CURRENT COMMENT.

Price Reduction Tends to Stability

Reduction in prices will do more to allay the social unrest of the present time than any other circumstance. The "law of supply and demand," upon which some economists rely in normal times, has been shown to be ineffective under the stress of war conditions, when necessity upsets every consideration. It should be fairly obvious that when the necessities of warfare upset the alleged "law," the necessities of peace cannot be gainsaid. There is unlimited demand at present for an enormous amount of material, food, clothing and building material, to go no further, and the artificial inflation of price alone prevents the use of these things and stops the natural operations of labor and capital. If the "law of supply and demand" were a real law, prices, in face of the imperative demand, would go higher still; but as it is impossible to take breeches off a Highlander, justice and equity must be recognized to be more potent than supply and demand. It is not permissible to starve a man to death because he cannot pay for food. Nor is it legitimate to deprive a nation of the comforts and conveniences which are actually the necessities of our modern civilization, because another nation can purchase these at a higher figure. The "law of supply and demand" is being recognized as a cloak for much greed, extortion and mercantile rapacity. Unfair dealing soon defeats its own ends, and it is in this respect that the moral factor enters into business relations and cannot be ignored. The cold, material basis for business and commerce resulted in the great war. We must find a better basis for our peace activities than that which led to such disastrous failure previously. Events will compel the recognition of principles that make for permanence and stability, whether we desire it or not. Prices are already yielding. Wheat and flour have fallen in price, and bread naturally follows. Forage will be found in sympathy, with a corresponding drop in the live stock markets. Sugar has been selling at 12 cents wholesale and less, a cut of fifty per cent. Lord Beaverbrook has been telling us that paper must come down. Reason and co-operation will carry the day.

House Shortage and Rents

No feature of the present condition of social unrest is more significant than the scarcity of houses. During the war there was almost a complete suspension of the construction of new houses, while many factors contributed to the decrease in those available. Population also was increasing and creating a greater demand. The usual shrinkage from fire, from decay, from transformation into business premises and other causes were responsible for a considerable decrease in the number of houses in the last six years. The number built has also been much below the average. This has been due to scarcity and cost of material, scarcity of labor and high rate of wages, and the reluctance of investors to put their money into house property in view of the high rates of interest available in bonds and other gilt-edged securities. Instances are not uncommon where property owners sold all their real estate holdings and put their capital into non-taxable war bonds. Some men like to be landlords and collect rents; but at the best it is a somewhat thankless task, and the uncertainty of tenants and their unlimited demands, coupled with their carelessness in the protection of property, does not invite to the ownership of renting properties. The landlord is portrayed as a bugbear by many tenants, but if the landlord told his story there would be seen another side. The present complaint of high and extortionate rents, if analyzed, will be found only occasionally to be justified. Any landlord who attempted to get as much return out of his property as the ordinary merchant does out of his wares would be execrated. He has to be content with comparatively low returns on his investment, comforted sometimes by the hope of gaining some increment on the sale of his property. This is a good deal of a gambler's chance, and by no means justifies the optimism of the many, however fortunate the few may be. The owning of a home is the most solid link that exists between the citizen and the state, but one would never suspect that the state considered this phase of the question from the handicaps placed upon those who attempt to own homes. In a new land, like Canada, especially, it might be expected that tenants would be in an insignificant minority, and that practically the whole population would own their own homes. Henry George's panacea of the "Single Tax," if universally adopted, would probably remove most of the present anomalies in connection with land values and home-owning; but there is not the remotest chance of its universal adoption, and its partial adoption has no guarantee of success and is frequently a failure. In fact, there cannot be a partial adoption of "Single" tax. It must be complete or not at all. An alternative which has not been tried, but which would be effective whether partially or completely applied, is for the state or community to own the land, and the individual to own the structure. The real difficulty about housing is the high cost of land in available locations. If the land was owned by the state and leased for short terms of not more than ten years, so that readjustments of values for taxation could be periodically and equitably made, builders would be encouraged to put their capital and labor into house construction, being certain of a return for their pains, while the state would have the construction for the security of its taxes, and control also of the districts it desired to develop through its ownership of means of transportation. The state here implies the municipality or whatever unit ownership was invested in. Failing some scientific method such as this, which would be objected to by all owners because it is scientific, equitable and new, and would provide fixity of tenure, there will be good opportunities for builders in the next few years who take advantage of the scarcity of houses and get the market at the right moment for materials and labor.

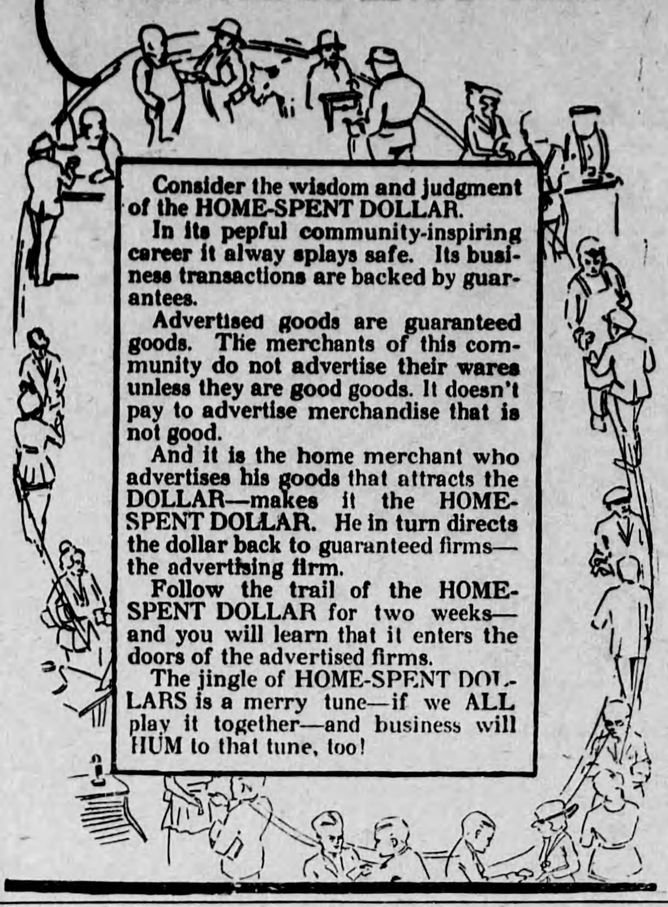
A New Lake and Ocean Route

A new canal scheme for the provision of an ocean-going route from the Great Lakes is naturally of keen interest to Ontario. The new plan emanates from Ottawa, and was submitted to the International Joint Waterways Commission by John Bingham, president of the Ottawa Board of Trade, and Noulan Cauchon, engineer. The Commission has no authority nor jurisdiction in a plan which is wholly confined to the Dominion of Canada, yet this may prove to be one of its strongest points in its appeal to Canadians. It is an all-Canadian route. The St. Lawrence project, with its deepening of the channel and use of water-power, is full of international complications, which no doubt will be solved; but the Ottawa proposals involve no one but Canadians. Canadians, however, would also have to bear the whole cost, but as this is cheaper by $100,000,000 than the St. Lawrence route and would give all the power developed to Canadians, the balance of advantage is said to be with the Ottawa scheme. The route is from Montreal by the Ottawa river, and then by a deep-water canal across to the St. Lawrence at Cardinal. There would be fewer locks by this route, less engineering, and 2,000 square miles of swamp land in Eastern Ontario could be reclaimed by it for farms. It is not always possible to decide whether such proposals are not primarily intended to delay earlier proposals. What is needed for Canada is quick action in the development of the lake and ocean traffic, and also of the Hydro-Electric Commission's power plans. The country is particularly short of power, and all that tends to maintain that shortage is against Canada's real interests. We can use all the power that can be developed by either or both routes, and the plan that gives power most quickly will be most welcome.

The Presidency and the League of Nations

History is said to repeat itself, but politics is the record beater in this respect. The present contest for the presidency of the United States offers at least as exciting grounds for a wager as the great horse race between Man o' War and Sir Barton. One of them is bound to lose. There is about equal chances for a dead heat. But it is the repetition of history that we are occupied with. Four years ago Mr. Wilson was gathering in all the German and Irish votes on his record as a Pacifist. Supporters of the Allies indulged their feelings in all varieties, from bitter indignation to scornful contempt. But Mr. Wilson was elected, and a month after he was installed as president he declared war on the German alliance. This year he is fighting for the League of Nations, which is to end war and has already done something in that direction. The last war it prevented was between Finland and her neighbor. It has done other things also, and with the assistance of Hon. Elihu Root has devised a world court of justice, where international offenders can be brought to trial. The Republican party is out against the League of Nations as fiercely as Mr. Wilson was out against war four years ago. But the "wise ones" declare that the Republican candidate will be elected, and it is not for Canadians to say they know better. At any rate, all the German and Irish and other voters who supported Wilson four years ago are now supporting Mr. Harding, and if reports are to be trusted Mr. Cox has a slim chance. The opposition to the League is altogether based on misrepresentation, the favorite allegation being that if the United States joins it her sons will be compelled to go all over the world to fight in wars in which the League will be involved| This is, of course, humbug. The consensus of the nations in the League will have great weight, because the wisest men will be behind its decisions, but every nation will be free to make its own decisions. After ballots have been counted, the electoral college given its vote, and the new president been installed, the great United States will join the League of Nations like everybody else—will, indeed, take a leading part in it, and claim the credit of having founded it. So will history repeat itself once more.

The HOME SPENT DOLLAR



Consider the wisdom and judgment of the HOME-SPENT DOLLAR.

In its pepful community-inspiring career it alway splays safe. Its business transactions are backed by guarantees.

Advertised goods are guaranteed goods. The merchants of this community do not advertise their wares unless they are good goods. It doesn't pay to advertise merchandise that is not good.

And it is the home merchant who advertises his goods that attracts the DOLLAR—makes it the HOME-SPENT DOLLAR. He in turn directs the dollar back to guaranteed firms—the advertising firm.

Follow the trail of the HOME-SPENT DOLLAR for two weeks—and you will learn that it enters the doors of the advertised firms.

The jingle of HOME-SPENT DOLLARS is a merry tune—if we ALL play it together—and business will HUM to that tune, too!

ADVICE TO GIRLS

By Rosalind

Registered According to the Copyright Act

Because of a change in printing and other plans, Miss Rosalind in future will have her mail sent to 34 King William Street, Hamilton.

Young women who wish to receive advice from Miss Rosalind through this paper are advised to make a note of her new address, and to address all inquiries in future to Miss Rosalind, 34 King William Street, Hamilton.

Dear Rosalind:—

I have read your advice to girls several times in the paper and think it is fine. I thought I ould give you my experience and hope to receive a profitable answer.

I have a boy friend who lives some distance away. I have been keeping company with him for some time, but he seems very careless about me though I love him very much. When I first met him and for some time afterward he led me to believe he thought a great deal of me.

What I want to ask is if I should give him up and not write any more, or if you could give me some method of regaining his love?

I am not twenty years of age. I can have loads of other company, but none satisfies the same. Hoping for an answer in the paper.

"BETSY."

Dear Betsey:—

Perhaps if you did not write for a time, the young man might get anxious and worry about why you had stopped. If he is too sure of you and for that reason, too careless about keeping your regard, it might be well to give him a jolt. If on the other hand, he does not care enough to be interested whether you write or not, it is time you forgot about him and turned your attention to those who will appreciate your friendship. You are a pretty writer, Betsy, I shall look forward to seeing the hand-writing again.—Rosalind.

Dear Rosalind:—

I am a girl of 15. I have been reading your advice to young girls, and I would like you to help me. I have been keeping company with a young man. I used to go with him quite frequently, he grew very fond of me. The time came when we had to leave each other. Before we parted he asked me how would it be to correspond? It is now three weeks since I have seen him. He said he would write the following Thursday, but no mail yet.

Please advise me what to do. Should I drop him a note and tell him I have let enough time elapse?

CUTIE.

Dear Cutie:—

I would not do anything at all, if I were you. You are so ridiculously young to even think about "keeping company," that it is doubtful if you will ever hear from the boy.—Rosalind.

Dear Rosalind: —

I am fifteen years old. I have been living in this town for eight months, and haven't a girl friend.

I know quite a few girls, but they all have their own chums and I don't think I would want one of them anyway. I am very lonesome please tell me how to find a girl friend.

VIOLET.

Dear Violet:—

It must be very dreadful not to have a girl friend to talk to and go out with. Have you really tried to be friendly with the girls you have met. Perhaps they think you are hard to get acquainted with and are, therefore, not natural when they meet you. Just try to be extra nice and friendly to one or two of them and see how it works. It may be that there is another girl in another town who is just in the same position as Violet. Wouldn't it be fine if they could write to each other and become good paper friends. I shall be glad to exchange addresses for all such correspondents. I am a great believer in the benefits to be derived from expressing one's opinions on paper. Who will be the first to ask for Violet's address?—Rosalind.

Just Books

The Hand in the Dark, by Arthur J. Rees, author of "The Shrieking Pit." Published by The Ryerson Press, Toronto.

People who read a great deal of fiction usually come to the point after a while where plots no longer have surprises for them, where they know what the ending of a novel, the solution of its mystery, is going to be as soon as they learn early in the story the nature of the plot, the character of the mystery. But let no such experienced hand and sophisticated head endeavor to foretell from the first hundred pages of this novel what the last ones will disclose. For the chances are overwhelming that he will be mistaken. In short, Mr. Rees has set before the reader a mystery whose blind and baffling qualities are likely to puzzle the most skillful of lovers of detective fiction.

The scene of the story is laid in a country house in England near the end of the war, a mediaeval moat-house, some hundreds of years old, which had taken the place of a castle dating back to Saxon times, and itself had a history beginning in turmoil and horrors. But in the Autumn of 1918 it was, as the author pictures it, a delight to the eye and a fascination, with its moat walls and bridge and old garden, to lovers of the past. Gathered there was a week-end party, whose gayeties the young and pretty wife of the heir to the estate could not engage in because a temporary indisposition confined her to her room. As the rest of the party was finishing their dinner and almost ready to start for a neighboring festivity they were startled by a scream and the report of a pistol, and the young wife was found dying in her bed, shot through the lungs.

Three detectives are presently engaged in the endeavor to find out who committed the murder, a local county constable, the star of Scotland Yard, and a private operative.

The complicated ingenuity with which the murderer had concealed his responsibility for the deed outwits them all, and will doubtless do the same for the reader until the mystery is solved for him. The book has other pleasures in store for the reader aside from its chief merit, for the author writes well, with a good, forceful, interesting style, makes graphic and pleasing pictures of his background, and puts individuality into the delineation of his characters.

UNFILABLE PRISON BARS.

A certain number of daring escapes by criminals who have filed through the bars of their cells are recorded in our prison annals. Such escapes have become very infrequent during late years owing to keener supervision by the warders. And now, if either of the new types of bar is adopted for general use in our prisons, it will take a very ingenious man to break through. In the first type the bars are of hollow metal, filled with water. These pipes are all connected with a central pump, and the water is kept under high pressure. Thus, the slightest break in any bar would cause a powerful jet of water to spurt. To continue filing the bar would be almost impossible. Also the fact that there was a leakage somewhere would be registered o n a dial on the central pump, and lead to speedy investigation. The second type now in use in certain U. S. prisons is simpler, though decidedly effective. This type also consists of a hollow bar inside which is a solid one, turning on ball-bearings. This inner bar turns at the slightest touch. If the outer cover were cut through no impression could be made on the solid bar as it would turn with the file. The purpose of the outer cover is to prevent the revolving bar being gripped.

The ordinary bamboo has been known to grow at the rate of 1½ ft. a day.

THE BRAIN BOX.

CONDUCTED BY E. GUNN RAMSAY.

Registered According to the Copyright Act.

Are you "sticking up for your rights?"

Are you getting your "rights?"

It is strange what a fuss some folks make over this question of getting their rights when the issue is a comparatively small and personal matter—though too often—in the larger and more vital things which will influence other lives, or affect the destiny of a community, they are extremely slow to take up what is their right, often not even troubling to consider their rights.

"Rights" as they are called have two aspects. Your right to live or receive or do, as you see it and your right or obligation, right in this sense meaning birth right, to do your common every day bit in the world.

Too many of us with our minds upon the story of Esau and Jacob look upon a birthright as some gift to us for our sole benefit and enjoyment, a selfish boon. But is there not another and more far reaching meaning?—that which is given to every man to pass on, to use in the service of his fellow men?

One of the "rights" which a certain class of the community is fond of shouting for is that of "Equality." This talk of "Equality" has been their idea of Heaven, a state where all are equal in wealth, possession and rank.

Followed to its ultimate conclusion, what a dreary picture such a state conjures up—a condition where none has any incentive to climb, to thrive, where that "divine discontent" which has made so many splendid characters would be missing. "Equality" in an ideal world, should be the birthright of every man, but "Equality" only of Opportunity.

An equal opportunity for all to achieve, to climb, to work, would soon bring to the surface those who are really worth while. Before men talk of equal distribution of wealth, what is the matter with an equal distribution of labor?

It is not more creation of wealth that is needed, but more labor to produce the good things of the earth in sufficient plentitude that all may enjoy. When all labor, then all may enjoy the fruits of labor.

If you "stuck up for your rights" you would be a producer of something. It is your right to give, my right to give, something towards the general sum of the world's happiness.

The world lags, halts and goes lame, because someone has failed to "deliver the goods," to do that which it is their right to do.

"Equality" of sharing in the plans and work of the world makes for "equality" of enjoyment.

ARE YOU "STICKING UP" FOR THESE RIGHTS?

Suspicious Bolsheviks—Their Attempt to Abolish Human Nature

By Capt. Francis McCullagh, in The London Daily Mail

During three months passed recently, as a supposed civilian, in Russia, I came into personal relations with Trotsky and with a number of the leading Bolsheviks; and this experience gave me a vivid impression of what I regard as one of the leading characteristics of the Bolsheviks—namely, their intense suspicion and great fear of what they call "the capitalistic nations" and "the great predatory Empires."

The Bolshevist Government now finds itself the only government of its kind in the world. The Government of Lenine is brand new, and has therefore none of the forces and sanctions of tradition behind it. It represents a very small section of the Russian people and is menaced not only by powerful interests inside Russia but also, in the firm opinion of the Bolsheviks, by all other governments in the world, republican as well as monarchical.

The Bolsheviks believe that these governments hate it intensely, and are, some of them, in a state of acute fear for their existence. But I have seen myself that the countries which suffer most from this fear—Finland, for example—are by no means in such a state of panic as the Soviet Republic, which is convinced, rightly or wrongly, that all the wealth of the world and all the intellect of the world are working against it ceaselessly and with supreme ability. Wealth, according to Lenine, is naturally against him: and intellect has been subdued to the service of wealth by capitalism, religion, patriotism, and militarism.

Lenine's Misgivings.

Despite all their bluster and all their military success, the Bolsheviks therefore feel themselves at times to be nothing but amateurs in the realms of diplomacy, war, secret service, and economics; and on more than one occasion Lenine himself confessed to a painful sinking at heart in view of the mighty combination of forces that was opposed to him, and even declared in public that his great experiment would probably fail.

The leading Bolsheviks whom I met in Moscow are profoundly convinced that their enemies have a great advantage over them in being able to offer rewards which they cannot offer—wealth, comfort, high and permanent positions, the esteem of powerful and ancient empires, the blessings of religion.

The Soviet can only give its agents hard work, danger, permanent discomfort. It cannot provide them even with good cigarettes or with matches which will light. It can only promise them the applause of a small clique, not the applause of a people.

It measures so accurately the tremendous strength of the temptations to which they are exposed that when it sends abroad not only an ordinary agent, but even a leading commissary, it generally keeps his wife or some of his relations behind as a hostage lest, corrupted by the gold of the capitalists, he should grow faint-hearted, tired of the bitter, unending struggle, and abandon them altogether.

Untrustworthy Communists.

Lenine has himself confessed in moments of depression, that though there are nominally 600,000 Communists in Russia, there are not 6,000 who can be trusted implicitly. Only fanatics can be depended upon in all circumstances, and fanatics are few, even in Russia. The average man cannot rise to the heights or sink to the depths of fanaticism, and (to mention no higher inducement) is easily tempted by the easy, normal life which ensures him cigars, beer, soap, clean linen, and other comforts which Bolshevism cannot give him, not to speak of nice dresses, jewelry, scent and real tea with sugar in it for his wife, as well as playthings for his children.

Even the fanatics in Russia have been kept at too tense a strain during the last two years; weak human nature cannot stand it. Lenine and Trotsky both realize this and are appalled by the infinite staying-power, the long experience, and the extreme seductiveness of the vast, patient force in front of them. They are all the more appalled because they realize that though the workers are tired the work has hardly yet begun.

The foregoing explains why Lenine and Trotsky tolerate, and will in all probability continue to tolerate, such a mediaeval institution as the Extraordinary Commission. Despite the dangerous wideness of its powers, it at least guards them from the anti-Bolshevist conspirators and the foreign agents who, in their opinion, swarm in every part of Russia.

Most of the things we say about them they say about us.

We praise their intelligence, but they think that ours is of extreme and deadly efficiency. They gave me to understand that more than 99 per cent of the sympathetic foreigners to whom they opened their minds have turned out to be agents of their worst enemies.

Trotsky's "Nerves."

Trotsky in particular has become so nervous and frightened at what he regards as the "disloyalty" of sympathetic Britons that he starts whenever he is addressed in English, and, though he speaks English fairly well, conducts the conversation in Russian or French if his interlocutor happens to know either of these languages.

He does not understand our institutions; he is suffering from overwork and nervous strain; he is even afraid of his own life.

In the Extraordinary Commission at Moscow I was shown a great collection of reports which had, it was alleged, been seized on agents of the Entente or on Russian anti-Bolsheviks. There was nothing to prove that they were genuine, but Trotsky believes them to be genuine, and it is no wonder, therefore, that he has been frightened by them, for they deal with schemes for destroying railway bridges, bribing Red generals and soldiers to surrender, and murdering the principal commissaries. According to these documents, several Bolshevist generals had been bribed to desert with their men during Yudenitch's advance on Petrograd, and it was the timidity of the Whites rather than the astuteness of the Reds which saved the latter from destruction. Quite a large detachment of Reds which advanced to join Yudenitch so frightened the latter's troops that all ran away; and when, with the best intentions in the world, the Red deserters continued pursuing, the Whites broke up altogether, and even threw away their arms. But the extremely narrow margin by which the Soviet Republic was saved on several occasions frightened the Bolshevist leaders extremely and has made them morbidly suspicious ever since.

I need not say that there is no reason for this suspiciousness, and that the British agents in Russia are there to find out the true state of affairs, which they have a perfect right to do, and not take part in plots for the assassination of Lenine and Trotsky.

Working Against Nature.

What frightens the Bolsheviks most of all, however, is the discovery that the very nature of man is working against them. All their attempts to abolish capitalism, trading, and that laudable desire for gain which, after all, makes the world go round are as futile as cutting water with a sword and expecting the fissure to remain open. Not a month passes without the Extraordinary Commission discovering that some new financial or commercial nucleus has formed on the old lines; and, for the past six months, a vast amount of speculation has been connived at in Moscow and elsewhere. As much of this speculaton is carried on, especially in the Moscow Food Control, by high officials of the Soviet itself, the Extraordinary Commission lost heart altogether in April last and has practically ceased to contend against it ever since.

Even this natural development the Bolsheviks put down, however, to the intrigues of foreign capitalists.