

## The Toronto World

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SATURDAY MORNING, FEB. 23.

### Fix Food Prices.

All the profiteers and all the corporation influence is directed against fixing the prices of food. The people alone are not considered. The prime producers are quite satisfied with prices as they are, or as they were a year ago, but the profiteers keep on urging that if prices are not given free range towards the eternal heavens the producers won't produce. Of course it is a profiteering fallacy, but the lawyer-politicians and the politician-lawyers listen to the plea complacently and permit prices to go on rising, and the people with non-elastic incomes to sit in despair. There can be no hearty war spirit when the people feel that they are being exploited.

The fixing of the price of wheat at more than double its usual price overthrows all the contentions brought against fixing the price of other commodities. This is more especially the case when the government calls on the people not to eat wheat, which is fixed at a reasonable price, but to eat other foods which are allowed to soar in price to unreasonable limits. Cheap wheat goes out of the country, and we are all glad to be able to help by letting it go, but this is no reason why other foods should be allowed to be the means, under the unfettered control of the profiteers, of taking all the money out of the people's pockets that can be extracted.

In these emergency times the "laws" of supply and demand are recognized by all thinking people to have broken down utterly. We must force supply, not for ourselves, but for our starving neighbors. But while we perform this necessary and virtuous service there is no reason why we should, if we can prevent it, submit ourselves to an organized system of extortion. Prices should be fixed.

### Lull Before the Storm.

Another slice of the French trenches has been taken over by the British, who now stand between the Germans and Paris. It is reported that the German troops are in twice the strength opposite the British trenches that they are on the French lines. This may mean either that the Germans expect to attack the British or that they expect the British to attack them. The necessity for the element of surprise may dictate something entirely different. If the British attack it is likely they will make use of their advantage at Passchendaele, to gain which such heroic efforts were made last November.

It is not at all clear that the Germans have any idea of attacking in the west. The fact that they talked so much about it is evidence to the contrary. They are prudent enough to let sleeping dogs lie when they have other plans to occupy them. The Russian front to a buccaneering crew like the German militarists presents an irresistible temptation. They are looting and burning as they go forward, and the sack of Petrograd is a prospect that calls them forward. It would be poetic justice were Petrograd sacked and all the faithless treaty breakers there rewarded according to their deserts. Petrograd has been the home of the Bolsheviks, who have not represented the Russian people. The true Russian capital is Moscow, and the capture of Petrograd may at last set the Muscovite aflame and rally them to the redemption of their fatherland. The situation, however, is vague and unsettled to the last degree, and depends on the awakening of the real Russian spirit to give it direction.

For the allies there is nothing but the defeat of the German forces to be considered. Peace on any other terms would be German victory.

**A Good Appointment.**

With the appointment of Mr. S. A. Armstrong as deputy minister of the new department of soldiers' civil re-establishment the government has taken a wise step. Mr. Armstrong has evinced sterling ability in his work for the provincial government, and his experience and gifts qualify him admirably to take charge of this huge and important problem. His success will depend largely on the freedom of action permitted him, and it is hoped that he will be given the necessary latitude to develop his plans.

## Other People's Opinions

### The Head of the Table.

Editor World: Many of us believe the people of Canada would like to see their prime minister as supreme in national affairs as the president of the United States. In war-time power may be centralized without danger to liberty. This has been proven under the freest democracies. The people at the last Dominion election re-elected Sir Robert Borden prime minister of Canada. He enters upon his second term free to reorganize his cabinet in any way he sees fit. This or that minister may come or go without attracting popular attention. It is the prime minister to whom the people look for guidance, direction, policy and leadership. That being the case they would not resent the government becoming more and more centralized.

Nor do they complain of centralization. Indeed, the complaint, if there is any, is that the government is becoming decentralized. It is said that the cabinet as a whole seldom holds any important session under the presidency of the prime minister. It is partitioned off into standing committees like a city council. Moreover, we have high and important officials like the food controller and the fuel controller, responsible neither directly to parliament nor directly to the prime minister, not to mention boards and commissions almost without number. The idea is that they should all be under the prime minister as officials of the government. The "board" system in municipal affairs is a failure; should it become a feature in the national administration?

The big problems must be solved in their last analysis by the prime minister. He should, of course, listen respectfully to the members of his cabinet, but as a general in command listens to the officers of his staff, it is he who must decide and upon him is the responsibility.

The prime minister is in control and there can be no division of responsibility. For the successful carrying on of the war, for the settlement of the railway problem and for other successes or failures, as the case may be, the country will commend or condemn Sir Robert Borden. The heads of certain great departments, like militia and finance, are associated in the public mind with the chief executive; but the public cannot possibly apportion the praise or blame due any government among 23 or 24 cabinet ministers. Few citizens recall the names of more than three out of the 23 advisers by whom Sir Robert is surrounded.

The people of Canada hold Premier Borden responsible, just as the people of the United States hold President Wilson responsible. Where he sits, there is the head of the table.

### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL WINTER FAIR ANNUAL.

Financial Statement Shows Organization to Be in Good Condition—Next Fair December 8 to 12.

The directors of the Ontario Provincial Winter Fair held their annual meeting in the parliament buildings yesterday.

The financial statement showed the association to be in a flourishing condition, having held in December, 1917, one of its most successful shows in its history. The prize money paid totaled considerably over \$21,000, and the fair's business showed a turnover of nearly \$45,000, with a credit balance of something over \$400.

The president, W. W. Ballantyne, in his address, complimented the association not only on its good financial standing but the important educational work that had been performed by the holding each year in Guelph of the fair.

The following officers were elected: president, J. I. Platt; honorary president, W. W. Ballantyne; Stratford; vice-president, John Gardiner; secretary, John A. Boag, Queensville; treasurer, R. W. Wade, Toronto; executive committee, J. I. Platt, Stratford; J. D. Brien, Ridgeway; W. McNeil, London; A. McKenney, Amherstburg.

The 1918 Ontario Provincial Winter Fair will be held Dec. 6 to 12, and entries will close Nov. 20.

### MRS. MARTHA FORD DEAD.

After an illness of some time, Mrs. Martha Ford, widow of the late Alexander Ford, died at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. Hazel McLean, Hampton Court Apartments, Avenue road, Mrs. Ford was the second daughter of the late E. H. Rutherford, Jarvis street, 64 years ago and has lived in Toronto all her life. The deceased was one of Toronto's best known and highly respected citizens, and is survived by one son, Rutherford Ford, and two daughters, Miss Louisa Ford and Mrs. Hazel McLean, all living in Toronto. Mrs. Ford was a member of the Anglican Church and will be buried Monday, Feb. 25, in St. James' Cemetery. The funeral will be private.

### COAL SITUATION WORSE.

"Well, it's just this," said Sergeant Major Gustaf, secretary of the West Toronto Branch of the G. W. V. A. "If the soldiers' aid commission can't get any coal I am sure there is little chance of my being able to get any. I understand they can't. The situation seems to me to be getting worse, not better."

### SPECIALISTS ORGANIZE.

A union of specialist machinists has been organized in Toronto, according to information received from John A. Flett, general organizer.

## Sir Robert Borden and Sir Adam Beck and National Railways.

### The Head of the Table.

Friends of public ownership are not required to pick a quarrel with Sir Robert Borden because of his reply to the big deputation headed by Sir Adam Beck which waited upon the government on Thursday to urge the nationalization and electrification of the Grand Trunk Railway System. The railway problem has been under consideration for nearly two months. The proclamation of President Wilson taking over the operation of the American railways and the simultaneous order of our Dominion Railway Commission authorizing Canadian railways to increase their passenger and freight rates made our railway problem acute and required our government to lose no time in formulating a definite policy. The policy, the World recommended and still adheres to, is a policy of complete and immediate railway nationalization. That policy has been endorsed by The Toronto Globe, The Winnipeg Free Press and by public opinion generally in Ontario and the west. It is a policy which we believe commends itself to the prime minister.

The persistent assumption in some quarters that the Canadian Pacific is to be excluded from the government's policy of nationalization finds no support in anything said by Sir Robert Borden. It is true that Sir Robert has never announced that the C. P. is to be included in the government's railway system; neither has he ever said that it would not be included. Those who ought to know his views declare that he sees certain obstacles in the way of nationalization which obtain in the case of the Grand Trunk but less than in the case of the Canadian Pacific. The Beck deputation by going out of its way to argue that the C. P. should not be nationalized, strengthened the hands of those who oppose the nationalization of the old Grand Trunk.

If we read the prime minister's answer a right he did not dispute the advantages that would flow from railway nationalization, but pointed out certain obstacles that he thought must be surmounted before we were to achieve its successful accomplishment. He said, and we think quite correctly, that the government of the day must always be responsible to parliament for the efficient operation and proper development of a national railway system. Political control in the best sense of the term could never be relinquished and the problem was how to retain political control without including party politics, patronage and many evils that we may frankly admit have clung like barnacles to government ownership in the case of the Intercolonial. We believe there is a way out and we think Sir Robert will find it, but he'll find it all the sooner by facing the question of the C. P. head on.

The Hon. Frank Carroll (his minister of public works) at Montreal was with his sanction. Here is how The Montreal Gazette (a leading opponent of public ownership) interprets it: "The speech of the Hon. Frank Carroll in Montreal before the Canadian Club last night was a masterpiece of tact, among other things, which he dealt, among other things, with the attitude of the Union Government towards the railway problem. While the idea of interfering with the C.P.R. has been definitely dismissed, the speaker pointed out that the government's discussion still centered around the attitude of the government towards the Grand Trunk. There is a rumor in political circles that the speaker would be asked to do so, and that the government has practically decided not to nationalize the G.T.R. The reason for this, he said, is that the government is purely a war government, in which very diverse views on the question of railway ownership would seem to be the best and wisest course to be followed towards the Grand Trunk. The condition in which the speaker would be asked to do so, and that the government has practically decided not to nationalize the G.T.R. The reason for this, he said, is that the government is purely a war government, in which very diverse views on the question of railway ownership would seem to be the best and wisest course to be followed towards the Grand Trunk. The condition in which the speaker would be asked to do so, and that the government has practically decided not to nationalize the G.T.R. The reason for this, he said, is that the government is purely a war government, in which very diverse views on the question of railway ownership would seem to be the best and wisest course to be followed towards the Grand Trunk. 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