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ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1920.

TO PROBE THE H. C. L.

As the result of the efforts of Mr. Frank Hodges, secretary of the British Miners' Federation, an exhaustive enquiry is being undertaken into the reasons for the high cost of living in Great Britain. The moving spirits in this connection are the railway workers, the transport workers and the miners, though the Trades Union Congress, the Labor party and the Co-operative Societies are joining in with them. The purpose of the enquiry is "to submit a plan for reduction to the Government to the Government with a view to inducing the Government to take such action as will substantially reduce the present cost of living."

With regard to the task ahead of the joint committee of enquiry, the New Age says:

"It is not too much to say that the existence of civilization is at stake at this period of the world's history; that its survival depends upon the discovery and application of the right solution of the problem of prices; and that the triple alliance, as the most powerful and representative organ of labor in England or in the world, has both the opportunity and the duty of saving civilization."

Major C. H. Douglas' articles on credit-power have been appearing in the New Age for several months and they have attracted considerable attention among students of economic history who understand something of the relationship of the private monopoly of credit to the high level of prices. It is maintained that the cause of high prices may be said to be the "inflation of purchasing power," in other words the manufacture of "money" (or its equivalent) without a corresponding and simultaneous manufacture of commodities.

This "inflation of credit" or "manufacture of purchasing power" is held to be, not the work of the Government alone, as critics of Government borrowing are inclined to suggest; it arises, says the New Age, whenever and for whatever reason an issue of credit is made without an instantly accompanying and equivalent creation of commodities.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain, British Chancellor of the Exchequer, has helped to direct public attention to this line of economic thought. He stated in the House that the effect of Government issues on prices differed not whit from the effect of private issues. Inquiring people may be inclined to ask with this official statement in mind, whether the action of a private monopoly in assuming \$500,000,000 of credit-power is calculated to have the same effect, tending to raise the level of prices, as Government action would have if it assumed a new credit-power of \$500,000,000 for civil re-establishment of exercise men?

The committee of enquiry in Great Britain is free to seek for causes in whatever direction the evidence may lead. After all, there cannot be any profound mystery in the cause of the high level of prices, however much it may seem to be wrapped in mystery by the involved statements of some of the political spokesmen for finance. In this age of scientific discovery, when mathematical research has made it possible to fly the Atlantic Ocean by aeroplane, there is surely intelligence sufficient to get at the root causes of price inflation, and to apply the right control before civilization is menaced with an economic collapse.

THE NEW TREASURE HUNT.

A French scientist recently declared that western Europe would be better off if it gave the same attention to the platinum deposits of Russia as it was giving to the Russian oil fields. A Deputy replied that the only difference was that western Europe was "not so noisy in its interest in platinum as it was in oil." The rich deposits of platinum in the Ural Mountains is one of Russia's great treasures. These mountains produced 95 per cent of the world's supply before the war, and platinum has since advanced in price. It is now worth eight times as much as gold, with a demand far beyond all visible supply.

The war showed how necessary platinum was to the manufacture of munitions of war. The metal had years before proved its usefulness in many industries of peace. Platinum is heavier than gold or silver, but is as malleable and ductile as either. It resists all but one acid; it has a curious property of absorbing certain gases and it is one of the rare substances which will bring about chemical changes without being in itself affected. For these reasons it is used by jewellers as settings for precious stones and working out art designs, by dentists, makers of scientific instruments, chemists for reagents and

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crucibles, manufacturers of gas for sieves, makers of incandescent lamps and electricians. To this fact is due its increase in value. When first found in South America it was not considered of sufficient worth to save. A hundred years ago Russia employed it in three ruble pieces, it was in mint enough then to make more than a million coins. Any person who saved one of these pieces would find it today worth almost \$100. Twenty years ago platinum had about the same value as gold, and it was not until this war that one ounce of platinum was worth two of gold.

The world's demand for platinum has led to a very widely extended search for it. During the war the Entente Powers got much of their supply from Colombia. It was estimated that the production of that country was about 20,000 ounces a year. Now it is believed that research will at least double this amount. The Germans made discoveries recently of extensive deposits in Westphalia. The Federal Government has found traces of the substance in Alaska, but the industry has so far not proved of great value. An effort, however, is being made by Government to locate new deposits by an investigation of the stream placers. Traces of platinum have also been found in Borneo, Australia, South Africa, Honduras, Mexico, Lapland and Ireland.

This wide distribution of platinum has given to searchers the hope that a new source of supply will be found which will equal the Russian fields. The great consideration in the Ural Mountain deposits, however, is not only their abundance but the ease with which they may be worked. Lenine had a full appreciation of their value when he replied to an English commission "that it would take many gold mines and more of wells to be worth Russia's platinum deposits."

EXTENDING THE PREFERENCE.

Discussing the question of preferential tariff rates, the Journal of Commerce says that the example set by Canada some years ago in granting preferential tariff rates to Great Britain, and to such parts of the Empire as were disposed to reciprocate, has been widely followed. The mother country in her war-time policy adopted the principle of preference to some extent, and the policy thus accepted remains. In the outlying portions of the Empire the subject is receiving increased attention. Jamaica is a party to the new agreement between Canada and the West Indies, the terms of which have not yet been disclosed, but which are understood to include preferential rates within the Empire. Meanwhile, Jamaica has made a special concession to cotton goods manufactured in the United Kingdom, the regular ad valorem duty of 15-23 per cent, being reduced to 10 per cent. There is a further preferential rate of 8-13 per cent for cotton piece goods manufactured from cotton grown in the British Empire. This, of course, is intended to encourage the growing of cotton in the West Indies, where a considerable measure of success has attended the cotton-growing movement. These concessions. It is to be noted, apply only to cottons manufactured in Great Britain. We may reasonably assume, however, that under the new West Indian agreement similar goods made in Canada will have the benefit of the reduction.

Another British possession which has come into the preferential movement is Cyprus. In that island, under a recent law, on a considerable range of manufactures, including all malt liquors, and on sparkling wines, the preferential rates are two-thirds of the regular duty, on other wines 60 per cent, of the regular duty, on spirits 95 per cent, of the full duty, and on all other goods five-sixths of the full duty.

PUBLIC APATHY.
Ottawa Journal: Less than one-third of the two hundred thousand persons who are qualified to vote in New Brunswick bothered about going to the polls this week to vote for or against Prohibition. The fact is illustrative of a thing that more than anything else work injury to democracy, namely, the apathy of the public in regard to even the most important of national problems. Between election times people rave and curse at Governments, denounce politicians and politicians and denounce them better men are not enlisted in public service. Yet, come to think of it, what else has the public a right to expect? What can it expect when more than half of its electorate holds its priv-

ileges of citizenship so lightly that it refuses to exercise a citizen's most sacred right? The wonder is not that Governments are not better, but that, having regard to public indifference, they are not infinitely worse.

In view of the fact that it is somewhat difficult to take away from a person something that he or she never possessed, the new Post Office regulation regarding the franking privileges of members of the Provincial Legislatures will not affect them much. The members of the New Brunswick Legislature have never had the right to have their letters go postage free, and, as far as we have been able to ascertain, no other Provincial House has had it either. The seasonal papers and other public reports have always been given the freedom of the mails as Government documents, and this privilege is now to cease also. The immediate effect will probably be a demand from the members for a larger postage allowance, in view of the fact that in future they will have to pay the postage on all these papers that they wish to send to their constituents.

The unfortunate mishap that put the Redoubt out of the running in yesterday's race for the America Cup will probably be regretted by no one more than the Shamrock's owner, for the win which he thereby became entitled to is not the kind that he is seeking. Sir Thomas Lipton is of the kind of sportsman that wants to win on his merits or not at all, and to whom a victory won under any other circumstances does not appeal. His first impulse to call his own boat off, and make it no race, is characteristic of the sporting instincts of the man; but he is entitled to all that the gods sent him, for his opponents would have had no qualms about claiming the victory had the conditions been reversed. It is earnestly to be hoped that the remaining races will be run without mishap, so that there may be some honor in winning them, in addition to proving which is the better boat and the more skilled crew.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Ask a Policeman.
(City Editor and Reporter, Chicago.)
A traffic policeman in Boston says that the women make the best automobile drivers, that they keep their heads and obey the signals better than the men do. Do they figure in more accidents than the men drivers in your city?

Following on "Increased Production"
(Canadian Railroader, Montreal.)

Some months ago politicians, financiers and others to whom we are supposed to look for light and leading were crying the need of increased production. Workers who had the temerity to strike for more wages to compass the soaring cost of living, were denounced as madmen and traitors to the public weal. They were assured that the only way out of their troubles was to work harder and longer and increase production.

Exactly the workers responded to the demand made upon them. Now we read of industries slowing down, of factories closing, because production has become greater than the demand. It does not appear that over-production is general; we may not be arriving at a real cycle of over-production, or be likely to swing suddenly into an age of business depression and widespread unemployment. But the symptoms are disturbing. The reports of Bradstreet and Dunns have become gloomy. Banks are curtailing loans; wholesalers in many lines are complaining that orders are falling off; retail merchants in the dry goods trades are reducing prices and advertising extravagantly. But food prices and rents are still bold and firm.

Aid to Polish Forces in Russia.
(Daily Herald, London.)

I am informed on the best authority that our political correspondent, that on their entry into Kiev the Soviet troops captured a number of British guns and ammunition and armored trains of British manufacture.

The fact of British aid to the Polish invaders is thus established beyond the possibility of any cavil. Precisely that section of the Russian people which has most hesitated to join forces with the Bolsheviks will be fired into a flaming fury (writes our political correspondent) by the barbarous act with which the Poles desecrated their last hours in Kiev. The Poles deliberately blew into ruins the great modern Vladimir Cathedral, with its seven gilded domes. Kiev is the centre of Russian piety. Before Moscow, before Petrograd, Kiev was the capital of Russia. It was called "the mother of all Russian towns" and "the Jerusalem of Russia" and it has remained the religious capital of the country.

The Poles are Roman Catholics, and the Russians are, of course, of the Orthodox Church. It is, therefore, more than a political outrage; it is a blow aimed on behalf of religious repression.

THE LAUGH LINE

Not Forward, But Back.

Robinson—"Ever lost much money backing horses?"
Driver—"Lost ten dollars once, I backed two horses, and the van that I was in charge of went through a shop window."

In Mourning.

Aunt—"I'm amazed at you playing the piano when poor little Fido has only just been poisoned."

Little Doris—"It's quite all right, auntie. I'm only touching the black keys."

Tired Of It.

"There are two sides to every question," remarked a ready-made philosopher. "There are two sides to a chestnut," said his friend, "an outside and an inside, but only one of them is worth paying attention to."

Benny's Note Book

BY LEE PAPE

Pop took me down town Saturday morning to buy me a pair of shoes and gave me 5 cents for car fare back by myself, and the conductor was standing there taking peoples fares saying, "Give me your fare, boy, give me your fare."

Im feeling for it, I sed, and the conductor sed, Well back up in the corner and feel for it and let these people get throo. Being a middle size conductor with his hair and his face matching, both being red, and I got back and started to feel in my other pockets, thinking, Gosh, G wizz, holey smokes, and after the other people had all went in the conductor sed, Now, boy, wares that fare? and I sed, Im feeling for it.

W dont you think up a new one? sed the conductor. Meaning that was wat I sed before. And I keep on feeling and the conductor sed, None of your tricks now, give me your fare or get off, and I sed, Im feeling for it, and the conductor sed, Are you a human being or a parrot? And just then a lot of more people got in, and it took the conductor about 5 minutes to collect all their fares on account of some of them wanting change and staying there till he gave it to them, me keeping on feeling, and the conductor sed, Now give me your fare, and if you tell me your feeling for it I'll slam you throo the window, and I sed, I guess something must of happened to it, I guess, I guess maybe I must of lost it.

If I looked anything like you I'd try to tell the truth and have at least something to my credit, sed the conductor. Properly meaning it for a insult, and he made the car stop and I got off, only having 3 blocks more to go anyway, and I keep on feeling till I found the 5 cents stuck in the lining of my coat pocket, thinking, Gosh, wats you know about that, O well, maybe I'm rich ill give some conductor 2 fares insted of one, maybe.

Not Educated To It.

Musical Hostess.—Would you like gaviotte now, Will? "Thank you, no. I don't care much for those foreign dishes. A plain ham sandwich is good enough for me."

THE GREAT IMPERSONATION.

"It is full of swift action and mystery with a sufficient flavor of romance to make it palatable for those who demand a love story."—St. Louis Post Dispatch.

LONDON ZOO HAS FINE BABY BISON

(Copyright, 1920, by Cross Atlantic News Service.)
London, July 15.—The buffalo is supposed to be about extinct in America except upon the face of the nickel, but the herd here is increasing. The arrival of a baby buffalo bull is chronicled by the papers thus: "The chief event of the week at the Zoological Gardens has been the birth of an American bison. The calf is a sturdy young male, which tried to run about within two hours of his birth. The coat is a light fawn, uniform over the body, and there is no trace of horns."

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Woodstock

Woodstock, N. B., July 11.—Mr. E. R. Teed returned home on Saturday from an extended visit to Windsor and the principal cities in the Canadian West. Mrs. Teed and Miss Lingley, who accompanied Mr. Teed as far as Montreal, are remaining for a visit with relatives at the Laurentian Mountains.

Miss Robbins, of New Haven, Conn., the guest of Miss Ada Pool, is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Bailey. Mrs. John Grey, of Red Bridge, is the guest of Mrs. D. A. Haviland. Miss Kate Myles, of Toronto, is visiting Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Dibble. Miss Marjorie Tupper, of Toronto, is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. C. H. L. Perkins.

Mrs. James Atkinson, of Shediac, is visiting her sister, Mrs. C. D. Jordan. Miss Laura Bulman and Miss Lulu Vince are spending a few weeks in Campbell.

Mrs. Mary Wright, R. N., of Boston, is visiting her sister, Mrs. E. W. Mac. Mrs. Harold Waite, of New York, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Gabel.

Miss Blanche K. Dibble is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. Dibble. Miss Edith MacRobert, of River Glade, is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. C. J. Jordan this week.

Rev. Mr. Prince, of Fort Kent, Me., preached in St. Paul's Church at both services on Sunday.

Mrs. A. H. Deedes and Miss Kitty Deedes, of Fredericton, who have been visiting friends in town, have returned home.

Miss McCarrin has returned home for a pleasant visit spent with friends in St. John.

Mrs. W. H. Hay, who has been in poor health, will leave this week to visit her sister, Miss Jones, in Queens County.

Miss Elizabeth Ketchum left on Monday for Amherst, N. S., where she will be the guest at the Rectory of Rev. Horace Dibble and Mrs. Dibble.

Mrs. A. H. Prescott left on Tuesday evening for Bangor, Me., where she will be the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Farris for a month.

Mr. H. B. Durost, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Peabody and Miss Margaret Peabody, made a trip by auto to St. John recently. Mr. Durost spent the week-end with Mrs. Durost at the home of her parent at Hampton.

Little "Bobs" Rogers, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Rogers, was operated on in the Fisher Memorial Hospital on Saturday for appendicitis. Although a very bad case, "Bobs" is progressing favorably under the skillful care of Dr. Rankin, who performed the operation.

Mr. Fred Buck and Miss Winnie Buck have returned home from a visit to Detroit and Boston. They were accompanied home by Miss Mary Buck, who has spent seven months in Detroit.

Miss Alexander Comben is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Comben. Mrs. A. Newell Vincent has returned from an enjoyable auto trip through Nova Scotia.

Miss Margaret Lockery, of Calais, who has been visiting her brother, Rev. F. M. Lockery, returned home on Wednesday.

Miss Evelyn Deming, who has been studying kindergarten teaching at Truro, N. S., is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Rogers.

Penobscot

Penobscot, N. B., showers of the past week great benefit to all the denizens. The early heavy rain has been followed by a light drizzle.

The funeral of the late Rev. Mr. Elliot of St. George's was held at the open air service, after which the family took the train for the settlement for interment.

Miss Grace Steeves and her family were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Collier, who spent a few days of the week with friends and relatives here.

Mrs. Stephen Fiddler, who has been visiting her son, Mr. Joseph Collier, spent a few days of the week with friends and relatives here.

Mrs. Sinclair and her family were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Collier, who spent a few days of the week with friends and relatives here.

Mrs. Stewart, Elgin, last week here, the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Collier.