons and daughters risking their all in this war, and whose powerful pen has helped all loyal causes in this present battle for freedom in the world, should now spend even a month in jail, because of the need for keeping the colour in the red tape.

It is true enough that the departments at Ottawa and Toronto show very great patience and are very considerate on the whole. Yet there is the ever-increasing danger of the growth of the bureaucracy that enslaves. The keen mind of the Kapuskasing editor sees this danger, and perhaps the sight blinds him to other facts that demand consideration at this time. In this particular instance, there is no possible fault to be found with either the department or the court. Both these authorities showed a patience and thoughtfulness much to be commended. The principle of the whole system, however, should not be forgotten. It is not enough to dismiss the matter with the suggestion that the Kapuskasing editor has been obstinate and self-willed, that he has been defiant and somewhat unreasonable. It should be remembered that every freedom won and held by British people through the years has been maintained by men of the Stephenson disposition—men who freely offer their lives to their country, but insist in minor matters on the freedoms for which they are ready to risk all.

BRING DOWN THE HOUSE!

There is the ancient story of the man who was so dull that he could not see a point until a house fell on him. That appears to be the attitude of the government at Ottawa. Unfortunately the House does not fall on the government often enough, if ever. The lack of response of the government to popular opinion is remarkable, scandalous, ridiculous, and then some. The attitude of the government in regard to conscription is one case in point. Another is in reference to the cost-of-living bonus for soldiers' families. The people demanded that justice for literally years before the government finally agreed. It would have been well if the House had fallen on the government to impress that idea. The House is soon to meet again. It is to be hoped that the House will fall upon the government to awake it to a number of truths and needs. One of them is the muddle in reference to beef and pork products. Some months ago the government was urging people not to eat pork, while at the same time all sorts of pork products were urged upon the people by the chain stores, with the suggestion that they would be wasted, if not used. More recently there was the talk of a shortage of beef, with the government assuring all that this would not be so. Then came the actual shortage of beef in some places, but it was announced more than once that rationing would not be necessary. Now, comes promising of rationing. At the same time there is suggestion that the situation could have been avoided if the House had fallen on the government. The Globe and Mail refers to a report prepared in 1940 by Mr. C. L. Burton on food supply. The report touched specially on wheat, at that time a burden to official minds, and showed how this surplus of wheat might solve other food problems. The proposal was to

use the wheat to produce animal food sufficient, not only for domestic use but also to supply overseas needs. Mr. Burton's report suggested that a scientific body be set up to study all phases of the situation and plan to use the surplus wheat to assure a surplus of food animals. There did not seem to be any political advantage in the report, so it was sidetracked for over two years. It is the duty of the House to fall on the government with the purpose of keeping the administration fully active and alive at all times. In Britain, the House has a habit of falling on the government there, and the Old Land government has sense enough to know when the House falls on it. In Canada, it is seldom that the House even quivers between elections. It would be service to Canada and to the war effort if the House in this Dominion adopted the habit of falling like a ton-load of bricks any time the occasion seemed to demand. Which would be often, these days.

GRAVEL AND SAND—AND PLACER

A recent heading in The Toronto Telegram reads:—"City Fathers All Married Men." Frankly, that is improbable, indeed, unbelievable.

Recently there has been repeated assurance that the tangled tape in regard to the calling-up of men for service had been all straightened out. It has—just like Hitler has beaten the Russians. Last week a young man in Timmins received his second call to service under the draft. He has been in the Air Force for two years and for several months has been on overseas service.

Since the government has started sending editors to jail for not filling out red tape forms for government departments, how would it be for the government to prosecute a few of its own incom-

Value of Canadian War Services to Soldiers Overseas

Weekly Newspapermen Report on Services Given Those on Active Service.

Another in a series of articles written by W. R. Legge and C. V. Charters, who represented the Canadian Weekly Newspapermen Association in a recent tour overseas.

(By Walter T. Legge)
The Canadian Government has taken over the financing of all the war services with the exception of the Red Cross which the international convention stipulates must be entirely free of government control. This step has relieved the country from a multiplicity of campaigns for funds, but it has also taken away some of the personal contact which the public previously had with these services.

They are, however, a very important part of the soldier's life when away from home, and they formed an interesting part of the Canadian Editors' investigations while in England.

Each one of them makes a special effort to minister to the needs of the man on active service when travelling or on leave. They provide many services to men who are visiting London, and we were shown over some of the places where these services are provided.

The first one we visited was a Canadian Legion Hostel, which is located in a building originally constructed for a girls' club, but which had never been used before being taken over by the Canadian Legion. This hostel, one of many operated by the Canadian Legion, is able to accommodate 1500 men, and facilities are provided for them to wash and iron their clothes while there without cost. Bed and breakfast costs three shillings, and this is about the average price at the many hostels operated by the various services.

We next called at a Salvation Army hostel which is located in a former hotel, and which has 358 beds. Among the names on the register at this hotel were Corp. M. E. Carr, New Liskeard, Ont., L. B. Mullin, Pembroke, and H. Sovereign, Waterford, Ont.

The Salvation Army, or Sally Ann, as it is frequently called, has a very special place in the hearts of the troops we were told. When we asked why, our informant could not give any special reason, except that they always seemed to be there when needed.

The Leinster Club was the hostel operated by the Y.M.C.A. which we visited and this also is in what was formerly a residential hotel. We were shown through by Captain W. J. G. MacDairmid, and Capt. McMurtrie, a brother of Dr. McMurtrie of Montreal, Mr. and Mrs. George, who own the building, manage the club for the Y.M.C.A. Fifty-five cents is the charge for bed and breakfast.

Still another former hotel, which is now operated by the Knights of Columbus, was the next hostel to be visited, and here Capt. H. McDonald, of Edmonton escorted the editors through the building. One of the features of this hostel is the fine food canteen. It is the fourth hostel in London operated by the K. of C. and a fifth was going to be opened in September, so we were informed.

The Maple Leaf Club, operated by the Canadian Red Cross was another hostel visited and here some names on the register included Sam. Sauvageau, Shawinigan Falls, Que., and Cpl. A. D. Taylor of Huntingdon, Que.

The Union Jack Club is unlike the other clubs we visited in that it is a permanent service mens' club having been first opened in 1907, and operated continuously ever since, and it is for all service men of the entire Empire. It is the largest one that we saw and has

been visited by over one hundred thousand Canadian soldiers since the outbreak of the war. It has many recreation rooms not found in the other clubs and meals are served there at all hours of the day and night.

One feature of this club is a huge memorial covering the wall of a long hall on which is inscribed the name of every one who has ever been awarded the Victoria Cross. There are many other memorials, one of which bears the intriguing words "In gratitude for a scrap of comfort."

The Union Jack was erected by public subscription as a National Memorial to sailors, soldiers and marines who have died in the service of their country. Its object was to provide a club-house including bed rooms, for the use and benefit of those serving on the active list below commissioned rank.

Each editor was given a copy of the club calendar, a book of 112 pages listing important events of history, a guide to the chief places of interest, lists of churches, hospitals, theatres, etc., and much other useful information including a map of the London Underground Railways, the whole forming a valuable pocket book of information.

Another club visited was the Beaver Club which is probably visited by more Canadians than any other. The building suffered some damage in a raid, but repairs were almost completed when we were there.

Not far from the Beaver Club is the Canadian Officers Club, which receives a great deal of help from Mrs. Vincent Massey, the wife of Canada's High Commissioner, and we found her busy serving soup there when we visited the club. Here we met P. O. E. L. Stovell, of Timmins and P. O. J. R. Mowbray, of Oshawa, who were expecting to go to the Near East soon after we were there. Names noticed on the register included Capt. R. W. G. Hughes, of Owen Sound, P. O. W. B. Fee, of Swift Current, Lieut. C. G. Goff of Sherbrooke, F. O. M. F. Ward, of Kentville, N.S., and Capt. Larry Audray, of Winnipeg.

Excellent meals at low prices are served in all these places, and the hostels also have very nice rooms. The men on leave can find in them accommodation equal if not superior to most of the hostels at a great saving in cost. The way that these services are appreciated is shown by the way that these clubs and hostels are crowded all the time.

There was one criticism which we heard and that is that Canadians are

unable to buy Canadian cigarettes over there. The N.A.A.F.I. canteens which serve the camps carry only English cigarettes which do not seem to be popular with the Canadians. The complaint is that while American soldiers buy American cigarettes in their regimental canteens to the extent of one carton a week, Canadians can only buy English cigarettes in the N.A.A.F.I. canteens.

The Canadians however profit by the better arrangement for sending Canadian cigarettes overseas at a much better price than prevails in other countries, and if the sale of Canadian cigarettes in the canteens would stop the sending of cigarettes at the 300 for one dollar price, they would probably prefer to keep the status quo.

The larger camps are given wonderful entertainment by the NAAFL E.N. S.A. which bring troupes of London stars to the camp theatres. As a sample of these shows we were taken to the ENSA theatre at Aldershot. Admission was limited to men in uniform, and the show was an exceptionally high class and clever review. Thousands attend these theatres each week.

All these services do their part in keeping the Canadian troops in excellent spirits.

Still stands the motto of the King: "Put into your task whatever it may be, all the courage and purpose of which you are capable. Keep your hearts proud and your resolve unshaken. Let us go forward to that task as one man, a smile on our lips and our heads held high, and with God's help we shall not fail."

Everybody hopes that 1943 will be the best year yet. Superstitious folks have special grounds for such a hope. In all of 1943 there is only one Friday the Thirteenth, while the average year has two or three. Last year there were three such dates, and there were three in 1940. In 1941 there was only one. Superstitious folk should pray that Friday the thirteenth of August will be the only unlucky day in 1943, and that it be not too unlucky at that.

Government Not Perfect

A Swedish farmer, who wanted to make his permanent home in this country, appeared for his naturalization papers. "Are you satisfied with the general conditions of this country?" asked the official. "Yah, sure," he replied. "And does this government of ours suit you?" "Well, yah, mostly, only I lak see more rain."—Blairmore Enterprise.

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Minister of Labour,
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