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MR. CARVELL ON REDUCING WAGES.

Mr. Frank P. Carvell, chairman of the board of railway commissioners, is not alone in cherishing an apparent desire to see wages reduced. But it is typical of Mr. Carvell to venture where others fear to tread, says the Ottawa Citizen. Hence the suggestion of the chief commissioner, about reducing the wages of express men, during the hearing of the case for increased express rates.

The counsel for the express traffic association, the associated express companies, had been setting forth reasons why they should be permitted to raise rates by forty per cent. last Monday, when Mr. Carvell made the following comment: "How long are wages going to remain at their present level? It is said that everything else is coming down. When are wages coming down, too?"

The learned counsel finding himself unable to answer the chief commissioner's question, Mr. Carvell repeated it in the form of an "admonition to the public, as reported in The Citizen:

"There are objections on the part of the public to rate increases, but the public doesn't ask that wages be brought down.

"It is just possible that the public is wiser than Mr. Carvell, in thus refraining from advocating a false step. Unemployment at the present moment is largely due to the lack of purchasing power among the public. Reducing wages would simply intensify this lack of purchasing power. There would be still less ability to buy goods, consequently less employment.

"There is an abundance of goods. Stores, warehouses, and factories are stocked. How are they to be disposed of, how are the wheels of industry to be kept in motion, unless purchasing power is distributed in the form of wages and salaries and incomes among the consumers, the workpeople of Canada?"

Mr. Carvell used to enjoy plain speaking. What would he say to the proposal to reduce the wages, or incomes, of workers, like the chairman of the board of railway commissioners? It would help very little towards solving unemployment, or towards keeping down the rate of unemployment and other public service rates. But it would certainly be less harmful to the community to reduce Mr. Carvell's salary than to reduce ex-

press workers' wages. It would be less liable to cause more unemployment.

The case in favor of reducing Mr. Carvell's salary before reducing workers' wages is quite simple. Mr. Carvell will doubtless see himself. Consumers are essential to maintain production in industry. Production tends to cease, when consumers are without adequate means to purchase the goods and services produced. Wages and salaries are the means of purchasing for immediate consumption, that is, for personal or domestic use, or enjoyment.

Mr. Carvell is a consumer. The express may be a consumer. Both are doubtless also contributing to the common wealth as producers. They are engaged in socially useful, or beneficial occupations. But, in the disposal of wages and salaries, they are not consumers. As consumers, they are virtually equal. Mr. Carvell can wear only one hat at a time. He wears out no more boots than the express man. Both doubtless eat about the same amount of food. In brief, production is just as dependent upon the purchasing power of the express man's wages, as upon the chief commissioner's salary.

What would happen if Mr. Carvell's suggestion to reduce wages were put into effect? The wage-earners and their dependents would tend to wear their old boots longer. They would have to make shift with less warm clothes, poorer furnished homes, stunted meal tables. They would be obliged to consume less. There would be reduced demand for goods. Production would be checked owing to the decreased purchasing power of the workers on reduced wages.

This restriction of consumption is actually what is happening in Canada: the result is general unemployment. Mr. Carvell should note that it is happening, too, in countries where wages are much lower than in Canada. The chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners had better look for a more scientific method of meeting the demand for increased rates to public utilities, than by suggesting a reduction in wages.

A reduction of \$12,000 salaries would be less liable to intensify the unemployment situation. Mr. Carvell would probably wear no fewer boots on an income of \$5,000 than on \$12,000. But the express men would certainly go less well shod, the demand for goods would de-

crease, if wages were cut down at the present time.

The belief that high wages are the cause of the high level of profiteering is the cause. Both, or either may tend to increase costs still more, just as wages seem to increase the swollen tide. But the main cause of inflation is to be found elsewhere.

Sir Thomas White has said some things, during ten years of parliamentary life, that seemed to shed the most light on the subject. He remarks on economic conditions. But Sir Thomas White gave the public some useful information before the parliamentary committee on re-establishment, last year, when he said: "The actual inflation in the world, at least among the nations that are in the soundest position in the world, is credit inflation due to the issue of securities."

After explaining what he meant by credit inflation in this particular instance, the former Minister of Finance continued: "With this credit inflation, you necessarily have an increase in prices." Perhaps at the next session to the board of railway commissioners, Mr. Carvell might inquire whether credit inflation has contributed much to the demand for increased rates?

It would be well to remember, however, that financial credit, like purchasing power, is essential to the smooth running of trade and industry. Real credit is based on the ability to produce goods, or services, when and where required. The consumer is a factor, equally with the producer, in maintaining real credit. Much attention has been given to methods of increased production, but practically none to sound methods of maintaining consumption of the goods produced. Otherwise there would be no inclination to follow Mr. Carvell's suggestion to reduce wages, at the present time of unemployment through lack of purchasing power.

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CANADIAN WOOLLEN MILL FIGURES FOR 1919 GIVEN.

The output of the Canadian hosiery and knit goods industries during the year of 1919 amounted to \$45,052,002, according to figures compiled by the Department of Trade and Commerce. The figures show that in that year there were 114 plants at work throughout the Dominion, with a total invested capital of \$34,149,593, and employing 11,931 persons.

An interesting feature of these figures is the large preponderance of women employees over men. There were 7,405 women to 2,525 men working in these plants, while 463 girls and 282 boys, all under the age of 15, were also employed.

The woollen yarn industry in 1919 showed an output of \$6,375,710 in material, according to figures compiled by the Department of Trade and Commerce. The capital invested in the plants, which numbered nine, amounted to \$4,381,236. A total of 930 persons were employed in the industry as follows: Men, 340; women, 590; boys under 16, 44; girls under 14, 76.

SOLDIERS' WIVES TO ATTEND AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

Dr. H. A. Stevenson, Labor member for London in the Legislature, stated this week that it is the policy of the Ontario Government to give all positions where possible to returned soldiers. This rule is to be strictly adhered to in the future. Dr. Stevenson says that on Saturday he had a conversation with Hon. Peter Smith, who informed him that married men will have the first call on the Government, especially in regard to such appointments as those to the Board of Moving Picture Censors, etc.

THANKS, AWFULLY!
The unions have done too much good to be allowed to be run into the ground. With good leadership they should continue to prosper," says the Engineering and Mining Journal.

PRESSMEN RAISE WAGES.
A large number of wage increases and improved working conditions are listed in the current issue of American Pressman, official magazine of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union. In Pittsburgh, Pa., these wage increases reached \$12 a week for platen pressmen and \$11 for cylinder pressmen.

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