

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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THE NEW YEAR

No longer on the threshold, but having fairly entered upon the New Year, it behoves us now to look forward and not behind. What is past is past. The future is bright with more than hope, but it calls for action and not philosophizing. As the Hon. H. H. Stevens, Minister of Trade and Commerce, writes in an article beginning in today's Guardian, the great storm of depression would appear, so far as Canada is concerned, to have fairly well blown itself out. We shall not immediately find ourselves launched in the midstream of prosperity, but we are heading steadily in that direction, with favorable winds and with every prospect of an ultimately safe and successful voyage. The price level of commodities, after a precipitate decline lasting over nearly two years, seems to be in a fair way to stabilization, and this, as Mr. Stevens states, should bring a return of confidence among business men and producers generally. The restoration of confidence should lead to a gradual increase of employment, a greater volume of production and an increase in the transportation of commodities. The prospects of greatly increased trade within the Empire as a result of the forthcoming Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa have been referred to in Thursday's Guardian. It is to this conference that the thought of all Empire statesmen is directed at the present time. If successful, it will mean the opening of the brightest chapter of commercial activity that the British commonwealth of nations has ever known.

There are other hopeful indications. Public sentiment in favor of world peace and disarmament has never been so strongly manifested at any period in the world's history as it is today, on the eve of the world conference at Geneva. Whatever success is achieved at this conference will be progress definitely forward to a goal of incalculable importance to humanity.

Of chief interest in this Province is the prospect of improved prices in agricultural commodities. In this connection Hon. Mr. Stevens, after reviewing the favorable factors in the situation which have already made their appearance, says: "There are present indications that abundant supplies and low prices of staple agricultural commodities are stimulating both domestic consumption and international movement, and in this feature lies the main hope of improved agricultural conditions." This statement deserves to be weighed and considered. In it is contained much ground for sane optimism and hopeful endeavor in the days and months immediately ahead.

THE TIDE COMING IN

The following extract taken from MacAulay's Essays, written in 1839—100 years ago, is strikingly applicable to England's present position: "The present moment is one of great distress. But how small will that distress appear when we think over the history of the last forty years: a war, compared with which all others sink into insignificance; taxation, such as the most heavily taxed people of former times could not have conceived; a debt larger than all the public debts that ever existed in the world added together; the food of the people studiously rendered dear; the currency impudently debased, and imprudently restored. Yet is the country poorer than in 1790? We firmly believe that in spite of all the misgovernment of her rulers, she has been almost constantly becoming richer and richer. Now and then there has been a stoppage, now and then a short retrogression; but as to the great tendency there can be no doubt. A single breaker may recede; but the tide is evidently coming in. "If we were to prophesy that in the year 1930 a population of fifty

millions, better fed, clad, and lodged than the English of our time, will cover these islands—that machines constructed on principles yet undiscovered will be in every house—that our debt vast as it seems to us, will appear trifling to our great-grand-children, many people would think us insane. We prophesy nothing; but this we say: If any person had told the Parliament which met after the crash of 1720 that in 1830 the wealth of England would surpass their wildest dreams—that stage-coaches would run from London to York in twenty-four hours, that men would be in the habit of sailing without wind, and would be beginning to ride without horses, our ancestors would have given as much credit to the prediction as they gave to 'Gulliver's Travels.'

"We cannot absolutely prove that those are in error who tell us that society has reached a turning point, that we have seen our best days. But so said all who came before us, and with just as much apparent reason."

UNEMPLOYED IN ITALY

Unemployment in Italy is on the increase, the number of unemployed now being around 750,000, writes R. W. McBurney, Assistant Canadian Trade Commissioner at Milan, in the forthcoming issue of the Commercial Intelligence Journal. Approximately 234,000 of this number are receiving unemployment subsidies at the rate of 40.3 cents Canadian a par. Though somewhat resembling the "dole" system as operated in England the subsidy is run on a strictly insurance basis, and can be drawn for a period of ninety days only (120 days in some cases.) It is not extended to agricultural workers, though these at times form as high as 22 per cent, of the total number of unemployed. Public works are expected to employ over 300,000 men at a cost of over 3,629 million lire. These works, which include reclamation of large marsh areas and the building of roads and aqueducts, will form a distinct national asset when completed. Additional relief is being furnished by the vocational syndicates of employers and work-people, and commercial and professional workers are also being called upon to contribute either in money, food, or clothing.

HEAVY FIRE LOSS

The heavy fire loss sustained by Messrs. DeBlois Brothers, practically on the eve of the new year, is one which will elicit the sympathy of all our citizens. A considerable part of the firm's winter stock, all, in fact, that was not housed in the lower warehouse, has been destroyed and the loss also involves a temporary disorganization of business.

Mr. George DeBlois, head of the firm, is one of the most generous contributors in the Province to worthy causes, and his many friends and well wishers will deeply regret the reverse which he and his brother have sustained at this time. The firm had built up a very extensive wholesale trade throughout the Province, and was favorably known on the mainland as well. Our citizens will be pleased to learn that temporary office quarters have already been found and that business will shortly be resumed.

EDITORIAL NOTES

A Happy New Year! Write 1932. Let the dead past bury its dead. As we advance in years, we should advance in mellowness and tolerance. The year 1931 was like a Beethoven symphony—full of storm and stress, but with interludes of serenity and gaiety, and a finale ending on a note of hope and optimism.

NOTES BY THE WAY

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS

Fifteen months of arduous efforts in the double role of Prime Minister and Minister of Finance have made inroads in the robust health of Mr. Bennett, says LeVeement. He owes it to himself to remove part of the burden from his shoulders by appointing a Minister of Finance who is qualified to fill that important office. During the several weeks' holiday that the Prime Minister was ordered to take his medical advisers, the Hon. Mr. Rhodes acted as Minister of Finance. During that period the latter succeeded to an extraordinary extent in directing the business of raising the National Service Loan, and if we are to judge by the expressions of opinion published in the newspapers, Mr. Rhodes has fulfilled to the general satisfaction the delicate mission of temporary Treasurer for the Dominion. From all parts of the country recommendations are being made that Premier Bennett should retain Mr. Rhodes at the head of the Treasury. It is an office of great responsibility, but it does not appear to be beyond the powers of the man to whom belongs the merit of having restored order to the chaotic condition of the finances of Nova Scotia at the time that he was Prime Minister of that province, and when the task which confronted him was exceedingly complicated and difficult. It seems to us that Mr. Bennett would do well, then, to mark his confidence in one of the most distinguished members of his Cabinet by naming Mr. Rhodes 'Minister of Finance.'

The Young plan advisory committee concluded its report as follows: In view of the measures taken in the last two years, the committee expresses the opinion that the burden of taxation in Germany has become so high that there is no margin for further increase. "No margin" are very definite and final words. What then is to be done? Germany obviously cannot pay; and the only question seems to be whether the creditor nations will intelligently recognize this stern fact and agree upon a compromise which will enable the Germans to pay something to somebody or if they will stand dumbly by and permit a German revolution which may easily add the German masses to the repudiationists of Russia.

Senator Kean of New Jersey the other day suggested that the United States approach this Dominion with the object of negotiating a treaty by which the parity of the Canadian dollar would be established by law with that of the American dollar. Of course we would all like to see that done. But we all recognize that it cannot be done. You cannot legislate economic conditions, nor can you control them within any definite fixed and narrow channel by legislation. The value of the dollar is determined by economic conditions which fluctuate from day to day. It would be about as easy to control the winds of heaven as to control those conditions by any law-making.

China says the Review of Reviews, cannot control Manchuria, which is infested with brigands. She has no money to pay her soldiers, and hungry and unpaid soldiers must become brigands if they are to keep alive. The borderline between the Chinese soldier and the Chinese brigand has at all times been very thin. Liberty to scrounge round the countryside is their principal remuneration. And if loot is the object, the Japanese settler is far the most profitable victim. That is why Japan has found it difficult to comply with the League's demand for the immediate withdrawal of her troops.

The Socialist is an environmentalist; he believes that the sty makes the pig. He believes, too, that the markedly unequal, and often inequitable, division of wealth in this country, and its vulgar, selfish use by a few, is to a great extent responsible for class warfare and poverty. If he is sufficiently enlightened he knows that while culture rests upon economic foundations, true inequality is based, not on wealth or title, but on personality; and that we ought to respect men for what they are, rather than for what they earn, and still less for what they own.—Exchange.

Mr. Baldwin says a writer in the Contemporary Review London, has often been criticized by his own party for that reckless experiment of enfranchizing all women electors, but he is always wiser and more clear-sighted than his critics.

Trade Prospects For The New Year

By W. L. McGregor

President of The Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Notwithstanding the fact that the affairs of the business community continue from day to day, the turn of each calendar year appropriately reminds us that we should at times take stock of our economic situation and if possible exercise foresight as well as hindsight. Looking back over the past twelve months or longer, we must come to realize that actually we have gone through many exceedingly difficult experiences. Sometimes it may have seemed to us that to entertain any hopes of normal business conditions was a far-fetched idea in face of the moribund circumstances with which occasionally we have been faced. We have been up against a continuing falling of prices in every field, changes on the economic horizon from week to week have accentuated a steady lessening of demand, and unemployment figures have mounted with unrelenting regularity. Industries fundamental to our national economy have been forced to half time operation or total curtailment, stocks of goods have turned over with painful slowness, the income of our biggest business—agriculture—has been seriously impaired, our rail and shipping interests have had more capital laid up than they have had moving. Stagnation and economic inertia have been all too apparent on all sides—or at least were so until quite recently.

Signs of Recovering Of late, however, there have been faint but definite signs of recovery. Increasingly good reports are lighting the penumbra. In the opinion of leading business scrutineers the line on the national economic chart has ceased its plunge downwards into the southeast corner of the diagram. There has been an upturn in many commodity prices, the wholesale index has firmed, merchandise in less than carload lots has been on the increase, while carloadings also are higher. The industries which anticipate or lead towards recovery, textiles and boots and shoes, have been running at near-to-capacity schedules for some months, our unfavorable balance of trade has been greatly decreased during the past year, we hear on all sides tangible evidences of orders coming in, of factories starting up again and even talk of profits. The overwhelming success of the National Service Loan in November revealed a financial strength which I venture to say was hardly dreamt of by most of us, and the fact that it was oversubscribed by approximately \$65 millions in one week when it was anticipated that superman effort for three weeks at least would be required, is, to my mind, remarkable. Other evidences of economic strength and business vitality can readily be quoted but these few will suffice to turn our attention towards the not-to-be-disputed better conditions which prevail today as compared with a few months ago.

Reasonably Confident I believe that we can quite definitely state the farthest stages of deflation have been reached and perhaps even passed. Now seems to be a good time for business men to go about their business once again with a reasonable confidence that the future trend of events will be on the whole upwards. The past year has also contributed many lessons to our portfolio of business experience. We have surely learned of necessity many things which have assisted us to become more efficient, more economical and more effective as producers and traders. Industrial and agricultural methods have unquestionably been improved, sales programmes have been stimulated, effective economies in marketing have been evolved, excess overhead and costs have been pared away. These developments are all to the good as our international competitive power is thereby greatly strengthened. I am satisfied that at least in so far as Canadian business administration is concerned, 1931 has been a year of progress.

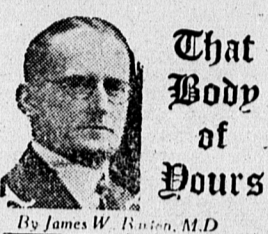
Therefore it certainly would seem patent that we are more effectively equipped for forward advance than we were twelve months ago. While Canadians may not have been producing in a normal way it cannot be said that no constructive work has been accomplished. A great deal of forward-looking activity has been going on all the time and while we have not employed all our man power we have nevertheless been employing our brain power to advantage. It is to be hoped that we shall continue to couple brain with brawn and to apply to business problems only those solutions which have been carefully and thoughtfully worked out in advance and which are in harmony with economic law.

Improvements Noted In industrial circles, moreover, improvements can be noted in the automobile and radio fields; far-reaching progress has also been made in the further development of household appliances; greater efficiency has been effected in certain railway equipment; and we can point to similar advances in other lines of manufactured goods. The splendid showing of Canadian grain and livestock farmers again last year at the Chicago Exposition demonstrates that our agriculturalists are still alive to the importance of quality production and are in the van of constant perfection of first rate grains and cattle. While we may gather together all those foregoing considerations and attempt therefrom to suggest a future of advance as from even date, as may seem to be implied, our looking ahead and defining of events to come is bound to be restrained by the unsettled conditions which unhappily prevail in the international sphere at the time of writing. Canadian progress in common with the progress of any of the other influential world trading nations is hampered to the reasonably unfettered exchange of goods and services between people separated by geographical and political boundaries. At present a thousand shackles seem to hold back international economic progress and until many of these are broken no one can expect that business will be much otherwise than held in check. There is reason to believe, however, that the nations must seek a closer coming together in a very short time and to hope for the implementation of sounder, more constructive national and international policies of business expansion.

Coming nearer home, we of the British family of Nations have our Imperial problems which we seem determined to face and to solve in a sterner, more determined way. Throughout the Empire there is an important growing feeling towards more intense economic co-operation and all of us must be looking forward with great expectations to the Imperial Economic Conference of 1932. Great Britain has already shown the way in her National Government policy. It is to be hoped that our reasonable anticipations of the Conference will not fail to materialize.

Canada's Problems Meanwhile, Canada is faced with certain national problems in many spheres of endeavor. Particularly may be mentioned our railways, agriculture and public expenditure. The first is now under expert consideration, the second seems to be well on the way towards more profitable operation as a result of constructive conference and applied research, while as to public expenditure it would seem fair to suggest that the citizens should be reasonable in their requests from Governments. As it is generally easier for municipal, provincial and federal public bodies to borrow than for private enterprises, it is also for the most part true that public expenditures are less rigidly controlled. We do not want to hamper our economic convalescence by maiming any essential member of the national body;

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By James W. Ruston, M.D.

That Body of Yours

When the first day of a new year arrives it would seem that all of us do a little thinking over the past year and plan some of the things we'll change during the coming year. The times in which we live are startlingly different to what they were less than three years ago, and yet in a sense not a single thing is different, and life is going on in the same way that it has always done. There are more discoveries in science, in medicine, even in religion in a year, now, than there were in any five to ten years previously. One of the undiscovered elements of the body and of the soil has lately been discovered and will be given a name instead of a number. Formerly incurable diseases—diabetes and pernicious anemia—now hold no terrors for mankind. Very recently, some new facts about cancer have been brought to light which may bring this dread ailment under man's control. The span of life is many years longer than it was fifty years ago. Yet that body of yours is really the same as that of the earliest known man. It was given a complete covering of muscle tissue with which you were supposed to work, and by the sweat of your brow, earn your bread. To hold the quantity of food necessary to give you strength to do this work you were given a stomach large enough to hold three pints of food or liquids. In order that all this food might be absorbed into the blood, you were given a small intestine twenty feet in length. By the time the food from the stomach reached the end of this twenty feet, all the nourishment in the food should be absorbed into the blood. And to hold the waste from all this food, Nature provided a large intestine, six feet in length. But despite your complete covering of muscle tissue you do not earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. Why then should you fill your stomach to its full capacity, and as it can stretch, much more than three pints is often put into it. What happens to all this food that you do not use up by working all your muscles? Most of it is thrown out as waste, and much of it remains as poison in the blood, and this poison can make you feel just as tired as if you had worked all your muscles by hard work. If you want to feel buoyant this coming year see that that body of yours gets more work and exercise.

PUBLIC FORUM

This column is open for the discussion by correspondents of questions of interest. The Charlottetown Guardian does not necessarily endorse the opinions of correspondents.

MR. HYNDMAN ENDORSED

Sir,—I was very much interested in reading the excellent letter of Mr. J. O. Hyndman, which appeared in yesterday morning's Guardian, in regard to making provision for the future care of mental patients. I am heartily in accord with everything that is contained in Mr. Hyndman's letter and he certainly summarizes the situation very clearly indeed. I think, however, he has perhaps been over modest in the estimate of the amount that the Government would save by taking over the property of the Prince Edward Island Hospital which no doubt could be had at a very reasonable figure.

There are some other things which I think Mr. Hyndman might have pointed out. I think every person will agree with him that in the future the buildings in which the insane are housed must be protected by a properly equipped fire department, which can be on the spot within a very few minutes of the time a fire might occur. No institution can maintain a fire department of this kind of its own. It would be altogether too expensive and practically impossible. The only other alternative then is to be able to secure the services of the Charlottetown Fire Department, and, while it would be possible for this Department to reach the old Falconwood site in say twenty-five minutes during the time the roads are clear, on the other hand it would be practically impossible for them to reach there during the winter, i.e., for about five months of the year. But there is another consideration. It is all right for the Charlottetown Fire Department to go to Falconwood in an emergency but to have the City Department locked upon as the regular means of protection does not seem just to the citizens of Charlottetown, who have to maintain this Department and it is not fair to the public that at any time fire protection should be taken so far from the City because it is quite within the range of possibility that a serious fire might occur within the City at the same time. I also like the reference which Mr. Hyndman makes to the two new institutions which must be erected within the next two years. They are both of vital importance to the welfare of this community and must be erected no matter what the cost. This Province, however, at present has about all the financial burden it can carry and those who have to do with the erection and financing of these two institutions should cooperate to the greatest extent possible so that the cost to the public may not be more than is necessary. I am, Sir, etc., S. A. McDONALD.

DR. L. B. EVANS of Lodon Eng.

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