

## IX.—LABOUR.

The Department of Labour of the Dominion Government was established in 1900, under authority of the Conciliation Act, 1900 (63-64 Vict., c.24), its chief duties originally comprising the administration of certain provisions of this statute designed to aid in the prevention and settlement of labour disputes, the administration of the Government's fair wage policy for the protection of workmen employed on Dominion Government contracts and works aided by grant of public funds, the collection and classification of statistical and other information relative to conditions of labour and the publication of a monthly journal known as the "Labour Gazette." 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).

The work of the Department was greatly increased in 1907 by the passage of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907 (6-7 Edw. VII, c. 20), which was designed to aid in the prevention and settlement of strikes and lockouts in mines and industries connected with public utilities. The Department is also charged 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. A change has been made in the "Labour Gazette" year, which will in future terminate on December 31 instead of on June 30. The volume for 1915-16, which under the former plan would terminate on June 30, 1916, will be extended to include the remainder of that calendar year.

**Labour Conditions in 1915.** According to a review of industrial conditions which appeared in the January, 1916, issue of the "Labour Gazette," the opening of the year 1915 showed a marked change from the situation existing at the commencement of 1914. At the beginning of that year, the depressed conditions of the previous year were still apparent; but in 1915 the improvement which became noticeable from month to month during the latter part of the previous year had become fairly well pronounced, and the close of 1915 witnessed a return to almost normal conditions in many respects. While at the close of 1914 there was still considerable unemployment, and in some localities this condition existed during the early months of 1915, the gradual enlistment of men for overseas service, the employment of others in the manufacture of munitions and other military supplies, in agricultural and lumbering operations, and the heavy falling off in immigration, all combined to bring conditions in many parts of the Dominion back to practically a normal basis so far as employment was concerned. Manufacturing in many lines outside of special activity in the manufacture of munitions of war was improved; lumbering showed activity practically throughout the year; fishing on the whole was good; mining, both coal and metal, resumed activity, and towards the latter part of the year was back to, if not above the normal standing of previous good years. Outside of building operations which continued to be dull, practically all the Dominion's industries showed