

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN 1913.

aid in the prevention and settlement of strikes and lockouts in mines and industries connected with public utilities. The Department is charged also with the administration of the Combines Investigation Act, 1910 (9-10 Edw. VII, c. 9). The scope of the Department has increased in other directions, especially in the investigation of the wholesale and retail prices of Canadian commodities and of questions affecting the cost of living, and through the inquiries made by the Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education. From 1900 to 1909 the Department was administered by the Postmaster-General, who was also Minister of Labour. It was constituted a separate Department under the Labour Department Act, 1909 (8-9 Edw. VII, c. 22).

Labour Conditions in 1913.—The year 1913, as noted in the Labour Gazette for January, 1914, was characterized in the latter half by financial stringency, which was general throughout Canada, but more particularly affected the western provinces, and indirectly the producing industries of the east, which depend to a large extent on western orders. The first signs of this stringency began to be felt in the early months of the year, but did not seriously affect industrial conditions until the summer and fall months. The condition of the money market had an important bearing upon employment conditions in the building trades, and in factory and other industrial operations, especially towards the end of the year. With the close of the outdoor season, which was somewhat later than usual, there was more unemployment in many parts of Canada than had been the case for a number of years. The lack of work was chiefly felt in the larger centres of population, especially in the western provinces, conditions in most parts of eastern Canada being well up to the average. Unemployment was most prevalent in the building trades and in occupations requiring unskilled labour. In some places skilled mechanics were also laid off and factory operations reduced to short time. The local authorities, wherever unemployment existed, were active in meeting the emergency. The situation was also relieved by a greater exodus than usual of foreign labour in the fall.

The year 1913 was on the whole a favourable one for agriculturists. The total yield was greater than in the previous year and conditions for the seeding and harvesting of crops were generally favourable. Railroad construction operations throughout Canada were especially active throughout the entire year. There was a decline in the product of the fisheries, largely owing to adverse weather conditions, which interfered considerably with operations, particularly on the Atlantic fishing grounds. In the lumbering industry a small cut of logs was made, and the mills were not running with their usual activity, owing to a decrease in the demand for lumber. In mining the year was a very active one. The coal industry on Vancouver Island was, however, affected by a labour dispute at Cumberland and Extension, which continued throughout the entire year, and at Nanaimo and South Wellington from the beginning of May throughout the remaining months of 1913. The tendency of wages was upward during the first three-quarters of the year, the greatest number of changes taking place during the months of April,