

14 cents per pound. At that time about 15 cents was considered a bare living price by the larger producers. The copper industry was much depressed. War conditions more than doubled the price. Much copper was sold during the past year at above 30 cents, and the mining companies made very large profits. On the entrance of the United States into the war the Government realized the need of copper but was unwilling to pay the high price of the market. The large operators took the patriotic step of filling a heavy Government order at 16½ cents per pound, while adhering to the much higher market price for all other purchasers, including the Governments of the Allies. While this order was being executed, and the need of the moment thus met, the Government officials entered upon an investigation to ascertain the cost of production, the results of which have been awaited with much interest. The ordinary market price has stood lately at from 25 to 28 cents. Some operators claimed that in view of the increased scale of wages and generally enhanced cost of supplies copper could not be profitably marketed at less than 25 cents per pound. That claim was probably well founded as respects some of the mines, but, on the other hand, some of the larger and more favorably situated mines could produce at lower cost. The question has now been settled by the Government officials fixing a price of 23½ cents for the next four months. There is, of course, some grumbling, but the general opinion is that the price is a fair one, encouraging production and allowing the mining companies a reasonable profit. In this case it is stipulated that the price fixed shall govern the market generally, the Allied Governments paying no more than the American Government for their supplies, and that wages shall not be reduced. If any of the mine owners in the States feel that they cannot produce copper at the price fixed they can turn over their mines to the Government who, with a view to ensuring the necessary production, have taken authority to operate the mines.

Under similar conditions the United States Government have fixed the prices of steel products until the end of 1918. This is a matter of even wider importance than the fixing of copper prices. The Government and the chief manufacturers of steel have been able to agree on the new scale, and therefore the trade is not likely to be seriously disturbed. It is to be noted that in the case of most of the steel items the reductions from current prices are large, running from 40 to 70 per cent. Thus the very large profits that the steel makers have been enjoying for the past two years will be severely cut down.

Labor and Government Ownership

THAT a large measure of government ownership of railways is here and likely to remain is an established fact. It would be useless to resist the movement. It has to be tried out on a larger scale than in the past. But nothing is gained by blinking the difficulties that it must produce. Many of the men who have joined in the movement have endeavored to comfort themselves with the idea that though the Government take control of the railways they will not really exercise such control, but turn the business over to some sort of board of commissioners or directors, or to an official who will be a dictator, who will manage it without government interfer-

ence. In a recent article we pointed out what we believed to be the impossibility of that kind of administration. That once it is known the Government have acquired control the public will hold the Government responsible for the management seems one of the plainest facts. Illustrating this view we remarked: "The trade-union which seeks increased pay for railway workers will not be put off by the railway dictator's refusal; they will go to the members of Parliament and the Ministers, and will insist that these responsible representatives of the people shall deal with the matter."

Although the Government have not yet formally taken over the Canadian Northern Railway Company's enterprise, the enactment of the law authorizing the acquisition has already produced among the employees the situation we described in advance. The Great North Western Telegraph Company is one of the subsidiary enterprises of the Canadian Northern and is included in the business that is to be taken over by the Government. There is a strike of the operatives of the Telegraph Company. An enquiry was held under the Conciliation Act and an award made, favorable to the payment of increased wages. The Company refused to accept the award. Under ordinary circumstances the matter would have to be left to the influence of public opinion, which is the agent relied on by the Act to secure the enforcement of decisions. Public opinion would doubtless support the employees and in time might bring the Company to the acceptance of the award. But the operatives are not content to await this procedure. They have been reminded by their leaders that this Telegraph Company is practically a Government affair, being part of the business of the Canadian Northern Railway Company which the Government have agreed to take over. Therefore, without spending time in arguing with the heads of the Telegraph Company, the striking operatives go straight to the Government at Ottawa and demand that the increased wages be paid.

The attempt to set somebody between the Government and the people must fail. Government ownership necessarily means Government control and responsibility.

Are the Farmers Taxed?

A MERCHANT in a western town raises the question—which he says is frequently spoken of in financial and mercantile circles—of the farmer's share in the war taxation. He tells of instances in which employees of business houses have left to take up farming, expecting thereby to escape conscription. This, he says, will not help the merchant to pay his war tax, while he is obliged to keep his business going to supply the farmer with harvest tools and other necessary things. "The burden at the present time," says the writer, "is being carried principally by the small towns and cities; the farmers are making the money and can well afford to pay one or two cents per bushel."

The farmers are, fortunately, a prosperous class to-day. It is desirable that they should be, for farming is the paramount industry in this country, and prosperous farmers will always be the chief factor in the creation of general prosperity. The farmers certainly should pay a share of the war taxation. How they can best be required to do this will probably be a debatable point. Generally

speaking any tax on foodstuffs, no matter at what stage it be imposed, will be passed on to the ultimate consumer. Perhaps in the case of wheat at present this law would not apply, for the price of wheat has been fixed. A tax such as our correspondent suggests would have to be paid by the wheat grower. The farmer who is carrying on large operations will probably be reached by the income tax. The smaller farmer's earnings will fall within the exemptions. There will have to be much consideration and reconsideration of taxation systems in the early future, and all classes of the community must expect to be called upon to share in the very heavy burden that the war is creating. The farmers, when the matter comes to be fully discussed, will not be less willing than others to take their share of the load.

No Pacifists Here

WHATEVER differences may exist among our people on other questions we may safely say that there is no party in Canada which to-day is disposed to pay any respect to the peace appeals which, in one form or another, are emanating from Germany. Of course, there is a sense in which we are all pacifists. We all desire peace. We all hate the horrors of war. We would all welcome any movement that gave promise of the bringing about of a real and lasting peace. But there is, practically speaking, nobody in Canada who believes that a peace of that kind can be obtained by entertaining any proposals that have been made or that are likely to be made under existing conditions, directly or indirectly, by Germany. That Germany can appreciate no power but that of force, that she must be soundly beaten before she will make any peace that the Allies can accept, is a fact fully recognized by all Canadians. Differences there may be as to the best methods of prosecuting the war, but that the war must be carried on until victory opens the road to peace is the conviction of Canadians of all classes. In England and in the United States there are classes of people who talk of making peace now. There are no such pacifists in Canada.

A Desirable State Trial

A STRIKING passage in the admirable address of Mr. Holman, Premier of New South Wales, before the Montreal Canadian Club was that in which he expressed a hope that means may be found of bringing the chiefs of Germany to justice as the criminals they are. He pictured a scene that ought to be enacted in a court of justice in Belgium when Belgium becomes free again. The commanders of the German army which invaded Belgium, if they can be found and held, should be brought before a Belgian judge and a Belgian jury. It was the law of Belgium that was violated when these men and their followers murdered peaceful men, outraged women, destroyed property and committed almost every other form of crime. It is to Belgian justice they should be summoned, and after fair trial, condemned to every punishment of pain and dishonor that the Belgian law provides. Still better would it be if the German Kaiser himself, the chief of the German murderers, could be brought to such a trial.