

## The St. John Standard

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ST. JOHN, N. B., TUESDAY, JUNE 24, 1919.

## COMMODITY PRICES.

A comprehensive mercantile survey recently made by the National Industrial Conference Board of the United States, which gives commodity prices to the consumer from 1913 to the present time, indicates a decrease in the cost of living during the past few months—slight in comparison, however with the tremendous increases noted for the preceding four years. In May, 1919, although still from sixty to sixty-five per cent. higher than in 1914, the cost of living shows an average drop of three per cent. from November, 1918, when the armistice was signed. This survey covers practically all commodities used in the ordinary household, which commodities are grouped under the headings of food, shelter, clothing, fuel, heat and light, and sundries. The increase in the cost of each since July, 1914, to March, 1919, has been seventy-five per cent. for food, twenty-two per cent. for shelter, eighty-one per cent. for clothing, fifty-seven per cent. for fuel, heat and light, and fifty-five per cent. for sundries. The peak of prices came last winter, when in December food costs were higher than ever before recorded in United States official records, food being eighty-seven per cent. above the 1913 level. In May last, prices of the same commodities were only seventy-five per cent. above the average of 1913, indicating a decrease of twelve per cent. In the four years intervening, flour, bacon, lard and cornmeal were more than doubled in price, sugar and potatoes almost doubled, while other articles show increases of sixty per cent. and over. Ever since May, 1918, such foodstuffs as beef, coffee, butter, onions and prunes advanced almost twenty-five per cent. while on the other hand beans, bread and a few less important lines were cheaper this spring than last year.

Whether the slight drop in prices of foodstuffs is a definite check on the upward trend to be followed by a gradual falling off, or whether it is merely a temporary reaction, no one may say, yet the opinion of the larger dealers appears to be that high prices will prevail for a considerable time to come.

In the matter of rentals, the interesting point is made that the increase for one variety of homes is accompanied by a corresponding decrease for other classes. The average working man because of better wages now prevailing has been able to occupy an apartment in a more modern house and apart from that the increased demand for this class of houses has resulted in rental advances, while on the other hand there has been an over-supply of the older and less convenient homes with a consequent slump in prices. Generally speaking, however, the increase in rentals all over the country, varying from ten to twenty-five per cent., has been largely due to the scarcity of houses of all classes, arising from stagnation in the work of construction.

It is in clothing prices, however, that the most marked advances have been noted. Woollen and cotton goods have gone almost out of sight in respect to cost, while the quality has steadily run down, yet in other lines there has been a drop during the past few months. Muslin, for instance, which sold at thirty-five cents per yard in 1914 and thirty-five cents in 1915, is now quoted at twenty-eight cents per yard, while cheap serge which was formerly retailed at one dollar per yard is now two dollars, and a suit which has prevailed for the last few years. In cheap ready-made clothing a man's suit costing fifteen dollars in 1914 retailed at twenty-six dollars and eighty-five cents in November, 1918, and at twenty-six dollars in March of this year. In women's clothes there has been a similar advance followed by a slight subsequent drop.

On the other hand leather goods have steadily advanced during the period of the war, and while there has recently been a slight fall in the price of many other commodities, these have gone straight ahead, so that a pair of shoes which in 1914 could be bought for three dollars and fifty cents and for five dollars and eighty cents in November, 1918, sold at six dollars and ten cents a few months ago. In respect to fuel the price variation has been similar to that of leather goods, showing a constant increase since the armistice was signed, although different districts have been differently affected.

Average the household budget from July, 1914, to November, 1918, an advance of from seventy-six to eighty per cent. is shown, with a subsequent decrease in the past six months of six point three per cent. These, of course, are United States figures, and are of interest only for purposes of comparison. The decrease since the armistice is a very small proportion of the previous advance, and when the whole range of commodities is included, indicates a drop of only three per cent.

## SOUTH AMERICAN TRADE.

Mr. A. Smeraldi, at one time a resident of St. John and very well known there, who is now Managing Director of the Export Department of a New York business house and who has recently returned from an extensive trip through South America, calls attention to the great opportunities for trade in that continent if proper methods are adopted by American exporters. He is very emphatic in his advice that manufacturers of this country should not develop the impression that they can get control of the South American market by a wave of the hand. It took Germany several generations to obtain a commanding position there, and that position was secured only by persistent and well-directed effort. It is a mistake, too, to suppose that Germany is out of the running, for Mr. Smeraldi believes that within a year or two from the conclusion of peace German agents will be securing orders as in the days preceding the war. They will overcome any sentiment which may exist by carrying on their trade through neutral European countries and, unless American exporters are very careful, the latter will lose the foothold they have obtained during the past three or four years. Of the South American countries, Brazil possibly offers the greatest opportunities, but Brazil is sorely in need of development and requires not only manufactured goods, but credit with which to finance its development. Those who decide to participate in the possibilities of South American trade must be men of big ideas, willing to take a chance and they must follow to a certain extent the methods of German exporters, which have been so successful in the past.

## WHAT GERMANY HAS DONE.

On every dollar earned in Canada over and above the amount required for the bare necessities of life a portion must be paid to the Government to provide interest on capital debt. Forty millions of dollars yearly must be set apart for the maintenance of our men disabled through overseas service. Every bite we eat, every stitch of clothing we wear costs and will continue to cost from twenty to one hundred per cent. more than its actual value. All this because a power-crazed madman of Central Europe desired to rule the world. It is difficult to see how, in the face of Sir Thomas White's financial statement, anyone in this country could favor a mitigation of peace terms imposed by the Allied Powers on Germany. For years to come this country, in common with all other allied countries, must continue to suffer from the results of the German Emperor's unbridled passion. The debt of Canada, formerly insignificant, is now over two billions of dollars and we are compelled to contribute every year for the payment of interest on the war debt more than the total amount of our ordinary income fifteen years ago. In four years this country has accumulated a liability of two hundred dollars per head of population, and in addition to this has been called upon to provide not only money for the care of injured men, but large sums to be used in assisting the normal activities of the Dominion during the period of transition from peace to war. If we had been a warlike people, if the ambition of Canada had been to conquer other territory, if we had deliberately attacked our neighbors in the hope of national gain, then the handicap under which we are now struggling would have been regarded as a fitting punishment for our unjustifiable ambitions. But Canada, like the other Allies, had no desire for war; had no thought of gain at the expense of other nations, but was forced into the conflict solely as a measure of self-defence. And this year, as in years to come when money may not be as plentiful as it is today, people will realize the extent of the devastation wrought by Germany, and will comprehend even more fully than they do now the sacrifices which peaceful nations were called upon to make in warding off the desperate assaults of a power-maddened people.

## THE SARDINE INDUSTRY.

The action of the Weir Owners' Association in voluntarily reducing the price of sardines to packers to ten dollars per hoghead will be generally commended. Conditions along the Bay Coast and in Maine are such that if owners of factories are unable to operate on full time for the remainder of the season, much hardship must result among those who depend on such establishments for their summer earnings. Circumstances over which the packers have little control have interfered with this season's activity, but the reduction in the price of the fish now offered by the weirmen should tend to a considerable degree to overcome existing difficulties. While there is no definite guarantee that as a result of this reduction all plans will be set on foot, it is a business, yet the new price is an attractive one and the action of the weirmen will undoubtedly

ly result in the proprietors of the factories adopting a most generous attitude in carrying on as extensive operations as prospective market conditions will warrant.

## WHAT THEY SAY

**Makes a Difference.**  
Baltimore Star: It appears that the Germans are a very merciful and pitying people—when they face their own misfortunes.

**The Pen and the Sword.**  
Toronto Globe: With a printing train of twelve cars, German peace delegates must think that the pen is mightier than the sword.

**Won His Title.**  
Ottawa Citizen: However strong the sentiment against the perpetration of titles in Canada, Canadians generally, and Ottawans particularly, will surely approve and applaud Major-General Sir E. W. B. Morrison's new honors which have been conferred upon—or rather which he has won by rendering to his country a uniquely distinguished war service. General Morrison's K. C. M. G. and his addition to his name and fame as a soldier and a citizen, but the addition of Major-General Sir Edward Morrison to Canada's color of knights will certainly add distinction to that class of Canadians.

**Our Divorcees 100 Per Cent.**  
Toronto Mail: It is probably true that Canadian marriages, on the whole, are more carefully considered, and more firmly based, than marriages in the United States. Community sentiment has a deep effect in regulating standards of marriage and in strengthening fidelity to obligations afterwards. The fact that our divorce rate is only one-hundredth of the American rate does not mean a like ratio of superiority. Acts of Parliament in the United States, which have passed only on proof of unfaithfulness in the United States, in 1916, adultery was the cause of only 11 per cent. of divorces granted. The assertion accounted for 38.8 per cent., and cruelty for 28.3 per cent.

**Birth of the "Bookie."**  
London Daily Chronicle: Professional betting, which some are suggesting should be taxed instead of beer, was apparently a by-product of the French Revolution, previously to which betting on races was mainly confined to wagers between owners and their friends. It was during the last decade of the 18th century that the first "bookie" known to fame as "Vauxhall" Clarke, came to a bad end—the end of a tail rope. As Mr. Clarke was hanged, the "bookie" but for highway robbery, the profession, or calling, of yelling "six to four on the field," cannot at that time have been a very profitable occupation. Betting to odds with professional book-makers, then styled "black-legs," did not become reputable until the thirties of the last century.

**"War Weariness" Party to Blame.**  
Edmonton Bulletin: President Beatty of the C. P. R. offers the suggestion that the "war weariness" party of unrest originates in the nerves, rather than in a reasoned hope to better conditions. There may be more in that theory than meets the eye. For four years the country has been living under a nervous strain. All of a sudden have been anxious about how and when the war would end. A large proportion have also been anxious as to the fate of loved ones in the battlefields. Another large percentage have been worrying—perhaps worrying more than any other class—over the question of whether or not they would have to "go across." After severe strain comes relaxation, and the greater the strain the more complete the reaction.

**Newspapers by Women.**  
Christian Science Monitor: That the first attempt to establish a daily newspaper edited, managed and printed entirely by women was not successful is no final proof that the thing cannot be done. One wonders, however, if there is not an element of failure in the fact that such a newspaper seems inherently unnecessary. Women have already a considerable share in the making of the regular daily paper, and as things now go, it will probably before long be quite accurate to say that newspapers are edited, managed and printed by men and women for men and women. A newspaper of general interest exclusively by and for other men and women appears hardly likely to be a profitable venture. More than that, the war has so greatly proved that women can do practically any kind of work hitherto done by men that enterprises undertaken simply to keep on proving it seems rather useless.

**Government from Washington.**  
Winnipeg Telegram: News despatches from Montreal yesterday indicated that the Canadian Railway War Board considers that it cannot reach a decision upon the demands of the railway shippers until the United States railway administration has reached its decision upon similar demands made by the railway shippers of the United States. Isn't it about time that Canada exercised her own brains instead of borrowing those of her neighbor? Last year the railway war board granted increases to Canadian railway employees, taking as the "McAdoo award" made in the United States. Then the Canadian railways increased their freight rates twice—in order to accord with increased freight rates in the United States.

Next, the parliament of Canada rejected daylight saving for their summer savings was promptly adopted by the Canadian railways, because the United States railways had adopted it.

## A BIT OF FUN

**Good Intentions Frustrated.**  
"I'm going to stop being kind and helpful to people," said little Johnny. "I'm going to be a little bit of a snob." "Well, it's this way. At school today I saw Tommy Jones putting a pin in the master's chair, so just as

## Little Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE.

Yesterday me and Skinny Martin was walking along, and all of a sudden I saw something shining like gold, and I quick picked it up and wat was it but a medal saying on it, Puffs Gingerale, Highest Award at 5 Expositions.

G. I wonder if its gold, I sed.

Wacky if it is, I was with you wen you found it, sed Skinny Martin. And we took turns dropping the medal on the pavement to see if it sounded like gold. Wich it did, and Skinny sed, Gosh, G, lets take it in a jewelry store and find out for sure, maybe its worth about a thousand dollars.

If its only worth about 500 id bbe satisfied, I sed. Wich I would of, and we kept on walking till we came to a jewelry store, and we wen in and there was 2 ladies in there already and another one came in rite after us, saying, My goodness, I cant wate, theres too many ahead of me. Being a tall kind of a lady, and the jeweler sed, Jest a moment, madam, jest a moment and ill be able to wate on you in a moment. Being a little jeweler with a worried expression and more empty space than hair, and he waited on one lady and she went out, and the tall lady sed, Reely, I dont think I can wate.

Just a moment, madam, jest a moment, I assure you, sed the jeweler. And he waited on the other lady and she went out, and the jeweler sed, Whose next?

Me, I sed.

Us, sed Skinny Martin.

I cant wate, I rely cant, that all there is to it, sed the tall lady. And she quick waked out and the jeweler worried expression got worse and he sed to me and Skinny Martin, Well, wat do you want?

Went you please, tell me if this is gold? I sed. And I reached up and put the medal on the counter, and the jeweler looked at it and his worried expression got worse, and he sed, Puffs gingerale, and you made me lose a customer and maybe she wanted to buy a watch for all I know, if I get hold of you ill teach you manners. And he started to come frum in back of the counter and me and Skinny Martin skun out of the store as fast as anything and waited outside a wile to decide weather to go in agen and ask for the medal back or not, deciding not.

The master was about to sit down I pulled away the chair. The master sat down on the floor, and when he got up he jicked me for pulling away the chair, and then Tommy Jones jicked me for interfering. Yes; I'm going to stop helpin' people!"

Almost as Good.

To instill into the mind of his son sound wisdom and business precepts was Mosenheimer senior's earnest endeavor.

He taught his offspring much, including the business advantages of bankruptcy, failures and fires—"Two bankruptcies equal one failure, two fires one fire," etc.

Then Mosenheimer junior looked up brightly—"Fadder," he asked, "is marriage a failure?"

"Well, my boy," was his parents' reply, "if you marry a really very wealthy woman, marriage is almost as good as a failure!"

Editor's Wife: "What do they mean by poetic license? Does a poet have to pay for a license?"

Her Husband (sadly): "No. If he did we'd have fewer poets."

The Right of Way.

Because he had the right of way, He sleeps within his grave today, He had the right to rush ahead, Which cheers his friends now he is dead.

His widow works and hums a song, Because he wasn't in the wrong, His children find their future bright, Because their dad was in the right, He isn't here their bills to pay, To share with them their hours of play;

All day the mother's strength is spent, To pay the grocer and the rent, The debts grow larger day by day, But father had the right of way! Oh right of way, what cruel shame Must others suffer in your name!

Wife (on her return home) "Have you noticed that my husband missed one of the very much while I was away, Mary?"

Maid: "Well, I didn't notice it so much at first, but yesterday he seemed to be in despair."

Left it to Them.

For some reason the old-fashioned dairy always affords amusement in a court of justice. His sense of justice is illustrated in the following story of Uncle Mose.

Uncle Mose, needing money, sold his pig to a wealthy northern lawyer who had just bought the neighboring plantation. After a time, needing more money, he stole the pig and resold it at a time to a Judge Pickens, who lived "down the road a piece." Soon afterwards the two gentlemen met and upon comparing notes, said what had happened.

They confronted Uncle Mose. The old man cheerfully admitted his guilt. "Well," demanded Judge Pickens, "what are you going to do about it?"

"Blessed if I know, Judge," replied Uncle Mose, with a broad grin, "I'm no lawyer. I reckon I'll have to let 'o' two gentlemen settle it between 'o'selves."

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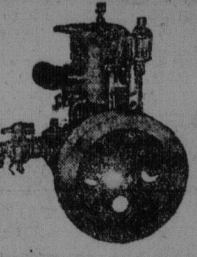
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