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PRICE CONTROL AND THE RETAILER

By Bruce M. Pearce

If you were driving an automobile at 60 miles an hour you would not by choice jam the brakes on suddenly. However if you found yourself headed for the brink of a precipice you would put them on just as hard as you could rather than plunge to disaster.

That, roughly, is what the Government did when it decided upon the Price Ceiling Policy. It saw rapidly rising prices swinging into the disastrous inflationary spiral. Its economic advisers said: "This upswing of prices must be halted now—in its tracks! If you temporize the battle against inflation will be lost before you can ever begin to fight it."

So the brakes were applied—hard! The highest prices charged in the basic period, September 15th to October 11th, were set as the ceiling.

Retailers Are Co-Operating
The Price Ceiling Policy meant inconvenience to practically all business and industry and losses for many trades and industries. The retailer was in the front line and so was among the first to feel the impact of fixed prices.

The loyal way in which retailers are complying with the law proves they are just as anxious as anyone else to make any necessary sacrifice; they realize as fully as anyone else that inflation would harm the war effort. That is the mainspring of their co-operation. They realize too that inflation would bring disaster to many of them. They remember that after the inflation of the last world war small businesses failed by the thousands. In one year there were four times as many bankruptcies as in a normal year.

Losses Must Be Shared
The mechanism of the Price Ceiling Policy provides the retailer with protection from undue hardship. He must of course bear some of the "squeeze" between his ceiling prices and higher replacement costs for some of the goods he sells; but he is not expected to carry more than his fair share of the burden. That is a fundamental policy of the Price Ceiling and to safeguard him in this respect, Retail Trade and Wholesale Trade Administrators have been appointed.

Whenever possible, the retailer is expected to work out his own arrangements with his suppliers to share or "roll back" the "squeeze". When he cannot arrange this he is expected to develop matters through the nearest Prices and Supply Re-

presentative of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board or directly with the Board's Administrator of Retail Trade and its Administrator of Wholesale Trade, who have offices in Toronto's Metropolitan Building.

E. G. Burton, who knows the retail business from a to z and who is serving the Board without remuneration, is the Retail Trade Administrator. R. F. Chisholm, another young executive, who is an authority on wholesaling, and who also serves voluntarily, is the Wholesale Trade Administrator. These two executives regard themselves as champions of a square deal for all parties. Their philosophy is roughly this: "You cannot undertake so terrific a job as halting inflation in its tracks without hurting someone. It is our responsibility to see that a normal flow of essential goods is maintained and that no one suffers undue hardship."

"Rolling Back" the "Squeeze"

Suppose a retailer finds himself badly "squeezed" between his retail selling price and the price he has to pay his supplier for goods. His first step should be to take the matter up with his supplier, who may be able to reduce the price to him. Perhaps the supplier will have to go to the manufacturer or importer to get some reduction in his costs. Perhaps the manufacturer or importer will have to go to the Government for help in the form of a subsidy. But in any event the retailer cannot raise his price—except for a few exemptions such as fresh fruit and vegetables, most kinds of fish, animal pets and furs. So the retailer should negotiate for a lower price. If he cannot conduct these negotiations by himself the Wartime Prices and Trade Board's officials, the Regional Prices and Supply Representative or the Retail and Wholesale Trade Administrators, will cooperate to see that everyone gets a square deal. If necessary, they will compel adjustments.

On the ground that the first place to look for help is to oneself, the Board will expect retailers will take any practical steps to reduce their operating costs. They will be expected to cut out unnecessary frills in their operations. So, too, will other businesses all along the line. However retailers can be sure that they will not have to bear more than their fair share of reduced income. This, I found during my visit in Ottawa; is a fundamental policy of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board.

WAY BACK IN LIBERAL FILES

THIRTY YEARS AGO

From our Issue of Jan. 4th, 1912
James A. Cameron was elected reeve and J. Scott McNair, deputy reeve of Vaughan by acclamation. John G. Whitmore, A. J. Wither- spoon and Alex Cameron were elected councillors.

A by-law to repeal local option in Richmond Hill was defeated by a majority of 82 votes. The vote to provide \$5000 for installation of electric lighting was almost unanimous.

P. G. Savage was appointed Postmaster for Richmond Hill succeeding the late M. Teefy.

A number of boys were brought before J. H. Sanderson, J.P., charged with calling offensive names and throwing stones at Jews passing through the village.

W. D. Amis was re-elected reeve of Scarborough.

FORTY YEARS AGO

From our Issue of Jan. 2nd, 1902
Last year's Vaughan council were all re-elected as follows: Reeve, J. H. Kirby; Councillors, J. N. Boyle, D. M. Malloy, I. Devins and D. Longhouse.

James Dimma was elected Reeve of Markham Township.

Richmond Hill council was re-elected as follows: Reeve, P. G. Savage; Councillors, William Innes, William Furey, Thomas Trench, David Hill. School trustees: Matthew McNair, William Storey, John N. Boyle.

Miss Nellie Franks passed away at the home of her brother J. W. Franks, Woodbridge.

S. L. Lewis Company offered 9c. per pound for plucked turkeys.

ALL IN R.C.A.F.

Prince Edward Island's response to Canada's call for men has been so enthusiastic and complete that the need for a permanent Royal Canadian Air Force recruiting centre has disappeared, R.C.A.F. headquarters announced. It will be closed Dec. 31. Few, if any man suitable for air crews remain in civilian life.

Of Prince Edward Island's total population of 88,000 people, nearly 7,000 men have enlisted in the active forces.

ALIBI

Goebels must be hard put to it for a satisfactory story explaining the large-scale German retreat in Russia. Couldn't he just say the army is coming home for Christmas?

—Christian Science Monitor.

GENERAL NEWS AND VIEWS

Now is the time to check up on how the New Year Resolutions are standing up.

Inaugural meetings of Municipal Councils will be held Monday next at 11 a.m.

The curling season was officially opened in Richmond Hill with games Saturday afternoon. The first skating was held in the arena Saturday night.

Have you something to sell? Is there some unused article around the house you no longer need? Turn it into working dollars through a classified "ad" in The Liberal. Send it by mail or telephone Richmond Hill 9. The charge is 25c. for any ad up to 25 words.

C. M. Carrie, secretary-treasurer of the L.T.B. & O. Home, Richmond Hill was a successful aldermanic candidate in Toronto's municipal election.

Our files of fifty years ago reveal that it is fifty years since Sir William Mulock, then William Mulock, M.P., planted 25 barrels of walnuts each containing 3750 nuts at his farm near Newmarket.

A suggestion that will be approved in many towns and villages comes from the Tilsonburg News. Here it is: "Another excellent way to save electricity would be the establishment of a provincial closing time for business places on Saturday nights. This would effect a considerable saving in electricity and would be appreciated by the majority of business people and their employees. In every community too many people leave their shopping until a late hour on Saturday nights."

Can this be true? Experts testify to its reliability. We are all told various methods to save gasoline. "Save Gas; Keep the Spitfires Flying", signs appearing in public places throughout the province. Here is the way to save. Don't drive more than 49 miles an hour. Driving at 50 miles 23 per cent of gasoline used is lost; at 60 miles 33 per cent is lost; at 70 miles 43.8 per cent is lost; at 80 miles 57.5 is lost. Careful driving saves gasoline, helps win the war, and at the same time enables the driver to have some extra pennies for the purchase of war saving certificates. Try it.

George Agar of Richmond Hill during the holiday feasting came across two peanuts grown together in a V shape. George brought the nut to The Liberal Office and said he wasn't just sure whether it foretold a Very cold winter, a Very Dry Summer or whether it was another of those popular V for Victory signs.

The only interesting feature of Toronto municipal elections on New Year's Day was the fact that Controller Lewis Duncan romped home at the head of the poll some 12,000 ahead of the next nearest contender. This was a nice slap on the wrist for the Toronto Daily press who ganged up on the Controller and even resurrected Ex-Mayor Day in their efforts to beat him. Controller Duncan looks like the next Mayor of Toronto.

Hon. R. J. Manion, former Conservative leader, has been appointed director of Air Raid Precaution for Canada it was announced, by the Federal Government this week.

The district was treated to the first real winter weather of the season Monday night when the thermometer registered below zero.

Production of automobiles and light trucks in Canada is being drastically curtailed with a view to virtual discontinuance of manufacture at March 31, R. C. Berkinshaw, chairman of the Wartime Industries Control Board, said tonight.

One of the month's best samples of war humour was given last week by the Cobalt reporter for The Northern News. He tells of a Cobalt friend of his who saw on the bill of fare in a Chinese restaurant in Toronto recently this patriotic item—"Free French-Fried Potatoes."

"LOOK FORWARD"

The past is gone with all its grief and sorrow;
Look forward now to a new glad tomorrow.

Wounds are not healed by weeping and repining;
Just face your cloud and find its silver lining.

Waste not a day in useless, vain regretting;
Make life worth while, giving as well as getting.

And lend a hand to aid a stumbling brother;

Life is enriched through helping one another.

Be of good cheer; the future holds the treasure;

As we deserve, so shall our blessings measure.

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