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SS. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1920.

ON THE DOWN GRADE.

Reports from parts of the United States that prices have started on the down grade will be received by many people with unbounded satisfaction. It was inevitable that the buying people would weary of constantly yielding to cash demands on its pocket and force a break. But a careful examination of the situation may cause some feeling of apprehension even among those who have been most loudly clamoring for a crash of prices.

The most notable announcement was that of the Ford Motor Company, which has cut its prices to those of pre-war days. Then followed the Franklin Automobile Company, which has stated that it has been compelled to lay off 2,000 hands on account of the falling off in the demand for cars. Getting houses and many other big dealers in necessary commodities have announced cuts and the public has been led to believe that similar price reductions are coming in other lines.

Doubtless these reductions have been forced because buyers have refused to follow dealers in the upward pace. They stopped cold. But the effect may not be altogether agreeable. The retailer finds his shelves filled with goods which the public will not buy at the prices demanded. The retailer regretfully passes the word on to the wholesaler who has his warehouses filled with clothing which he must dispose of before he orders more from the factory. The factory has been running full blast, turning out wares at a good profit and passing a share of the proceeds along to the workers who have not been slow to demand more wages on penalty of tying up the plant.

If the price-lowering era has really come what may result? Will the head of a household who has abstained from new garments rush in to replenish his depleted wardrobe? If he does, the storeman will have smiles in place of frowns for the suave travelling man. He will take advantage of the new quotations and realize that his old stock of business will go on as usual. The wholesaler will order from the factory and the wheels of industry will keep turning. On the other hand, the ultimate consumer may wait. The new prices may not be attractive. Business cannot be done except on a profit basis, and if the consumer declines to be reasonable the world will get back to the manufacturer, who will reduce his staff or close down entirely until there is a demand for his goods. The clothing operator out of work is in no position to buy goods, and there is a general slackening of all lines.

Price slashing to honor the buying public cannot go on indefinitely. Some storekeepers and middlemen and fabricators of clothing, books, and other necessary commodities may have been reaping a golden harvest, but they must have a comfortable margin over cost on what they sell. Eliminate the excessive profit and business can go on without loss. But go below the reasonable margin, which is ordinary profit, and the worker must consent to reduced pay if his employer is to keep the concern going. While "price circles" again appear, with low prices chasing low wages like a pair of squirrels in a revolving cage?

After all, there may have been much unnecessary howling about the high cost of living. Are the workers worse off than they were when wages and food and clothing were touching bottom—when a street laborer at \$1.25 a day bought his eggs at twelve cents a dozen and his steaks for ten and twelve cents a pound, with a soup tureen in? We think not. Perhaps the street laborer has other ways. Certainly his present modest remuneration of \$4 or \$5 a day won't allow many theatre parties, but he probably derives some satisfaction from the spending of his weekly stipend and would hesitate before desiring that we shall go back to the pre-war epoch.

The great difficulty has been that in these prosperous days there has been a fair distribution of prosperity. The great army of white collar men have seen the cost of living increase 100 to 200 per cent, while most of them have had to content with very modest accretions to their salary cheque. They have been in no position to force business to compensate for the bounding prices of everything they consume. They have had no apparent prospect and yield to every hand-out of the purveyors of such commodities as they use.

In this connection it is interesting to note the statement made in the September bulletin of the National City Bank of New York that the drop in prices cannot be otherwise than gradual because:

"Every agency that contributes to production is in demand. Labor is in short demand, and means have been

in consequence. Capital also is in demand, and its wages (interest rates) have risen. Every kind of machinery that will assist in production is in demand; and it is only as these agencies of production are multiplied or made more productive that the supply of necessities and comforts for the population can be increased."

SHOOTING "ACCIDENTS."

Without wishing to be in any way vindictive or harsh, we cannot forbear expressing the opinion that a man who through avoidable carelessness causes the death of any person should be made to pay the penalty for his criminal action. It is only by practical lessons of this kind that the need for care can be taught. We are prompted to make these remarks on reading the report of the shooting of a young man in York County by a hunter "in mistake for a bear." These shooting accidents happen every year, and will go on happening until some one is made an example of. The man who shot the supposed bear doubtless fired his rifle in the full belief that the object at which he was aiming was in reality a bear, but he did not stay long enough to make sure. He took a chance, as the saying is, and made a grievous mistake. No doubt he is now filled with remorse, but that does not help matters. His offence is known to British law as culpable homicide, and he should be indicted for manslaughter. Possibly, however, the authorities in this province, knowing the difficulty there always is in getting the average jury to convict, owing to the mankind sympathy which is more often than not felt for the man in the dock, no matter what his crime, feel that to prosecute is but waste of time. The jury takes the view that the offender did not intend any harm, that the effects of his act were accidental and so on. That sort of excuse doesn't go in Britain, and should not go here. There the trainman who carelessly forgets to close the switch and causes an accident which results in loss of life goes to the penitentiary. In this province he is merely dismissed from the service, and forthwith an agitation is commenced to get him reinstated. In legal theory a man is presumed to be responsible for the consequences of his acts, but in practice he is not so regarded here. Until he is, and is made to understand this fact, we will never be free from these shooting "accidents." A salutary lesson taught to some of these careless hunters would bring about a change, and a man would soon learn to look twice before he shoots once.

THE TRUTH FOR ONCE.

Moved no doubt by qualms of conscience, The Telegraph on Saturday morning forsook its age-long policy and published an article almost a column in length on the political situation in New Brunswick, under the heading, "New Brunswick Party Leaders." "Colonel Baxter, new Conservative head, faces difficult task—Premier not strong—Premier is entirely overshadowed by his chief lieutenant, Peter Veniot." The Telegraph said, among other things: "Colonel J. B. M. Baxter, who on the eve of a provincial election, succeeded Mr. J. A. Murray as New Brunswick's Conservative leader, is a prominent St. John lawyer and by no means an amateur in politics. Ten or twelve years ago he was a power in St. John municipal affairs and later made his influence felt in Federal politics; and for the past three or four years he has been the brains of his party both federally and provincially in New Brunswick."

SETTLERS FOR NEW BRUNSWICK.

Old Country reports indicate that Dr. Croftman, the new Agent-General for Ontario in London, is doing good work for his province in the way of stimulating interest in it among those who are planning to come to Canada and engage in agriculture. Since his arrival in England in July he has been devoting his energies to the securing of as many of the best settlers as possible for the spring of next year. A report of his activities in the Premier, London, states that he has been waging the campaign of

forming in Ontario with so much success they have no more inquiries being received at the Agent-General's office as during the present period.

Is the Foster Government taking any steps to bring the advantages of New Brunswick before the people of Great Britain, or do they feel that this province has nothing to offer settlers? We hear nothing of any activities on their part along the line of inducing immigration here.

THE LORD MAYOR.

The unfortunate Lord Mayor of Cork was at first rather a tragic or pathetic figure. Before suspicion was aroused that he was being fed there was much sympathy expressed for him, even by people who abhorred the rebellious and disruptive principles for which he was supposed to be suffering. He has now become comic. He promises to do Sinn Féin grievous harm by turning it into a laughing matter. Suppose this force is continued indefinitely, what will newspaper readers think when some morning they read an official bulletin to the effect that the Lord Mayor has passed a comfortable night, has entered upon the 100th day of his fast, and remains cheerful? Will not Sinn Féin fiercely protest against the press giving prominence to such news? The Mail and Empire observes that the Hearst papers which lauded MacSwiney as a greater patriot than Nathan Hale, who regretted that he had but one life to give for his country, now cease to mention him. When the man is named it is with a smile instead of a sigh. Yet now is the time he is deserving of sympathy. He is like a wretch who has been holding down a balloon rope who has been entangled and carried off the ground. He doesn't let go. The Lord Mayor has soared into the supernatural.

Britain appears to be calmly preparing to face the worst in regard to the strike of coal miners. The outcome must be to be feared is the extent to which the strike may spread. If the railway men and other transport workers should quit work too, the result must necessarily be the dislocation of practically every industry in the country. Already several services have been curtailed to save fuel, and further reductions will probably be made, with a view to easing the situation as much as possible.

The Board of Commerce says that the Canadian refineries have on hand, or coming under contract, 300,000,000 worth of sugar. That is 300,000,000 pounds, or half a year's full consumption. How did the refineries get loaded up with so much, at the top prices? That is a question everyone asks.

A BIT OF VERSE.

HARVEST TIME.

Pillowed and hushed on the silent plain,
 Wrapped in her mantle of golden grain.

Wearied of ploughing weeks away,
 Summer is lying asleep today.

Where winds come sweet from the wild rose briars
 And the snore of the far-off prairie fires.

Yellow her hair as the golden rod,
 And brown her cheeks as the prairie sod;

Purple her eyes as the mists that dream
 At the edge of some laggard stream;

But over their depths the lashes sweep,
 For summer is lying today asleep.

The north wind kisses her rosy mouth,
 His rival frolics in the far-off south.

And comes caressing her sunburnt cheek,
 And summer awakes for one short week—

Awakes and gathers her wealth of grain,
 Then sleeps and dreams for a year again.

—E. Pauline Johnson.

THE LAUGH LINE.

One London firm is advertising thirty three per cent off its goods at reduced prices. There is now no excuse for any workman being late at a strike—Punch.

Reason for Gratitude.
 Little Edna was visiting the museum with her aunt. In the Egyptian room the child saw the desecrated remains of an ancient Queen and asked what it was.

"That is some one's mummy, dear," replied auntie.

"Goodness!" said Edna, "I'm glad my mummy doesn't look like that."

Avoiding Recklessness.
 "Did you ever try to run for office without a campaign fund?"

"No," answered Senator Sorghum. "I think I could have managed it once or twice. But the effect would have been to give my constituents the idea that I was too impractical to be entrusted with the responsibilities of a great public office."

The Judge Was Stumped.
 Police Judge Cohen, quizzing Sam Jones, accused of assault and battery, asked, "Why did you hit this man?"

"Wha? Judge," the negro began, "what would you all do if some one called you a 'sinky-headed loafer'?"

"But I haven't got kinky hair," said the Judge.

"Well," drawled Sam, "what would you all do if he called you the kind of headed loafer did you?"

Suburban Delights.
 Liza Lightfoot lives on the edge of

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

THE PARK AVE. NEWS.

Weather. Partly cloudy in spots.
 Sports. A ice cream wagon went past last Thursday with the back board of it hanging down loose, and several of the fellows ran after it about 5 blocks in hopes a few cream fresher fall off ice cream make fall out without the driver noticing it, say home diled. Among those running was Benny Potts, Artie Alexander, Leroy Shooter, Fred Stinkins and Sam Cross.

Financial Notes. Much excitement was caused last Saturday by Sid Hunt paying back Ed Wernick the cent he owed him for about 2 months.

POEM BY SKINNY MARTIN
 Send for Sherlock Homes.
 How hard the rain comes downward
 How fears the wind does blow!
 Ha ha, send the detective,
 A track upon the snow!
 Ah heck, its only arailroad track!
 Baffled folled alas alack!
 Am I good detective? No!

Society. Miss Mary Watkins and Miss Lorett Mincer wish to announce that although they are not axilluly mad at each other they do not speak and dont intend to till the former apologises for pulling the latters hair and the latter ipologises for stamping all her mite on the formers foot.
 Intriguing Packs About Intriguing People. Skinny Martin says he is never going to get married no matter how he gets, and has a new way of signing his name, being, A. R. Martin, Old Bitch.

the town where he earns a fair wage by working on an adjoining farm.
 A particular pet of Lem's is a small pig, which is as playful as a pup, and fully as lame.
 A friend visiting Lem the other evening inquired:
 "How you like it out heah, Lem?"
 "Ah like it jus' fine."
 "Owa de house?"
 "Yessah."
 "Is dat yo' pig running afiah you dataway?"
 "Yessah."
 "In town we has to pay all we ask for pig meat like dat, while out heah you has yo' own poik choppe just trootin' round at yo' heels all day long."

Described.
 "Are they happily married?"
 "Nope. Married; that's all."

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Daily Fashion Hint

Prepared Especially For This Newspaper



AN AFTERNOON PROOF.

The home dressmaker can manipulate black silk crepe de chine into this delightful afternoon frock with perfect success. The skirt is slightly distended at the sides for the straight-line is not absolute in the realm of formal dress—and the blouse is cut very low at the front to accommodate a vest of black and white lace with collar to match. The lower edges of the blouse form the belt, crossing at the front. Medium size requires 5 yards 36-inch silk and 1 yard 12-inch lace.
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VILNA OCCUPATION BROKE ARMISTICE ALLIES DECLARATION

Note is Sent to the Government Deploring

tion of Armies.

London, Oct. 18.—A note with to the Vilna situation was handed to the Polish Government Sunday.

The note declared the Allied governments considered the occupation of Vilna contrary to the armistice of the League of Nations.

Both the governments expressed opinion that Poland should consider General Zeigonski's and thus give satisfaction to the League of Nations, whose authority was pointed out had been shaken.

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