

E D I T O R I A L

LATIN labels on our trees do no good. Winter approaches and once more in the parks the shrubs and trees let down their leaves and reveal the ghastly labels that passionate botanists have wired to their branches. Thus a good honest sugar maple is found masquerading as "Acer Saccharinum"—a pretension as far removed from the real character of that useful tree as knighthood from a workingman. Thus also the White Oak is paraded as *Quercus Alba*. That sort of thing may have been all very well for the Latins, and no doubt if Julius Caesar were resurrected and was being given the freedom of one of our cities it would be an act of courtesy to label our trees in his own language. But as it is only the botanists know or care, or some Latin scholar who wears his knowledge as a dog would wear a fifth leg. The real people to be considered in this matter are the children. It would interest thousands of 'em to know that this tree was a red oak and that one a white oak. But Latin labels frighten off all but the pedantic. Instead of spreading learning they hamper its expansion. Some day the dead languages will be left only to those who need it in their reasearches. Some day the people who now stick them on our trees will take more interest in English. They may even learn to write it. It isn't a bad language.

TACTICS are not necessarily opinions. When a writer is dealing with the tactics of armies he is likely to say things once in a while that do not seem on the surface to be wholesale compliment to either side. Sidney Coryn, an Englishman who has studied the war closely, and whose article was printed in last week's issue of the Courier, gave an opinion that Germany was feeding back territory to the Allies at a cost and slowly withdrawing men from the western front to stem the tide in the East. He may be wrong, but that is his opinion. He did not quote the cost that Germany is paying. Neither did he deny that whatever Germany now does she is compelled to do and no longer chooses to do. If Germany is weakening her armies in the west, so much the better; we shall sooner be able to break through. But whether she weakens her armies there or strengthens them will make no difference to the ultimate result. We shall break through—some time. All the cumulative evidence of our weight of men and munitions points that way. But before we do there will be plenty of time for tactics that do not of themselves constitute ultimate opinions on the trend of the war. When a neutral expert devotes nine-tenths of his writing to prove that the Allies are winning, he is entitled to reserve the other tenth of his opinions for the consideration of tactics. And that is the part which makes the bulk of his pro-Allied opinions so valuable.

SURELY the action which the Government promised the Labour men to take with regard to the High Cost of Living will not take the form of another Commission. On the last High Cost of Living Commission there is said to have been a straight division between those members who believed in Free Trade and those who believed in Tariff Protection, with the result that the Free Traders blamed the tariff—but were not allowed to say so owing to the superior numbers of Protectionists associated with them. That commission was worthless, and so will any other one be unless it is authorized to do more than report on the mere generalities of the situation.

One element which deserves recognition in the study of the problem is the High Cost of Labour post hoc or proptre hoc. A ridiculous proportion of the people who complain of the High Cost of living are themselves part of the cause. In other words, they are middlemen. It is not unlikely that if the activities of our population were analyzed even in our present war conditions, it would be found that between the farmer-producer and the factory-producer there is an army of middle-men as great, possibly greater than the combined numbers of farmers and factory-workers. We are over-burdened with gentlefolk who toil not, neither do they spin. They make polite livings by acting as intermediary-handlers of traffic, or middle-men between middle-men, or the servants of middle-men. The Government may—though it is difficult to see just where they are going to get the courage to do it—take steps to check the charges of the middle-men. They may inquire, for example, why milk which is bought in the Ottawa valley for five cents a quart retails to Toronto householders at ten cents a quart. They may be able to drive that price down, and the prices of other necessities of life in like manner. But no lasting good will have been accomplished until steps are taken to encourage more producers—of both kinds. That would increase the supply and moderate the demand. That is the real basis of the H. C. of L.

SOME people's intense optimism is apt to become pessimism at short notice. This applies peculiarly to war, which has produced a state of nerves never before known in the world. Consider the man who nudges you at lunch and says in a sub rosa tone that he has it on good authority from a man who has lately travelled through all the Allied and neutral countries with his eyes wide open and his ears to the ground—that there will not be a shot fired after November.

That man is an unreasoning optimist, who this time next week may be one of the most doleful Jeremiadists in town. He is fed up on the mere gossip of the war, as a poor old body is tantalized by symptoms and patent medicines. He alleges solemnly that his informant tells him Germany has no wool. Ergo—any one can see the consequence. Germany cannot possibly fight without wool. Why? The informant does not say. And the informant is both right and wrong. Germany has wool. Germany has so much wool that she is fighting like the devil in the last ditch. And the moment Germany loses the last of her wool she will be next thing to a finish in the fighting. The moment fate plucks away all the wool that the war lords have pulled over Germany's eyes, that country will see daylight so painfully plain that she will be like the blind man suddenly glaring at the face of noon. We have no objection to the optimist. We are all privileged to be one of the class. But the best way to look for the best is to blink at nothing. If this war should take an unprecedented notion to be done before Christmas, the British nation will be forced to quit before she has finished her work, which is a thing she has never done. Canada will be sending men home before many of them have had a chance to strike a blow in the great victory; and that is something a true Canadian, no matter where he was born, does not relish. The man who whispers that the war may be over with November will buck like a broncho and become a pessimist the moment he reads something in an Allied newspaper that does not sound like Hurrah, boys!

THIS passage from a translation of Nietzsche, written, of course, long before the war, is interesting: "It seems forbidden by public opinion in Germany to refer to the evil and dangerous consequences of the late war. A great victory is a great danger. The greatest error at present is the belief that this fortunate war has been won by German culture. An iron military discipline, natural courage and endurance, the superiority of the leaders, the unity and obedience of their followers—in short, factors which have nothing to do with culture, helped to obtain the victory. . . . At present both the public and the private life of Germany shows every sign of the utmost want of culture; the modern German lives in a chaotic muddle of all styles, and is still, as ever, lacking in original productive culture."

This passage by the mad philosopher would need little change were it being uttered as a comment on present-day Germany. The reference to Victory is alone the only thing out of place.

SIR HAMAR GREENWOOD and his bluff ways is indeed welcome back in Canada. The only thing to be regretted is the fact that he comes no longer as a Canadian. The newspapers may say so and Sir Hamar may say so in his speeches, but the truth of the matter is that Sir Hamar required a larger field for his activities than Canada, and has become a Londoner. Somehow this is a disturbing thought. Here we are with tremendous problems to solve. Here is a country needing all the brains and all the devotion her people can muster. Yet a man like Greenwood—really a brilliant man—is drawn to London. Says somebody: "He can do service for Canada as well there as here." Wrong. The man who serves Canada loves Canada. And the man who loves Canada leaves her only when he must, and to him no higher honours and no better fellowship is to be had than the honours and the fellowship of his own countrymen.

WHOEVER invented the proverb that it's cheaper to move than to pay rent, should also invent another one—It's more uncomfortable to move than to go to war, as long as you don't have to fight. Moving is—war. That's near enough to the Sherman definition. One of the greatest tragedies of modern moving is summed up in the screw driver. The artist who designed 20th century curtains did a fine stroke for the screw-makers. The window contrivance of personal knowledge contained no fewer than forty-eight screws in six various sizes, all of them nearly invisible to the naked eye, half of them inaccessible, and most of them too small for any screw-driver of a man's size. Why does a man fall heir to the screw-driver at moving time? It's one of his prerogatives. And there is a deep need of a magnetized screw-driver that will never hit any other part of the screw except the groove and never budge from the groove till the screw is out. Otherwise the most obvious puzzlement of modern moving is—china. Packing china is an art. And it requires an artist. No ordinary man should ever attempt it. Unless a man is willing to put one whole newspaper round each dinky little cup or saucer or whatever it may be, he is not fit to be even an assistant at the game of packing china. These two irrelevant details disposed of, the rest of the moving business is merely a case of absolute dislocation, when you have no home, no immediate use for your friends, no regard for the cat and no concern about anything except to get water, gas, electricity, coal, telephone, milkman, etc.—all steered away from where you have been and connected up to where you are going. In which respect moving is—what war is said to be.