

If every German could have the President's letter in his hands for quiet reading and reflection, we might hope for some early movement by the independent elements towards the reorganization of the German system. The Kaiser, however, will probably not permit Mr. Wilson's despatch to have a widespread circulation. Time will be required to get the sound reasoning of the President into the minds of the German people. Meanwhile His Holiness the Pope will be able to clearly see that a peace proposal that cannot be approved by a nation in the position of the United States cannot possibly be entertained by the European nations which have suffered so severely from the German barbarism.

Closure

THE Canadian Northern Railway bill is the most important measure of the Parliamentary session. Some other questions have caused more debate, but there is not one of more far-reaching influence than the measure to acquire the great system of railways, telegraphs, hotels and other enterprises covering seven of the nine Provinces of the Dominion, and to arbitrate Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann's claim for \$60,000,000. It is much to be regretted that the Government deferred the introduction of the measure until a late stage of a long session, and then rushed it through the House of Commons by means of the "closure" — a rule only employed once before in the history of Canada. A measure of such magnitude, brought forward at an early stage of the session, and left to take its course through Parliament in the ordinary way, would have had a better chance to win general approval.

Meat Profiteering

SO MUCH being said in Canada concerning the profits of those engaged in the meat trade, it will be interesting to learn what is happening on the same subject in other places affected by the war. New Zealand and Australia are large meat producing countries. Much of their meat is frozen and sent to the English markets. At an early stage of the war the British Government took control of the supplies from both countries. Their main purpose, of course, was to ensure abundance of food for the armies. Only a moderate part of the quantity imported has been released for the use of the civilian population. Some complaint having been made concerning the prices to consumers the New Zealand High Commissioner in London has made an explanation which seems to show that the business has been well regulated up to the last stage, when the meat passes into the hands of the English retailer who in some instances may use his liberty to ask more than a reasonable price. The New Zealand farmer receives 6½d. per pound for lamb, and 4⅞d. per pound for mutton. The British authorities charge the actual cost of transit, cold storage, insurance, etc., and allow two per cent commission to the selling agents. The wholesale dealer receives the meat at the price so fixed and is required to sell to the retailer at a profit not to exceed a half penny per pound. If after this explanation the retailer asks prices that are unreasonable the responsibility can be fixed on him, since it is made clear that up to the time the

meat reaches him it has been subject to Government control and its prices have been fair.

The point of chief interest to us here is that the British Government have declared that the wholesaler should be content with a moderate profit not to exceed in any case one cent per pound. What profit our Canadian wholesalers receive on their sales is a disputed point which we presume will be made clear when Commissioner Henderson and the accountants associated with him send in their report.

Railway Crossing Dangers

THE level crossing is everywhere a source of much danger on our railway lines. Wherever it is reasonably possible to do so the crossing should be eliminated, and the railway line carried below or above the highway. Where such safeguard is not practicable, and where there is considerable traffic, gates and watchmen should be provided. These are things which the Railway Commission should insist on. But insistence on the duty of the railways should not relieve travellers on the highways from their own responsibility. There are some places where the tracks are used infrequently, and where the Railway Commission may feel that either the elimination of the crossing or the employment of watchmen can hardly be insisted on. Common prudence on the part of the highway traveller should be a sufficient guard against accident. But how often that common prudence is neglected! The automobile driver particularly too often dashes across a railway track without taking any trouble to see whether there is an approaching train. The sensible injunction, "Stop! look! listen!" is entirely disregarded, too often with fatal results. No vehicle of any kind should cross a railway track until the driver has stopped and carefully observed the track in both directions. This is such a simple rule that it may seem quite unnecessary to remind people of it. But the newspapers almost every day bring reports of cases in which the rule has been ignored and people killed or injured.

There is need of a campaign to impress the rule on all drivers—and particularly on the motor car drivers, whose craze for speed is one of the chief causes of the trouble. Even in our cities, under the eyes of the police, the regulations respecting speed limits are every day violated to an extent that is productive of great danger. In town as well as in the country there is much need of more attention to the advice "Stop! look! listen!"

A Check to the Motor Industry

ONE of the curious things in the business world has been the ever increasing extent of the motor car industry, even in face of almost general business depression. In the course of ordinary business there are some things which are regarded as necessities, things which under all conditions people will get if it is possible to do so, and some other things which are regarded as luxuries, things only purchased largely when times are good and money plentiful. The motor car was classed among the luxuries. A sharp restriction of the motor industry was to be expected in the period of business depression which occurred in the United States and Canada

shortly before the outbreak of the war, and continued during the first few months of the war. Surely if there was anything which people could do without at such a time it was this new and somewhat costly vehicle. The strange thing is that the motor industry, instead of showing a falling off, exhibited a remarkable expansion. The people, apparently, refused to regard the motor car as a luxury. Even in hard times they insisted on having the new vehicle. Then, when the first war shock was over and business revived, the motor car industry went forward by leaps and bounds. The motor car is largely an American invention, and while it has invaded the markets of other countries it is in the United States that it finds its greatest success. In most lines of industry, the British manufacturer, though he may be slow to start, is able to compete successfully with the world. It might be expected that he would do so in the motor car business, but he does not. No British car of equal character is offered as cheaply as the popular American cars. The explanation is to be found, not in any lack of skill or enterprise on the part of the British manufacturer, but in the taste and habits of the people of the two countries. In England the motor car is still regarded as the luxury of the rich or well-to-do classes. In the United States it is regarded, if not as a necessary, as a very useful thing, ministering to the comfort of the people, and quite within the means of classes who in England would never dream of buying a car. In America, consequently, there is a market for the cars which is not found in Great Britain. No British manufacturer could think of turning out, as one American factory did last year, nearly three-quarters of a million cars, about twenty-four hundred for every working day! That American concern may well be regarded as the greatest manufacturing enterprise in the world. In Canada, while there has not been anything like as great a development of the motor car as in the States, the number of cars in use, either Canadian or imported, has largely increased. The lessons of thrift and economy so universally heard or read have not seemed to check the purchase of the cars.

Now, however, a change is coming over the situation in the States, and it may extend to Canada, though if the experience of our neighbors in war-time is like that of Canada, the check on the use of the motor cars will not last long. For the moment, however, there is a disposition in the States to regard the car as a luxury, and to dispense with it, or at all events not to enlarge the sphere of its use. The general increase of the cost of production is obliging the manufacturers to increase their prices. The higher prices of tires and gasoline are making the cost of operating a car materially larger than hitherto. New war taxes are warning the people of heavier burdens to be borne. There is a manifest slackening of orders. Manufacturers are reducing their operations. Motor car company stocks are falling in prices. There is at last a distinct check to the business. For a little while the industry will not flourish as it did. But we doubt if the check will remain long. In spite of war conditions and appeals for economy and thrift, Canada is using more motor cars in the fourth year of the war than she did in the first year. The idea that the car is a luxury is pushed aside. So it is likely to be in the States. The good American citizen will feel that there are many things that he may dispense with in war time, but he will probably soon reach the conclusion that he cannot well get along without his car.