

clear that he is strongly sympathetic with the cause of the wholesale grocers, and the now famous letter of the latter association to the Prime Minister urging his appointment as chairman of the board is public property. As a final illustration of this attitude, we recall that recently the Canadian Canners and the Dominion Canners were required to pay over to the wholesale grocers the amount of a loyalty rebate, which, according to the Federal Trade Commission, would probably be illegal in the United States.

Leave Business to Regular Channels

Closely akin to what we have been describing, there is one respect of the legislation which requires mention. I refer to section 17 (2) of the Combines and Fair Prices Act, in which it is stated, "..... nor shall any manufacturer, wholesaler or jobber, because anything herein contained, be under obligation to sell to other than such classes of persons as are accustomed to purchase from manufacturers, wholesalers or jobbers, respectively, nor shall any person be under obligation to sell otherwise than in accordance with the ordinary course of business." The evident intent of this provision is to keep trade going through the regular channels of wholesale and retail establishments, and to prevent the development of co-operative associations, consumers' clubs and similar organizations, which have been a means of benefit to consumer members wherever they were able to buy from the manufacturers or wholesalers. This provision, which, as Judge Robson has said, "removes the last chance the consumer had to do anything for himself in reducing the cost of living," might seem to have been approved by parliament unwittingly, but the framer of the Act seems to have inserted it of set purpose, for he says, in the decision regarding the York Trading Company, that this, in his opinion, is a wise policy. In other words, this opinion has been incorporated by parliament into legislation as a declaration of that body's trade policy for the whole commercial mechanism; and is to be the determining element in the decision as to the avenues along which trade may be pursued.

This provision, then, hedges about the consumers of the country; it tells them what is the lawful course through which the distribution of necessities may take place, and gives them no choice but to follow in the way laid down as legitimate. It is more than passing strange that parliament should not have allowed the consumers of the country the utmost opportunity to work for their own welfare by buying their necessities in the way which they think most economical, rather than forcing them to pay tribute all along that line which others consider to be for the best interests of the country. Would it not be wise to allow the people to choose, rather than having the choice imposed upon them from above?

Board Should be Reorganized

I have given enough in the foregoing account of some of the board's work to indicate that there is need for a thorough revision of its entire policy, and of the legislative authority under which it operates. Although the constructive results of its efforts have been meagre and much hostility has been aroused against it, the board, if reorganized in personnel, purpose and methods, might be of great service to the country. There is much important work that awaits a board which is properly qualified and constituted; and I may be permitted, in closing, to suggest some lines of activity which should be undertaken.

Publicity is one of the greatest educative and corrective agencies that can be employed to mold business life into the best form and character. There are many of the business practices of the present which could not stand the light of public scrutiny, and if they were shown in their essential nature those who commit such acts would be compelled to desist from them or lose their standing among their business associates. Much more can be accomplished in this way than by the threatening arm and the uncertain course of the law. The dragging of doubtful or shady practices and of unfair profits into the light of day, so that the public, as a whole,

may know what is going on, would be a much more potent deterrent to the unscrupulous or the profiteering commercial man than many of the penalties imposed upon corporations through the secrecy of the law courts.

How Publicity May be Obtained

To give this information to the people, not in vindictive-ness against the sinner, but in an impartial and scientific way—not for the sake of ostentation in getting even with some public malefactor—would require the work of carefully trained experts (economists, accountants, lawyers, etc.), who were eager only for the presentation of the truth. These should be able to examine the books of firms, to dig out the facts from the records, to know the economic conditions under which a particular business is carried on, and the economic principles which are the fundamental groundwork of all business. After investigation of its affairs they should be able to discern the evils and the good connected with any business, and to suggest the appropriate remedies for correcting the former. The investigators should be thoroughly familiar with financial matters so as to be able to follow clues and get to the bottom of the financial management and methods. The present idea that the board can send out questionnaires to the firms, "and when the answers come in, you can hand your list to a clerk, if you like, and he can put his finger on the names of those who need to be tried," indicates a complete lack of knowledge of the great variety of ways in which facts may be distorted, falsified and concealed.

The organization of an industry; the interrelations of the corporations in one industry with those in other industries, either through community of stock holdings, community of directors, or by other means, the financial control of industries and corporations; the practices and profits of, as well as the necessity for, middlemen;—these and a great many more facts should be given to the public. Democratic government is based upon an intelligent electorate and educated citizenship, and it is impossible for the elector to vote properly unless he knows the facts by which to form an intelligent opinion of men and issues. How can one be a patriotic citizen of the country without knowledge of the country's industrial and commercial life? Here is work for a Board of Commerce to elicit the fine results from an improved business morale and enlightened conscience through the stimulating influence of judicious publicity.

TO ENLARGE NATIONAL RAILWAY SYSTEM

Announcement was made from Montreal on May 21st that the Committee of Management for the co-ordination of the Grand Trunk Railway with the Canadian National System had been appointed, consisting of C. A. Hayes and S. J. Rutherford, representing the government, and Frank Scott and W. D. Robb, representing the Grand Trunk.

The four gentlemen above named appointed Howard G. Kelley, president of the Grand Trunk, as the fifth member of the committee and chairman.

All members of the new committee are well-known railway men. Howard G. Kelley has for some years past been president of the Grand Trunk System; C. A. Hayes is at present vice-president of the Canadian National Railways, in charge of traffic; S. J. Rutherford is assistant to the vice-president of the Canadian National Railways; W. D. Robb is vice-president of the Grand Trunk, in charge of transportation, construction and maintenance; Frank Scott is vice-president and treasurer of the Grand Trunk.

A first Swiss Watch and Jewellery Fair and Branch Industries will take place in Geneva from the 11th to the 25th of July, 1920, to permit foreign buyers to acquaint themselves with the evolution which has taken place in these Swiss industries, and with the novelties which they have been able to create these last few years.