

A FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF FUEL.

Ottawa, December 28.

With the object of ensuring a fair distribution of coal amongst consumers, Mr. C. A. McGrath, Dominion Fuel Controller, has written to the mayors of all cities and towns throughout the Dominion, suggesting the appointment of an official to look after the interests of those who have been refused coal by dealers.

"I would suggest," says Mr. McGrath in his letter, "that you should appoint some one in your municipality, preferably one of your civic officials, whose business it will be to look into every application for coal by any householder which is refused by dealers, and if it appears to be a case of actual need and your officer is aware that there is enough available in the store of coal in the hands of any such dealers, such dealer shall forthwith be ordered to meet such emergency, irrespective of whether the applicant in question is a regular customer or not.

"This is a time when 'team work' is absolutely essential, and I am in hopes that if the situation is put squarely before the dealers in your town, they will be willing voluntarily to co-operate with you in order to relieve any such cases of emergency that may arise. I shall be obliged if you will indicate the name of any dealer who shows a disposition to disregard the public interest, and I will communicate with him direct from here."

WORLD'S WHEAT OUTPUT.

A cablegram from the International Institute of Agriculture gives the following estimates for 1917 crops:

Total production of wheat in Denmark, Spain, France, England, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Holland, Switzerland, Canada, United States, India, Japan, Algeria, Egypt and Tunis, is 1,864,124,000 bushels or 96.1 per cent of the production of the same countries in 1916, a decrease of 75,000,000, and 85.1 per cent of their average production during the five years 1911-15, a decrease of 325,000,000.

Production of rye in Denmark, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Canada, and the United States is 160,306,000 bushels or 96.2 per cent of last year, a decrease of 7,000,000 and 91.7 per cent of the five years' average; a decrease of over 6,000,000.

Production of barley in the same countries, as for rye plus Great Britain, Japan, Algeria and Tunis is 610,699,000 bushels, or 100.1 per cent of last year and 95.9 per cent of the five years' average, a decrease of 27,000,000.

Production of oats in the same countries as for barley minus Japan and Egypt is 2,570,939,000 bushels or 112.1 per cent of last year, an increase of 275,000,000 and 113.4 per cent of the five years' average, an increase of 300,000,000.

Production of potatoes in England and Wales, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, United States and Japan is 1,118,669,000 bushels, or 136.4 per cent of last year, an increase of 298,000,000 and 114.8 per cent of the five years' average, an increase of 143,000,000.

TO PREVENT DELAY IN UNLOADING CARS.

Ottawa, December 28.

An order-in-council has been passed, upon the recommendation of the Food Controller, to prevent unnecessary delay in the unloading or re-shipment of food or food products in freight cars. It provides that no freight car containing such products shall be allowed to remain under load at its destination for more than four days after notice of its arrival has been given by the railway company to the consignee. When any such car is detained for a longer period the railway company is required to notify the Food Controller.

Similarly, the Food Controller must be notified if any freight car containing food is held at any railway point for a furtherance order for more than one day after the arrival of the car.

If a car remains under load at its destination for more than four days, or has been held more than one day for a furtherance order, the Food Controller is authorized to give written notice requiring the unloading or issuance of a further order within two days. At the expiration of this period the food, if not unloaded or re-shipped, will be sold by the Food Controller.

The Food Controller is also authorized to forbid the acceptance by the railway companies, without his written permission, of food from any shipper whose goods have been seized and sold. For failure to comply with the provisions of the order a penalty is provided of a fine of up to \$50, or imprisonment

THE U.S. FOOTWEAR TRADE.

According to the report of R. G. Dun & Co., the boot and shoe market almost throughout the entire year 1917 was featured by the enormous purchases by the United States Government, with contracts placed estimated to have involved close to 28,000,000 pairs. Civilian trade, however, was irregular and men's lines were the first to feel the effects of the inactivity that characterized the situation following this nation's participation in the war, while later on the general wave of economy caused a material slackening in the demand for about everything. Salesmen found on their trips that it was extremely difficult to obtain orders for the higher-priced footwear, and as the year progressed business was confined mainly to the medium and lower-cost goods.

WAR HITS SPAIN'S RAISIN INDUSTRY.

According to the Spanish customs statistics, the exports of raisins from Spain during 1916 were 19,092 tons. Malaga's share of this was 8,893 metric tons, of which 2,875 tons went to France, 2,080 to Great Britain, 1,316 to Denmark, 523 to the United States, 508 to Cuba, 312 to Argentina, 282 to Italy, 239 to Holland, 238 to Sweden and 206 to Norway.

The raisin industry has declined greatly in comparison with what it was in the middle of the last century. One cause of this decrease was the substitution of fresh fruits for raisins as means of transportation improved, and another was the increasing cultivation of raisin grapes in other countries.

This year's raisin crop is a good one in both quality and quantity. There are said to be about 1,200,000 boxes available. Prices are ruling fairly high notwithstanding import restrictions in some of the belligerent countries and difficulties in shipping. The level of prices has been maintained chiefly because of the abnormal condition of exchange.

Shipments to Great Britain and France—which countries have hitherto been the largest markets—have been practically stopped by British import prohibitions and the difficulty of obtaining French permits. This means that the growers have 75 per cent of the crop left on their hands; but holders of fruit are looking forward to purchases for account of the British army.

For a term not exceeding six months, or both fine and imprisonment.

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