

the purpose of his note, which aimed at obtaining the co-operation of all the belligerents, he was bound to address them in terms which assumed that the attitudes of all were sincere. But while properly refraining from expressing any view as to the justice or injustice of either side, he should have been more careful to avoid the use of language from which either side could take offence. The passage so indignantly condemned by the friends of the Entente Allies was tactless and stupid.

The President's note may serve no good purpose, but there is no reason for regarding it as unfriendly to the Entente Allies. It is not a proposal of peace terms. It is not even an offer of mediation. It is a suggestion that if each side of the conflict would state clearly the terms on which it is disposed to make peace a groundwork might be laid for further negotiations. The situation hardly admits of this at present. Germany, though through her Chancellor talking of peace proposals, has really proposed no terms. As for Great Britain, one cannot easily see how she can at this stage do more than declare, as Mr. Asquith did and as Mr. Lloyd George does, that there can be no peace until Germany is prepared to make reparation for all the crimes she has committed and to offer something that the world can regard as guarantees for the peace of the future. There will, no doubt, come a time when there will be need of more details of what Great Britain and her Allies will accept. But so long as Germany maintains her attitude of arrogance and her military leaders continue to proclaim their purpose of conquest, there will be no peace, and no peace negotiations that can be seriously considered.

### Stocks

GR<sup>EAT</sup> and manifold are the mysteries of the stock markets. In 1914 rumors of war caused quite a financial depression. Then when the rumors proved true and the great war came upon the world there was a panic in which prices melted away and ruin was brought to many doors while to many others very heavy losses came. Peace, apparently, was what was then needed for the maintenance of stock market stability.

Note the changed situation to-day. Not rumors of war but rumors of peace were the cause of the recent severe collapse in the stock market. The prospect of the war coming to an end sent prices down the toboggan slide. Now that the peace movement is found to have no substantial basis, stocks begin to climb again. The stock market, which wept over the breaking out of war in 1914, now sheds its tears when there is a suspicion of peace being within the bounds of possibility.

### The Growth of Prohibition

OP<sup>PONENTS</sup> of prohibition of the liquor traffic often claim that where prohibitory laws are adopted experience proves their failure and leads to a desire to repeal them. In only rare instances can ground be found for this contention. In the present day the prohibitory movement shows great strength and where partial prohibition is established there is found a strong desire to have more rigid measures. The Saskatchewan Government some months ago adopted a law which went a long way in the direction of prohibition. So far

as the general sale of liquor was concerned, there was a total suppression of the trade. The law provided, however, that those who still desired to use the condemned beverages might obtain them, under certain restrictions, from a number of stores established by the Government. Further provision was made for a referendum on the question of continuing these Government liquor stores. The vote was taken last week and the people everywhere, by very large majorities, decided against the stores. Thus the business, even in the modified form of the sale by the Government under restrictions, is banned. Saskatchewan, evidently, has found in the partial prohibition of the past few months reason for determining that there shall be complete prohibition.

Prohibition is now in operation, or will be very shortly, in every Province of Canada except Quebec. Even here the growth of the movement has been rapid, and while the immediate enactment of a prohibitory law may not be expected, the Quebec Government and Legislature have adopted measures which impose additional restrictions on the traffic. Probably the new law goes as far as public opinion in the Province now warrants. But the movement for total prohibition will continue. A "dry" Canada may be not far off.

### Will the Public Learn?

A BOSTON journalist, Mr. George L. Walker of the Commercial, laments the unwillingness of the public to learn what is good for it. Possibly the result of the Presidential election has something to do with this regret, for our Boston contemporary was not a Wilsonite. But it is not of the Presidency that he writes now. It is on the high prices and the causes of them, and the public's attitude toward them, that he founds his lamentations. Of course, he says, prices are high, but what else could be expected by misguided people? In the high price of coal he sees evidence that the public "is paying for some of its fads." Concerning petitions favoring the prohibition of the export of coal, he writes that "guardians should be appointed for all the people who sign them." The shipment of coal to foreign countries, particularly to South America, is necessary for the enlargement of American trade, and that is urged as a matter of vital importance, not only as respects future trade but also as bearing on South America's ability to supply food-stuffs which the world now needs. Here is the summing up of the arraignment of the public for its stupidity:

"It is almost a total waste of time and blank paper to explain these things, because the public apparently does not want to understand them. It wants to believe that it costs no more to mine coal after wages have been advanced 50 or 100% than it did before; that the railroads which have been ham-strung by the government and restrained from advancing their freight charges should be in a position to buy enough new cars, at double the prices they formerly paid, to haul and deliver the tremendously increased tonnage of coal required by manufacturers and others during this temporary period of unprecedented industrial activity. The public's unwillingness to learn and accept the truth is costing it a lot of money and withholding great opportunities and benefits which it otherwise would enjoy. As long as the individuals who make up the public continue

to be extremely 'reactive' in their business and rampantly ignorant toward everybody else's interests, antagonism will obstruct the industrial progress."

What a simple way it is to be ignorant! All that one need do is see that other fellow doesn't know what he is talking about! The fact remains, however, that these perhaps degenerate days the public has acquired, among other privileges, the right to believe that it does know a few things, and to act accordingly. So this old world will have to adapt itself to the new order of things, and let the people have their way. If it is not good for them they will doubtless discover the fact later and become more humble and more willing to listen to the voice of reason.

### Oleomargarine

THE widespread demand for the abolition of the long standing prohibition of the importation, manufacture or sale of oleomargarine—a demand created by the very high price of butter—has not unnaturally led some of the dairymen of our country to register a protest against any such change. It is probable that the exclusion of oleomargarine tends to increase the demand, and consequently the price, for butter. In such circumstances, in a world not yet entirely free from selfishness, it would be too much to expect that all who are interested in the production of butter would readily assent to the abolition of the advantage which the present law allows. But there is reason in all things. In the face of the high cost of living now so much complained of, the farmers and dairymen should not place themselves in opposition to any movement calculated to supply any useful commodity at more reasonable prices. Of course, as a reason for opposing the admission of oleomargarine, it is alleged that the article is unwholesome. If the dairymen will rest their case on that ground and take steps to establish the truth of their contention, they will have a strong position. Oleomargarine in times past was often produced under conditions which certainly made the article undesirable. The reasons against oleomargarine were good. If the situation is the same today, if the dairymen can show that the oleomargarine of the market is unclean or unwholesome, they will have public opinion with them in their effort to continue its exclusion from Canada. But it is only fair to say that such objections are now said to be unwarranted. Oleomargarine as sold today is represented to be both clean and wholesome. If this claim is well founded, there will be difficulty in showing good reasons for adhering to the present excluding laws. Canada, we believe, is the only country in the world today which does not allow the sale of oleomargarine. In England, where pure food laws are rigidly enforced, oleomargarine is sold everywhere. That fact creates a fair presumption that the old charge of unwholesomeness can no longer be sustained. If competent authority will show that the article is free from objectionable elements, and if strict provision be made for the marking of it with its proper name, so that the public may be protected against fraud, there will be a good case for abolishing the prohibitory oleomargarine law that has so long been in force. The question is pretty certain to come before Parliament at the approaching session. It would be well for our Department of Agriculture to set on foot now an inquiry which will enable it to be ready with all needed information on the subject.