

EQUITIES MAKE VALUES.

We are informed by one of our financial contemporaries that "Equities make values." They surely do, as instanced in the increased value of Bell Telephone stock, when the Railway Board empowered the company to increase its rates by 10 per cent., in spite of the strong protests of the municipal councils and the Union of Canadian Municipalities. In other words, the Railway Board simply handed to the Bell Telephone Company a large equity at the expense of the public. We find, too, that many of the privately owned utility companies have increased the value of their stocks by equities of the same nature—increased rates and fares. The pity of it is that they get away with it so easy.

HIGH COST OF LIVING COMMITTEE.

The House of Commons has appointed a special Committee to inquire into the cost of foodstuffs, clothing, fuel and other necessities of life. Such a committee ought to have been appointed long ago, but even late as it is there is no reason why it should not do good work in bringing to light some of the reasons, and excuses, for the high prices of every necessity of life. Much valuable evidence has already been given, most of which shows the excessive profits made by the middleman. In clothing alone the evidence proved that in many instances the middleman's margin was greater than the whole amount that went to the farmer, manufacturer and laborer. And no doubt the same reason will be given for the cost of many of our commodities. But assuming that the principal reason for the high prices is the excessive margin between the producer and the consumer, what is the remedy? So far as our observations go we would say that the only remedy is control of prices, starting with the retailer as being the one in touch with the public, and working back to the grower or producer. But such control must be real control which so far as we can see can only be made possible by the closest co-operation between the Federal and Municipal authorities. There is at the present moment an Order-in-Council delegating certain powers to the Municipal councils in the matter, but these powers are limited and indefinite and therefore unsatisfactory. The consequence is nothing has been done and nothing is likely to be done under the present arrangements. We would suggest that the Committee take up this phase of the question as a possible solution of the problem.

QUEBEC'S FOREST WEALTH.

Ottawa, May 31, 1919.

The Editor:—

We notice in your May issue a paragraph claiming that Quebec's forest wealth is in excess of that of British Columbia. There must be some error in connection with this item. We believe that you have confused the forest area with timber contents on such area. It may be quite true that Quebec possesses 130 million acres of forest land, while British Columbia has 100 million acres, but the average stand per acre in British Columbia is very much higher than that of Quebec. As a matter of fact, British Columbia contains to-day approximately one half the total timber stand of the whole of Canada. This differs quite radically from the statement in your issue that "Quebec has 30 per cent more timber than British Columbia."

Yours very truly,
ROBSON BLACK,
Secretary,

INVITATION TO MAYORS.

The Cost of Living Committee of the House of Commons has passed the following resolutions:

"That, with a view to assisting this Committee, we request the Mayors of the following cities, viz.: Halifax, St. John, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Fort William, Port Arthur, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and Victoria, to form a committee consisting of the presidents of the Boards of Trade, presidents of the Trades and Labor Councils, presidents of G.W.V.A., and two representatives of women's organizations, or such persons as the foregoing organizations may appoint.

"Such committees to ascertain the base cost to importer or manufacturer of following staple articles: boots and shoes, ordinary articles of clothing, meats and meat products of packing companies, fresh and cured, flour and cereals, coal, silk, and bread; also average rentals for residents of working classes; also average general rate of bank interest on commercial paper, also the ultimate retail prices charged in ordinary retail stores, to consumers, delivered, of such articles.

"That the above committee be asked to perform the above duties as an emergency public service, to assist the committee in its work.

"That the object is to find out the spread between the original producer of common articles of necessities of life, and the price charged the consumer. That these committees be asked to report as early as possible on these items, and to furnish subsequently such other information as they may desire."

FOREST FIRES.

Quebec, June 2, 1919.

Dear Sir,—Since we have had dry weather that, if continued for some time, may be a cause of damages to our forests, I would be greatly obliged if you would kindly call the attention of your readers to the great necessity that exists for them to be extremely careful, when they have to travel in and near the forest, to take the necessary precautions to properly extinguish their camp fires, to watch their pipes, etc.

For the same reason the settlers who must kindle their clearings should remember that they are under obligation to request, beforehand, a permit to do so, and also thoroughly clean the surroundings of the brush pile so as to prevent the fire to escape from their control and attack the adjoining green timber. Furthermore, they are compelled by the law to watch or have watched the combustion so as to prevent any danger of conflagration.

Thanking you in anticipation for the help you will give us in this occasion, I remain,

Yours very truly,
J. PICHE,
Chief of the Forest Service,
Province of Quebec.

THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW.

With the May issue of the National Municipal Review, published by the National Municipal League, from its headquarters in Philadelphia, the magazine becomes a monthly instead of a bi-monthly, as heretofore. This welcome change is made because of the increasing importance and interest of the Review, and in response to a wide-spread demand. As a magazine for everyone interested in good municipal government the National Municipal Review has achieved an illustrious record during the seven years of its existence, and has numbered among its contributors practically all the foremost specialists in municipal government.

The National Municipal Review enjoys a unique position in the United States, even among periodicals, giving special attention to municipal affairs, in that it has maintained a remarkable leadership in progressive municipal reforms. It is to-day formulating and discussing the ideals which the general public will be considering five years' hence, and adopting in a decade. A search in a library for reference on any current municipal topic usually shows that the earliest article on the subject was published by the National Municipal League, and that the latest and most complete evidence is also among the League's publications. The Review is therefore invaluable to all who are concerned in American municipal government.