

## CURRENT COMMENT

### THE BUSINESS PROFITS TAX.

To put a premium on vice is admittedly bad business, but it is continually done, and is even made a policy of on a sole score that the virtuous can stand it. The monkeys are said to escape work by refusing to talk, knowing that if they began to speak they would immediately be made to work. There is a systematic policy of making monkeys of us all adopted in many departments of Government, which works out in an entirely detrimental manner economically, socially, nationally. Probably it is more felt in our assessment methods than anywhere. If a man paints his house or barn, or puts in a bath or spends his money in any other way likely to benefit the neighborhood as well as himself, he is assessed at once with an extra sum on his assessment. The same principle is behind the business profits tax, which becomes a premium on dishonesty to begin with, and on poor business methods generally. The more enterprising, the more productive, the more efficient and the better managed a business may be, the heavier is the penalty that falls upon it. The result is to curb all business activity, to repress enterprise and to discourage the efforts of those upon whom the success and the welfare of the nation chiefly depend. It is generally admitted that those who are best able to bear the burden of the nation should bear their fair share and they have rarely shown unwillingness to bear more than their exact share. But there comes a point when the imposition may become prohibitive, and automatically destructive of fundamental business interests. It is felt that this point has been reached in the business profits tax, which as a war measure and in times of extremity, was acquiesced in, but which in times of peace, of reconstruction, of returning equilibrium, of precarious commercial adventures, invites frustration if not disaster. The reaction after war naturally creates a period of depression and the effort of the business profits tax in such conditions is distinctly discouraging, when a stimulating policy is required instead of the reverse. This operates in turn in the vicious circle of lowering production, which increases unemployment, retards the return to lower prices, and maintains the high cost of living. Other objections may be found in its discriminatory application. Concerns employing less than a specified capital escape the levy. Manufacturers have to pay while agriculture contributes nothing. The Government carries off the profit which in a well-managed business is carried to reserve, but in the seasons of slacker trade the Government makes no contribution to the straitened resources, or towards balancing a possible deficit. In the United States the recent financial situation has made it impossible to collect some of these taxes where estimated revenue had failed to materialize. It is obvious that where there is embarrassment of this description through the collection of surplus profits by the Government and the consequent extinction of reserve capital that the tax is a decided detriment to business. The alternative is the sales tax, and on another occasion it can be shown that there are advantages in this method of raising necessary revenue which the profits tax cannot claim, and without any of its corresponding evils.

### BETTER BREEDING NEEDED.

Ontario stock men are learning that the advantage of turning off only good beef animals is one that cannot be over-rated. Poor quality stock brings only low prices, and well-bred stock counts on the market every time for the highest rates. When a farmer is feeding his raw stuff it makes a big difference to him whether he is putting it into a good skin. In the one case he gets full value for his pains. In the other he is scraping through with losses which might be avoided. It is still a difficult matter in some districts to convince farmers that good stock whether cattle, hogs, horses sheep or poultry, pays better than the non-descript and mongrel stock into which some are content to shovel their feed. This is true of milk as well as of beef and means that more attention should be paid to breeding. Ample information and assistance is given in this respect by the O. A. C.

and the Department of Agriculture. A Bulletin (No. 281) has recently been issued by the Department which can and should be had by every farmer who thinks a cow worth keeping. A scrub bull is defined on page 9 (with an illustration) as one whose mission is "to eat as much as possible without giving any returns either in the production of beef or milk." We do not imagine that the Minister of Agriculture will guarantee that even a pure-bred bull will produce milk, but the department evidently includes Irish bulls in its province. The meaning is clear, however. The scrub bull is "a sure getter of inferior calves, thus keeping our average live stock shipments in the lower grades." A full consideration of scrub, grade, and pure-bred cattle is given in this bulletin, plentifully illustrating Angus, Short-horn, Hereford, Ayrshire, Jersey, Holstein, Guernsey and other breeds. To farmers who cannot own a pure-bred sire themselves and who wish to get a better bull the advice is given to "form a club and get a pure-bred sire. Give the calf a fair start to make you money. Put a sign on your gate if you have one, 'Pure-bred bull used on this farm.' Better bulls bring better calves. A good bull is cheaper at any price than a scrub as a gift. The quickest, surest and least expensive way to improve a herd is by the use of a high-class pure-bred sire." Argentina is beating Canada in the meat market because she has better bulls.

### ENCOURAGING CENTRAL EUROPE TRADE.

Both Great Britain and the United States are finding that wealth in a pauper world is of little use. Gamblers will "stake" a penniless friend for the fun of winning back the stake. There is a little more urgency, however, behind the policies that are being adopted in London and Washington to encourage trade with the war-devastated nations. The point of chief moment which will nevertheless probably be lost sight of, is that the world cannot get along without any of its members. The "desperate remedy" as it is called, being considered in London was suggested at the International Financial Congress last September in Brussels by Ter Meulen, a Northernlander. It is an arrangement for long time credits to the central European nations to enable them to purchase merchandise, with a provision for insurance as a protection for the vendors. There does not appear to be anything very desperate about this device. Insurance is as old as the mercantile marine for the protection of those who take necessary risks, and it is the measure that makes sea-traffic so stable and profitable. Insurance is merely a distribution of risk, and if credit is reasonably warranted in central Europe the device of insurance is justifiable. Great Britain must have markets if her industries are not to become extinct. The demand in Austria, Poland and other countries is imperative, but until their currency regains its value only some special credit will enable merchandise to be sold to them. The United States proposes to take another method of accomplishing the same purpose. Exports to European countries are to be stimulated by discounting paper for exporters and banks financing export business, and by guaranteeing bills, notes and other paper of foreign buyers. This discounting is to be done through the recently revived war finance corporation which has its credit at present \$375,000,000. The corporation is in fact a big insurance company for United States business in Europe, and the Government is prepared to back it up to a thousand million dollars. In both cases undoubtedly only good business will be encouraged, and the "health" of the risk will be as carefully investigated as is usual in banking transactions. But there will be a little larger latitude than is usually the case. It is probable that no more risks will be taken, if as much than in the case of any ordinary foreign loan. There can be no permanent revival of business until the international trade currents are all flowing at their normal rate. It will be remembered that Canada took a flyer in Roumanian trade some time ago, and no harm came of it. Up to a reasonable point, enterprise in dealing with the war-worn nations will be amply rewarded.



**HANDY, Spandy, Jack-a-Dandy,**  
Loves plum cake and sugar candy,  
Dotes on picnics with their lunches,  
Apples, olives, grapes in bunches.

Find two other pocket-knives. Left side down on trousers. Upper side down.

## THE MARKETS AT A GLANCE

Generally speaking, business continues with the improved feeling that was manifest at the beginning of the year. Some shading downward is noted on some lines, but for the most part prices are steady. Wholesalers and manufacturers report that sales for the first week in the new year compare with favorably with other years, and are greater than they have been for several months past.

**Montreal.**—Quotations on hogs advanced towards the latter part of last week but the bigger offerings this week have resulted in quotations coming back to where they were one week ago. Packers state that lower quotations may be expected on live hogs in the near future, and this will have an effect on the whole pork market. In the meantime prices remain unchanged. The trade in lard and shortening is quiet. Both butter and cheese show more strength this week with smaller supplies of butter at hand and a bigger demand for export. The feature of the market is the lower prices quoted on eggs as a result of the bigger production and the larger receipts on the market. Higher prices are quoted on chickens. In the provision market there are many reductions in prices as a result

of a price-cutting scheme on the part of a number of local wholesalers. Flour was reduced 20 cents a barrel towards the latter part of last week, but the wheat market has strengthened up this week with a stronger feeling for flour.

**Toronto.**—Business in wholesale circles has a more cheerful tone. Sales have been more frequent and orders are for larger quantities than for some months past. This increased activity is undoubtedly due to the fact that retailers' stocks have been reduced to as low a point as possible. The markets are gradually becoming stabilized, and with the buying movement increasing, business conditions should be well on the road to normal. There are no new developments in refined sugar. Lack of export orders both in Canada and the United States for evaporated apples is said to be the reason that evaporated apples are offered at the present prices, which are fifty per cent. lower than last year. Evaporated apple manufacturers claim that present prices are less than the cost of production. Beans are easy under an active demand. Onions are a drug on the market and prices are easier. Potatoes and other vegetables are dull at unchanged prices.

## THE COUNTRY BOYS CREED

I believe that the country which God made is more beautiful than the city which man made; that life out of doors and in touch with the earth is the natural life of man. I believe that work is work wherever I find it, but that work with Nature is more inspiring than work with the most intricate machine. I believe that the dignity of labor depends not on what you do, but how you do it; that opportunity comes to a boy on the farm as often as to a boy in the city; that life is larger and freer and happier on the farm than in town; that my success depends not upon my dreams, but upon what I actually do—not upon luck but upon pluck. I believe in working when you work, and playing when you play, and in giving and demanding a square deal in every act of life.

Edward Osgood Grover.

### HOW I FIXED UP MY FARM OFFICE.

I have had some experience in fitting up an office in the residence on my farm. The room used is small and cheaply heated. Very often a small oil stove heats it when the days are not very cold.

I purchased one of the standard typewriters that was second hand and had been "built up" for about half regular price. I have used it many years without cost for repairs. A roll top desk was purchased, also a typewriter table. The desk is well provided with letter file, books, and I also have a filing cabinet. I find a large desk cheque book to be very convenient. Having all drawers and pigeon holes in my desk labeled saves me much time looking for things.

The bulletins and farm papers containing valuable information I always file. Anyone handy with tools can make a good filing cabinet for this purpose from a large box by putting in partitions. Then label the pigeon holes with the different subjects and file the bulletins under the proper labels. If it is necessary to figure a ration or to find a catalogue may be found by going to this file.

I find that typewritten letters, with descriptive letterheads do much to create a favorable impression on pro-

spective buyers of farm produce with whom it is necessary to transact business by mail.

A small library of select agricultural books has been very valuable to me.

The cost of my office equipment was about as follows: Second hand typewriter, \$50; typewriter desk, \$15; roll top desk, \$30. My filing cabinet I made at no cash cost. I also own an amateur photography outfit that has proved very useful. It costs about \$60.—W. H.

**A Pill That is Prized.**—There have been many pills put upon the market and pressed upon public attention, but few have endured so long or met with so much favor as Parmelee's Vegetable Pills. Widespread use of them has attested their great value, and they need no further advertisement than this having firmly established themselves in public esteem, they now rank as one of the best in the list of standard vegetable preparations.

In 1917 the wages paid to the employees in Canadian manufacturing amounted to \$465,199,823, and the products turned out had a value of \$3,015,577,940.

There are 354 American students enrolled in British universities.

## MARRIAGE MEDDLERS

Very rarely do a couple marry with the complete and cordial approval of all their friends and relatives on both sides. There is always someone who is of the opinion that Jack is too good for Jill or that Jill has made a sad mistake in marrying Jack. Not even the division of property causes so much dissension in families as meddling in love affairs.

Rarer still are the cases where opposing a marriage accomplishes its purpose of breaking off the match. There is very little that disapproving relatives can do to prevent a marriage, however cogent and valid their reasons for objecting.

Violent opposition is of all courses the most impolitic. Gentle discouragement of a love affair sometimes effects much. Ridicule, tactfully employed, is a potent weapon.

Much may be done by contriving to postpone a wedding, provided the contriving be artfully concealed, thus affording opportunity for better acquaintance and possible disillusionment. But open opposition of any kind is more likely to defeat its purpose and make the two more determined to wed.

Opposition is, however, much more effective with women than with men. The reason is obvious. It is only the exceptional woman who can afford to set her family at defiance upon any subject of importance. The average woman is accustomed from her youth up to take their advice.

The woman who marries in direct opposition to the wishes of her kith and kin must either be tremendously in love or tremendously self-willed, perhaps both. It requires a far greater effort for a woman to forsake father, mother, sisters, and brothers for the man whom she loves than that which the man makes in similar circumstances. She may love him all the better because she thinks them unjust to him and fully intends to disregard their advice, but when it comes to the pinch her heart falls her.

Most men, on the other hand, are eager to break a lance with anyone in defence of the woman for whom they care enough to marry. The better the man the more willing he is for the combat.

Moreover, the vanity of man bids him rely on his own judgment. The man who is in love, or fancies himself in love, with a woman believes that he knows her thoroughly. He resents outside advice or information.

His self-esteem is enlisted in defence of his own opinion and he declines to believe anything to her discredit. Indeed, he will quarrel with his best friends if that friend shall attempt ever so kindly to discourage his marriage with the woman of his choice.

—E. M., in The London Daily Mail.

### SUGGESTS BORDEN

#### AS GOV.-GENERAL.

In a letter to an Ottawa paper, John S. Ewart, K.C., suggests the appointment of Sir Robert Borden as Governor-General of Canada. "He has done a great deal of hard, conscientious work in the service of Canada," Mr. Ewart remarks, "and has well earned the right to be her first viceroy."

Mr. Ewart adds that he proposed Sir Wilfrid Laurier as Governor-General when Sir Wilfrid was alive but out of office.

