

LABOUR.

the "Labour Gazette." 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, 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 1914.—As stated in the Labour Gazette for January, 1915, the financial stringency and business depression, which became marked in the latter half of 1913, was not improved at the commencement of the new year, and with the outbreak of war conditions rapidly became worse. Many factories either closed down completely, reduced working hours, or laid off numbers of employees. The temporary cessation of ocean transportation, with the consequent cutting off of sources of supply of raw materials and of markets for both agricultural and manufactured products, and the general uncertainty caused by the war, had a most depressing effect on business and industry all over Canada. As the war progressed, however, and it was seen that the trade routes were safe, and that prompt measures had been taken to safeguard the banking situation, confidence returned, and efforts were made to keep the factories running to the greatest possible extent. Gifts by the Federal and Provincial Governments of supplies of flour stimulated the flour-milling business, and assisted activity in transportation. Pulp and paper mills became very busy, and orders for war material rendered conditions active in textile factories, leather factories, meat packing establishments, and in some branches of metal and wood-working manufactures. Despite this improvement, however, there were still large numbers of unemployed, and in many localities charitable and relief organizations took care of large numbers of destitute persons. Recruiting of soldiers for Canadian contingents did much to relieve the situation, and towards the end of the year Government and municipal undertakings were commenced in many parts to assist in providing employment.

The year was a good one for farmers. While the Western grain crops were not so heavy as in the previous year, they gave good returns, owing to the high prices realized. Root crops were exceptionally good everywhere. Fruits were generally fair, apples being a very heavy crop. Fishermen, on the whole, had a successful year, but the dislocation of the European market left large stocks in the hands of the packers. Lumbering had a fair year in most districts, but in some localities low water curtailed operations during the summer. Sales were dull, owing to lack of building operations and the unsettled state of foreign markets. Metal mining in the Cobalt and Porcupine districts was about normal, but conditions in British Columbia were on the whole