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FRIDAY MORNING, NOV. 9.

The Farmers and the Food Controller.

Hon. W. J. Hanna spoke at a meeting of representative farmers and editors in the city yesterday, and he showed that the gravity of the food situation was being fully considered and provided for. While anxious not to depress public feeling he made it clear at the same time that the conditions that existed were becoming worse and not better, and that there must be a general awakening if very grave and serious distress is to be avoided. The shortage of food can scarcely be sufficiently emphasized. He recounted some of the measures that are being applied to mitigate the conditions. It is too late for remedy. All that can be done is to make the best of a calamitous situation.

Practically all the food in the country is being rushed to Europe in order to meet the want that threatens the allied nations there. Arrangements have been wiped out upon which much had been depending in America. Until the next harvest there must be the most careful thrift of foodstuffs. In eight months more, it is estimated, the pressure will be very serious if steps are not taken all round to conserve supplies.

Mr. Hanna gave several illustrations of what is being done. A sugar commission has been established, and no sugar can be bought in the world anywhere except thru this commission. The price fixed for raw sugar is 5 1/2 cents per pound. Cuba at first refused to sell at this rate, but when threatened by an embargo delivered her sugar. The sugar refineries will be given a pro rata allotment of the raw material, and they will deal similarly with the wholesalers, and so on. The supply will be reduced to about half all round. There can be no increase in prices, however, as the cost for the raw material is fixed. Sugar should not be sold over ten cents a pound. A case where a higher rate was charged is being investigated.

Mr. Hanna also explained the milk, the potato and the hog situations, and invited investigation by the press into the operation of his department.

The farmers stated that not more than half the present crop need be expected next year owing to the scarcity of labor and the abundance and lateness of the present harvest, which left no time for the preparation for next year's work. Strenuous objection was taken to the alleged declaration by the city newspapers that the farmers were profiteers. This was repudiated by the editors, and no instances could be cited by the farmers.

The World has taken the side of the farmers throughout the war, and has urged the necessity of more attention being given to the farm labor question. We have also deplored the fact that the farmer gets so little of the high prices paid by the consumer. We have pointed out the cause and the cure. If the farmer does not join his fellow-farmers and ignore politics he will never be able to secure what he wants. If he wishes to secure more of the profits of his sales he must resort to co-operation as it has been adopted elsewhere, and as he has done to a limited extent in Canada in some lines. The labor man and the farmer must get together and promote their common interests if they wish to solve their common problems.

Mr. Hanna's address made a deep impression and will make for a better understanding of the food controller's work.

A Misleading Word.

There has been a great deal of careless usage of the term conscription in the last twelve months, and we have frequently pointed out that what is technically known as conscription in Europe has not been proposed here and would not be endorsed by any considerable number of the people. Advantage is now being taken of this ambiguity for political purposes, and we are hearing a great deal of disingenuous denunciation of conscription, which means to people of several of the European nations what we mean by militarism, the system that we are trying to abolish, and against which all our efforts are directed.

It does not matter very much what the government system is called so far as genuine Canadians are concerned. They know that the safety of their country, the liberty of their children, the perpetuation of the traditions which make the British Empire what it is, all depend upon our triumph in this struggle.

The aim of many insidious enemies of the nation, pro-Germans, friends of the autocratic system, is to convince the uneducated immigrant that conscription here is the same thing as in Europe, imposes the same evils, and establishes the same objectionable control of a dominant military class.

This, of course, is not the case. The selective draft does not call everybody to the army as in Germany. It does not require life-long service. It takes no one from work which is more necessary than the work of the army. It discriminates among those who are needed at home and those who are not. It recognizes the common burden that we all have to bear, and it places it on the shoulders of those who can carry it, irrespective of their class or condition.

Nor is the selective draft in operation for military service alone. There are other activities as urgent and necessary as fighting, and those who can do better work at these than in the positions they hold at present may be transferred. Hon. Mr. Hanna stated yesterday that it was under consideration to divert some of the drafted men to farm work, where there is a shortage of labor, in view of the great need for higher production of food.

National service of this kind is not to be confused, therefore, with the system of conscription which involves life-long military service, which is dependent not on the will of the people, but solely on the personal decision of a ruling autocrat. Our national service depends on the decision of our elected representatives; and the policy for which we fight is not that of an irresponsible monarch, but of a league of all the free democracies in the world.

The basic political aims of those who distort and

misrepresent these facts will perhaps affect the views of many who do not understand the situation, and who are constitutionally and congenitally, like the proverbial Irishman, "agin the government."

The Military Service Act is the same measure practically which is in force in Great Britain and the United States, and on which Australia is again about to express its opinion. The removal of any misconception will help in due degree the great cause of the world's liberty and peace.

The Coon Starts Down.

A despatch from Cobalt credits Mr. George Chapman, representing the Minerals Separation Company, as saying that his company, which controls the flotation process, has no present connection with Beer, Sondheimer & Co. Mr. Chapman further says that his concern is now free from German influence and is prepared to deal with the mine operators on a more reasonable basis and revise downwards its scale of royalties.

This is quite satisfactory as far as it goes. The important point is that the Canadian output of war metals and precious metals since the commencement of the war has been curtailed by the arbitrary action of the Minerals Separation Company. That company, in Canada and the United States alike, has seemed to be more anxious to cripple and curtail mineral production than to make the money it may have been entitled to make out of its undoubtedly valuable process. The company may have been acting in good faith and it may have been unwittingly serving the interests of the central powers rather than the interests of the allies, but the fact remains that it was pursuing a dog-in-the-manger policy in this country which threatened the Canadian mining industries with something like ruin.

The World took occasion to present the miners' side of the case. It showed that the Minerals Separation Company was in fact, whatever its intentions may have been, serving the interests of Germany by curtailing mineral production in Canada. We pointed out the fact, not at the time, we believe, disputed, that the sole agent of Minerals Separation Company on this continent was Beer, Sondheimer & Co., of 61 Broadway, New York; and in this connection we ventured to say that Beer, Sondheimer & Company have been black-listed by the British Admiralty and placarded by the United States Government as a finger on the head of the great German Metal Trust.

Quite apart from its German affiliations we objected to the policy of the Minerals Separation Company, which practically refused to do business with the Canadian mine owners, but seemed bent upon embroiling them in costly litigation and in curtailing mineral production. We urged the Dominion Government to cancel the patents of this company, and to permit the Canadian miners to use the flotation process upon the payment of reasonable royalties. This fight we carried on single-handed so far as Toronto was concerned, and we heartily acclaimed Hon. Frank Cochrane's statement at Cobalt a few weeks ago that the policy advocated by The World would be the policy adopted by the union government.

Hon. Mr. Cochrane learned thru The Cobalt Northern Miner and from the mine owners of the north country that the Minerals Separation Company was doing. He seems to have been the Davy Crockett that was needed for the occasion, and the coon is preparing to come down. However, we are not surprised to learn that the north country miners told Mr. Chapman that they wanted the Dominion Government to ascertain and declare that his company was free from German influence and control before they would talk to him about the royalties he is now anxious to receive. The World congratulates the miners and the union government upon what has already been accomplished, and agrees with them that the grip of Germany must be released from the vast store of war metals that abound in New Ontario.

Margarine.

Montreal has advised with the food controller and recommends him to fix a price for margarine. This request he has consented to consider, and has even hinted that he may consider it favorably. However, the fixing of prices is so much against the policy the food controller has adopted we must not be too sanguine. The sale of margarine in Canada comes as a gift to the great corporations that will produce it and get the advantage of this new-found market. If ever there were justification for fixing the price of anything, it is in the case of margarine.

There is an idea in some quarters that margarine may cheapen the price of butter. It is just as likely that with an unfixed price margarine will chase butter up the scale until it becomes an inaccessible luxury.

No one can say what the effect of disturbing the butter market by the entry of margarine may be. The cheaper commodity, flooding the market, may drive butter to sear and more lucrative markets elsewhere; and like Canadian apples, Canadian butter may be most expensive at home.

Whether the food controller fixes the price of margarine or not he should provide that, as in Great Britain, all margarine shall be clearly marked as such, and heavy penalties should be imposed for substitution. All restaurants and hotels should be compelled to state to their guests whether butter or margarine is being served. Guests should at least have the choice of diets.

Samuel T. Wood.

Kind son of nature, lent a little while,
To tell us of the haunts and turing ways
Of creatures countless in the scale of life
Beneath the rank of man. They caught thine eye
And gripped thy heart so big and true to them,
And then thou gavest us their charming tale,
Outpouring it as if from magic fute.
But now, at last, thy last sweet tune is played,
And thou hast laid aside thine instrument.
With none to take it up. And we are sad.
And nature sobs today on yonder shore.
To golden south or silver north? Thy friends
Shall come again. Wilt thou? Thy flight is long,
So long that thou shalt nevermore return.
And thou thyself, perplexed, didst not know where.
But thou art good. And God who gave thee birth
Has ample room and love for thee.

G. B.

Never set a person down as dull until you have tried him alone, and even if the duologue fails, do not be too sure which is the dull one.
From the song of the birch-tree some of the tribes of northern Russia prepare their ordinary drink, "birkenwasser," from which they also make vinegar; and in some districts they boil it into a sweet syrup which serves them instead of sugar.

MORE FOOD TO BEAT THE U-BOATS

By P. T. V.

In view of the fact that Germany's U-boat blockade (so-called) is attempting to starve England into defeat, what are England's farmers doing to produce wheat at home?

The answer is somewhat complicated. If this were to be another Thirty Years' War, England's farmers could, long before its end, raise on their own land enough food to support the country.

But this is not to be a Thirty Years' War, and today, after three years of it, the farmers of England are raising enough wheat in a year to last the country just ten weeks.

Nor is this to be taken as a scare story. I looked last week at an enormous elevator in a remote part of England, far from air raids, where was stored enough wheat to last the island one year. Nor is it likely that this great supply will have to be tapped. For the promise with which the Kaiser launched his practical ocean blockade—that of bringing England to her knees within three weeks—has long ago fallen flat. German submarines may accomplish this much.

They may deprive England's mercantile marine of enough ships to give Germany a more nearly even start on sea after the war (if anybody wants to trade with Germany after this war).

They will accomplish no more than that. And it is a matter of great doubt whether they will accomplish that much. For German submarines have given a tremendous boom to English shipbuilding interests, a boom whose results are known only to the ministry of shipping.

But this article deals with English farmers. England's 17,500,000 acres of pasture land explains why England's farmers are producing only one-fifth the wheat necessary to sustain their country.

It takes ten years to make a good pasture in England, and farmers refuse to plow up their grass land for wheat until they can be assured it will pay them.

What will the price of wheat be, they ask, not for two or three years, but for a minimum period of four years?

The whole world wants a short war, and none more than the farmers of England; but what if the war should end next year and the price of wheat should take a sharp slump? What of the farmers, then, who had plowed up good grass and to sow wheat?

Some land there is in England which takes to grass as naturally as a duck takes to water, and deteriorates slightly for the first four years after it is left to grass, and then enters a period of from four to six years when it gradually improves under grass. Then the stock goes on it, and for the next fifty years it continues to improve. And England's farmers have been instructed for centuries to graze grass and live stock are preferable to wheat.

Despite the obstacle England's good grass land presents to an increased wheat acreage, there has been an increase of 7 per cent. in 1915-16 over the average for the ten preceding years. To accomplish this small increase, however, a rise in the price of wheat from \$5.50 per quarter in 1910 to \$12.50 at present, was necessary.

With these 17,500,000 pasture acres deducted from the 34,000,000 acres which are available for farming in England, Wales and Scotland, crop rotation explains why wheat is missing from so many of the remaining 14,500,000 "cultivated" acres.

For, out of these 14,500,000 acres, only 1,211,000 were sown in this year 1917, actually planted to wheat.

Four, five, six, seven, and even eight year rotation systems are used throughout England. From some of these wheat has been entirely excluded, and in all of them no more than one crop of wheat every alternate year is provided for.

On light soils, the usual rotation is roots, wheat, clover, and wheat, now that the demand for wheat has soared, and on heavier soils, it is roots, or fallow, wheat, clover, wheat, beans, wheat. This is the usual rotation, and the crop rotation is chiefly a war development, wheat not having been, prior to the war, nearly as popular a crop as oats.

It has been suggested that an increased yield per acre, in the absence of a large increase in actual acreage, would help, but raising the average yield of a British crop is a Herculean job. Forty years ago the British farmer was getting his thirty bushels of wheat out of an acre. Today he is getting thirty-three bushels, and in the time he gets thirty-three, it is probable that the war will have been long ended.

And here arises a curious condition. France is getting only fifteen bushels to the acre, but French farmers are feeding the nation without outside help. French crop rotations, which allow heavily for the cereals, are the explanation, however. A more liberal use of the artificial fertilizers also helps to explain the French situation.

Most of the wheat grown in Great Britain is grown in England, for among farmers on this island, wheat is essentially an English crop. Of the 1,211,000 acres given to wheat in the island, only 40,000 acres are in Wales, and 60,000 in Scotland. Scotch farmers are a great deal fonder of oats, over 1,000,000 acres of oats having been grown in the north country in 1914. There is, however, a large acreage in the lowlands of Scotland, which is quite suitable for wheat.

And it is in the highlands of Scotland that much of the 24,000,000 acres of barren land in Great Britain lies.

The difference between the total acreage of the island (34,000,000) and the 32,000,000 acres available for cultivation is made up of mountains, forests, bogs, heaths and fells, and the fact that it is quite devoid of farming possibilities is attested by the further fact that for centuries, even during long periods of food scarcity and high prices, it has lain in its present barrenness.

While the actual acreage in wheat has shown a small decrease this year under last year's figures, the barley, oats and potato acreages have shown enormous increases. Here is the table:

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OUT OF TUNE



BUTTER SCARCITY FELT IN BRITAIN

Purchases in Australia Will Afford Little Present Relief.

London, Nov. 8.—Little immediate relief from the butter scarcity need be anticipated from the large purchase of Australian butter announced by the government. Only a small portion of the 10,000 tons bought by the government is in existence. It is spring just now in Australia, and the purchase deals with the supplies which will be forthcoming during the next six or eight months.

"We are faced with a definite shortage between now and Christmas," said a prominent "butter expert." Stocks are low and importation from Denmark and Holland has practically ceased. The small quantities of Danish and Dutch butter which are in stock or are coming here are about the only "free" butter obtainable. The government controls all the rest. We could probably have more of this Danish butter if the government would pay the price, but at present the bulk of the exports go to Germany, where butter is welcome at almost any price.

Women registering for war service in the United States will be compelled to give their age and occupation, etc.

SPANISH ONIONS SPOIL IN TORONTO

Food Controller Hanna Orders Immediate Sale of Ten Tons.

Ottawa, Nov. 8.—As a result of representations made by the food controller to the department of customs, instructions have been given for the immediate sale at the best price obtainable of ten tons of Spanish onions which were spoiling in storage in Toronto.

The facts were brought to the attention of the food controller by an official of the Verral Storage Company, who stated that 297 cases of Spanish onions in storage in their plant had sprouted, and in another week's time would not be fit for food. The onions were placed in storage by the Canadian Spanish Company, 32 West Front street, but the storage company was unable to locate any person at that address. The cases had been shipped from the West Indies in bond.

The food controller at once took up the matter with the commissioner of customs, and the latter telegraphed to the collector of customs at Toronto instructing that an immediate investigation be made. The result was an order for immediate sale.

BRITISH ADVANCE DISCONCERTS FOE

Berlin Paper Describes Operations in Belgium as "Flanders Hell."

TANKS ROLL ONWARD

No Measure Can Prevail Against Allies' Flame Throwers.

Canadian Associated Press Cable, London, Nov. 8.—What Berlin thinks of the capture of Passchendaele is reflected in an article in The Berlin Post, headed, "The Flanders Hell." "Gas clouds covered all our arms with thick rust. Flame throwers began against which no measure can prevail. We now had the enemy on our neck. Tank after tank rolled forward. Behind these came acute and Canadians. Finally our reserves made a counter-attack. Murder broke out afresh. The battle ebbed away, but no rest came." The Daily Mail says: "With the ridges around Ypres in our possession, we threaten the German positions on the coast and at Lille. The ground has been won at great sacrifices, for the Germans fought desperately, knowing what is at stake."

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