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Economy, national and private has hitherto been urged as a war measure. The response has been favorable, but not to the extent which the people of Canada should economize on purely patriotic grounds. The rapid rise in the cost of living, however, is bringing home to everyone the necessity for the closest scrutiny of expenditure, personal, business and governmental.

On another page Mr. Greenwood points out the advantages of substituting fish for meat to a considerable extent upon our tables. But this is only one item of economy that could be effected by the housewife throughout the land. There are many more substitutions that could be made in our diet which would not sacrifice a particle the nutritive value of our meals. The increase in the cost of food is naturally our most pressing problem, but the matter of dress is only less so. Herein remarkable saving could be effected in the personal and family expense account. We are importing large amounts of goods which give evidence of extravagance and economic waste. Many of these items are in lines of wearing apparel of which there are provided cheaper and equally valuable substitutes of our own manufacture. We could at least import the cheaper varieties. So also in our consumption of luxuries waste is too evident.

This is not a small question simply because in the majority of individual cases it involves only small amounts of money. The aggregate waste, which is altogether controlled through social and governmental means, totals hundreds of millions annually. We believe that the Dominion Government might very well put into operation at the next session of Parliament a moderate amount of items which are now imported and prohibit their importation. It might reasonably go further and prohibit the manufacture of certain luxuries for the period of the War, particularly of those articles, the consumption or purchase of which serves not only no useful purpose, but perhaps a pernicious purpose.

On the social side much could be done. The leading business people and their families should make it fashionable to be economical. They should wear their saving habits on their sleeves. They should frown on ill-advised expenditure and use social pressure against those who refuse to practise saving and economy.

If Canada were on the thrift basis of France, for example, she would be subscribing half billions of dollars to War Loans in place of two hundred millions of dollars. What this meaning is to Canadian industrialism in the way of waging war he who runs may read.

The services of this journal are offered through an inquiry column, which is open to subscribers and the public generally without charge, for detailed information or opinion as to financial or industrial affairs or institutions throughout the Province of British Columbia. Wherever possible the replies to these inquiries will be made through this column. Where inquiries are not of general interest, they will be handled by letter. We think that we can assure our readers that the opinions expressed will be sane and conservative, and that all statements will be as accurate as possible.

In a recent press despatch from Ottawa it is stated that the Hon., the Minister of Customs, has for the present, refused the request of the British Columbia business men for the appointment of a customs official at New York.

The department apparently is seeking another solution and is approaching the railways with a view to securing from them a rate on all commodities having a Dominion port on the Pacific as a destination from the manufacturing centres of Ontario and Quebec to Halifax or Saint John, which will be the same as the rate from those centres to the port of New York. This solution, we confess, is an approximation to an adequate solution in the circumstances, but we must hold that it stands little hope, at least for several years, of favorable action. The distances preclude the probability of the railways giving equal rates. For example, from Toronto to Saint John via the Intercolonial, the Government railway, it is slightly over 1000 miles; on the Canadian Pacific Railway which crosses the state of Maine, it is something like 800 miles; from Toronto via Buffalo to New York it is by the longest route 550 miles, and ranges down to about 500 miles. This is on one of the densest traffic sections of the United States, and for that reason enjoys a low rate. Hamilton being nearer to New York would be more favorably located for the New York haul as against the St. John haul. The manufacturing districts of Ontario would be situated similarly to Hamilton. It will thus be seen that the railways will have to give a rate for a 800-mile haul, using the most favorable illustration to the Customs Department proposed solution, equal to a 550-mile haul of which 110 miles will be on a Canadian railway.

Using Montreal as an example the distance from Montreal to Saint John via C. P. R. is approximately 485 miles, while from Montreal to New York it is nearer to 300 miles. The rate therefore which the C. P. R. would have to make would render little profit in the business. It can thus be seen that the proposed solution of the Hon. J. D. Reid will meet obstacles, which we doubt he will be able to overcome. The citation of distances is only intended to be the roughest approximation. Relatively they are not much in error.

Why would it not be a good stroke of business for the Minister of Customs to grant the request of British Columbia? On the return of normal conditions after the war our railways and steamship lines could make arrangements to handle the trade on terms of competition with the New York rate when the Customs privilege could be withdrawn or held in abeyance. We are quite anxious to keep the trade and transportation entirely in Canada or in Canadian bottoms, but there are limitations imposed by Nature which cannot always be overcome. In cases where they cannot be overcome there are alternative solutions. In this particular case we cannot see as yet how we in British Columbia can have untrammelled trade with Eastern Canada without the resort to the expedient of appointing a customs official at New York for the handling of this trade.