

Our Factories Grow

The war pushed Canada to a manufacturing status away above anything we have known before.

This was emphasized by Hon. C. D. Howe in the Commons the other day, when he passed on to Parliament, and to the people of Canada, some information that was statistical but far from dry. The nation has, in brief, graduated from an "assembly line" industrial set-up—in which parts are imported from other nations—to a "production" basis, where we make those parts ourselves, and turn out the finished goods for consumers.

This is a marked step ahead; and the industrial vitality that Canada showed in war-time should not be checked or injured by the changeover to peace.

Any fears that we might have to put a damper on it by easing the speed of our own wheels to theoretically stimulate international trade has a fairly pungent antidote from Right Hon. Clement Attlee, Prime Minister of Great Britain, who stated during his recent visit that the greatest and richest trade had always been carried on between highly industrialized nations.

Canada's industry has earned its spurs and should keep them.

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If we look back to 1921, only 11.8 of our wage-earners were then employed in manufacturing, but by 1941 that figure had climbed to nearly 18 per cent.

In 1929 we had 575,693 wage-earners in manufacturing industries; to-day there are over a million.

Average yearly earnings of these workers climbed from \$777 in the depression year of 1933 (compared to \$1,106 in 1920) to \$965 in 1937 and \$1,383 in a typical war year, 1942.

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But to suggest that reconversion will carry this general sweep with it is to invite trouble, if not ridicule.

We are at a stage when difficulties crowd the reconversion to peace-time production, for which the vast majority of people so eagerly wait.

And to many "white collar" workers, who have had little or no wage compensation during the war years, it can hardly seem logical or fair that advantage should be taken of these reconversion troubles by certain elements who are interested in nothing except their own power and advancement.

For no longer can we isolate strikes that are at times so diligently fostered. They cannot be contained as local disturbances. They hit outside the boundaries of a city, and beyond those of a province—even of a nation.

The Windsor tragedy, for example, has thrown hundreds of men out of work in Oshawa; more in Chatham. Nor is this all. Under the surface, unnoticed by the general public, are the losses borne by shopkeepers and clothiers and druggists and others, and, worst of all, by the workers themselves, on whom so many others rely to carry on their jobs.

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An individual industry to-day is a part of industry as a whole. Interdependence is a keystone. The hurt to one is an injury to others.

To those who seek profit from present difficulties there is this to say: It is profit from something on which every one else loses. It is the false coin of discontent.

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