CURRENT COMMENT

"Recognition" in the Legislature.

Public opinion in Ontario is solidly behind Premier Drury in his stand against an increased indemnity for members of the legislative assembly. The expenditure of another $110,000 on the legislators does not give promise of increasing their wisdom, their practicality nor their public spirit. In the payment of legislators a change has been made in the oldest British tradition. In the nature of things the change was bound to come. But in spite of Mr. Dewart's assertion that this legislative honorarium is only a recognition and not a remuneration, the transaction gives a commercial character to the legislator's activities for which there had been no excuse previously. When the public hands over $1,500 to a legislator the question comes up, what is the value received? In the aggregate, or taking them on the average, the public is satisfied to think that value has been received. But when a further demand comes up for what Mr. Dewart suavely styles recognition, the matter of value received is pressed home with more insistence. It will be asked whether membership of the legislature is an asset or a liability. Does a man lose or gain by belonging to the Queen's Park Law Shop? It is clear that lawyers regard it as an asset, to judge from the number who seek the position and the tenacity with which they cling to it. If it be an asset for them they cannot fairly ask for more pay. The farmers may be considered in the same way. As the House meets when the average farmer is not supposed to be doing very much, a seat in the legislature would appear to be a decided asset for him also. The labor men approach the subject from a rather different standpoint. They certainly do not wish to legalize the professional politician, but just as soon as a seat in the legislature becomes a means of livelihood professional politics becomes legalized. The finest thing about politics is the voluntary spirit in which the best service is rendered and the labor unions did homage to that principle when they subsidized their representatives. One thing is certain, that Premier Drury rightly interpreted the sentiment of the Province when he set his face against the proposal.

A Robust Thought Review.

The Onlooker is a new monthly venture in Toronto journalism which aims at filling the place once occupied by Goldwin Smith in The Bystander. It may seem somewhat ambitious to follow such a literary purist as the sage of The Grange, which, by the way, visitors to Toronto would do well to visit as a fine specimen of the old Colonial dwelling, now devoted to the housing of a magnificent gallery of pictures. Goldwin Smith was not always as infallible in his opinions as in his style, and perhaps The Onlooker will be satisfied to secure a little more accuracy of opinion with a little less impeccability in English. The Onlooker attacks Sir Thomas White—good worthy man—to begin with; the C. N. R. and Mackenzie & Mann follows; Mr. Crerar and his panaceas are next polished off; Sir George Foster and Hon. Arthur Meighen are then hailed as having "decided conspicuousness" as probable successors to Sir Robert Borden, who, it seems to The Onlooker, "may never again resume the reins of office." Mr. Rowell gets off easily as "a simple honest gentleman" who "is not and never can be a politician" because "he is temperamentally unfitted for the game. Building roads at present prices in Ontario is denounced if devised to catch the rural vote as "the meanest, the most truly sordid device ever conceived by low political cunning." Sir Andrew McPhail is let down easy and Principal Hutton is enveloped with "a certain pontificial splendor." An article on Ireland insists that the Keltic race is dark. Ulster is truly Keltic and carried its ancient name to Scotland, returning in later days to become the Ulster Scot. The Onlooker promises to deal with the Irish Literary Renascence at a future date. He correctly attributes the Irish Sinn Fein deviltries to the United States Clan-na-Gael—with a little German assistance, we imagine. Seeing that the editor has admitted four poems by James Cobourg Hodgins to his pages, and that the publisher is a member of that reverend gentleman's congregation, it should not be difficult to determine the identity of The Onlooker.

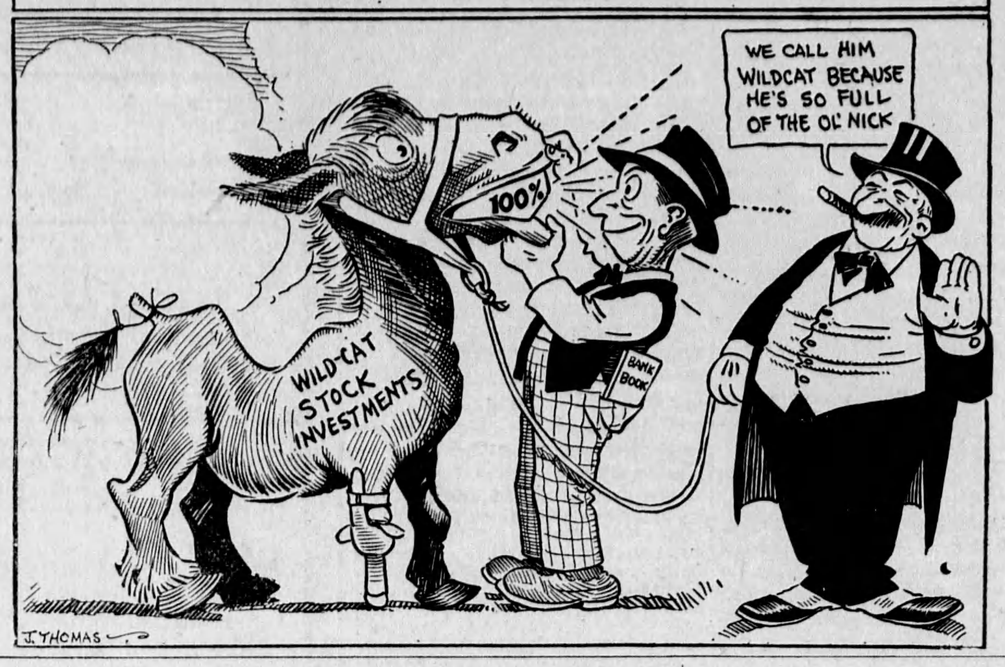
A Problem in Flotation.

Col. Grant Morden has been making a great deal of his abnegation in floating a merger without watering the stock, and even in entering his assets at a figure much below their estimated value. The people are resigned to big mergers, because they can't help themselves. They know by experience that as a rule a merger puts up the price of its products. Col. Morden alleges that there is no water in his stock and consequently that it will not be necessary to put prices up in order to pay dividends. We shall all hope so, of course, and be pleased that steel, instead of following the naughty example of cement, will behave like virtuous oil, and actually cheapen the commodity in question. There is a phase of the stock-watering problem that does not seem to have been observed in any public comment we have come across. It lies in the fact that all Col. Morden's steel assets, which he boasts are positively discounted in his estimates, are nevertheless catalogued at present day prices. These are at least 100 per cent. over pre-war values, and our able financiers tell us that prices will return to normal in from five to eight years. Should this be the case, it seems clear that even if assets at present estimates were discounted by twenty-five per cent., when prices resumed their normal level there would be fifty per. cent. water in stock that was based on present rates. If material is worth a dollar, and goes to two dollars on account of unusual circumstances, twenty-five per cent. off this would leave the price at $1.50, or fifty per cent. over the original figure. Should prices resume their normal condition in days to come as far as present day values are concerned stocks based upon these values will then have to demand dividends fifty per cent. above what would be required if, let us say, some more scientific way of gauging actual values and fair returns on actual values were adopted. There is no doubt that the policy of mortgaging our future, which is the method of stock flotation, and a perfectly legitimate method as things are, does tremendously complicate the whole social and financial situation and embarrasses its settlement. No doubt Col. Morden acts in good faith, but it ought to be obvious what the result will be in the case of giant mergers which mortgage their future in terms of an abnormally inflated present.

Will the Women Agree ?

A shrewd observer declares that the high cost of living is really due to the extravagant tastes and inordinate love of display of women. Not all women, of course, but of enough women to set the remainder wildly aflame with desire not to be outdistanced. It is extraordinary how the most estimable women succumb on some point or another to the universal rivalry. The unwonted freedom gained by munition workers opened up possibilities of expenditure never contemplated before. Most of the money that was earned was freely spent. All sorts of luxuries—things that could have been done without—were added to the family possessions. What house does not yet possess a piano, a phonograph, a motor car? What woman but feels the need of these and of a set of furs? If she feels the need is it necessary to say that friend husband also soon begins to feel the need. The need is sown in him and cultured and tended until he feels it is badly as anybody. He is subtly instructed in the need for a new house, with a garage for the car, and with the new house there come great waves of necessity for new furniture, fittings, rugs, curtains, and, of course, appropriate garments for the new abode. Man has no alternative but to go forth as in the cave days of old and kill and slay and bring home what the desireful woman indicates. How much of this is true? Ask the profiteer who urged him to profiteering and who put the tear in it! It is a great tribute to the power and influence of women that this state of things exists. But it also suggests the remedy for our hard conditions in the matter of prices. If women could only be taught or convinced that they have no use for nine-tenths of the things they are now crazy for, and without which they do not think they could exist, we could have a return to financial sanity in three months. As it is, experts are giving warning that in three months we shall be plunged in a gulf of financial depression and there are not many in a position to say this is not so.

LOOK BEYOND THE TEETH



The Quiet Observer

Potatoes Go Bragh.

An excellent step was taken by the good ladies of Galt when they crowded the City Hall and decided to raise potatoes as a protest against raising the price. Potatoes are being classed among the luxuries now, and those present pledged themselves to abstain from buying luxuries. A general policy of economy was outlined and endorsed and the meeting places Galt in a class by itself for the practical way in which the women of the city have taken action. A good deal of potato growing has been done in the cities in years past. Now the necessity is very great and there should be no difficulty in continuing and extending the practice of other years. The matter should be considered altogether apart from misleading considerations of "supply and demand." A demand such as the world presents to-day is really unlimited, and all the potatoes that can be raised would not suffice. The problem of distribution is quite as important as that of distribution. If you could get enough potatoes grown to supply the world this difficulty of transportation would still have to be met.

A Little Labor Rift.

James Simpson, editor of the Industrial Banner, a Labor organ in Toronto, was indiscreet enough to rely upon a second-hand report of what he was told had occurred, and made reflections on the editor of the Labor Leader, a rival organ which professed to be less Bolshevistic than some other people, of course with no suggestion of Mr. Simpson. Twelve good men and true have decided that Mr. Simpson had no right to say that the Labor Leader was subsidized in order to create dissension in the ranks of labor, consequently reflecting on the reputation of its editor, and the verdict reached into Mr. Simpson's pocket to the extent of $1,500 damages and costs. This will measureably strengthen Mr. Simpson's hold on his own constituency, for it is according to the method of reasoning of some readers of the Banner that the system under which we live would not have mulcted Mr. Simpson in damages and costs had Mr. Simpson not been against the system and his opponents in league with it.

Sources of Public Opinion.

A Hamilton paper remarks that the modern board of trade makes people think, and thought transforms itself through conspiration in community action. A great deal may be done in the formation of public opinion by the presence of an active board of trade in every town. Public opinion that gets itself realized in action is the vital essence of co-operative citizenship. A board of trade is a practical way of getting the leading men of all stripes of opinion together. Their good practical common sense will lead them into action and in action they will learn to know each other. This is the first step to genuine public life in any municipality. There ought to be differences of opinion, but if there be any measure of toleration and good will such differences are wholesome. It is part of the disability of ordinary farm and rural life that the farmer has little or no opportunity to assemble himself with his brethren of the seeder and plough. As a result he cultivates a severe individualism which inclines him to be suspicious and on occasion even morose. The Farmers' Institute meetings have done something to bring the class together, but there they talk shop. What is needed is a sort of Farmers' Canadian Club, where, say, on a Saturday evening the farmers of a district could meet and hear some prominent man talk on a subject of interest and importance. The Canadian Clubs have done much to widen the outlook of city men. There is no reason why men in the country should not be similarly benefited.

Women in Major Politics.

Sir W. R. Nicoll, reviewing Sir Harry Johnston's novel, "Mrs. Warren's Daughter," deduces from the book that Sir Harry would attribute all the errors and mischief of government is due to the fact that governments are made up of men only. Sir Harry is said to write as a passionate believer in the administrative capacity of women. "What we want, and must have, is a Man-and-Woman government. Then we shall settle our differences without going to war." It is not going too far to say that the entrance of women into public life and into politics means this very thing. But how soon will the change come? It is a little more than a generation since women began to take their place in the business world. The typewriter and the telephone did much to hasten their advent, but they have not been slow to seize more important positions. It will take about a generation for women to force their way to cabinet rank in politics, but by 1950 we should be enjoying the efficiency and the practical genius for organization in matters that men are satisfied to let slide, but are abhorrent to women's instincts for order and system, and the determination of the developed woman to have things settled right. The mother spirit in politics is needed to balance the dominant if not domineering paternal tendency.

Starving in the Empire.

We should not be allowed to forget that people are starving to death in what we call our civilization, dying every day for want of food, or for want of money to buy food. An appalling story comes from England, where a man and his wife, 27 and 26 years old respectively, and their infant son, were found dying for want of food in Bermondsy, a central section of London. They were taken to the hospital and all died during the week. The wife in her despair was kneeling on the floor picking up crumbs of bread from the floor. They had pawned all their property, and the wife about once more to become a mother. "Inhuman and terrible" was the view taken of this case, who being technically able-bodied was refused help by the board of guardians or poor law authorities, and so starved to death. In Toronto the church authorities, in spite of the vast sums recently collected, are paying their ministers so poorly that many of them are abandoning their charges, unable to continue the struggle. It has been pointed out the outside laborer gets $1,200 or $1,400 a year wages, while many of these ministers have no more than five, six or eight hundred a year. So they are turning their talents to secular account in order to support their dependents. These are signs of the times.

Eight Cents on the Dollar.

It is a rather serious consideration for those who consider at all that the paper money of the world, exclusive of Russia, where money is a joke, amounts to $56,000,000,000. At the same time the national debts of the world have grown to $265,000,000,000. In addition world credits have grown enormously. To meet the bank paper there is only twelve per cent. of the amount demanded could be paid in gold. That is to say, the world is only able to pay 8½ cents on the dollar, and is consequently badly bankrupt. By ignoring the gold standard for some time, the situation may gradually be composed, but it is worth noting that the absence of gold does no more than increase the prices of everything rated in terms of the new paper money. What the result may be no one is prepared to say, but busines men who look facts in the face are confident that there are hard times ahead which will involve the whole world in thrift and careful management if the logical outcome of the situation is to be escaped. After the great wars of the past conditions similar to our own prevailed, though not so excessively emphasized. One feature of identical character is noted in a declaration of the Supreme Council of the Allies. Listen:—"The general extravagance now observable throughout the world is a phenomenon which has almost invariably followed in the footsteps of every great human catastrophe." The strictest economy is needed and this means every man, woman and child in Canada.

A Regrettable Incident.

General Dyer, who gave the order in April, 1919, to fire into an unarmed crowd of civilians at Amritsar, has arrived in London. There were 500 killed and 1,500 wounded and general Dyer declared that it was "his dirty duty" to do as he did. He had to decide in 30 seconds what he should do. "I shot to save British rule; to preserve India for the British Empire and protect Englishmen and English women who lived under my protection. Now I am told to go. Every Englishman I have met in India approved my act, horrible as it was." Five hundred were killed and 1,500 wounded. His defence is that the shooting was necessary to preserve British rule in the Punjaub. He has been alternately reprimanded and complimented for the act, but nothing has been done to condemn him. According to military regulations he was quite within his authority in issuing the order, and he has never been court-martialled. The incident is one that stands black on the record, but there is evidently a disposition even among Hindus to distinguish between the act of the soldier in command and the Empire he represented, apart altogether from the wisdom of his act.

The Dead Honor the Dead.

A unique memorial of the defense of Verdun has been chosen by the committee of Holland sympathizers who determined to erect a memorial of the 400,000 Frenchmen who fell in defeating the German attack. In 1882 Rodin modelled a group to celebrate the "Defence of Paris" and the committee decided to have this group enlarged and dedicated to the later event. The older sculptors objected, as they had objected at first when Rodin's work was rejected for that of Barrias. A technical objection was also raised that the scale of Rodin's work could not be changed without his permission. Five letters were found from Rodin, however, which authorized, encouraged, raised and directed the work of enlargement already taken over by Rene Le Bossee and his son. The artist himself lived to know of the triumph of Verdun and this specimen of the work of one generally acclaimed as the greatest artist of the Third French Republico, will be a worthy memorial of the prowess of those sons for whom life was nothing and France was everything.

PINS ARE SCARCE.

Pins, medium-sized pins, are scarce. A New York stationer having an order for six pounds of No. 3 or No. 4 pins, tried without success to get them from jobbers. He was told that there were none in the market. The No. 3 and No. 4 pins are the medium sizes, such as are used for fastening papers together. They come generally in half-pound boxes. It is only about a centurn since the manufacture of pins by machinery began. Before that time they were hammered out by hand, and of course were much more costly than now. The earliest pin undoubtedly was a thorn, but bone and bronze pins have been found in prehistoric ruins.

In 1817 the first patent for the making of pins by machinery was granted, and since then there have been many improvements. The first machine-made pins had heads separate from the shank, the head being fastened on with a wire.

By the newer methods the solid head pin is made in one piece. Wire of a suitable gauge is run off a reel and is nipped between jaws. The piece of wire is headed by a die and pointed by a revolving cutter. The pins so made are cleaned by boiling and are laid in a copper pan with alternate layers of grained tin. The contents of the pan are sprinkled with argol (bitartrate of potash) and boiled for six hours, the pins thus becoming coated with tin. They are then washed, dried and polished in a barrel containing bran.

CANNING OF WHALE IS DISCONTINUED.

The commercial effect of the war and its cessation is strikingly exemplified in the whale fisheries of the Pacific coast. Due to the food shortage and the demand for oils and fats, whale fishing was actively carried on. During the 1918 season, over 500 whales were taken by three fishing stations; the catch of one station alone was 246. During the same year 30,000 cases of whale meat was canned and met a ready market.

The close of the war, however, meant the complete cessation of the whale-canning industry; no whale meat was put up in 1919. Only one whaling station was in operation, and only 166 whales were taken.

Whale-meat is a nutritious food product, in taste being similar to beefsteak. It was placed on the market at a price of 20 cents per pound tin, and filled a requirement for a food supply at low cost. As a war measure the taking of 500 whales in one season could be justified, but a continuance of killing on this extensive scale would result in the annihilation of this great mammal.

GETTING MORE SPEED.

When it is desired to get more speed into an old car one of the operations necessary is to change the gear ratio of the rear axle. Racing cars use less than three-to-one reduction, and this change can be made in the ordinary stock model by fitting a new differential ring gear and drive pinion, which can be obtained from the maker of the car.

The Brain Box

CONDUCTED BY E. GUNN RAMSAY.

What are you contributing to Life?

To the sum of the world's happiness?

This is a question which sooner or later must come to every individual.

Not a soul born into this world who lives beyond the age of childhood can say or act as though he had nothing to do with how the rest of the world lives.

This old world was meant to be run to a definite plan. There is a place in its scheme for every man and it should be the duty of every one, man or woman, to find his place.

Have you found yours?

There is a place for you. If you are not in it to-day whose fault is it?

What have you contributed to Life, what are you giving which entitles you to receive recognition?

A man purchases a piece of land and upon this a foundation is digged for a house. This foundation represents a life plan. Even before the house has been completed, while local improvements are being added, he will be called upon to pay taxes—SUCH IS LIFE.

You are a property owner. You have something tangible which you are enjoying at the expense and through the labors of some members of the community. The upkeep of your roads, your street lighting, sewerage, etc., therefore you are expected to pay a just tax.

Some men there be who evade the tax, some go a very long time evading it, some are hauled into jail, but eventually every man gets a call from he who collects the taxes—this also is Life.

Life, practically from the cradle to the grave, presents a series of bargains. We are not very long in the world before a tax is levied upon us and at stated periods, old Father Time comes round and passes the hat, and every man is called upon to pay that which is considered his just due.

"How much owest thou unto my lord?"

The man who in his everyday life might cheerfully "render unto Caesar" by dubbing up promptly his property tax, his rental and all other just dues, who presents to the world which knows him, the everyday hustling, commercial business world an honest front, is not always the first to rush forward with his contribution when Life knocks at the door.

Sometimes he is like the man in church, who was so busy singing "All things come from Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee," that he did not notice the collection plate passing away from him, ... or, like the prominent gentleman in the front pew, who lustily sings, "Take my silver and my gold not a mite would I withhold," while he goes through every pocket to pick out a nickle from among the bigger coins.

He gets away with the smallest possible contribution, yet for his outward appearance and his sacrificial mien, he may pass for the most zealous of all contributors.

This man is to be found in all ranks. Sometimes he works for a wage, giving the smallest possible service in return; sometimes he gets into office but forgets his debts to those who have entrusted him with the reins of power.

YOU, who expect to get something out of life, tell us what are you putting in?

The man who evades his taxes, who escapes his creditors, may go for a very ong time, but eventually there must ome a day of reckoning, sometimes hat day may be so late that payment s not made until after the debtor is dead, but the collector still waits, and —SOMEONE has to pay.

Who pays for YOU?

Are you putting back into life an adequate reward for all that you have gained?

There is yet another man to whom Life passes the hat. He makes no pretence of running away when the collection is taken up, but rather proudly wears upon his sleeve the motto, "I PAY," but the coin that he drops in is too often found to be counterfeit. This is the man whose actions will not bear close scrutiny, who whatever gathering or organization he may join, eventually brings disrepute upon it.

His promises look fair, but they will not stand the test. He is even more dangerous in the community than the one who openly passes up the collection —for while appearing to be so honest —he doubly defrauds those who trust him, because for his counterfeit "Coin of Service," that of many honest men is discredited.

Make your contribution to Life worth while—let there be no evasion of Caesar's dues, nor offering of counterfeit service to your fellows.

Only so can you expect to reap in your place that reward which is the just due of every good citizen.

PATRONIZE HOME INDUSTRY.

H. J. Halford Says Canadians Should Buy Made-in-Canada Goods.

Writing in the Made-in-Canada number of "The New Democracy," Mr. H. J. Halford, Vice-President of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, says: "The recent decline in the value of the Canadian dollar has brought home to most of us the urgent need for patronizing home industry, of developing our own resources, and finally of developing our own manufacturing processes to a point where Canada will be in future to a larger extent self-supporting than she has been in the past." Provided that they are not used as a pretext for unduly increasing the cost of Canadian goods, Mr. Halford continues: "No patriotic citizen of this Dominion can find fault with the various campaigns which are being conducted for the purpose of inducing the rank and file of the Canadian people to purchase the products of Canadian mills. Similar campaigns have been conducted in other countries with notable success."