

The farmer who raises food and exchanges it for pianos, pianolas, victrolas, trotting buggies, books, moving pictures, pleasure cars, and so on, is just as much a war-drone as the man who made them.

In other words, the further we look into the case the worse it gets. Since food is a war material we might have supposed at first sight that our vast agricultural population was really employed in working to win the war. Indeed a lot of nonsense to this effect has been spoken and printed during the past few years. If all our farmers were working directly for the Government, if all that they produced were handed over to the Government, and if they themselves received out of it only enough food and clothes to keep them going, then, indeed, they would be doing war work. For the Government could either use the food to feed the soldiers or sell it to the foreigners for the munitions. But this is not the case.

Exactly the same argument applies to the export trade. It is often thought that if such and such a thing is manufactured in Canada and sold abroad, then since this brings money into the country with which we can buy war material or pay soldiers, the export trade is a direct contribution towards the war. Sheer fallacy and confusion, if not worse. Export in private hands pays only its tax to the Government, not its product. The export workers exchange their nine-tenths of what they make for their own consumption. Here, again, drone trades with drone, and the country profits—apart from its little tax—nothing.

The truth is that in all these things individual greed and selfishness obscure the issue. War brings with it the peculiar phenomenon of war prosperity. This, economically, is one of the most distressing things conceivable. Here is the interpretation of it. It is as if an industrious farmer and his family had worked hard for a generation and amassed flocks and herds, barns and buildings, and good stores of provisions and grain; then, in a moment of insanity, had set to work to burn the buildings, and in the warm light of the flames kill and devour the animals, and gorge themselves with the grain and fodder, throwing the rest away. In this mad orgy one son of the family, more idiotic even than the rest, rubs his silly hands before the burning home and leers: "Father, it is warmer here and nicer, and there is more to eat, than in the old days when we worked hard and had but little food. Father, we are prosperous. We have done a good thing." Then presently the fire burns down into ashes and the night comes and the dark. And where the grain once stood and the meadows smiled in the sun, the wolves shall howl again in the gloom of the forest. And where the homestead was, there will be graves. Such is the interpretation of war.

The farmer and the family are the nation, and the idiotic son laughing beside the fire is the war theorist talking of the boom of trade.

But people either do not, or will not, know this. They still want their industry and its inflated gains, and War Prosperity with the flush on its hectic face and War Pleasure with its strident laugh, dancing away the midnight hours. In and through it all moves smug hypocrisy, suggesting the little words and phrases that are to