

EXPORT FIRST: SAVE AFTERWARD

CANADA is ready for drastic action on the part of the Food Controller. Producing more food for export according to population than any other country, we are capable of real self-denial.

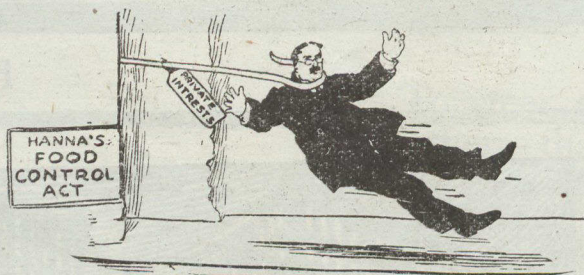
THERE is one official Food Controller in Canada. There are at least a million unofficial controllers—male and female—each of whom is quite persuaded of his ability to hold down that particular job with better results than those obtained so far by Hon. W. J. Hanna, or to be obtained by Mr. Thomson, his successor.

"I don't see the least advantage in this war bread they are advertising and that Mr. Hanna wants us to eat," remarked one woman to another in the course of a street-car conversation.

"Neither do I," was the reply. "Why, it is just as expensive as the white. It all goes to show how little sense Mr. Hanna has. I do believe our food costs us more now than before he was appointed."

Now, I am not qualified to discuss intelligently the question whether or not the various substitutes for white bread should, or should not, be sold for a less price. That is, after all, a side issue—important as it may be to each and all of us in these days of the shrinking and rapidly diminishing dollar. The trouble with most of the Food Controller's critics is that they are muddled in their thinking. First things first is a safe rule. To reduce the cost of living for us who remain at home is NOT the principal purpose for which a Food Controller was appointed. His main task must be accomplished first. We are facing world-wide scarcity of food; we are, in fact, in danger of world-wide famine. The Food Controller's task is so to regulate and direct consumption of food that there will be sufficient for all, so to divert consumption from one food to another that certain essential staples and highly concentrated foods such as wheat, beef and bacon may be saved for export.

Much noise has been abroad in the land about the burden of sixty cent bacon. Much of that noise has emanated from farmers who have no objection to \$2.21 wheat or 18 cents per pound live weight for hogs. But why should sixty cent bacon be a burden on home keeping Canadians? We need not eat it. Indeed, if we are alive to the real needs of to-day, we shall have seven baconless days a week. Bacon is scarce; it is a highly concentrated food that occupies comparatively little space in these days of scant shipping facilities; it is an absolutely essential food for the Canadian and Allied armies. Yet the idea of most of the amateur Food Controllers in Canada seems to be that the F. C. should reduce



By FRANK MAITLAND

the price of bacon for the Canadian consumer in order that we may, without undue strain upon our pocketbooks, eat more of it.

Why waste time with advice and persuasion, which so often go unheeded, when Government has the power of compulsion backed by the unmistakable mandate of the people? Or, if we are still wedded to voluntary effort and the fetish of personal liberty, why be so modest in the requests that are made of the public? Why restrict consumption of beef and bacon in restaurants and hotels to five days in the week? Why not restrict it to one day, or two days in the week? Why not make the same regulations applicable to private homes as well, with such exceptions as may be demanded by the peculiar conditions in some localities or by the needs of men engaged in strenuous manual labor?

If it is not advisable or practicable to make such regulations compulsory, why not make the request of the patriotic people of Canada? The request once made and reasons for it stated and explained, I am convinced that public opinion would quickly send to Coventry any thoughtless individuals who might selfishly disregard it.

It is a matter of common knowledge among all who read the newspapers and serious periodicals that there is an alarming scarcity of wheat and flour. The United States has no wheat for export on the basis of ordinary consumption. Mr. Hoover is appealing for a saving in the consumption of wheat and flour and the saving each month is being sent overseas. In Canada, we have a small surplus for export on the basis of ordinary consumption, and the Canadian Food Controller asks us to increase that surplus by reducing our consumption of bread and flour in all Canadian households. So far so good; but—

AND ONE CLEAR CALL FOR HIM

THIRTY-TWO years ago, on the 28th of July next, Alfred Richards stood in the old C. P. R. station, Montreal, and called out the first through train for Vancouver that ever ran in Canada. "All aboard for Hong Kong!" was his slogan. We are not told how many people got aboard. In those days Hong-Kong was about as far away from Montreal as heaven is now—from Toronto. Alfred Richards lived long enough to see Hong-Kong coming to Canada. For twenty years he was train announcer. A few days ago he went on a journey where no train could carry him. This is the picture of it.



This is a policy of saving first and shipping later. It is voluntary saving. Why not export first and save afterwards, thus making the saving compulsory?

Is it not possible to-day for the Canadian and American Governments to make an accurate estimate of the minimum requirements of wheat in both countries and either set aside for export, or export at once, the entire surplus? That estimate should be made on the assumption that liberal use will be made of all the various substitutes for white bread now recommended to us by the Food Controllers. If the wheat and flour were unobtainable, we should soon accommodate ourselves to the use of hoe cake and oatmeal products. Until such action is taken, or we are put on rations under a ticket system, the saving of wheat products in Canada and the United States will be very much of a farce. There is no sanction for law the equal of necessity.

Of course, such a policy would entail some hardship. But what of it? Some of us might realize then that this country is at war. One weakness of a democracy at war is the hesitation of government to demand real sacrifice of the people. Canadians are more ready for sacrifice and hardship than our Government and our Food Controller seem to realize. A drastic policy, involving real sacrifice and undoubted individual hardship would be welcomed by the great majority of patriotic Canadians.

For the task of greater production in 1918 on our farms the effective mobilization of all our man power and woman power is urgently and immediately necessary. Our farmers cannot be blamed if they hesitate to sow and plant an increased acreage until they have positive assurance of an adequate supply of labor for the plowing, the hoeing, the weeding, the harvesting and the threshing of the crop. In every village, town and city in Canada, committees should be at work enlisting the signed and pledged assistance of men, women, boys and girls for work on Canadian farms during the busy season of 1918. Boards of retired farmers could be usefully employed in passing upon the lists of these volunteers for agricultural service. No time need be wasted in appealing to the farmer for greater production because of the profits he can make at present high prices. He knows all about that and is apt to resent being reminded of his present day good fortune. But appeals can profitably be made to his patriotism.

In Western Canada there is a strong agitation for the conscription of aliens for work on Canadian farms at reasonable rates of wages. A blazing indignation was excited last year by the hold-up tactics of aliens from enemy countries who exacted double the ordinary wage—often more than that—from patriotic Canadian farmers whose sons were serving in Flanders for \$1.10 per day. A drastic and firm handling of this problem is confidently demanded of the Government by the people of Western Canada.

Vast areas of land in Western Canada, belonging to the Government, to the railway companies, and to private speculators are lying idle. Many thousands of Chinese laborers are crossing the continent each month on their way overseas. Could not our Government try the experiment of borrowing a few trainloads of these men and putting them to work under competent direction this spring on the task of breaking up some tens of thousands of acres of this idle land? It is probably inadvisable to sow wheat on new breaking in the prairie country. No immediate returns might be obtainable in 1918, but we have 1919 and succeeding years to look forward to, years of scarcity and probably years of war.

Canada is in the mood not only for sacrifice, but for daring innovation and courageous experiment. She has given her rulers an unmistakable mandate to spare no efforts but to mobilize all the resources of the Dominion for the winning of the war. She is probably more anxious to give than her rulers are to demand; she is ready for sacrifices which her rulers may fear to ask of her. No demand upon the patriotism of Canadians will be made in vain, if the reasons for the demand are properly explained.