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ST. JOHN, N. B. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 11, 1920.

THE COST OF CLOTH.

The tremendous increase in the cost of tweeds and other material out of which men's and women's suits are usually made has been, and is being, felt very keenly by most of us. But the great increase in cost is not confined to this country by any means, but is felt just as keenly in most other lands, particularly in England, where a commission has been sitting under the provisions of the Profiteering Act to investigate the whole matter. From their report we gather that if there is profiteering in the cloth business it cannot fairly be placed on the manufacturer.

This report, which is somewhat lengthy, is, on the whole, fair and moderate in its conclusions, and is unambiguously based on the examination by expert accountants of the books of eight firms for a period roughly coinciding with the twelve months ending June 30 last year, while further evidence was obtained from traders, including the Co-operative Wholesale Society. The firms chosen were "above the average efficiency and size of the trade generally" which is highly competitive. It was found that while the pre-war rate of profit on sales was 10.1 per cent, it is now 19.7 per cent, but certain deductions require to be made. Excess Profits Duty is an outgoing necessarily charged upon the business before distributable profits can be arrived at, and it reduces the rate to 7.9 per cent. When, in addition, allowance is made for the extra cost of renewals of machinery and plant, and for special taxation, the net retainable profit becomes 4.5 per cent. Before the war the manufacturer's profit on a yard of tweed which sold then at 2s. averaged 2 1/4d.; now the gross profit on the same cloth sold at 8s. is 4 1/2d. and the net profit 3 1/4d. per yard. Thus the manufacturer is acquitted from the charge of exacting an undue profit. To find out why anything is so dear would necessitate an extension of the inquiry into other channels which the committee were not invited to explore. In view of their report, however, the need for further investigation is more apparent. Since the end of June last year, it is stated, manufacturers' costs have increased by at least 25 to 30 per cent, and there is no prospect of a fall. On the contrary, a further rise appears probable. A year ago wages and general expenses had increased to three times the pre-war levels and the price of raw material had increased fully four times. An important condition of the industry is the need for carrying from seven to nine months' stock of material, of which four to six months' stock is normally sold ahead in the cloth. A reserve of raw material has to be accumulated to provide a margin to which to select for blending, and the success of a business depends on the skill and experience professed in the selecting and blending of materials. If a rapid decline in values takes place, the trade incurs heavy losses, which can be met only from past profits or nowadays by the recovery of Excess Profits Duty from the Government.

The report forms an illuminative study in the effects of that much debated duty. In actual practice it is debited by manufacturers to the prime cost of the article, and the committee state, is an important factor in putting up prices. It hampers new enterprises and complicates the question of financial reserves. It was given in evidence that at the present moment large schemes for the extension of existing works and for the building of new plants have had to be dropped owing to the inadequate financial returns. The committee have been unable, owing to the uncertainties involved, to make any sound calculation regarding the effect on profits of the attendant risks, and feel that they have probably made an inadequate allowance. The amount of capital in the industry after the claims of taxation have been met has proved insufficient, and "bank overdrafts have never been heavier in the trade than they are today." Since the eight firms whose books have been investigated are "above the average of efficiency and size," and "it is generally accepted that those firms making the largest profits give the best value to their customers," it may be presumed that the others have made less than 4.5 per cent. profit on their sales.

FRANCE REBUILDING HER SHATTERED INDUSTRIES.
Reconstruction—this was the word that set every industrial and agricultural chord to vibrating in France after 1919. We have read about French reconstruction in history. Since November, 1918, some persons have talked much about previous records, contrasting them rather cynically at times with the progress now

being made toward restoration of normal conditions in French fields devastated and French factories destroyed by the German invader. Have we not been too doubtful or too cynical? Conflicting reports brought back by investigators have made it impossible to form a definite opinion. Some of them said France was rapidly recovering. Others told another story. But now we have an exact and definite statement of what has been accomplished. The French Office of Industrial Reconstruction has published statistics of the ten invaded departments showing the condition of industrial establishments and trades as of May 1, 1920.

The New York Sun figures that, taking 100 per cent. to represent the condition in 1914, the number of establishments now in operation stands at 71.80 per cent. This is truly a remarkable showing. It is better by only a small margin in the recently published figures showing that Belgian industry is 80 per cent. normal, and Belgian reconstruction has been the marvel of the world since the armistice. But this encouraging showing of the resumed industries in France is modified by the figures revealing the numbers of employed. In the reopened factories and trades there are 340,002 workers, compared with 679,133 in all the factories and trades open in 1914. Of the workers now employed 82,138 are engaged in rebuilding and repairing, and 257,874 in commercially productive work. The commercial producers now are therefore only 37.9 per cent. as numerous as those of 1914. From this report it might be thought that French production in the war area could be increased if the number of workers were increased. But this is not the case. The employed figures are low not because of a dearth of workers but because of lack of materials.

What reconstruction work France has accomplished went forward with a minimum of outside financial aid. She has made one or two small loans from England since the armistice, but these were only a fraction of what she could have used. Let the world mark well the French spirit of persistent, unconquerable self-reliance that has never waned or weakened. In another year it may be generally understood that the cause of French reconstruction is the world's cause. History will yet record another example of how the indomitable will and courage of France enabled her to "come back" when to give up in despair and to force the burden on others might have been chosen as the easier way out of her terrible trials.

IDEALS AND REALIZATION.
The admirers of President Wilson feel that he is to be one of the most commanding figures of American history, on account of his high ideals and his generous "vision." Now "vision" is a grand thing, but there is one thing still grander, and that is the power of building things.

Anyone can have generous visions of human advance. But to be really a great man, you must not merely entertain generous hopes, but do a lot to realize them, through bringing about workable systems of improvement. President Wilson has failed of the higher ranges of achievement, by the difficulty he finds in connecting with the actual facts of life. He holds himself aloof from realities, he distrusts practical men, he does not closely ascertain actual facts, so that his record of practical achievement falls far short of what it should have been.

Women are now taking their place in the jury box in England, and from reports to hand most of them seem to like the position. They appear to be surprised at the simplicity of the court procedure, and also to appreciate the deference and courtesy extended to them by Bench and Bar. There are limits, in the opinion of one of these women, as to the type of cases they should be called upon to try, but she felt that women should try women because they understood the wiles of their own sex better and would see through them where men would be deceived, "as they always can be by a clever woman and sex sympathy." There is a good deal to be said of this phase of the situation, too.

A despatch from Rome says that the Pope has approved of public prayers being offered for the "well-being" of Ireland. Now, just what did he mean to convey by the word "well-being"? It may mean many things, according to the point of view of the individual. Premier Meighen says that newspapers should tell the whole truth—and this, mind you, with the price of paper about 8c. today!

Premier Hughes of Australia, is now threatening to keep Archbishop Mannix out of the Commonwealth. That ecclesiastical firebrand, says the Mail and Empire, is not unlikely to find himself a man without a country. Oh! no, dear friend, not as long as the United States is afloat. A country that boasts a Hearst would not refuse a Mannix.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Paper Suits. (Toronto Globe.)
All this talk about the possibility of paper suits of clothes might interest folk more if they did not realize that, at the present price of newspaper, the paper suits are able to cost more than those most people are now wearing.

International Sport. (Westminster Gazette.)
Shall we find it necessary eventually to add to the League of Nations a Committee charged with the duty of revising the rules of our games? It looks as if there might be plenty of work for such a Committee. This year we have been entertaining golfing friends from the States, charged with the duty of persuading us, apparently with some success, to admit alterations in the Royal and Ancient game. There have been difficulties from time to time as regards the handicapping of yachts. In polo the Americans have points of difference from ourselves. And now we have Sir Oliver Lodge leading a revolt against the lawtonian system by which the server is allowed what is, in effect, the old "ball," which disappeared long ago from cricket. An International Sports Committee could lay down rules for the world; but would such a Committee encourage international rivalry, or kill it?

Sir Lomer's Position. (Montreal Gazette.)
La Patrie is curious to know what position Sir Lomer Gouin is to occupy on the executive of La Presse. It points out that while its contemporary announces that Quebec's former Premier joins the direction of La Presse, it does not indicate what his prerogatives will be—whether he will be financial director or political director; whether his guiding influence will be exercised on the business side of the newspaper, or in the enunciation of the newspaper's ideas and principles. "If," the editorial adds, "Sir Lomer is only to exercise administrative functions, his association with La Presse has no interest for the public. But if it will be another affair if he takes over the political direction. In the past Sir Lomer and La Presse have not always shared the same opinions—they have not always seen eye to eye the questions and problems which have concerned the people of Montreal, the province and the Dominion. If Sir Lomer takes over the political direction, then how will the alliance operate? Shall we see La Presse adopt on every occasion the opinions of Sir Lomer or will Sir Lomer henceforth adapt himself to the policy of La Presse? If he becomes political editor, there will be occasion to pronounce the 'dignus est intrare' (he is worthy to enter) into the Journalistic profession! When governing the province, Sir Lomer resolutely announced, on the question of prohibition, that he 'knew how to put water into his wine.' Is that what he will do when joining La Presse, if his position is to be that of political director?"

A BIT OF VERSE
THE FELLOW WHO FIGHTS ALONE
(Western Veteran.)
The fellow who fights the fight alone,
With never a word of cheer,
With never a friend his hand to lend,
With never a comrade near—
'Tis he has need of a stalwart hand
And a heart not given to moan—
He struggles for life, and more than life.

THE FELLOW WHO FIGHTS ALONE
The fellow who fights the world alone,
With never a father's smile,
With never a mother's kindly tone,
His sorrowful hours to guide,
Who joins the fray at the dawn of day
And battles till light is flown,
Must needs be strong, for the fight is long—
The fellow who fights alone!

THE FELLOW WHO FIGHTS ALONE
God bless the fellow who fights alone,
And arm his soul with strength!
Tis safety out of the battle rout
He conquering comes at length;
Till far and near into every ear
The fame of his fight is blown;
Till friend and foe in the victor know
The fellow who fights alone!

THE LAUGH LINE.
Hope So, indeed!
" My new play is about rent profiteering."
" I hope it brings down the house."—Boston Transcript.
In Hoc Signo Vincas.
" Three balls!" yelled the umpire.
" Now's your chance to sock it," shouted the excited pawnbroker's clerk to the batsman.—Boston Transcript.
Worse Than Pinning.
" Is the rich young widow pinning for her husband?"
" Not exactly, but from the way she is making his money fly, it might be said she is wasting away."—Baltimore American.
His Problem.
Kell had drawn a summary for being absent from post while on guard duty.
" Where were you," demanded the judge-advocate, "when the sergeant of the guard passed just in front of your post?"
" At the rear."
" Where were you when the corporal passed just behind it?"
" At the front."
" And now," triumphantly, "where were you when the sergeant and the corporal walked around your post from opposite directions without seeing you?"
" Judge," said Kelly hopefully, "that just the question that's been worrying me. Where was I?"—The American Legion Weekly.

Benny's Note Book
BY LEE PAPE
Pop was rooting the spoarting page with his feet up and ma was darning holes out of socks, and I sed, Pop, do you think it would hurt you to eat soap? Do you think it would, ma?
This a sensible question for a brite young man to put to his bizzy father, sed pop. Ma not saying anything, and I sed, Well do you think it would hurt you to eat watermelon rind? Do you think it would ma?
I think some children ask redicikliss questions, sed ma. Meaning I was one of them, and pop sed, I 2nd the motion. Meaning be thawt so too, and I sed, Well how about candio areeces, do you think it would hurt you to eat candio areeces? Do you, pop? Do you, ma?
Have you the slightest inclination to eat candio areeces, soap or watermelon rind? sed pop.
No sir, I sed.
Well then what the big ideer? sed pop.
Ive ete them already, I sed.
The doos you have, sed pop and ma sed, Benny Pote, youve doo nothing of the sort, and I sed, Yes mam, yes sir, this afternoon I was errount at Pude Simkiness and we had a bite taking contest and took holes out of different kinds of things.
For merrasy sake, no wonder you feel sick, sed ma and I sed, I doxt feel sick, ma, and ma sed, I think I better give him some medicine.
No, let bad cuff alone, sed pop, and I sed, Do you want me to tell you wat eils we took bits out of pop? Do you, ma?
Wich they both sed they didnt, so I didnt tell them about the dog bligitt and the cake of yeast and the sunflower.

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MILLIDGEVILLE HAS NEW ORGANIZATION
Will Carry Out Programme for the Entertainment of Summer Visitors.
Another club has been formed to add to the pleasure of the residents of the city's summer resorts, the new comer will be known as the Millidgeville Summer Club.
It had its beginning at a well attended and enthusiastic meeting held Monday evening at the residence of J. Fraser Gregory, Millidgeville.
Included in the plans of the new club is the holding of weekly dances, the first of which will be given this week in the R. K. Y. C. clubhouse. Later it is the intention to take up tennis, water sports and other activities and the formation of a four-oared crew is being considered.
Officers for the present season were elected as follows: President, J. Fraser Gregory; vice-president, Miss Elizabeth Ritchie; treasurer, Miss Gladys Martin; secretary, A. I. Machum, with Miss Olivia Gregory, Miss Winnifred Green and L. MacC. Ritchie as members of the executive.
More than fifty members were enrolled Monday evening and each one feels that the club is starting on a busy and enjoyable season.

FAIR VALE TEAM DEFEATED
Fair Vale ball team way to Rotheray Me lack was against the side. The weather was desired for good the Fair Vale boys t dress their muscles y take some pleasure ball around the field to perfection.
Rathbura was put ed no money for they till it brought twelve circuit. On the oth Vale boys put Ned H for their side and the ball made victory nings were played i of which the card sh be 12 to 1 in Fair Va While the score v the Rotheray boys made some excellen which happens many lack was against th by no means discour row the sun may be it is cloudy today.
London, Aug. 10.—(Associated Press)—Football Team, which won South Africa rel it won all fourteen m 44 goals against 24