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Special Articles

Distribution of the War Loan.

By H. M. P. Eckardt.

Conditions in the West.

By E. Cora Hind.

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The Returned Soldier Problem

THE Government has just announced an increase in the separation allowances for soldiers' wives, making the monthly payment \$25.00 instead of \$20.00, which was in vogue heretofore. This is in line with the recent agitation carried on not only by the soldiers themselves, but by thousands of others who felt that the pensions and separation allowances were inadequate.

One of the great problems confronting the nation is the returned soldier. It is most imperative that the nation should do everything in its power to further the interests and welfare of the men who have risked their all in defence of the country's principles. How best to do that is a problem which calls for the most serious consideration of our ablest men. The war itself has brought about many economic changes, and certain lines of industry have taken on an importance which was not dreamed of a few years ago. Women have also entered into trades and are doing a work to-day which they never attempted in pre-war times. In other cases certain industries have almost been abolished, so that there must be a process of readjustment not only for the returned soldier, but for others as well. On the returned soldier, however, the readjustment process falls the hardest, partly owing to the fact that he has been out of touch with economic conditions for a considerable period of time, and partly because all the soldiers now returning are more or less physically unfit for active participation in industrial work. These soldiers do not want charity. They demand that they be put into industries where they can earn their living in a respectable independent way. To train a partially disabled soldier so as to make him capable of earning a living is never an easy task, and in some cases it is almost impossible. However, the difficulties are not insuperable, as is shown by the industrial homes and employment bureaus established by the Governments in various parts of the country. It is to be hoped that the Government, as well as large employers of labor, will continue to do their utmost to find work for the returned soldiers and at the same time that the efforts of the former along the lines of increased pensions and separation allowances will continue. It is most important that the men who fought for the country should not have just cause to complain about the treatment they have received from their country.

Too Much of a Spread

IT IS everywhere admitted that distribution plays an important part in the present high cost of living. Whether the chasm can be

bridged or not there is undoubtedly a tremendous "spread" between producer and consumer, a gap which is now supplied by the commission merchant, the wholesaler, and retailer, as well as oftentimes by one or more speculators.

The real trouble is often found in faulty distribution. Food stuffs grown in one place are transported across a continent and back again before finding a market. This wasteful distribution undoubtedly adds to the cost of living. A good example of this is found in a recent shipment of fifty-eight tons of turnips, which were grown in Alaska. These were transported to Seattle, but when they got to Seattle were again sold and re-shipped back to Alaska, the poor turnips travelling 2,905 miles before finding a consumer distant only 382 miles from where they were grown.

A short time ago a wool dealer in the eastern United States sold a consignment of wool at 61c a lb. After he had disposed of it it was re-sold several times, each dealer making 10c a lb. profit. After some few months the original owner of the wool heard that a certain firm had a large consignment of wool for sale which they were willing to dispose of at \$1.25 a lb. The original owner of the wool agreed to take the consignment, paying the price asked of \$1.25 for it. He then asked where the wool was located as he wished to use it at once for manufacturing purposes. The reply he received was, "On the third floor of your own storage warehouse, where it has been ever since you sold it originally."

Undoubtedly a certain proportion of the links in our chain of distribution are necessary. These necessary links will probably include the cold storage man, the wholesaler and the retailer, but why the Government should allow speculators to step in and add their toll to the cost of commodities passes understanding. The examples given above could be duplicated in a hundred instances. There are too many people handling our food stuffs and other commodities.

The Halifax Disaster

THE terrible disaster which has just taken place in Halifax has brought home to the people of Canada the dangers associated with the prosecution of the war. The loss of life and the destruction of property makes the disaster rank as one of the great world tragedies. Even to-day when we have become saturated with sorrows after years of tragic happenings and our sense of proportion and our estimate of human life have been cheapened we are all shocked and grief stricken over the terrible disaster which has befallen the Nova Scotian