

The Ontario Argus

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THE PERIODICAL VOW.

Right now there are hundreds of citizens of these western states who are making their periodical vow to "store coal" during the summer months. And right now it is a safe bet that not half of them will act on that impulse, sane and logical the it is.

It is strange that the public does not profit by experience. Society is so used to take things for granted that it is the exceptional individual that lays up supplies for the future. The human family does not have the foresight of the humble squirrel who stores his nest with nuts for the long winter.

Three years ago Ontario went thru a coal shortage almost as acute as that which we are experiencing this winter. There was some suffering and the city was in bad shape. As the result there was a more general storing of coal last year and the year previous, but this year there was comparatively little coal stored. In other words it took this community but three years to forget its bitter coal experience.

There is another phase of this situation so far as Ontario is concerned. In reality we have no fuel dealers in the city; that is, men who have any money invested in the business. It is a sideline with the lumber yards, while the one ostensible fuel merchant stores practically no coal at all. In other words we have only sidetrack coal brokers here.

The Van Petten Lumber company did store some coal this summer. It filled its bins, and had them cleaned out early in the fall and never again had a surplus. That so far as can be learned is the only investment of money in the business, save that which follows when cash is not received and customers have to be "carried for a time."

Now it must be admitted that this is a privilege that few business firms enjoy, namely that of having a busi-

ness in which there is comparatively no investment. The public has the right to expect the men in this business of keeping some stock on hand.

On the other hand, these business men have the right to expect the public to have some consideration for them and to spread at least some of its buying over the entire year instead of rushing pell mell upon them when the weather goes cold and expect them to have the coal ready for immediate delivery. To do this would make the business unprofitable.

Ontario and vicinity each year purchases approximately 120 cars of coal, or about 6,000 tons. On this turnover there is, it would seem, a sufficient profit to merit at least some investment on the part of the dealers, in stock, while there should also be some inducement for the purchaser to buy early and store during the summer. It was lack of this that, in part, accounts for the failure of many householders to store their winter's supply.

So the fault for the shortage is not to be charged to the dealers alone, tho they have their share of responsibility, but to the lack of good judgment on the part of the public, and of course largely to the strike. A little better team work all round would have averted a lot of grief.

Thanks to break in the coal strike and the efficient handling of the fuel supply by the administrator, we will all weather this storm—but how long will its lessons be remembered?

WORK FOR SERVICE MEN.

The spectacle of a thousand jobless ex-service men parading the streets of Portland should awaken that city to its duty. Such a parade has not been held, as yet, but is threatened unless the employers of Portland arouse themselves and do something for these men.

It should not be the part of those who read the statements of the committee engaged in finding jobs for the men to jump to the conclusion that the Portland employers did not put the ex-service men who came back from war at their old jobs. There is nothing to prove whether they did or not, and that should be determined before condemning the Portland business men.

There is a great likelihood that when many of the men from the in-

terior of Oregon and Washington, Idaho and Montana, Wyoming and Utah were discharged at Camp Lewis, as thousands of them were, they just stayed on the coast and have drifted into Portland and naturally enough seek work. But the work is not easily found.

But tho it is not easy to supply all the boys with jobs there is no need for a thousand men who are honestly looking for work being long idle in Oregon, if the prosperity stories that emanate from the state's metropolis are true, as no doubt most of them are.

The task of getting the man and the job together should be hurried to the best of the ability of the employers and the service men's committee. To keep these men in idleness too long would be a disgrace to the state, would breed unrest at a time when that should have no added nourishment, an would be false to the promises that employers and the public generally gave the men when they went away.

At least so long as there are Japs and alien slackers holding down jobs, that ex-service men will accept, there should be nothing left undone to see that the Jap or alien goes and the soldier or sailor is put to work.

THE SPECIAL SESSION.

At last Governor Diecott yielded to the demand of the suffragettes for a special session to ratify the Federal Constitutional amendment. We had thought he would, and hoped that he wouldn't, not because of opposition to the cause of woman's suffrage but to satisfy our desire to see a public official who could tell that militant bunch of women where he stood, and then had the nerve to stay with that declaration.

There may have been around Portland and at Salem, somewhat of a demand for the special session on this ground, but there certainly was not a demand over the state generally. Therefore in yielding the Governor has allowed himself to serve a special clique. But at that he should not be censured too severely. It really is too much to expect a man to fight a bunch of women, especially with an election just a few months in the offing.

There is another thing about the call that strikes us as peculiar. That is that the women's ratification

proposition is placed fifth on the list. In importance that is its proper location, but politically it was the all important reason for calling the solons together.

As a combination of vote getting reasons, we submit that the Governor has the prettiest bouquet we have seen for some time; namely:

The amendment of the Workmen's Compensation act to increase awards for disabled workmen; to appropriate money for the soldier and sailor's educational fund; to submit an amendment to restore capital punishment; to remedy the irrigation and drainage bonds interest guarantee law; and lastly to ratify the federal suffrage amendment.

All of these measures have so much merit that the Governor was wise in uniting them as the reason for the call, but had the call not been issued no doubt the state could have worried along without the changes.

Still perhaps the Governor is right and we ought to have these things done now, and the solons will no doubt act accordingly. Since the call was issued without the guarantee of the lawmakers to restrict their activity and forswear their pay and mileage, the boys will draw down the usual fees and can go as far as they think the Governor will stand before using his veto. All this is as it should be, for the country is rather satisfied that it has seen enough exercise of executive power over the legislative branches for the time being.

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