

Maintaining the Standards

Different Families—Upholding the Standard—Practical Methods

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

In any town you please, whether large or small, there can be found two types of families, sharply contrasting with each other. The one maintains certain standards of living, the other does not. The family with the standards is a source of strength to the town, while the other is an expense and an incubus.

In the one type of family is to be found a range and elevation of life which enables it to appropriate to itself whatever advantages are in the town where it is situated. The house in which it dwells is roomy enough to allow of comfort for all its members, and there will be some sort of well-kept garden about it. The food on the table is sufficient and prepared tastefully for the meals. There are a number of books, and a regular supply of newspapers and magazines. The children go to school, and continue going to school till they exhaust the school possibilities of the town. Perhaps one of them may then go on to college. It is a family which lives happily with its neighbors, respecting itself and winning respect. It obeys the laws, pays taxes, votes with as near an approach to intelligence as can be expected, supports church, library and charities.

The other type of family lives in some decrepit shanty until it is evicted for non-payment of rent. The truant officer visits it frequently. It is never above beggary, and is usually suspected of petty thieving. All the churches know it, and take hopeful turns in attempting its redemption, as it blandly exploits the charity of each of them in success. It pays no taxes, is a constant expense to the charities or justice of the town spends; nothing for reading matter and little for anything else; neither respects itself nor wins respect.

You will find these two families in any town, but you will find more of the one type or the other in certain sorts of towns. In a town supported by some industry requiring highly-skilled and highly-paid workers, such as railway engineers or rolling-mill operatives, you will find a larger proportion of families which maintain the standards. In a town supported by factories employing women and children you will find a larger proportion of the families without standards.

Or again, if you view the same town at different times you will find the number of families of either type varying. As the one flourishes the other decays, and vice versa. You will find that in times of expansion the family of the standards multiplies, while in times of depression the other type grows numerous.

Superficial observers are apt to ascribe such contrasts to character differences. And differences of character do count for much. Some families will make a desperate fight before they abandon the higher level of living, and others will continue in their shiftlessness whatever you do to pull them out. Nevertheless the chief cause of the difference is not one of character but of income. The wages, in amount and regularity, which the head of the family can earn determines in the long run whether or not the standards will be maintained.

It is obvious that the most precious possession of any nation consists in the standards of living of its people. It should set itself, when such standards are threatened in any way, to cherish and defend them most vigorously. They are not to be cheaply gotten, nor, having been lost, are they readily recovered.

We Canadians find ourselves in such a position today. Our standards of living, which have been higher during the last four years than ever before, are threatened by the upheaval attendant upon readjustment from the war to the peace basis. Very many of our poorer people have enjoyed, through military pay and allowances, and the disbursements of the patriotic fund, more of regular income than ever before. And, in the industries of the country generally, the same thing is true for the workers. The gain has not been so much in the amount of wages as in their security. There have been no slack seasons, no unemployment.

This betterment of income has lifted the plane of living for those who have enjoyed it. They have entered into a sphere of comfort, and attained a

Every wise proposal for the smooth return of the men from overseas into civil occupations is so much provision against that danger. I need not recount the list of excellent schemes which the Dominion Government is preparing. One of them in particular will be of extreme value, if it is launched immediately and competently administered. That is the Dominion-wide system of Employment Bureaus. Why this machinery, for which legislation was provided last spring, should not yet have been set going I do not know. But every day's delay must make the hazard of success increase. It is going to be a job for supermen to improvise such a chain of employment bureaus, across this vast half-continent, and carry the improvisation through in the very crisis of the returning of the soldiers and their re-absorption into civil occupations.

But a good deal more might be done to uphold the standards. In none of the proposals before the Canadian public is there that direct and specific recognition of and grappling with this problem which we see in Britain. There the Labor Party sets in the forefront of its programme the doctrine of a minimum wage, a minimum education, and a guarantee of employment for every worker. The government in power has another proposal, less drastic in character, but miles in advance of anything seriously considered in Canada, that of Industrial Councils formed of appointees of Employers' Federation and Trades Unions. And the other parties have other suggestions; for everyone over there is alive to the prime importance of insuring the maintenance of the standards.

All this is—barring a miracle—years ahead of Canadian practical politics. I venture, however, to put value as citizens, they did not possess before. The Dominion has been richer, both materially and spiritually, because of military pay and munition con-

tracts. The danger now is that the standard may be lowered.

forward a suggestion which follows so simply and logically in the wake of what is already Canadian practice that I hope that it may find favor. It is that the principle of the Fair-Wage Schedule be carried further and extended to all industries which are the recipients of governmental assistance.

The Fair-Wage schedule is included in all governmental contracts. The government says to the contractor who is to build the wharf, bridge or post-office, "You must pay your men a living wage. We make that a condition of your procuring this contract. And, in order that there may be no mistake about the matter, here is a schedule of minimum wages for the several classes of workmen whom you will use." Such is the frank and fair protection which organized society in this country throws about its members employed on public works.

Should not that principle be carried further? Should the government not say to any railway or steamship company which asks for subsidy or guarantee of bonds; or to any financial concern which asks for any financially valuable privilege; or to any manufacturing concern which asks for bonus, rebate or tariff protection; "If we give you this favor it is on condition that your employees be maintained in such a way of living as comports with Canadian ideas. And, lest there be any mistake, here is a schedule of wages, based on the cost of living, which shall be a minimum for you?"

Indeed, the argument for such a schedule is stronger in the case of manufacturing industries than in the case of public contracts, for the request for special bonuses and customs duties has always been based on the needs of the employees. No government yet ever gave a protective tariff in order to make financial promoters rich. The plea has always been "the full dinner-pail." Too often what was intended for the dinner-pail has found its way into dividends on diluted stock. It is quite fair and reasonable, and in line with the accepted and approved policy of the government of Canada, that those who benefit by paternal legislation should hand on a proper share of the benefit to each of their employees.

WEEK'S RECORD OF ACTIVE MONTREAL STOCKS.

Sales.	Open.	High.	Low.	Last sale.	Net chge.	—YEAR—	
						High.	Low.
2,217 Asbestos	40	44 1/4	38	43	+7	44 1/4	15
1,300 Do., pfd.	61	62	60	62	+ 1/2	62	45
240 Brazilian	52	52 1/4	52	52 1/4	+1	60	32
195 B.C. Fishing	45 1/2	48	45 1/2	48	+ 3/4	*52 1/2	40
210 Brompton	60 1/2	61	60 1/2	61	+ 1/4	63 1/4	41 3/4
160 Can. Car	32 1/2	32 1/4	31 1/2	31 1/2	unch.	38 1/4	18 1/2
955 Do., pfd.	84	85 1/2	84	84 3/4	+1 3/4	92	49 1/2
571 Can. Cement	65	66 1/2	65	66	+2 1/2	69 1/2	*57
225 Can. Loco.	63 1/2	64	63 1/2	64	unch.	69	58
1,842 Can. Steamship	49 1/2	50 1/2	49 1/4	50 1/2	+1 1/2	50 1/2	39 1/4
1,377 Do., pfd.	*78 1/4	*78 3/4	*78	*78 1/2	+ 3/4	80 1/4	76
6,350 Crown Reserve	23 1/2	24	23 1/2	24
1,930 Dom. Steel	*62 1/2	*62 3/4	*62	*62 1/2	+ 1/2	65	*53
290 Dom. Textile	*97	*98	*96 3/4	*98	+ 3/4	100 1/2	80 3/4
3,892 Laurentide	183	194 3/4	183	193	+11	194 3/4	152
326 Maple Leaf	134	135	134	135	+2	140	94
4,513 Most. Power	85 3/4	88 1/2	85 3/4	88	+3	88 1/2	68 1/2
255 Ottawa Traction	*80	*80	*80	*80	+1	*80	66 3/4
2,807 Shawinigan	116 1/4	117 1/2	115 3/4	117 1/4	+1 1/2	118 3/4	*107
2,100 Spanish River	17 1/4	19	17 1/4	18	+1	20	13
2,085 Do., pfd.	62	64 1/2	62	64 1/4	+2 1/4	64 1/2	50
2,540 Steel of Canada	62 3/4	64	62 3/4	64	+1 1/4	74 1/4	*49 3/4
100 Do., pfd.	95	95	94 3/4	94 3/4	+1 3/4	97 1/2	89 3/4
915 Wayagamack	50 1/2	51	50	50	- 3/4	53	50
— BANKS —							
10x Commerce	193	200	193	200	+9 7/8	190 3/4	185
10 Dominion	209 1/2	209 1/2	209 1/2	209 1/2	+7 1/2	209 1/2	202
39 Merchants	*180	*180	*180	*180	+14	*180	167
32 Montreal	216	216	216	216	+6	216	210
119 Royal	213	213	212 1/2	212 1/2	+4	213	208
— BONDS —							
\$181,000 Can. Loan (1925)	96 1/2	96 3/4	96 1/2	96 3/4	+1	96 3/4	93 1/4
87,400 Do. (1937)	96 3/4	97 3/4	96 3/4	97 1/4	+ 3/4	97 3/4	91 1/2
85,500 Cedars Rapids	88 1/2	89	88 1/2	89	+1	89	80
10,000 Dom. Iron	85 1/2	85 1/2	85 1/2	85 1/2	+1 1/2	86 1/2	84
31,700 Wayagamack	80	80	80	80	unch.	81	75
— UNLISTED SHARES. —							
100 Dom. Glass, pfd.	*83	*83	*83	*83	+1 3/4	85	*83
1,015 Laurentide Power	60	61 3/4	60	61 1/2	+1 1/2	62	50
620 N. A. Pulp	2 1/2	2 7/8	2 1/2	2 3/8	+ 3/8	4 3/8	2 1/2

*Ex-dividend. xBroken lot sales.

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