

THE "BUFFER STATE" OF INDUSTRY

Survey Director, National Prosperity Bureau.

By Garrett K. Adams.

"Between the massed forces of producers and consumers the retail merchant occupies that unenviable position analogous to the 'buffer state' which we read about as existing in Europe between one world power and another. Whenever the market fluctuates it is he who finds himself caught between two millstones. When prices were going up he had to bear the brunt of the consumer's ill-feeling and now since they are on the down grade, he it is who has been urged by producer and manufacturer to sacrifice himself in order to restore public confidence in American business."

This interesting analogy, with one of many bearings on the distressing position of the retailer revealed by the National Prosperity Bureau in its national survey of consumers' complaints now being concluded by the Bureau. This data, when assembled, will classify cause and effect of conditions throughout the country. It aims to disclose precisely what is at the bottom of depression in various localities and if strictly local conditions enter into the general depression.

Meanwhile, it is of use to analyze this writer's characterization of the retailer. The retailer is the final distributor of the products of industry. This function — little understood by the average consumer — may be likened to a great river which collects and bears on its bosom to the wide sea of consumption, all the outpourings of the innumerable tributaries of the world's industrial watersheds. And so his very nearness to them makes him the butt for every unsatisfactory condition that exists, the causes for which are looked for no farther than his door.

Getting Together the Facts.

To think fully into and around any subject, a number of co-relating factors must be weighed together, added, subtracted, multiplied or divided into one another according to their relation to the question under consideration; and the body of consumers have not the facts regarding the causes of high prices.

It was this weighting and collating that induced the Bureau to issue its questionnaire. The results will be distributed broadcast so that the consumer may better appreciate the problems of the struggle back to normal. The Bureau's educational work which is enhanced by prosperity editions of newspapers, by millions of prosperity posters in sizes from stamps to bill boards, by lectures, by writings, by advertising everywhere the "buy now" slogan, will culminate in an extraordinary national celebration to be known as "National Prosperity Week" during the first week in April. This concentrated drive against "hard times" and the pessimist is expected then to permanently drive gloom out of the land.

No one will deny to the retailer the right to a legitimate profit on his investment and service. Beyond that, the one big fact is that the retail merchant is the last cog in the great industrial machinery of production and distribution and, as such, every turn of the wheel that makes for high prices, adds to the size of the bill which he hands the consumer in return for supplying his needs, in order that a profit may be made.

Collector for Industrial Kingdom.

In short, he becomes the final collector to the industrial kingdom, and as such must needs bear the dislike and suspicion which has always fallen to the lot of the tax gatherer since the beginning of organized society. Every sin of self-interest, greed and waste, which the war has done, has been added to the cost of production during the last few years, is visited upon his devoted head in over-flowing measure.

It is no sin for labor to demand and fight for a wage that will release the worker from the freezing grip of poverty. Nevertheless, every dollar which the worker gains, which adds to the cost of production and distribution must be paid by the ultimate consumer, and has to be collected by the retailer.

Capital demands a greater return on its money invested — the consumer pays and the retailer collects. The wholesaler reaps himself against higher operating costs — the retailer must collect. Transportation companies levy higher freight rates; cartage companies increase their charges; landlords raise their rents to meet enhanced costs — in every case the consumer pays, and the retailer must collect.

Banks impose higher interest charges or close down on the retailer depriving him of his ability to take trade discounts — the consumer must pay the difference. He himself becomes more exacting in his demands for service; the clerks ask for larger salaries to keep up with the general elevation of prices.

Distinction of War Tax Collector.

To meet all these calls upon his resources, and still have power to serve the buying public and supply them with what they want when they want it, the retail merchant must add each on to his own operating costs, and collect from the ultimate consumer.

And finally, to add its question and recognition to the enviable position of the retailer as the collector in chief and shipping boy extraordinary of collecting the war tax, carrying with it the honor of wiping out the national debt. And in recompense, he becomes the butt of the overall and old clothes brigade and the silent boycott, and, at the last, is allowed to wear the halo of martyrdom in the cause of The Great Adjustment of Prices.

Prices have been forced down, not because the cost of producing the stock which the retail merchant carries on his shelves warrant the reduction, but because the supply is temporarily greater than the demand, and, peculiarly, in this

case, the needs of the consumer and the demand are not synonymous.

When the Public Wakened.

The requirements are, in fact, large enough to take care of everything being manufactured, but the buying public suddenly wakened to the fact that its intemperate buying in the past, which was largely the cause of price inflation, could not go on indefinitely. In protest against the very condition which it caused, it struck blindly against the nearest object, — the retailer, just as the irate setting hen — without invidious comparisons — strikes at the stick pointed toward its nest without aiming at the hand that manipulates it.

If there has been sustained profiteering, that charge cannot altogether be laid at the door of the retailer as a class. One of the useful results of the investigations of the National Prosperity Bureau established that fact.

Buy CAREFULLY But BUY Now.

If prices must come down permanently, the remedy must be looked for in the cost of production, and abuses must be checked before they reach the final outlet. Squeezing the retailer out of business only deals with effects, not causes; refusing to allow him his fair profit, the consumer is doing nothing — short of "killing the goose that lays the golden egg" of service which allows the small purser to make purchases in quantities suitable to its size — a result which would mean tragedy to all except the rich who could afford to spend large sums and had the facilities to hoist the stocks so purchased.

And, so the National Prosperity Bureau earnestly asserts that if the buying public will continue to purchase its requirements with judgment, prices will come down, and they will come down without disturbing the industrial machinery more than is necessary.

SHOPPING WITH A GIRL.

Spring, with her bright colors and fresh draperies, is coming tripping along in the distance. Faint odors of her sweetness are already permeating the ambient air with a delicious fragrance. The opening days of all the milliners, dress-makers and druggists dealers are in bloom.

Say, did you ever go shopping with a girl? No! Well, go away back and sit down. Your life is a useless waste.

We've been, Lassy, messy, but it's fun. It is a thrill one never has but once; tripping from store to store to shop; from milliners to milliners, pattern and putting to and fro, a mad prismatic labyrinth of man-distracting labyrinths of man-distracting fabrics and incomprehensible wares. You stand off at a safe distance, and gaze around at the ceiling as if looking for something up in the air that isn't there, while your girl friend is chatting across counters with pale-eyed, blue-necked, expedites, and whispering over the quality, style, finish, durability and price of fancy articles, such as no well regulated retailer's optics ever behold. Little trays like inflated parakeets to be worn leaves you only knows how or where. Strange implements of torture, relics of the inquisition, compounded of steel and whodunnit, steel holes and cords, resembling the straight jackets used in hopeless cases of lunacy — articles beyond the imagination as to what they are for. Inspection bottle-corked shoes in which Diana of Ephesus or the Venus de Medici would huddle like a lame cow, or a fringed toilet pullet.

Darting here and there, everywhere, tumbling and musing up the wondrous products of every town and nation and creation. Picking little twist-rammed top-knots. Marvelling at long and gorgeous articles resembling things Santa Claus is familiar with beside fireplaces. Sauntering into departments whose articles of wares would make a Kookaburra or Cherokee brave's fierce eyes dance with ecstatic admiration. Examining tiny wrist watches, and so on and so forth. Until finally famished by trays of cream, peach amythys and diamonds, and palting their inefficient frames before the radiant eyes of our fair and lovely pilot and commandant. And at the last purchasing a spoil of thread and a paper or pins. Ah! luckless wight who never has been, just see and imagine what you have missed. — Durham Herald.

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FITZPATRICK IS BUSY MAN

Chairman of Americanism Commission of Wisconsin is Administrator of Educational Bonus Law.

Edward Augustus Fitzpatrick, chairman of the Americanism Commission of the Wisconsin department of the American Legion, has become known to thousands of veterans because of his position as administrator of the educational bonus law of that state, which allows \$30 a month to ex-service men who desire an education.

Although he is only thirty-seven years old, Mr. Fitzpatrick has had exceptional experience in the field of educational administration. He is a graduate of the New York City training school for teachers and received three degrees from Columbia university. Following his university study, Mr. Fitzpatrick was a teacher in New York public and high schools and later became connected with the New York training school for public service. Mr. Fitzpatrick was assigned to the Wisconsin board of public affairs for educational investigations and afterwards became executive secretary of the commission of practical training for public service and a director of the society for promotion of training for public service.

During the war, Mr. Fitzpatrick served as a major of infantry and was in charge of draft administration in Wisconsin. Since January 1919, he has been secretary of the Wisconsin state board of education. He is the author of a number of books and articles on educational problems.

A member of the Madison, Wis., Post of the Legion, Mr. Fitzpatrick, has served as chairman of various state committees and is now chairman of the state publicity committee. In addition to his duties in the field of Americanism.

M'ALISTER ROSE TO MAJOR

Arkansas Officer's Unit Made Record for Number of Men Discharged in One Day.

Heber L. McAlister of Conway, Ark., chairman of the Americanism committee of the Arkansas department of the American Legion, endeavored himself to many ex-soldiers with his unit at Camp Dix, N. Y., discharged more men in one day than any other unit in the army. The score which he commanded was 530 discharges in one day.

A member of the Arkansas National Guard, Mr. McAlister entered the federal service early in the war and served in America and France. He rose from second lieutenant to major. Mr. McAlister was educated in the common and high schools of Mississippi and was graduated from Mississippi college. He was an assistant in mathematics at his alma mater for one year and then became a member of the faculty of Ochsletha college. He was acting president of the latter institution when he resigned to enter the service. Mr. McAlister is now director of extension at Arkansas State Normal school.

SEARCH FOR BERGDOLL'S AID

Legion is Endeavoring to Find Man Alleged to Have Helped Slacker Reach Germany.

The American Legion is searching for the man who is reported to have aided Grover C. Bergdoll, notorious slacker, in his escape from Canada to Germany, according to Leonard Bolles, national adjutant of the Legion, who said that the Legion is especially concerned in that Bergdoll is alleged to have obtained his passport in Winnipeg by using an American Legion button and the army discharge papers of a Legionnaire.

Mr. Bolles has appointed to the Department of Justice to ascertain the facts in the case and proposes, if the report is true, to see that the man is apprehended, expelled from the Legion and brought to a speedy trial.

Bergdoll has been the target of numerous attacks of the American Legion. When he "escaped" from prison a reward of \$500 was offered for his capture and a number of Legion posts in many parts of the country took similar action to bring about his capture. One post adopted resolutions urging the President to demand the release of the two Americans who tried to recover Bergdoll in Germany.

Familiality's Breed. At the grave of the departed the old darkey pastor stood, but in hazy looking into the abyss he delivered himself of the funeral oration.

"Samuel Johnson," he said sorrowfully, "We hopes you is gone where we specks you ain't."—American Legion Weekly.

The Greater Shams. Wife: Aren't you positively ashamed that your wife and daughter are out at the shows? H:—Nope. But I am ashamed that they are all out at the knees.—American Legion Weekly.

It's the persistent advertiser that wins. Keep your ad in The Gazette all the time and watch the results.

WITH THE WOMEN IN CITY AND COUNTY

Events of Interest in the Social Life of Gastonia and Gaston—Facts and Fancies for The Gazette's Feminine Friends.

Mrs. Zoe Kincaid Brockman Editor Phone 747

TO ONE IN PARADISE.

Thou wast all that to me, love, For which my soul did pine; A green isle in the sea, love, A fountain and a shrine, All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last! Ah, starry hope that didst arise, But to be nearest! A voice from out the future cries, "Oh! on!"—but 'er the Past (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies Mute, motionless, aguish!

For alas! alas! with me, The light of life is o'er! No more — no more — no more — (Such language holds the solemn sea To the sands upon the shore), Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree, Or the stricken eagle soar.

And all my days are trances, And all my nightly dreams, And where the gray eye gleams, And where the footsteps gleam— In what ethereal dances, By what eternal streams, —Edgar Allan Poe.

WAR MOTHERS TO MEET.

The War Mothers' Association will meet in regular session on Wednesday afternoon, March 9, at 2 o'clock at the home of Mrs. A. A. McLean. A full attendance is desired.

MRS. GARRISON BACK FROM NEW YORK.

Mrs. D. A. Garrison returned Thurs day from a stay of several days in New York. When asked what the shops are showing in women's wear Mrs. Garrison said that the new spring wraps are lovely, loose affairs in either cape or bolero effect, the leading fabric for these being black satin. She also said that the windows of all the leading shops were alive with gowns, mount materials, fans, and dress necessities in the new shade called Harding blue.

IN HONOR OF MISS SCHULTZ.

Miss Emilie Schultz who for the past year has been the visiting nurse for the Loray community and who leaves Gastonia today to become a missionary to Africa, was the guest of honor at an informal six o'clock dinner given Friday evening by Mrs. George R. Gillespie, at her home on South Marietta street. In toed with Miss Schultz were Misses Taylor and Mrs. Elizabeth Ephlin.

WOMAN'S CLUB HEARS MRS. MCKIMMON.

The Gastonia Woman's Club met in the Central Social auditorium Friday afternoon at 3:30. Mrs. J. H. Sporker presided, in the absence of the president. The routine business was transacted and a nominating committee elected to nominate the officers for the coming year. Mrs. Nell Pickens chairman, Mrs. R. V. Warren, Mrs. Joe S. Wray, Mrs. P. R. Kille and Mrs. D. A. Garrison. This committee to report at the April meeting.

The meeting was then turned over to the home economics committee. Mr. Harry Harrison, community song leader, talked in a most interesting way of the value of community singing.

Mrs. Jane S. McKimmon, of Raleigh, State home demonstration agent, delighted the members of the club with a most practical, helpful and entertaining discussion on "A Woman's Business on Life."

FOLLYANNAS HOLD DELIGHTFUL SOCIAL.

The Follyanna Social held Thursday evening by the Philathea class of Main Street Methodist church was a decided success. The Barren Hat, in which the social was held, was effectively decorated with streamers of blue and white, pink promises, and crystal baskets of pom-poms, the basket handles tied with gold tulle. Various games were played and piano selections were given by Mrs. C. C. Carpenter. An interesting informal talk by Mr. Duncan B. Cary, of Jacksonville, Fla., the guest of Miss Lola Long, was greatly enjoyed. At this meeting the Philathea members learned just who had been their "Follyanna" during the past few months, and the main of Follyanna friendships was renewed. Pink and white ice cream with wafers was served.

BOYS' CLUB WITH ROBERT GLENN.

The Boys' Club met last night with Master Robert Glenn as host at the home of his parents, Dr. and Mrs. L. N. Glenn, on Chester street. The living room and dining room were thrown to gether and were bright with quantities of jonquils and golden bell. Various games were enjoyed and in a memory contest the prize, a silver pencil, went to Miss Elizabeth Love, and the beauty prize, an eraser, to Master Burke Hubert Parker. A delightful ice course with cake was served by Mrs. Glenn, assisted by her lovely little daughter, Miss Mary Glenn. Those present were Ralph Falls with Maree Lee Mason; Willie Spencer with Annie Blair Anders; Murray Grier with Amy Sue Jacobs; C. K. Marshall,



Advertisement for MATTHEWS-BELK CO. featuring '30 RETAIL STORES' and '30 RETAIL STORES' on either side of the company name. The ad states 'SELL IT FOR LESS' and 'every suit guaranteed'.

Large advertisement for 'ATTENTION MEN!' from Belk's big Spring Sale. It lists various suit categories and prices: 'Men's and Young Men's New Spring Suits' (values \$5, \$10, \$15), 'Men's and Young Men's All Wool Suits' (values to \$32.50), 'Men's All Wool Serge Suits' (values to \$25.00), and 'Style-Plus Young Men's Suits' (values \$30 and \$35).

Dr. with Elizabeth Ross, of Gastonia, for the daughter submitting the With Middlebury, Vermont, R. B. Belling, in a story on the subject, "General John B. Gordon, the Ideal Patriot, with Wilson and DeWitt, B. H. Parker, and a Soldier."

PRE-SCHOOL CIRCLE WITH MRS. QUICKEL. The second meeting of the Pre-school Circle of the Parent League Association was held Thursday afternoon at Mrs. T. J. Quickel's home on South street.

LIST OF PRIZES OFFERED BY U. D. C. The following prizes were offered by the U. D. C. for the best essays written by the members of the organization in the World War.

MR AND MRS. ROBINSON ENTERTAIN. Thursday night at their home on West second avenue Mr. and Mrs. J. Lee Robinson entertained at an elegant and elaborate neighborhood dinner party.

SOCIETY PERSONALS. Master Thomas Kindley left Friday for Andra to spend the week end with his brother, Master Glenn Kindley, who is a student at Christ school.

ROYALTY RIDES A BICYCLE. A bicycle is one of the most highly prized possessions of Princess Cecile, daughter of Prince Andrew, of Greece. Almost any afternoon when the weather permits she can be seen riding about the Royal Grounds at Athens.

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