

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS, Editor and Owner.

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GERMAN LIVING COSTS.

The cost of living in Germany has fallen during the last several weeks. In November for the first time since Sept. 1914, there was a decrease in the average cost of sustenance for German families and in prices for food stuffs in general. This is said to be due, to a large extent, to the fixing by the government of maximum prices on pork and butter. From 200 towns come reports that the effect was at once felt and that other foods showed a tendency to lower in price to parallel these two staples.

Theorists will jump at the opportunity to present an argument in favor of government regulation of food prices in general in other countries as well as Germany, when they hear of the immediate and radical effect that has been produced. Other theorists will see the absolute defeat of the English blockade and the overthrow of the hopes of the Allies to starve out the Teutons. And both will be wrong.

Two things have entered into the necessity for regulation of food prices by the German government; possibility of famine, and grave national danger. It is but another development of the policy that extreme militarism has made necessary official supervision of every mouthful of food that passes the lips of the people. If militarism means that a village bailiff, or constable, or whatever he may be called there, may direct the housewife to prepare soup for her family today and beef stew tomorrow, it is becoming a thing of astoundingly close touch with individual life. The regulation of prices is not so much an indication of government efficiency as another sign of great national stress. And if the blockade by England had not been effective, there would have been no shortage of food, giving rise to such increased price schedules as to make governmental interference necessary.

A CENTURY OF SAVING.

One hundred years ago next De-

cember the first savings bank in the United States was opened. From an experiment in that day, these institutions have come to be one of the biggest and most important factors in the business life of the country. As affecting thrift and the consequent prosperity of the great mass of people they are probably the most important factor. In recognition of the anniversary which will be celebrated during the last month of 1916, the American Bankers' association has begun a campaign designed to further thrifty habits among the citizenry of the country. This has led to a rather exhaustive research and compilation of statistics which go to show that in the United States the percentage of thrifty people as based on bank accounts, is just 11 per cent. In other countries, notably France, the percentage of this class runs as high as 34 per cent.

Developments of the past few months have led, however, to a condition which it is expected will overturn these figures. There have been numberless new savings accounts started in the banks of this and other sections, and it is the aim of the association to avail themselves of the time of prosperity to bring home the lesson they seek to teach.

Savings banks do much to encourage saving, especially since the inauguration of novelties in the way of making small deposits, home banks, and other such devices to present the virtue of thrift in a concrete form.

No small factor, either, is the stability of banks in general and the gradual growth of confidence in them. Every bank failure hurts the thrift of a generation, and every satisfactory settlement of the obligations of a defunct bank helps in the same way.

A NEW ITEM.

Instead of remaining the most wasteful of nations, the United States must become the most economical. This is the latest "preparedness" cry.

The United States bureau of chemistry has already undertaken to point the way. It commences with the conservation of food at its source of supply, the farm.

It deals with the prevention of food spoilage, it develops new uses for products, new methods of preservation, new ways of detecting adulteration of foods. It deals with such matters as the breakage of eggs in transit, which is said to be enormous and preventable.

In such a conservation is the key to big economy, but it is not the master key. That is in the hands of the American housewife.

The greatest waste in this land of great extravagance is that which accumulates in the garbage cans at the kitchen doors.

Lack of economy in cooking is often merely thoughtlessness, as in the case of housewives who pay the same rate for the tail and the tenderloin of a

porterhouse—and then throw the tail away.

Such thoughtlessness or "culinary non-preparedness" may prove as fatal to a nation as military non-preparedness. It is one of the pronounced differences between the self sufficiency of Germany and the "muddling" methods of England in the present war.

WHY WE ARE RAISING MOLLY CODDLES.

Almost invariably when a young man applies for a job today he is incapable of performing the work required of him.

He usually wants a manager's job before he has served his apprenticeship. To him work in a dirty place is distasteful and his hands must be kept clean, white and soft. He is disgraced in his own mind if he cannot wear good clothes and a white collar.

Usually he "tries out" and is either found so fearfully inefficient that he is rejected, or if accepted he works a little while in the hope that an advancement will come to relieve him of his menial task. If that advancement fails to come he quits and seeks some "softer" place.

Am I not right? Ask the employers of labor in La Grande and elsewhere, and you will find these assertions absolutely correct.

Why these conditions? I notice by the Observer that the public schools have recessed for a week until after the stormy weather shall have passed.

In other words, we as a community have removed every obstacle and hardship from in front of our children by heavy public expenditures to erect

modern steam heated buildings, and now we must remove the weather burden by permitting this expensive educational plant in La Grande to lie idle for a week while the weather undergoes a change.

Is it any wonder the boy or girl is incapable when graduated? Is it any wonder the road of life is too rugged for these "cared for" children?

Most of the older people who are carrying the load now were only too anxious to go to school, weather conditions not considered. If our feet became wet on the road we took a dry pair of socks and changed at the school house.

School is to be extended a week in the spring. Nonsense, for when the springtime comes children become restless and want to get out so that schooling in the spring is only partially as good as in the winter months.

The plan is wrong. Let the educational plant be run on schedule. Let the building custodians, the teachers and pupils report for duty at a certain time each day. Extra care can be used to look after the child's condition when he arrives but make the school an institution that the weather cannot stop, for in this way regular habits are formed among the children. They are taught they must surmount obstacles, not sit down and wait for the sunshine.

I am strongly opposed to the school board's ideas in closing the schools this week and I believe every person should give it some study.

Very truly,

GEORGE STODDARD

Havana has abolished the fly and

mosquito and is making advertising capital out of it.

The price of matches, has advanced. This being leap year, we rise, in behalf of the unmarried ladies, to protest.

SAW SHRINKS CORDWOOD

College of Forestry Exonerates Accused Dealers.

University of Washington, Jan. 29.—Cordwood merchants, caught between irate patrons and a harsh law, have begged assistance from the college of forestry in solving the vexatious problem of the shrinkage of the fuel they market. The results of experimentation now under way at the university are likely to have a considerable effect on the state's firewood merchants and perhaps result in remedial legislation.

Douglas fir has been experimented with by the university foresters and it has been discovered that a loss of from 7 to 11 per cent occurs when four-foot wood is stacked, sawed into 12 to 14-inch stove wood and remeasured. The shrinkage is due to irregularity in the sticks before sawing. The difficulty is particularly great when stump wood, with any decided butt swelling, is handled.

The dealers, of course, complain that they buy in four-foot lengths by cord measure. When the wood is sawed they must deliver more than they get for a cord or else get into trouble with their customers and perhaps the law, since weights and measures inspectors are privileged to halt any load of firewood and measure it, holding to strict standards.

The average loss in Douglas fir seems to be about 10 per cent. Some woods will probably show more and some less shrinkage when the foresters get around to test them.

When Dean Winkenwerder has presented the results of the investigations now being made it is likely that the woodyard men will seek relief

from the lawmakers.

The dean remarks that people who think they are getting more wood when they buy the long sticks and saw them at home are simply forgetting that they are transferring the shrinkage from the woodyard to their back yards.

MRS. PENFIELD'S TAX HUGE

Wife of Ambassador Assessed on Personal Property of \$5,058,202

Philadelphia, Jan. 29.—When the tax assessment books for 1916 were sent to the Receiver of Taxes Kendrick by the board of revision of taxes to be opened for the payment of reality and personal property taxes for the current year it was disclosed that Mrs. Anne M. Weightman Walker Penfield, wife of Frederic C. Penfield, United States Ambassador to Austria, is assessed to pay a personal property tax on a valuation of \$5,058,202, as compared with a valuation of \$3,734,511 in 1915.

Mrs. Penfield is the daughter of the late William Weightman. She is regarded as one of the richest women in the United States.

The heaviest individual personal taxpayer is the estate of Thomas Dolan, former president of the United Gas Improvement Company, whose assessment for the current year is \$8,552,765, as compared with \$9,341,878 in 1915, while the estate of Henry H. Houston, a former director of the Pennsylvania Railway Company is assessed at \$7,193,954, and in 1915 \$6,790,382.

The estate of F. A. Drexel is assessed this year at \$6,356,150 and last year at \$6,450,350.

The total assessment has not yet been completed, but it is expected to reach \$625,000,000, and may exceed those figures.

Metal Hot Water Bottles. A remedy for cold feet. The best bottle ever put on the market, and at a reasonable price at Silverthorn's.—Adv.



FOSTER'S COLLEGE MIDDIES

Now on Display a Limited Number of Those Popular COLLEGE MIDDIES

The most and only becoming middie for all kinds of wear. Made of good weight galetea in plain white and in black and white stripes, blue and white, red and white, green and white and orange and black. All are absolutely fast colors and "Tub" beautifully—sizes 14 to 20, 36 to 44—pick your size now—priced \$1.50.

High school girls—we have a few of these middies in your school colors, also a few O. A. C. colors.

nm West & Co
THE QUALITY STORE

SCENE SHOWING EMMITT CARRIGAN, IN "GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN," A METRO MASTERPIECE AT SHERRY'S TODAY.



The Careful man realizes that Burglars always know where Valuables are hidden. Do he puts his valuables where they are safe—in our Safety Deposit Vaults—and has no fear.

IT IS CARELESS TO KEEP JEWELRY AND VALUABLE PAPERS IN THE HOUSE; IT IS ALSO DANGEROUS. YOU MAY LOSE THEM; FIRE MAY BURN THEM; BURGLARS MAY STEAL THEM AND MAY KILL YOU TO GET THEM.

THE CAREFUL MAN KEEPS HIS VALUABLES IN ONE OF OUR SAFETY DEPOSIT BOXES. HE KNOWS THEY ARE SAFE, SO IS HE AND HIS FAMILY.

WE WILL RENT YOU A SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX FOR \$2.00 PER YEAR.

La Grande National Bank

LA GRANDE, OREGON

Capital \$200,000.00 Surplus \$50,000.00
Resources \$1,000,000.00

Fred J. Holmes, President
F. L. Meyers, Cashier

C. C. Penington, Vice President
E. Zundel and H. E. Coolidge,
Assistant Cashiers.

DIRECTORS.

Fred J. Holmes J. G. Snodgrass J. F. Conley
C. C. Penington H. S. Brown F. L. Meyers
A. Blokland A. T. Hill H. E. Coolidge