

"The Jarvis Record"

TELEPHONE 37, JARVIS, ONTARIO

Published Every Thursday Morning
Member of the Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association and the Ontario-Quebec Division of the C.W.N.A.

ADVERTISING RATES UPON REQUEST

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

To all points in Canada \$1.50 per year in advance
To the United States \$2.00 additional for postage.
The date to which subscription is paid is indicated on the address label.

A. L. MILLER, Editor

THE GREAT STRIKE

— By Lewis Milligan —

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a country called Thisland whose people were very industrious. Their farms were prosperous and their city factories were busy day and night producing goods that were in constant demand not only at home but in wide-spread markets abroad. In fact they could not produce enough to meet those demands and there was a shortage in some goods; but the standard of living of the people was far higher than that of many of the countries with which they traded.

To maintain this standard of living and growing export trade, farming methods had been improved by constant fertilization and the introduction of mechanical equipment. Factories also had to be constantly extended and new inventions for improving and increasing production were adopted from time to time. These mechanical inventions tended to lighten the labor of the people generally as well as to raise their standard of living.

Periodic adjustments of the economic balance between the rising cost of production and the cost of living were not made without considerable confusion. Factory workers would band themselves together and demand higher wages, and when these demands were not met in full they would refuse to work, thus stopping production and entirely cutting off their wages. This process of enforcing their demands they called "strikes," which was a very apt term, for they struck at everybody concerned and even at those who had nothing to do with the dispute.

Few factories made profits beyond what was required for maintaining their capital investment and providing reserves for future emergencies. But the leaders of the workers contended that high prices were due to high profits, and they made periodic demands for higher wages. They did not seem to realize that wages constituted the major part of the cost of production, and consequently fixed the market price of the product. Thus with every increase in wages the cost of living increased in proportion—with every increase in the cost of living a further demand for wage increase followed.

This treadmill process had gone on for years and years, when, realizing that the workers were not getting anywhere, a young man conceived a bright idea. Instead of striking for higher wages he would start a strike for lower prices. He organized housewives in a boycott of certain commodities which he thought were too high in price. This movement became so popular that it spread to take in all kinds of goods until the shops and factories were closed and everybody was out of work.

And so it came to pass that the Government had to take over all the farms and factories because their owners were bankrupt and unable to pay their debts. In accordance with the popular demand, the government reduced the prices of all commodities to the bare cost of production. There were to be no more profits. Wages, however, were to remain at the level prevailing before the Great Strike.

With the taking over of the farms and factories by the Government, the owners were relieved of their responsibilities. They had no longer to worry over wages and prices, market for their products and the payment of taxes. All of these things were taken care of by the Government. The workers also were greatly relieved to think that henceforth their jobs would be secure and that they would have to worry no more about wages and prices. But someone had to bear these responsibilities and do the worrying, and this fell upon the Government.

All went well for a short time and the workers were contented and happy—so happy that they took things easy, did not work as hard or as long as formerly. Why should they do so since their labor was no longer being "exploited" by the "capitalists" for profits? Meanwhile the ambitious industrialists and the master-farmers were emigrating to Otherland, and their places were filled by the strike leaders. The result of all this was a steep decline in production, the cessation of exports, and eventually a shortage of commodities for home consumption.

The workers grew restless and began to blame the Government for their situation. They could not now complain about their wages, for these were high; nor could they protest against the prices which were low. Their complaint was that there was so little to buy, and they were willing to pay higher prices if they could recover their former standard of living. They must get rid of the Government and put in power an administration composed entirely of labor leaders. This they did by an overwhelming majority.

But the new Government found itself as powerless as the old one to change things, and they went from bad to worse. Thousands of people were out of employment, although there was plenty of work to be done. Commodity prices had been repeatedly cut down until the farms and factories were carried on at enormous losses. But wage rates remained fixed at

their original level.

At this juncture the housewives rose in a body. They had grown tired of trying to make ends meet, and of seeing their husbands around the house doing nothing because they refused to work for less than the regulation wage rate. The housewives were led by a little woman with a large family. She had a calm and clear mind, but a sharp and commanding tongue. She conceived the idea that the cause of all the trouble was high wages. She ordered her husband and adult sons out to work for whatever they could get, and told them that they must work harder than they had ever done before. Other housewives followed suit, and the movement of back to hard work spread throughout the land. The Government was powerless to stop the movement and the home-life of the doleful idle men was rendered so miserable, and in many cases dangerous, that they were glad to accept jobs at any price.

And so it came to pass that Thisland returned to its former state of industrious prosperity. "FOR THE PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO WORK."

V V V V

THE LISTENING AUDIENCE

RADIO EXECUTIVES and producers in recent years have been regarding their output with a critical eye. Sensitive to the comments of listeners and columnists on the one hand and to the wishes of commercial sponsors on the other, they have tried to take the pulse of their audience, with listener surveys and at the same time pondered means of improving the quality of their broadcasts.

The surveys established that existing programs command a large audience, especially in the peak evening hours. The conservative wing of the radio industry came to the conclusion that listeners are satisfied with what they hear, and that any departure from established broadcast pattern would damage radio's popularity.

Others, including some top executives are less willing to admit that radio is everything its listeners would like it to be. To them, the radio industry is still in the experimental stage. They feel that the public is solidly radio-conscious, but that while the radio provides satisfactory fare for listeners of varied tastes, a considerable number of sets are turned on for hours on end from habit and without regard for the type and quality of entertainment offered.

Many stations are emphasizing public service programs of immediate interest and benefit to their own community, undoubtedly losing listeners with programs of a more general appeal. Similarly, many attempt to encourage local performers, less experienced and often less able than the stars of New York and Hollywood, but commanding staunch support in their own town and occasionally rising to the top of the profession.

Some sponsors are said to be wary of "high-brow" programs of serious music or of an educational nature, preferring to cater to a larger audience with programs of a more general appeal. Yet the British Broadcasting Corporation has won a large and enthusiastic following for its Third Program by ignoring "popular" tastes and appealing directly to a more intellectual public.

All the experts agree that the listening audience is apathetic—letters of praise or condemnation come from a mere handful of more articulate enthusiasts. But what radio fans really like and what they'll put up with—that's the \$64 question.

V V V V

AID FROM THE AIR

LONG BEFORE THE PLAGUE of locusts beset the Egyptians in Old Testament days, agriculturists struggled to obtain control over the pests of the field and garden.

Through the centuries the slow progress of developing poisons that would kill bugs yet leave the crops unharmed, was one of man's tedious experiments. The arduous, back-breaking job, bending over a tender plant, applying the poison took up hours of labor. Then came the automatic sprayer.

To agriculturists in the late 80's the (to us) primitive sprayer was a godsend and newspapers of the day prophesied "new vistas of production" would be within the grasp of all.

Following the First World War another stride in the campaign against harmful insects was taken. Barnstorming airmen evolved the common spraying unit and flew over orchards and fields at dangerously low altitudes, leaving a billowing cloud of spray behind them to settle on the leaves and blossoms.

It was a dangerous program. The airplanes, designed for flight at "conservative" altitudes, flitted with gravity close to the ground, but the method of spraying was effective and fast. It was another weapon for victory in the age-old battle, probably the most effective up to that time.

The battle continues and a new adaptation of the aerial weapon has been developed. Farmers have watched with interest the latest assault against harmful insects. The new weapon is a helicopter, evolved during the Second World War and it is apparently the most effective yet utilized. The "copter," by its very design, safe for low flying, drives the spray onto the fields by its powerful rotor blades.

The insecticide, forced by the powerful blades, strikes the ground and lodges on the underside of the leaves where it is most effective.

Those who have been watching the demonstrations are convinced the battle for effective spraying is almost won.

V V V V

QUOTES FROM YESTERDAY

SEE FIRST that the design is wise and just that ascertaining, pursue it resolutely; do not for one repulse forego the pursuit you resolved to effect.

—Shakespeare

Pen, Scissors and Pastepot

— By George W. James —

The Canadian Statesman, Bowmanville, Ont.

In the debates which have taken place in the House of Commons during the past six weeks, the picture has been pretty clear as to what farmers can expect from legislation passed by the government. The two measures of particular interest to agriculture are the Canadian Wheat Board Act and Bill 25 which governs the sale and export of farm products other than wheat. It will be necessary to deal at some length with their terms and implications.

FARM PROBLEM
Since these articles are primarily concerned with the assembling facts from official records for the information of the rural Canada the matters affecting farm production and marketing will be explored before going on to credits, tariffs, immigration, labor, foreign affairs, social measures, and the like, all of which are more or less interrelated and the policies for which have in some measure been defined.

5-YEAR CONTRACT
It is generally known that the Minister of Agriculture negotiated with the British government a 5-year agreement for the sale of annual specified amounts of Canadian wheat at prices agreed upon, subject to revision at later stages in the agreement. Having thus negotiated, the Minister came back to ask parliament to ratify the contract. The ensuing debate revealed the terms of the agreement, which are generally as follows:

TERMS

The contract runs for four years from July 1, 1947. During the first two crop years Britain will buy at least 1,000,000 bushels per year at \$1.55 per bushel. During the next two years she will buy at least 1,000,000 bushels per year at a price of at least \$1.25 per bushel in 1948-49 and at least \$1.00 in 1949-50. But in setting the final price for the latter two years, Britain agrees to take into account any difference between the \$1.55 and the world price during the first two years.

FUNDS POOLED
In fulfilling the initial terms the Wheat Board will pay the Canadian wheat grower only \$1.35 per bushel at times, elevators and will set up a five-year pool in which will be placed the funds accruing between the home price and the \$1.35. These funds, after subsequent price revisions, after which the pool funds will be paid out on participation certificates, to the growers when the five years have expired. It thus becomes a sort of fund.

WIDE POWERS
At the same time the Wheat Board can, with approval of the Governor in Council, deal in grain and other commodities, and has complete authority in interprovincial and international trade. But further control may be exercised in the matter of coarse grains under Bill 25, which will be explained later. The Board has the Canadian farmer's interest at heart and over his production in the fields above mentioned. The regulations are rigid and authoritarian, even more so than in time.

WORLD PRICE
Meantime the price of wheat on world markets has risen to \$3.01 per bushel or higher at the moment and what remains as surplus when fulfilling the British contract may be used by the Board if it so desires. At the same time the Board has been supplying wheat to Canadian food mills at 77.5 cents per bushel under a drawback number of 20 cents, a treasury which means that taxpayers foot the bill for bread prices. It is a pretty complicated picture.

POLICY TESTED

During the debate on the British wheat agreement the Minister maintained it had the approval of the organized farmers as a measure of their support. But it was shown that the Federation of Agriculture in refusing to discuss last year's participation monies and has carried them this year, the farmers are not in a position to discuss the matter. The Board has been supplying wheat to Canadian food mills at 77.5 cents per bushel under a drawback number of 20 cents, a treasury which means that taxpayers foot the bill for bread prices. It is a pretty complicated picture.

FARMERS BEAR LOSS
The element of unfairness in the British deal was emphasized in this way: That the difference between the price paid to the farmer and the price paid to the British was some \$232 millions, with farmers alone bearing the loss, not the people of Canada as a whole, as in the case of the domestic wheat subsidy. These are some of the main features brought out in House debates as the various factors were examined.

"MY WEEK"
— By R. J. Deuchman —

I met not long ago a banker, now made out the note he handed me. He had spent the greater part of his life in different branches of business, mostly in the Province of Quebec. I asked him, as I often do, with all classes of people, for the funniest incident in his business experience. This is the one he placed first in the list.

I give you the story as closely as I can but I cannot put on paper the fine Irish voice of the afternoon when he told it to me as he sat in the chair of his customer on this occasion.

"In the town, which must be named, we had an account of an Irishman, a small contractor who carried a balance with us of from three to seven hundred dollars. One day a cheque came in which wiped out his deposit and left him with a deficit of about \$200. I phoned him and suggested that he come in and cover up or give us some security."

"You are calling me about my account," he said, and every word sounded as if it came from Dublin. How much did you say I was over? "Two hundred dollars, I answered."

"Now how much would I be having in your institution last week?" "I look up, \$500, I told him."

"Then did I call you up?" "Yes, why should you?" "The why in hell should you call me up now?" "I was stumped, what could I do with a man like that?"

"What happened then?" I said. "We paid his cheque, he covered it up or three days. Sometimes he went over for a few dollars here and there, but I never mentioned it to him. I always felt that his answer was 'I worth any risk we took.'"

Here is another one from the same source: "A man came in one day and asked me the price of a Safety Deposit Box. The price was \$5.00. He asked if I could let him have it for \$4.00. I said, 'No, the bank doesn't allow the price, everybody pays the same.' He went out sorrowing. A few days later he came back and asked if we loaned money on victory bonds. This was during the first Great War and, at that time, we loaned up to \$500 on the bonds. He came in the full value of the bonds, he wanted to borrow \$100. I said, 'No, we don't loan money on bonds.' He went out sorrowing. A few days later he came back and asked if we loaned money on victory bonds. This was during the first Great War and, at that time, we loaned up to \$500 on the bonds. He came in the full value of the bonds, he wanted to borrow \$100. I said, 'No, we don't loan money on bonds.' He went out sorrowing. A few days later he came back and asked if we loaned money on victory bonds. 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