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OCT 4 1917
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The Journal of Commerce

VOL. XLIV. No. 15

MONTREAL, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1917

Price, 10 CENTS

The Journal of Commerce

Devoted to
CANADIAN INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND
FINANCE.

Published every Tuesday Morning by
The Journal of Commerce Publishing Company,
Limited.

Head Office: 35-45 St. Alexander Street, Montreal,
Telephone: Main 2662.

Toronto Office: 263 Adelaide St. West, Toronto.
Telephone: Adelaide 917.

HON. W. S. FIELDING,
President and Editor-in-Chief.

Subscription price, \$2.00 a year.
Advertising rates on application.

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Special Articles

The Farmers' War Loan Subscriptions.

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The Consolidated School.

By J. W. Macmillan.

Banking and Business Affairs in the U. S.

By Elmer H. Youngman.

Conditions in the West.

By E. Cora Hind.

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Price Fixing

THE fixing of prices by Governmental authority is not an easy matter. Perhaps there should be little surprise that in Canada the authorities have shrunk from the difficulties attending it and that our Food Controller and Fuel Controller have hitherto confined their work to the giving of abundant advice — excellent advice, no doubt — as to what we shall eat and how we shall act and how waste may be avoided. Yet, if there is to be no control of prices in the case of things most needful, the appointment of Controllers would hardly be required. A simpler and cheaper machinery for the distribution of economic essays could be found. The price of wheat has been fixed, but the fixing process has not been carried on to flour and bread. The continued high cost of living is pressing for some further action, and Mr. Hanna, the Food Controller, now intimates that something will shortly be done. In a statement issued a few days ago he speaks of the particular difficulties in connection with the fixing of prices in the retail trade. The excessive number of middlemen he holds to be one of the causes of high prices, yet he thinks that any restriction of their operations would paralyze a large part of business. That there is some foundation for this view may be admitted, but probably Mr. Hanna has somewhat magnified the difficulty. It will not be easy to grapple with the question to the satisfaction of the consumer if the retailers of the necessities of life are to be free to charge what they please.

One difficulty of a serious character is that if in the case of any article a price is fixed there will be a cutting down of production, a realization of the old proverb, respecting the killing of the goose that laid the golden egg. Careful inquiry and intelligent judgment are needed to bring about at the same time abundant production and moderate prices.

Another difficulty arises from the relation of one industry to another. If the farmer is denied the liberty of getting for his wheat the best price that he can on the world's market, he will naturally feel that some similar restriction should be put on the activities of the man from whom he buys his farm implements, his fertilizers, and the other commodities of which he is not a producer, but a consumer. To distinguish between the things in which price regulation is required and those in which producers shall be free to get all the price they can is not easy. Preference must certainly be given to those articles which may be classed among the necessities of life.

The Independence of Ireland

IN SOME unaccountable way the name of Hon. John Hall Kelly, a prominent Quebec barrister and a member of the Legislative Council of Quebec, became mixed up in the recent discussions of German intrigue in the United States, somebody having referred to him as one who desired the independence of Canada. Mr. Kelly, in a spirited statement to the press, says there was no foundation whatever for the use of his name in that way, adding that he has advocated "the independence of Ireland, but not of Canada." Mr. Kelly is not happy in his choice of words. It is probable that he has used the word "independence" in relation to Ireland in the sense of Home Rule. There was a time when it pleased some people to treat every advocate of Home Rule as disloyal. There are always people who are ready to claim a monopoly of devotion to the British flag and to denounce all who do not fall in with their own not always unselfish ideas. But that situation, as respects Home Rule, was long ago. Home Rule — the granting to Ireland of a large measure of independence in her local affairs — is today the avowed policy of the British nation. But it must be understood that this means the maintenance of Ireland as a part of the Empire, not the creation of Ireland as an independent State. The latter is the Sinn Fein idea, which can only be carried out by revolt against the British Crown. No loyal Canadian, no member of a Canadian legislative body, can afford to put himself in the Sinn Fein class. Mr. Kelly probably had no intention of doing so. But his declaration for "independence" for Ireland was not a happy one.

Copper and Steel

PRICE fixing has received much more attention in Great Britain and the United States than in Canada. The British authorities have gone a long way in their plans to protect the public against excessive prices, and in the States similar plans are under consideration. The prices of metals required for the production of munitions have lately been vigorously regulated by the officials acting for the government. Much interest has been manifested for some weeks in the probable action of the Government in relation to the price of refined copper. Canada has a large interest in the question, for a considerable quantity of the copper sold in the States is refined from the products of Canadian mines. The copper market has for several years exhibited remarkable fluctuations. Some time ago the price fell to 13 or