

SAWMILLING SECTION.

[This Section is published by arrangement with the Dominion Federated Sawmillers' Association (Incorp.) in the interests of the Sawmilling Industry of N.Z.]

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In another column will be found a reprint of the paper read by Mr. H. Valder at the Annual General Meeting of the Federation held in Wellington recently—the subject matter—Profit Sharing—in the light of the World's unrest and upheaval to-day—together with the demands of the worker for higher wages and better conditions, comes most opportunely; and although it may only touch the fringe of the subject, it is pleasing to note that the Federation is awake to the position, and desirous of making some contribution towards the solution of the problems with which employers are confronted. The basis or ground work of the unrest appears to be the feeling of antagonism exhibited by labour towards the employer, and a rooted belief that the interests of labour and capital are opposed to each other, in place of being interdependent; and until a better understanding is brought about and the relationship of each is shown to be dependent upon the other, we can hardly look for a remedy. Mr. Valder's paper certainly affords food for thought, and suggests a system of profit sharing amongst workers who contribute their labour towards the profits earned by any manufacturing or industrial concern. Some of us may not agree with the low rate of interest he thinks capital should be allowed, in an industrial undertaking, even if regard be had to the reserve rate set aside for unforeseen losses, which would fluctuate in proportion to the risky nature of the business. It is also open to question whether "Welfare shares" should be distributed amongst the employees of a concern, until they had put in a certain length of service, and also whether capital and labour should not divide in equal proportions the excess profit after allowing Capital a fixed rate, and setting aside a further per centage to meet contingencies. But that some such system whereby the worker will have a direct interest beyond his daily wages in the successful conduct of the trade or business he is engaged in, must sooner or later become general—is in our opinion becoming more and more apparent. Direct action by way of strikes, thus lowering production, in the long run hits the worker harder than any other class of the community—but somehow he cannot, or will not see this, and it is only by giving him a direct interest in the profits he assists to create, and by spreading abroad a better knowledge of economics amongst the rising generation of workers, we may hope for a better state of things.

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Attention is drawn to the "Forestry" section of the Parliamentary Industries Committee's Report just presented to the House. The Committee advocates the immediate appointment of a trained Forestry expert—the planting of quick growing trees, suitable

for butter-boxes, cheese crates, and fruit cases—imitation of timber export—the establishment of a Chair of Forestry in one of our Colleges and a Government Seed Store for the supply of forest seeds. From the sawmillers' point of view and the suggested Forestry restrictions it is intended to impose, the recommendation that immediate steps be taken to settle beyond dispute the increment value per acre per annum of timber produced by timber trees in our Native forests, is of great importance, as upon this would probably hinge the restrictions that may be imposed in the future.

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The resumption of the Railway timber traffic has been brought about after nearly two months' suspension, wherein stocks in the town yards have been depleted, and at the country mills correspondingly increased. Several mills had closed down, but if the traffic had not been immediately resumed in part, many more would have followed suit, and so have created wide-spread discontent and unemployment. It is hoped and believed the full services will again be available very shortly.

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The shortage of house accommodation has again been brought before the public prominently and a conference convened by the Wellington Repatriation Board has just been held, at which strong resolutions were passed urging the Government to undertake a house-building programme to meet present needs. One delegate gave it as his opinion 20,000 houses were required throughout the Dominion, and the Industries Committee recommends that a National Housing Dept. should be set up under the charge of a separate Minister of the Crown, and that 2 or 3 business men with a thorough knowledge of the building trade should be appointed Commissioners to act with him. It is further proposed that a sum of £2,000,000 should be made available for this purpose. If it is intended to confine this expenditure to the cities and larger country towns where workers are employed, great care will require to be exercised to avoid running up the value of town allotments and suburban areas suitable for the purpose, which it may be found necessary to purchase.

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The dissolution of the National Government came about suddenly and was a surprise to many who think that Sir Joseph Ward would have acted with greater discretion and with more credit and honor to himself and party, had he elected to remain in the Cabinet and assisted to pass the urgent and necessary legislation required before a dissolution of Parliament can take place. His manifesto to the country is a far-