

Tory Food Barons Are Responsible For Coal Famine

Cars Which Should be Used for the Transportation of Coal are Converted Into Warehouses for Food Products---Greedy Foretellers and Nervous Financiers Have the Government Under Their Control--High Costers Enjoying a Carnival.

(By H. F. Gadsby.)

Ottawa, March 8.—People round here keep asking what the Borden government is doing with the War Measures Act to curb the high cost of living. Under the War Measures Act, passed unanimously by both Houses of Parliament, the Government can do anything it wishes with the laws, customs, precedents and business arrangements of Canada if the emergency arises. So far as people can see, that is about where it ends. The government has power to do what it likes, but it doesn't like to do it.

With prices soaring as they are in Canada, most governments would be thinking of regulating exports with a view to enabling the people who live in this country to get their fair share of the products of the soil at reasonable rates. But, far from regulating exports, the Borden government looks on while its particular pets, the coal storage barons, bring on a coal famine by using cars that might be employed in carrying coal, as warehouses for their food products until they can find ships to carry the stuff across the ocean.

The Food Barons.

In other words, the whole transportation equipment of this country is, by grace of the Borden Government, at the disposal of the food barons who can use it or not in such a way as to throw the whole economic scheme out of gear. It is surely bad enough that they should use their own warehouses to manipulate prices, but when they proceed to commandeer freight cars to make it worse, it looks as if the War Measures Act ought to take a hand in.

But that will not be while the Borden Government is in office. Its apparent object is to hand all the money in the country over to its friends, the

food pirates. The munition workers may get high wages, but what's the use when they have to shell it nearly all out for food to eat. The food pirate reminds one of that grim old song about the undertaker, "I'll nail you at the last."

The High Costers.

The Borden Government is not in a position to deal with the high cost of living in a thorough root and branch way. There are two reasons for this. One is that the Borden Government is itself responsible for the high cost of living through its fiscal policy. The other is that it was put where it is by a combination of greedy foretellers and nervous financiers who still have it under complete control. The Borden government daren't do anything to mitigate the high cost of living. Its masters won't let it. If it regulated prices it would be regulating its own friends. If it regulated exports it would be putting a crimp in some of its chief benefactors' profits.

The Borden government has been at pains to avoid any run-in with the cost of living that would prejudice its friends. Its idea is to go through the motions but not to do anything that will hurt. With this object in view there have been some half dozen royal commissions looking at the cost of living from as many different angles. They are encouraged by the Borden government to take a good long look and not to be in a hurry to make up their minds. In the last two years and a half it must have cost the Borden government at least a quarter of a million dollars to pay economic commissions of one kind and another to string out the debate on the high cost of living until the next general election is over.

Commissions Reported.

In spite of this some of the commis-

sions have simply had to report. They couldn't hold it any longer. They did not want to expire as it were by the effluxion of time. Most of them had other work to do. So they reported—and the government did nothing about it. These were the more active commissions. The other commissions did nothing at all and consequently made no report, which course, on the whole, suited the Borden government even better.

A number of these high cost of living commissions harbored a joker in the shape of the Cold Storage King of Canada who was planted in their very midst so he could see what was coming and head it off. This is how earnest the Borden government was about the high cost of living. It placed the chief operator at all the strategic spots where the news might be expected to come first.

And Still Another.

To all these commissions another has been added lately who is to go at the high cost of living from the scientific end. A distinguished scientist has been appointed at a distinguished salary to begin a research right away. Evidently he has a life job. He need not report for a long time yet. He has asked a thousand other scientists to help him at nothing a week but glory galore, and almost anything is sure to come of it—except an immediate report. This is a great concentrated effort on the part of science not only to help the Borden government out of a hole, but eventually, as we take it, to feed the poor without giving them anything to eat.

This scientific inquest will no doubt suggest substitutes for staple articles of diet which have under the Borden government become too expensive for the people. These substitutes, one may hope, will be somewhat more pal-

atable than, say, sinking one's teeth in the furniture to satisfy a hearty appetite.

Not a Substitute.

Hay as a substitute for bacon and eggs is out of the question, because the army uses all the extra hay. Bran is cheap yet, and saw bran taken with hot water, is said to be good for the digestion, owing to its capillary action. But the moment Premier Borden's food barons get the idea that bran is in popular demand it will shoot up in price, as rice has done already, someone having mentioned rice in their hearing as a substitute for potatoes. Nothing the public flees to as a refuge from the high cost of living but the food barons get there first and make it more precious than rubies. The War Measures Act is about as useful to stop these greedy fellows as if it didn't exist at all.

The Land Problem.

The Borden government has it in its mind that the vacant land problem is going to solve the food problem—bring the untitled soil and the returned soldiers together and the thing's done.

This scheme had its origin in the bright mind of R. B. Bennett, M. P., or some other large sequester of the prairie lands, who would be glad to sell to the government at a good swinging price the broad, idle acres which produce nothing now but taxes.

The only drawback to this scheme is that the returned soldier prefers the city. No lonesome prairie farm for him where he can't so easily grow wheat which the Borden government will not let him sell where he pleases.

The humorist is a philosopher who breaks the sad news gently to the world because he is sorry for it.

NO ALUM

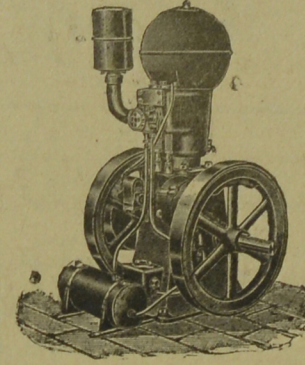


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