

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN 1915.

great improvement. Immigration which in 1914 showed a heavy falling off from the previous year, continued to decrease in 1915, the total reduction being about 70 per cent. While there was a large falling off in imports there was a heavy increase in exports and the aggregate trade for the year was several millions greater than in 1914. Railway construction on the whole was quiet, though some work was carried on in connection with new lines in Alberta and British Columbia, and on some of the large established railways. Transportation also showed a better year. Agriculture gave the best returns on record. Crops were uniformly good all over the country, with the exception of potatoes, which in the large producing districts were only half a crop. Wages remained at about the same level as in 1914, though there were a number of changes, mostly in the nature of increases. During the first nine months of the year 45 changes were reported, compared with 46 the previous year. Of these changes 22 involved increases, 18 a reduction of wages, four a reduction of hours and one an increase in hours. During the last quarter of the year three changes occurred, all increases and all affecting the mining industry, several thousand employees being concerned.

Labour Organization.—The total trades union membership reported at the end of 1915 was 143,343, being comprised in 1883 local branches of trade union organizations of all types. The membership reported at the close of 1914 was 166,163, comprised in 2,003 branches. There was therefore a decrease of 22,820 members and 120 branches during the year. Of the total trades union membership for 1915, 114,722 were members of international organizations, which have 1,661 local branches in Canada. The remaining 28,621 were members of national and independent bodies. There was a loss of 22,820 in the membership of international organizations, a gain of 2,725 among independent bodies and an increase of 211 in national unions. From the outbreak of the war to the end of the year, it was reported to the Department that 11,972 trade unionists in Canada enlisted for the war and 439 reservists rejoined the colours, making a total of 12,411 members of 961 labour organizations who joined the army. The actual number was probably somewhat greater than this, as information was not received from all the local unions with regard to the enlistment of their members.

Industrial Disputes.—The number of strikes and lockouts in Canada reported to the Department of Labour during 1915 was 43, the lowest number recorded since 1901, when the Department first collected statistics relating to strikes, and one less than in 1914, the previous lowest record. There was a decrease in the number of establishments affected from 205 to 96, but an increase in the number of employees concerned from 8,678 in 1914 to 9,140 in 1915. The estimated loss of time in working days was 106,149 in 1915, as compared with 430,054 in 1914. The number of trade disputes which began in 1915 was 38, five disputes being carried over from the previous year. The greatest number of disputes occurred in the province of Ontario, 16 disputes being recorded from this province. There were eight disputes in Nova Scotia, five each in Quebec and British Columbia, four each in Manitoba and Alberta and one in New Brunswick.