

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1916

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THE COST OF LIVING.

Another decline in the price of flour reminds the people who have been paying the recent high prices that they have been at the mercy of the speculators and profiteers whose activity might long ago have been curbed by the government. The same government could reduce the cost of a number of manufactured articles and food products by reducing the tariff. The government, however, will take no action, and the people must apply the boycott, reduce their purchases, or go on grumbling and paying.

The St. John board of trade practically blames it all on the war. That is an easy way out of the difficulty. The war did not, however, have this effect in Australia. Mr. P. E. Quinn, government commissioner for New South Wales, points out that in Australia food prices are controlled by the government. Every Monday morning the prevailing prices for staples are announced by the government. If the announced price for butter is thirty-six cents, the housewife pays that and no more. In Sydney the best eggs are sold for twenty-five cents a dozen. The Australian bakers sell a two-pound loaf of bread for seven cents. A reasonable profit is allowed for the producer, the wholesaler, and the retailer.

What we need in Canada is government action, prompt and effective. The war is still far from an end. Only yesterday the Manchester Guardian sounded this pessimistic note—

"The progress of events and succession of bitter experiences have at last brought home to the minds of most men the fact that we are not winning the war, and the further conviction that, with the present methods of waging the war, we shall never win it."

The Guardian is, of course, arguing in favor of government reconstruction, and is not really afraid that we will never win the war, but that we are not going to win it soon is perfectly obvious and therefore the living conditions are certain to become more unsatisfactory for the great mass of the people.

Doubtless it is well for the board of trade to counsel the people to bear with patience whatever sacrifice the war entails, and to exercise a prudent economy, and eliminate all needless waste; but why not also counsel the government to take such measures as will guarantee that these same people will not have to carry on their backs the speculators and profiteers who are taking advantage of the war conditions to enrich themselves? Why was four ninety cents per barrel higher a few weeks ago than it is today? How much did that boost in price take out of the pockets of the people of Canada without a particle of real justification? The same question may be asked in relation to other price fluctuations such as would not be tolerated in Australia or England. It is the duty of the government to protect the consumer. If the war is to be prolonged and conditions grow worse, there is the more reason for prompt action.

Much ado has been made about the price of flour, potatoes, canned goods and other food products. The cost of living has increased in all departments, and the cause is deep-seated and far-reaching. Only government action can give relief, and that only in some directions. It is no easy task, and radical changes need not be expected. Natural causes are responsible for a great portion of the increased cost, and only by increasing production can these be removed. But there are also artificial causes, such as hoarding and unrestricted speculation and the operation of combines. These can be removed by government action. The problem is native-wide, and in a sense world-wide. No local treatment will do more than give a temporary local relief in some directions. The best statesmanship of the country should be applied to the bigger task of making changes that will beneficially affect the whole country.

The plea for economy and cutting of needless waste is always timely and never more so than at present. If, for example, everybody in St. John resolved tomorrow to use no more ice-cream, an enormous quantity of milk would be available for general distribution, and it might cause a reduction in price. In a thousand ways habits of extravagance and luxury have increased the cost of living, and as the war is prolonged it will become necessary in Canada as it has in England, for people of small income to scrutinize more carefully every item of expenditure. But when they are urged to do this, should not the government see to it that they are not called upon to contribute to the enrichment of speculators and profiteers who care for nothing but the dollars they can squeeze out of the necessities of war-time?

MORAL CONDITIONS

It is not creditable to the city of St. John that so many unsavory cases involving not only the morality of the community but the welfare of little children should have to be brought before the police court, but bad as the showing is it would be much worse if the police force were large enough to deal with conditions as it should be done. Public indifference is at the bottom of the trouble. There is such a lack of com-

munity spirit that those who are seeking to better conditions are handicapped at every turn. And this means that children are being brought up in vicious surroundings, without proper care, to become a menace or a burden upon the community in later life. One who has knowledge of the conditions in some of the so-called homes in this city is disposed to speak bitterly of the smug complacency of so-called Christian people who pass by on the other side. The press cannot go into particulars in many cases—they are so wholly bad. When ever the citizens of St. John make up their minds to get together and clean up the city they can do it, and surely the task should appeal to all who have any regard for their own children, for the latter cannot fail to be influenced to some extent by their surroundings, and upon them in later life will fall the burden of caring for the vicious, the feeble-minded and the generally unfit of their own generation. Among the sacrifices the citizens of St. John should regard as necessary on their part while their sons are fighting the battles of righteousness in Europe is the sacrifice of a little time and energy and money to make St. John a better city, and Canada a country more worthy of the graves in France and Flanders.

THE WAR AND PROMOTIONS

Referring to the fact that many lieutenants are being sent from England to France to replace those who are in the casualty list or have been promoted, the Toronto Star makes the following very proper observations:

"Something more like a just system to the fighting man at the front prevails now than that which was followed throughout nearly the first two years of the war. Nothing could have been more unfair than the former practice under which a lieutenant might spend a year on active service in the thick of the war and remain a lieutenant, while another subaltern who spent the same year here at home could become a captain and then a major and arrive at the front very much the senior of the war-torn officer who had spent a year in hard fighting. This system was all wrong, and the Star protested against it repeatedly while it was in operation. Schools of instruction and training camps are very good, but after all the greatest of all military training schools is the front of the war itself, for there the officers and men get a training of all which is practical to the last degree, so practical that an error costs a man a limb or his life. War is a grim school, where officers and men learn, not the theories of warfare in general, but the absolute realities and necessities of this war in particular. And it is skill in fighting in this war is particularly that is needed just now. Quite a few majors and captains have reverted to the rank of lieutenants after reaching England in order to get to the front. More of them should do so. Most of them were lieutenants not long ago, and while they have been getting promotions at home other lieutenants serving on the actual fields of war have not been getting promotions. The present plan of sending across from England to the Canadian divisions at the front few officers above the rank of lieutenant, and leaving all or nearly all higher ranks to be filled by promotions from among those who have had real war experience, is the right system. The plan should be departed from only in the case of officers of exceptional qualities. Not only so, but in securing the best material from which to produce the necessary supply of lieutenants, the ranks at the front should be drawn upon and promotions given to those non-coms, and privates who have shown that they are the stuff out of which officers can be made."

A SCOTTISH KIPLING.

Canadians who love the poems of Service will be interested to know of the discovery of a Scottish Kipling. R. W. Campbell, who has already won his laurels by his books "Private Spud Tansson" and "The Kangaroo Marines," and has now given the world of letters a set of poems entitled "The Making of a Mick McGhee" and other stories in verse. These verses breathe of romance, the humor, and the glory of the great adventure. And to Canadians these poems will have a special interest, for the author has toured from Halifax to Vancouver, Prince Rupert, and back. He was the author of that famous journey of 12,000 miles in a kilt, through the cities, towns, prairies and deep canyons of Canada. His pen and his lectures have sent many to seek their fortunes in the golden west, for he is an ardent admirer of all things Canadian and matters imperial. In Toronto he met the great Macdonald of the Globe; in Winnipeg, the immortal Ralph Connor, and in other parts the statesmen, thinkers, and pioneers who have laid the foundations of our great Canadian dominion.

These poems breathe a reverence for things imperial, and introduce the world to the chivalry of the trenches. Ifun there is and in abundance, the same sparkling fun that has immortalized "Spud Tansson." There are many beautiful illustrations. Those who desire a literary treasure should secure a copy. The book is entitled "The Making of a Mick McGhee" and other stories in verse, and is to be issued at 3s. 6d net by George Allen & Unwin, London.

Mr. Massey, the prime minister of New Zealand, has received the freedom of the City of London.



LIGHTER VEIN.

Handicapped travelers had four minutes in which to catch their train. "Can't you go any faster than this?" he asked the street car conductor.

"I could," the conductor answered, "but I have to stay with my car."

"But, Bertha, how did you make the acquaintance of your second husband?" "It was quite romantic. I was out walking with my first, when my second came along in a motor car, and ran him down. That was the beginning of our friendship."

"Now, if you had put your money in the savings bank instead of buying a motor car with it you'd have something laid by for your old age." "Yes, and see that fool son-in-law scotching around in motor cars bought with my money when I'm too old to enjoy 'em. Not for mine, thank you."

Mother—"You were a long time in the conservatory with Mr. Willing last night, my child. What was going on?" Daughter—"Did you ever sit in the conservatory with father before you married him?" Mother—"I suppose I did." Daughter—"Well, mother, it's the same old world."

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Draft From the Siege Battery

Lieut. J. W. Price of Moncton Will Take Fifty Men Overseas—St. John Again Signed More Than Half of Recruits

Orders have been received from military headquarters asking that a draft of fifty men and one officer be dispatched overseas at once from No. 9 Siege Battery, now mobilized on Partridge Island. Lieutenant J. W. Price of Moncton will lead the draft overseas.

To Fifth Division. Lieutenant S. M. Bosworth, of General Hughes' staff in France, has been appointed aide de camp to Colonel Swift, who is forming the fifth division at Bramshot, England.

Recruits. Five recruits were secured in the city yesterday—Held Geldert, Sussex, Machine gun draft; ThomasCane, London, England, naval service; Horace Smith, Yorkshire, Eng., naval service; Fred Quinn, St. John, naval service; Frank A. Day, St. John, Canadian Engineers.

A total of seventy-two recruits were secured in the province during the last week. The county totals follow: St. John, 48; York, 10; Restigouche, 8; Northumberland, 8; Westmorland, 8; Kent, 2; Carleton, 1; Charlotte, 1; Victoria, 1; and Madawaska, Queens and Sunbury, Albert, Gloucester and Kings, 0.

BOARD OF TRADE ELECTS OFFICERS

At the annual meeting of the St. John Board of Trade last evening the report of the nominating committee, presenting only one name for each office, was received.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, A. H. Wetmore; vice-president, J. B. Cudlip; members of council, P. W. Thomson, W. H. Thorne, W. E. Foster, T. H. Estabrooks, H. C. Schofield, R. B. Emerson, J. A. Likely, J. Hunter White, A. G. Gray and W. P. Burditt.

A vote of thanks was tendered to the retiring president, Joseph A. Likely. On motion of A. H. Wetmore, a resolution was adopted in which the high cost of living is due to uncontrollable causes and cannot be charged to the business or farming interests.

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J. H. COHOLAN SECRETARY OF THE NEW INSTITUTE

The directors of the Young Men's Catholic Institute met last evening. The most important business of the meeting was the appointment of a permanent general secretary. J. Harry Coholan was appointed to the position and will enter upon his duties immediately. A membership committee was also appointed consisting of Allan Agar, William Mager, P. J. Fitzpatrick, John McDonnell and Joseph Kennedy. The building is now about ready for occupancy, and it is planned to start the physical classes for boys immediately. Physical Instructor Magee has everything in readiness and the apparatus for the gymnasium has been put into place.

Mr. Coholan, the new secretary, should prove an excellent official. He is scholarly, of pleasant manner, experienced in work of this nature and enthusiastic over the new institute and its work.

RHEUMATISM CONQUERED

"I have been for the last two years a cripple with Muscular Rheumatism. I have tried almost everything known to medicine to relieve me, but in vain. I was in constant pain and inflammation. I sought change of climate in Kentucky and other Southern points without relief. Your manager in this city recommended GIN PILLS and I have since taken eight boxes and am now cured. I continue

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