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## Progress and Prospects in Provincial Business

**Probable End of War Not Soon—Question as to Credit Conditions—Flourishing Condition of Business with Good Prospects for the Remainder of the Year.**

In attempting to present some few outline remarks on business conditions and business prospects in British Columbia, it is necessary to preface them with some statement as to the war situation and also with the credit situation.

Apart from the supreme object, that of winning the war, the question most often asked is, "when will the war end?" A negotiated peace as now recognized is out of the question. It must end by victory for the Allies and in no other way. The bald facts of the situation are that we are not winning the war. We are simply holding the enemy until our equipment and men will be sufficiently overwhelming as to admit of a continuous offensive, that is, until the resources and man power of the United States are in operation against the enemy at a maximum. We are, therefore, fairly certain in saying that the war cannot end this year. It would also be safe to say that barring the collapse of Germany, of which there is practically no evidence, the war cannot end before the autumn of 1919, and possibly the spring of 1920. Within limits the end of the war is not probable before the fall of 1919, nor with favourable conditions, would it be expected to last beyond the fall of 1920. We think that business interests may with reasonable safety count on cessation of hostilities some time between those two dates. As regards the credit situation, it is nowhere in as safe a position as it has been since the country has been adjusted to war business. As we approach the more critical days, critical from its economic aspects rather than its military aspects, the question of credit assumes a larger and more important place in the affairs of business. As the war progresses the producing power and the consumption of goods will be increasingly under Dominion regulation and control, if they do not come under the actual management of government officials. We must look forward to the possibility that what we have to sell we must sell to the government and what we may buy, we must buy from the government. In the matter of credit, therefore, it

can be seen that the uses for and the operations of credit will be more and more regulated and controlled by the government as it will be in the matter of goods. The average business man must face this situation and must adjust matters to the position of buying what he has capital sufficient to pay for and selling for cash, or close approximations thereto. The banks as credit instruments must decline in their extensions of domestic credit as its credit resources are more and more required for the uses of the state.

With this general statement in mind we confess that the present situation needs handling, particularly as this is true of Western Canada, including British Columbia. The general trend in the East is for the hand to mouth basis of business, whereas in the West merchants are buying and have bought in much larger quantities and against the needs of a greater period ahead. Although this is quite natural in the West on account of the fact that the East is the producer of manufacturing lines and the West is largely the consumer of these manufacturing lines, the question is one of degrees and not of principle.

It is generally recognized that the entire commodity markets are somewhat out of gear. Prices have risen to such a point that the question of purchase by the general public is being inquired into as never before, and a certain period, not necessarily prolonged, of abstinence from buying because of public resentment may possibly involve serious depreciation in present prices which would have a very disturbing influence on business affairs. It is therefore incumbent upon the average business man to buy

against present needs and buy in small quantities though often.

Taking the fundamental business situation as we can see it in vague outlines, we must say that the economic strain is ahead and increasing as the months will go by, taking a greater pull upon our resources and wealth, both public and private, than it has during the progress of the war so far. We must therefore conserve all our resources and save to the point of individual privation.

In view of the great prosperity which is rampant throughout Canada including the Province of British Columbia where the signs of extravagance and foolish expendi-

### PROGRESS AND PROSPECT IN PROVINCIAL BUSINESS

#### PROGRESS OF MINING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IN 1917

#### CONSERVATION OF CREDIT FOR WAR PURPOSES

#### STATIC ELECTRICITY AND GASOLINE EXPLOSIONS

#### RECENT ANNUAL REPORTS

#### MINING THROUGHOUT BRITISH COLUMBIA.

#### TRUST COMPANY NOTES, COMPANY NOTES, INSURANCE MUNICIPAL, LUMBER, MINING AND OTHER INFORMATION