

Industrial Relations and Social Security

Maritime Conference on Industrial Relations

Some sixty representatives of Maritime industries including representatives of labour were present at the fourth Maritime Conference on Industrial Relations which was held in Halifax on November 6th and 7th. While in peace-time these conferences which are sponsored jointly by the Institute of Public Affairs at Dalhousie University and a committee of leading industrialists were confined to a discussion of labour problems, their scope has been widened since the outbreak of the war and the economic and social problems created through the war now also come up for examination. They were in the foreground in the first session which was presided over by D. R. Turnbull, General Manager of the Acadia Sugar Refining Co., Ltd.

How the war has changed the structure of Canadian industry was the subject dealt with by the first speaker, J. S. McLean, President of Canada Packers, Toronto. On the basis of comprehensive statistical material he showed how Canada was nearing rapidly the stage of full employment, a development which was accompanied by a rise in prices and an increase in the cost of living. The sacrifices involved by these changes are not equal and greatest for those living on a fixed income and one of the major problems facing the government is to aim at a greater equalization of the burden.

The effects of the war on the Maritime economy was the second subject. It was treated by Professor B. S. Keirstead of the University of New Brunswick. He showed that the stimulus given to Maritime industries by war contracts was not so far reaching as was generally assumed since these contracts were confined to a few areas. Furthermore it seemed doubtful whether the prosperity

created in these areas would be of a lasting character. The main industrial products of the Maritime region, coal, steel, lumber, pulp and paper, are of a highly competitive character and there is a great danger that production would have to be curtailed considerably at the end of the war. It would be a task for the Dominion Government to see that the sacrifices asked from the Maritime regions should not be greater than those of other regions of Canada.

At a luncheon meeting under the chairmanship of President Stanley of Dalhousie University, Stewart Bates, Professor of Commerce, at Dalhousie, spoke on the price control measures recently introduced by the Canadian government.

In the second session under the chairmanship of R. L. Dunsmore, employer-employee relations in defence industries came up for examination. E. R. Complin, Industrial Relations Manager of C.I.L., spoke from the employer's point of view, while John W. MacLeod of Glace Bay, a former president of U.M.W. District 26, voiced labour's opinion on the subject. Dr. Mollie Carroll of the Department of Labour in Washington told the audience what steps had been taken in the United States to raise labour standards in war industries, to eliminate waste and to provide for more harmonious relations between the various factors of production. In the discussion which followed, A. E. Skaling, Vice-President of the Saint John Trades and Labour Council made interesting comments on the topics under discussion.

In the evening session, Dr. Allon Peebles, Executive Director of the Unemployment Insurance Commission spoke on the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Scheme.

The final session of the Conference was given to the problem of training workers for defence industries. Dr. F. H.

Sexton, President of the Nova Scotia Technical College, spoke on the various training schemes which have been set up in the Maritimes. He gave a vivid description of the efforts which have been made to overcome the lack of skilled workers by establishing training courses of three or four months duration. They supply the labour force necessary for the rapidly expanding defence industries in the province and have proved to be very successful. R. L. Dunsmore, Superintendent of Imperial Oil, Dartmouth, reported on the apprenticeship training scheme which is operated in Imperoyal but is also used by a number of other companies. This scheme has not only improved the quality of the work done in the plant but has also raised the educational standards in the district since admission to apprenticeship presupposes a good school record. The last speaker was E. R. Complin, Industrial Relations Manager of C.I.L. His subject was "Foreman Training" and he reported about the elaborate program which is being carried out in this field not only by his firm but also by other industrial concerns in Ontario. He illustrated his address by an excellent film "Let Us Talk Things Over" which emphasized the value of cooperation between management, foremen and workers.

The Conference was brought to a harmonious end at a luncheon meeting which was presided over by J. B. Hayes and at which Dr. Carleton Stanley, President of Dalhousie University spoke on "Industrial Relations To-day and Tomorrow."

A new slate of officers for the coming year was elected. The Chairman is R. L. Dunsmore, Superintendent of Imperial Oil Limited, while the Committee consists of the following: D. R. Turnbull, General Manager, Acadia Sugar Refining Co., Limited; J. B. Hayes, Manager, N. S. Light & Power Co., Limited; R. Brennan, Manager, T. Estabrooks Company; J. H. M. Jones, Mersey Paper Company; T. C. Macnabb, Superintendent, Canadian Pacific Railway Company; Dr. M. M. MacOdrum, Dominion

Steel and Coal Corporation; C. J. Morrow, Lunenburg Sea Products Limited; L. E. Shaw of L. E. Shaw Limited; and Dr. L. Richter, Dalhousie University (Secretary).

Results of Factory Health Services

The growth of health services established in industrial plants of the United States and the high return in terms of employee health and attendance yielded by that investment was revealed by a recent survey of the National Association of Manufacturers in New York. According to the survey it is estimated that a health program saves the average 500 employee plant \$5,611 net each year. All but five employers considered the program to be paying propositions. Over 90 per cent of the firms replying indicated reductions amounting to 44.9 per cent in accident frequency, 62.8 per cent in occupational disease, 29.7 per cent in absenteeism, and 28.8 per cent in compensation insurance premiums. Reductions in labour turnover and improvement of labour relations were reported by the overwhelming majority.

Physical examinations are used by most companies for determining the placement of employees. On the average 4.4 per cent of those applying for work in 1,154 plants were rejected because of physical shortcomings disclosed through physical examination. Other important features of the health program are exhaust ventilations for dust, fumes or gas control, fatigue prevention, employee hospital insurance, mutual benefit associations, doctors in plant at regular scheduled hours and periodic check-up physical examinations of office employees.

The per capita costs of the health program have increased considerably during the last twenty years. They were 88 cents in 1915, \$4.43 in 1921, \$5.10 in 1930, \$6.12 in 1938 and \$5.17 in 1940.

Transfer of Defence Workers

In order to facilitate the transfer of workers in defence industries to regions where the supply of labour is insufficient to meet the demands of defence industries,

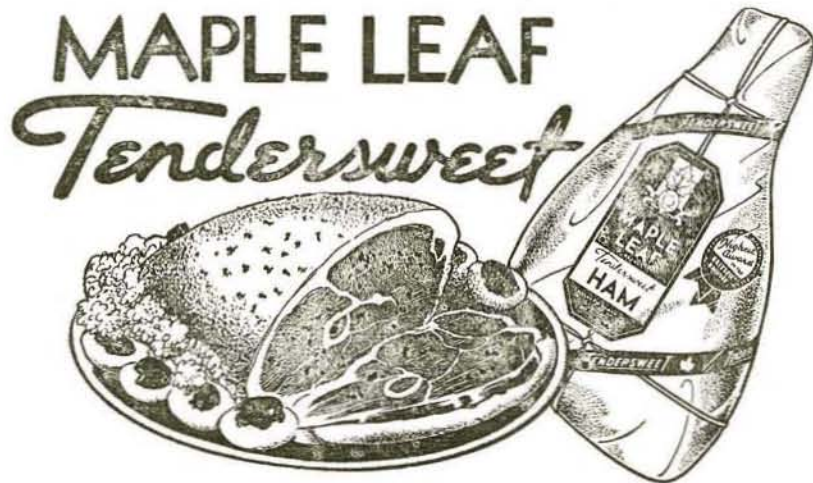
their moving expenses can be met from government funds according to Order-in-Council 10/6172 of August 13, 1941. Expenses for travelling in connection with such transfer need not be repaid, while a loan of not more than \$10 to defray living expenses during the first week of employment is to be paid back in full out of the workers full pay for the regular pay period. The financial assistance is confined to workers engaged through the employment service of the Unemployment Insurance Commission for employment in war industries and agricultural work and may only be granted where such assistance is deemed necessary by the local representative of the employment service.

The sum of \$50,000 to cover the expenses of transfer of such workers has been provided and is to be administered by the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

Family Allowances

Australia, always progressive in the field of social legislation, has in the spring of this year written on her statute books the Child Endowment Act, providing for payment of 5 shillings per week for all children under 16 years of age in excess of one child in each family, regardless of the income of the parents. In justifying the government's step, the Minister for Labor and National Service explained that the first child was excepted on the ground that the basic wage of the Commonwealth is adequate for a man, wife and one child and that according to recent nutrition studies, malnutrition existed to a serious extent only in families with a large number of children. The annual cost of the endowment of children with the exception of the first one in the family is estimated at £13,000,000. The necessary funds are to be raised by a payroll tax of 2½% on incomes exceeding £20 a week or £1,040 per annum.

PRODUCT OF CANADA PACKERS



Maple Leaf Tendersweet Hams are in a class by themselves. They come from carefully selected hams, processed in a new way recently evolved by Canada Packers. This new process gives them a delicious tenderness and sweetness.