PUBLIC OPINION IS EXPRESSED ON VARIOUS TOPICS OF DAY

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor.)—Permit me to offer a few words on the subject of economy and salary cutting.

We have heard a lot about the shortcomings of this and that city official and of the government as a whole, and when analyzed all these complaints seem to resolve into one general fault—the city employes are overpaid and economy makes it imperative to cut the salaries.

First of all, what is economy? All will agree that it is a decrease in the relation expense bears to results. Or in other words it is an increase in the amount of service a dollar will secure.

Agreed on this point, it then resolves into the paramount question, how can we increase the service the dollar buys? The common remedy thus far seems to be, reduce the salaries. This appears so simple a remedy that it has already met considerable favor with the powers that be, and numerous employes have suffered thereby. But right here is where the difference in executive ability is manifest.

Any man can reduce salaries, but can he reduce the cost of service by so doing? Generally speaking, he cannot. The city's wage scale for the average employe is now lower than that in private enterprises. And the men employed are equal if not superior in quality. Where, then, is the fault?

It can be no other than in the handling of the men. They lack the needed guidance. It is in the administrative end of the system where the great fault lies. The finest horses will be unable to move a load without being properly harnessed, and with the reins in the hand of a competent driver. Feed your horses well; they will be eager to pull; get good harness, and above all a competent driver. But without a driver, underfed horses, however great in number, pulling this way and that, will prove anything but economy.

Do not cut the salaries of the workers, but fix up the harness. Cut out the unnecessary and encourage the sterling qualities now dwarfed. The heart and soul of one well-paid man will give far more service than the presence of two discontents. In fact simply employes we need, but service. A dissatisfied employe is never an economy. If the increased cost of living in general prompts us to cry out for economy, do not be so foolish as to think that the cutting of your fellow worker's salary will aid you. See that the work is handled in an intelligent manner. Then if fewer men can arrange to handle the work give them at least part of the saving. Let the employe see that getting the job is not the only incentive. Let real service have its reward. If, from the lowest to the highest, men can do more individually, encourage them to do so, and the true economy we need will hold its share for you. AN ECONOMIST.

PRISON REFORM IS DISCUSSED

Observations Made in Cell Are Used as Basis by Writer.

SALEM, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—As a representative of the class which is directly affected by the methods of administration of the prisons of the land, I want to commend the editorial entitled "Behind Prison Walls," which appeared in The Oregonian recently. I have been in the cell and had a chance to think and observe the whole system from that angle. I was then, and am now, a most enthusiastic friend of law and order. I did not defend nor condone the violation of law for which I paid the penalty. At no time while I did my time was I in sympathy with the spirit or principle of the underworld habitue, who feels that it is his bounden duty to beat the law of society, but I could see some phases of the prisoner's mind and temper that do not seem to cut much figure in the infliction of penalty.

The prisoner of whatever grade or class is made to feel that he is not in prison in order that he may be a better man, but to satisfy the feeling for revenge in society. I realize that this is overdrawn and overworked by the men in their considerations of their situation. But so long as conditions are such as to make them feel so, it will not be a surprising thing to find, here and there, a fellow who has descended to or never found any higher level than his own brute impulses, and who has grown so desperate in his nature that he will throw all discretion away and evoke any or all punishments upon himself for the personal satisfaction of just expressing his contempt and hatred for the forces which restrain him.

The most visible representative of those forces is, to the man of small thinking ability, the warden and other officers of the place where he is imprisoned. When conditions produce such an utterly abandoned outlaw it is indeed a problem what to do with him. Your discussion of the situation showed an open mind on the subject. This view of the matter might help some.

Anywhere on earth that two or more men are thrust into a social relation with one another, they at once adopt rules for their own government. It may not be done formally. It may not be done consciously, but it is done. If 10 men of the type of the outlaws who got the barbarous "hosing" in the Salem Penitentiary recently were permitted to gang together they would at once recognize some things as forbidden. The inmates of all prisons have these unwritten laws. They are their laws, and because they are their laws they are interested in the enforcement of them.

The underworld has its laws. They do not run along the lines of the laws of society, but they are laws, i. e., they may not seek redress for a wrong from the officers of the law; they may not double-cross one of the underworld gang; they may not filch from one of their own crowd; they may not "squeal."

Their laws, like all laws of the universe, are supported by penalties. There are outlaws by nature and who will defy even their own laws for the satisfying of personal desire. The underworld knows no plan for the regulating of such, except elimination.

The fact is that we let our temper rise at the act of defiance of the law that we wish to have observed, and we seek to get even. The violator is made to feel that this is so, and as hate always begets hate, he develops his sentiments along lines that do not help him nor his keepers. The introduction of more and more of the self-governing idea in the prison will help. Prisoners do not lessen the rigidity of the rules when they have a hand in government, but often stiffen them. But they are then living under and enforcing their own rules. All but the wholly distorted mind and character will, and does, respond. Osborne and others have found it to pay.

I am fully aware that the bulk of society thinks that it don't make any difference what the prisoner thinks of the system under which he is punished. That it does its work by the terror that it strikes into the hearts of possible violators of the law.

I wish to state three points just here.

First, the deterrent value of the prison is all with the yet unconvicted man. Once he has been branded the law has less value to him, and its penalties have much less force. The "fish" (the newly-incarcerated man) feels the sting and humiliation of it all, and before he is caught at all he may have a great fear of the prison. He magnifies the horror of it all.

Second, the once convicted man, or the repeater, constantly loses his fear of prisons. He may hate them and their administration, but he does not feel more disposition to comply with the laws of society for fear of the prison than he did before he had been in once. He acquires a good deal of contempt for the whole system. So much of it appears to him to be mere childishness. So much is futile. Its rules cannot be enforced. Its administration is so full of provocations to hatred of society, and he sees that the personnel of the prison force is often such as to make the whole thing a farce. He sees men whom every one knows to be as bad law violators as himself going freely about their business.

Third, if the purpose of penalty is to protect society, or if there is any desire to have the penalty have any reformative value, the attitude of the mind of the prisoner as he is discharged is the whole thing, is the measure of success of the system.

It does make a difference what the prisoner thinks of the system. If he happens to be one of the great majority who have learned new lessons of hatred and new methods of operation, he will go out a more dangerous man and a more hopelessly hardened man than he was when he went in.

This need not be so if the system were right. It cannot be otherwise than so under the present system.

ROBIN HOOD.

FARMERS ARE SELLING HENS

Cost of Foods Laid in Part to Shortage of Crops After Rains.

CANBY, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—The high cost of food is not altogether due to the war, as one of your writers puts it. Here are some of the facts that exist in my neighborhood and anyone desiring to investigate can do so:

The farmers in this vicinity and for miles around, with few exceptions, had only one-half a crop, such as wheat, potatoes, oats or barley (a great many had not this much), due to a very late dry Fall. When the rains did set in they continued almost without intermission up to June 1, so that it was with some difficulty that the ground was prepared and the sowing done for grain. As to the potatoes, a great many planted two and three times, even then not procuring a full crop. The reason for this was the many and continuous rains, which rotted the seed and prevented them from sprouting.

Now these same or similar conditions existed over a large part of the United States. Anyone who reads The Oregonian, with the Government crop reports and other data, must know this statement to be correct and this naturally accounts for high price of above named products.

As regards eggs—most of us have sold off our hens, just keeping enough for our own personal use, for there is nothing to be made from them. Usually at this season the hens take a rest. I haven't gathered an egg for a full month, and when I do—believe me, it will taste mighty good in a lovely cup of old-fashioned coffee (once again).

The fact of the matter is that the farmers' efforts in supplying a really good article is not appreciated and long since became tired of catering to people who did not know a good thing when they had it.

For instance, all last Fall, Winter and Spring we were carrying our eggs to market and receiving from 15 to 22 cents from the grocer, who never on any account pays cash, but we must take it out in trade and thus lose in more than one way.

One reason for these very low prices was the heavy importation of cheap eggs from China, which were shown to be both unclean and not healthful, according to report made by Oregon Agricultural College.

The housekeepers were using these in order to bring the farmers to time. This they succeeded in doing, but at the same time caused the farmer to unload a lot of his hens on the market, and he is continuing to do so.

Personally, when I lived in Portland I was always glad to pay a farmer 5 cents per dozen more for his product than was asked for same at the stores, and I say that a housekeeper who does not know the difference between a real egg and the imported article is a poor judge of food qualities and not a responsible person to look after the gastronomical needs of a family or household.

The butter proposition was the same thing as the eggs. All the year we were receiving from our grocer (in trade) 45 cents for a two-pound roll of the finest, sweetest country butter and the fellow with a poor article received just the same. To get ahead of that we who could began selling our milk to the cheese factory, which was found most satisfactory.

Previous to the heavy rains, for the space of about six weeks, some Portland buyers covered this territory twice weekly, paying the market price for eggs, etc. Buying prices ranged from 38 to 45 cents a dozen. Before marketing the eggs they were candled, after traveling a distance of 40 miles, to say nothing of other expenses. Are not these people entitled to some profit?

The women who are boycotting now will not obtain a first-class article when the prices are lowered, while the article of worth will continue to command its price from careful buyers who want nothing but the best and are willing to pay for it, otherwise the eggs go to the cold storage. In the meantime the farmers are retiring from the poultry business for keeps. Even a worm will turn, you know.

MRS. G. M. PLUMMER.

ANOTHER MAN DEFENDS PRICE

Boycott Eggs Now, He Says, and You Will Do Without Them in Two Years.

M'MINNVILLE, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—I should like the privilege of saying a few words concerning the much-discussed question of the boycott on eggs.

To begin with, I will take the ones who favor this action at their own statement that eggs should sell at this time of year for about 38 cents.

In following this I wish you to notice that my figures are based on very conservative estimates—that I have allowed as much as possible to my opponents in the discussion.

I have the figures of a flock of hens which is given the very finest of care throughout the year. There is no saving of expense or trouble to secure the best results from them. From October 22, 1915, to December 22, 1915, this flock of hens produced 99 dozen eggs. Throughout the year they produced 1312 dozen eggs. One could not expect to secure the proposed top price for more than the two months mentioned, which is never more than one-thirteenth of the year's production; and it is very seldom as much as one-thirteenth of the year's production. If the consumer pays 38 cents, the farmer will get about 26 cents.

At present the price paid to the consumer goes as low as 17 cents and 18 cents in the Summer in Portland.

Consider, however, that at this price eggs are placed in cold storage for the Winter, and they are then sold for a considerable margin. Cut that margin by reducing the retail price of fresh eggs to 38 cents and you have the retail price of storage eggs cut to 28 cents or 30 cents. The storage man must make this difference by buying cheaper in the Summer. It is conservative, as any one who knows the sum of 2 plus 2 can see, to say that the producers' price for eggs in the Spring and Summer must then go to 10 cents and 12 cents, or even lower. If the storage plants cannot have large enough margin to buy at this season, consumption can not keep the price even as high as this. It is apparent that this is a smaller margin than the storage plants now operate on.

Of the flock quoted above, 900 dozen of the eggs were sold at the Summer's minimum, or at an increase of one-third of the minimum price. It is certain, then, that at least 900 dozen of every 1300 dozen must be sold at not more than 12 cents, or an increase of one-third, which is 16 cents. When the consumer pays 38 cents, the producer does not get more than 26 cents. (Look it up if you do not believe me). Now, you propose to permit the farmer to sell one dozen eggs at 26 cents, while for every dozen sold at this figure he must sell nine dozen at not more than 16 cents.

This is the only way to determine the average price for the year. For 10 dozen sold at this proposition the producer would get (the boycotters must be suffering from an overgrowth of heart), the sum of $1.70. This is an average of 17 cents a dozen, and figure as you will, you can not deny that I have given, in every case, figures which would be all that the consumer could ask me to allow.

Now, it is almost impossible to find a flock of hens which will average as much as 12 dozen eggs each in a year. In saying this I refer to flocks of hens raised for the production of eggs for the market.

Twelve dozen eggs at 17 cents a dozen, what do you have? You have just $2.04 for each hen—the maximum.

The flock before quoted, during the year 1915 cost $2 each for feed, to say nothing of the labor. This leaves just 4 cents for labor and profit.

In this connection I should like to call your attention to some of the foods on the market, the reduction of which prices are far more worthy of your efforts than in the case of eggs, butter, etc. Here is one. A package of Shredded Wheat biscuit costs 15 cents. It weighs 12 ounces. This is at the rate of 20 cents a pound. Sixty pounds of wheat in a bushel, and this food costs you $12 a bushel. The farmer gets $1.50 at the most of this. Figure some for yourself. You will not believe that there is any very great waste in preparing this food, if you have ever had occasion to investigate flour mills, etc.

While I am not a German nor a German sympathizer, I feel sure that no well-informed person will deny that Germany regulates prices better than any other nation. Today Germany regulates prices of everything, and while the general average of articles of food and drink in Germany is 50 per cent higher in that country than in New York, the price of such articles as eggs, butter, etc., is twice as great as in this country.

This is essential to the discussion only in this, that the German government has found that, considering cost of material, labor, etc., it costs more to produce these articles than many of the others, and as it must conserve expenses, and especially labor, they have taken this means of curtailing the use of these. Other things can be produced cheaper. If Germany must place this much higher relative value on these products, what can the farmer of this country make at the lower relative value?

There can be only one end to this, if carried out as planned. You will recall that the production of pork became impossible owing to the rise in the price of wheat at the beginning of the war. Producers sold all the animals they had. Pork dropped at once, but where is it today? It is unprecedentedly high, and likely to go higher.

Force down the price of eggs now and you will suffer in two or three years. You will not boycott them then as a joke; you will face the stern reality of denying yourselves their use.

E. H. STEWART.

PLEA FOR PARTY UNITY MADE

Writer Says Republicans Should Quit Discussions of Defeat's Cause.

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor.)—Is it not about time for Republicans to get really together and quit further discussion of who was responsible for our late defeat? The facts are that both factions are to blame. In California the old Republican leaders were to blame for trying to monopolize Mr. Hughes while he was in that state and the Progressives, who gave Johnson over 200,000 majority, showed a contemptibly petty spirit in visiting their resentment on Mr. Hughes, who was in no wise to blame for conditions there.

It may be reasonably charged that Mr. Roosevelt's speeches did not help Mr. Hughes, without taking issue with the sentiments he expressed. His general declaration for Mr. Hughes was an undoubted help, but his bitter invective drew no votes. His caustic denunciations of the Germans and his declaration that he would seize all German ships in American waters alienated many thousands of German votes that were naturally hostile to Mr. Wilson, and it drew to Mr. Wilson's support thousands of mushy molly-coddles, both men and women, who were attracted by the silly pretense that Mr. Wilson had kept us out of war.

The Democratic press were quick to seize upon all of these radical expressions and to call them to the attention of their Republican dupes as proofs that Mr. Hughes and Mr. Roosevelt would plunge us into war. The discussion of Mr. Wilson's Mexican policy, open as it was to the criticism of every patriotic American citizen, was worn threadbare and became tiresome, while there was too little discussion of needed economic legislation.

But all of this discussion of reasons for our defeat gets us nowhere. In The Oregonian last Sunday a hot-headed correspondent had something to say about the 4,000,000 Progressive and the 3,000,000 retrogressive votes of 1912. Have we not had a surfeit of this kind of mush? What great progressive reform has this gentleman ever brought about? Recently in an article published in the interest of one of the great advertising agencies of the country one very suggestive statement was that one prime cause of President Taft's defeat was that he didn't know how to advertise his merits and his achievements. He was less of a politician than a statesman. If he had been more vehement and spectacular he, too, might have had 4,000,000 votes, but it is to be observed that the spectacular and vehement man gets just so far and then comes to a dead stop. Between the start and the goal the enthusiasm he engenders very often runs plump against a stone wall of bitter opposition.

The facts are that in that army of 3,000,000 "retrogressives," so-called, there was as large a percentage of patriotic progressive sentiment as among their opponents, and no larger percentage of bosses and political schemers. Much of this talk from political parrots about President Taft's shortcomings is just as senseless as is the criticism of other great leaders. He has made a record in long years of public service that will insure him a place in American history as one of our greatest statesmen.

OBSERVER.

RAISING PRICES HELD BENEFIT

Writer Believes Era of Falling Prices Hurts Conditions.

CORBETT, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—Why this outcry against rising prices? Is an era of falling prices, with all the things incident thereto, to be preferred to an era of rising prices, with these things incident to it?

Were the conditions of 1892-3-4-5 to be preferred to the conditions of today?

I always thought a foreign market was to be desired. Is not the diplomacy of nations mainly directed to secure this market, and their wars caused by disputes over it?

If so, why this cry over selling farm products in the present foreign market?

Is it any worse to sell farm products in a foreign market than to sell the products of factory or munition plant in said market?

Is the farmer to be compelled by a tariff to buy in the home market, and by an embargo to sell in that market, while all other products are free to enter any market they can?

Why is it so necessary to build up commerce and manufactories at the expense of agriculture?

Why is it better to foster a nation of wage earners than to foster a nation of independent individuals?

Why is it a crime for farmers who have bought the products of the farm to band together to hold their goods and sell them in the best market, and so righteous a thing for an association of wage earners to hold up a congress at the point of a threat to paralyze all industry and business and bring hunger, misery and suffering upon millions?

Why is a tariff put upon farm products so long as the market does not justify their importation? The mitigate the market would admit of such importation, and the tariff becomes some protection to the farmer, this tariff is taken off as in the case of hides, meat, eggs and butter.

If those who are crying about the high prices of farm products think they are too high, let them get in and produce. That, to my way of thinking, is the natural and proper way to bring down these prices, if there is so much money in it.

SYLVESTER E. EVANS.

EGG BOYCOTTERS REPROVED

Brownsville Man Says Encouragement Should Be Given Breeders.

BROWNSVILLE, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—In the matter of the boycott on eggs. The great majority of the biddies are on a strike, too, and the few that are laying are not paying half of the board bill of all of them. In fact the cost of production of all the flocks now is far in excess of $1 a dozen of eggs on an average, although our hens are laying a few more than enough to pay the current feeding cost of all the flock, but not enough to begin to pay any part of the cost of hatching and rearing them.

Many hens will not lay until February, and many flocks will not pay the high cost of feeding at all, to say nothing about the care. Whose fault is it if feed is high priced and eggs scarce? Why should the manufactured article be pounced upon as the great offender when the raw material is altogether to blame? Boycotting the product will react at some future time in still higher prices, for it discourages rather than encourages production, for it is bound to be trying to poultrymen in the face of the high cost of feeding and rearing their flocks.

Biddy isn't going to work over-time when prices are high. She may feel sort of aristocratic and that she doesn't have to, and that people might expect too much of her if she did, and lie around expecting an easy living off of her hard earnings. Not much!

When the other biddies begin to holler about what they have done and can do she will jump into the ring with her cackle and not before.

Now it seems to me that true economy in that direction would be to encourage and stimulate production. If so, what better course could be adopted than to keep a few hens in the back yard? Most families could worry along with the product of a dozen well-kept hens of a laying strain, and the scraps from an average table would almost keep them in luxury with a little green feed, grit, oyster shell, and the charcoal from their own wood stoves added.

That would be true economy, for not only would it be a saving of the high cost of feed but would be turning waste into a valuable food product. I am sure this is a more satisfactory way to boycott high prices, and incidentally more profitable, for our inexcusable waste and extravagance has more to do with high prices than anything else. By true economy the wealthy can best help the less fortunate classes, and the less fortunate classes can best help themselves, when possible, by catering to the tastes of the more fortunate classes with neat, clean products of good quality which their means and circumstances require. Our inexcusable wastes and extravagances would keep the starving millions of Europe in plenty.

Better average results can be had from a few birds than from a large flock, and a very little attention will keep them clean, free from mites, healthy and vigorous, and the quality of their eggs the very best.

Then when you become well acquainted you will find them much more attractive than any other pets, for they are not only profitable but very friendly and sociable.

Our White Leghorns and Rhode Island Reds will allow us to pick them up most any old time and place. They will sort of jabber to us while holding them, but of course we cannot understand their hen talk. Then, as if they seem to understand that, they will commence singing, and biddie seems to think she has a wonderfully fine voice.

My wife has picked them up and set them on nests and they would settle down like they intended to lay her an egg.

I merely mention this to show that you can make true pets of them. If one does not wish to be so friendly they will repay well anyhow if they are handled gently and fed and properly cared for.

Give them good, clean, comfortable quarters that can be properly ventilated without drafts, that will protect them from the storms, and give them the benefit of the sun when it shines. Also plenty of grain feed, grit and oyster shells and the table scraps, and little else will be needed.

W. W. BAILEY.

FARMER'S WIFE GIVES VIEWS

Meat Said to Be High Only to Consumer, Not to Producer.

FOREST GROVE, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—There are many theories as to why the cost of living is so high. Perhaps as a farmer's wife I can throw a little light on why prices of meat are out of sight. Thousands of head of good beef cattle have almost been given away in Portland this Summer and Fall. Every farmer around here fattens a few cattle on pasture each year. These buyers in Portland and elsewhere have paid from 2½ to 4 cents a pound for practically all the cattle the farmers have had to sell this year. Have you city people seen any decline in the price of meat? We of the small towns have not. We pay 12½ cents a pound for the poorest meat. Anything decent to eat is 18 cents and more.

They tell us: "Oh, Holsteins and Jerseys are not beef cattle. We can't pay hardly anything for them." But you see they sell every bit of them, even the tails, properly skinned.

What the farmers or Government should do is somehow to regulate the prices between the seller and consumer. Beef is just as good in taste from a nice, fat Jersey heifer or cow as it is from a Durham. Many people would be glad to get moderately fat beef at a fair price. Only the fattest stall-fed cattle have brought even 7 cents this Fall. They are not raised by the ordinary valley farmer, but our meat is good, even if there are not pounds of tallow on it.

The farmers should form a co-operative meat company and kill and pack and sell to consumers their own clean, wholesome meat, or they had better quit raising stock. At the price hay and grain are selling for now every man who feeds it is losing money, except the few dealing in fancy stock. Feed a ton of hay to a yearling steer to winter him; say the cost is $15, then count the cost of feeding and wintering the calf. Then sell him in the Fall for $12 when he is a year and a half old. Hundreds of farmers have done that very thing this year. Fine fat cows brought $20 or $25, but you may believe their meat brought from 18 to 22 cents a pound. Many farmers are now peddling their meat at 10 cents a pound and so get a fair price, and how the people grab for it!

About eggs. A sack of wheat now costs the person with hens to feed $3.65. Few hens are laying, but the non-layers must be fed till the moult is over. For two months this has been done and nearly another will elapse before a person can make 1 cent above the cost. Unless most skillfully handled there will be a loss, even at the present price of eggs. I keep my hen accounts very carefully and know whereof I speak. Hens do no more than pay expenses for three months in every year. Do not blame the farmer, I suppose the great demand for feed for war horses makes grain so high. I doubt any man's ability to raise or lower the egg market by cornering eggs. Divide the eggs he is hoarding by the population of the United States and see how few it would mean to each of us.

A "Tired turkey raiser" states the exact facts. Good thing for her the turkeys died, as if she fed them wheat or corn at 2½ cents a pound she would have had to sell to the buyers for 25 cents live weight to have made a profit, and no turkey raiser was paid even this year that amount.

As to raising hogs on field peas, which looks so good on paper: It may do in the East, but here as soon as the vines were trampled by the hogs the peas would mould and rot. Put seven shoats on an acre of peas and in three weeks their food would be a rotten, mouldy mass.

Even the wheat farmers nearly all sold their grain before it went up. I personally know that the farmers in Eastern Washington mostly sold their wheat this year for less than 90 cents a bushel. Many sold for 80 cents.

This awful war is pinching everybody except the people who are furnishing it with supplies, so we must all grit our teeth and stand it. I haven't noticed many farmers getting rich, in this vicinity at least. If eggs go very low while feed is so high, the hens will all have to go to the market, and then eggs will be high.

One of the queerest suggestions lately is that a law should be passed to allow no veal to be sold, at least heifer calves. I wonder what philanthropists would feed them. Surely not the farmer who sells them because he has no need of them. The ones who passed the law would have to appropriate funds for the orphan calves!

MRS. JENNIE A. REEHER.

EVERGREEN BERRY NOT NATIVE

Wild Fruit Once Domestic but in Early Days It Was Unknown.

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor.)—The Evergreen blackberry is not a native of Oregon. The public generally speak of it as "the wild blackberry," because it is found growing wild in uncultivated and isolated districts.

Members of our family who have lived in Oregon since 1871 say that it was unheard of in the early days. At that time the woods were thoroughly hunted over for wild berries, as tame ones were rather scarce.

What was then called the "wild blackberry" was really a species of dewberry, a very tart and fine flavored berry it was, always popular for pies, jams and for drying.

But now, as I have stated, the Evergreen blackberry is called "the wild Oregon blackberry," and as such it is sold in the markets, and the housewife thinks of course, she is buying the native berry. This berry is a rank grower, a persistent and abundant bearer of fruit, but it is inferior in flavor.

It is not many years since we first found the Evergreen berry listed in the nursery catalogues.

In recent years we began to hear that people were finding great quantities of these berries as "wild," so called.

They are found in the foothills, also in Western and Southern Oregon, where they have evidently been scattered in some way from the cultivated patches.

I wish to add a letter recently received from the professor of pomology at the Oregon Agricultural College. He explains quite satisfactorily all that is necessary to know about this interesting species of berry.

"We cannot tell you just exactly when the Evergreen blackberry was introduced into this state.

"However, it is not a true native here. After once being introduced, it found such a congenial home that it escaped from cultivation and is now found growing wild in a number of parts of Western Oregon.

"Southwestern Europe is generally designated as its native home.

"It has now become one of our leading commercial varieties of blackberries in this portion of the Northwest." MRS. MATTIE B. ROSS.

EGG BOYCOTT IS ASSAILED

T. T. Geer Says Housewives Have Tackled Wrong Items.

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor.)—While the present high cost of living is simply "fierce," and while the housewives are not to be blamed for energetically delving into the cause of it and vigorously applying a remedy when found, I am moved to coincide with such of your correspondents as have questioned the justice of making the first, or any other, "stab" at the prevailing price of eggs.

For seven years I have kept a flock of hens, varying in numbers from 200 to 30, and know from experience there is no profit in the business unless a condition could be maintained when feed is reasonably cheap and eggs relatively high. There are many things about the business of which the average purchaser knows nothing. A dozen eggs is a dozen eggs and that is the only matter of interest to him—or her.

This would not be so if chickens were hatched full-grown egg producers and if they laid an egg every day, but "day-old chicks" are noted for being shy as to producing eggs on the start. Pullets do not begin laying eggs even when two weeks old, nor a month nor six months, and when the housewife or other individual engaged in the business hands out feed for from seven to 10 months to a hen that does nothing but consume wheat and other food that practically destroys her value before she presents any income whatever, the eggs that she does finally lay should bring a price well up to the 50-cent standard at any time of the year.

And she doesn't lay all the time even when she begins that method of pretending to reimburse her owner for her "keep." Nobody's hens do, and when they are eating feed that costs from 3 to 4 cents per pound her eggs should bring 75 cents a dozen—that is, if the owner is to reap any profit at all for his entire year's expenses. Today I was talking with a man who has 200 hens that have laid but three and four eggs each day, all told, for two months, and he says they have cost him at least 75 cents apiece.

Treatises on scientific poultry raising are valuable, of course, and sometimes pullets lay at six months, but the overwhelming number of them do not, anywhere, and the "extra C's" are so very scarce that they always get their names and pictures in the papers. When all hens deliberately refuse to lay unless they are fed on five dollar gold pieces and people expect to buy eggs at jitney prices in comparison, a boycott, if successful, will only drive everybody out of the business and Chinese eggs will supply the market.

Speaking of eggs, it should not be forgotten that unless an egg is good it is not a good egg. It is hard to successfully establish degrees of freshness in eggs. It is either a fresh egg or it is not. Of course an egg can be placed in cold storage or it can be "water glassed," but in neither case do you have a fresh egg to use in after months. Everybody knows this and it accounts for the reason that "strictly fresh" eggs will always be in a class to themselves. Every housewife knows that an egg under suspicion is already condemned. T. T. GEER.

PRODUCER PROTESTS BOYCOTT

Egg Raisers Consider Housewives Are Not Fair in Attack.

HOLLEY, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—My Portland dealer writes me: "I would ask you not to make any further shipments until the egg boycott is over, as the housewife is not using any eggs. I have tried my best to place eggs with the grocery stores, hospitals and hotels—in fact, I tried to get contracts for them at quotation prices, but none of them would enter into any contract."

Now, I want to know how the poultryman has sinned greater than any other producer of foodstuffs, especially at this time of year, when we are all keeping hens at a loss. As early as the last of October a poultryman of Brownsville that keeps over 3000 hens said they was not paying their way. For from two to three months in late Fall and early Winter the hens moult and pay no profit or even keep themselves, and then through the scarcity the price goes up and you start a boycott.

Every such move discourages the poultry raiser, and if there was any likelihood of there ever being a surplus under normal conditions such efforts would put a quietus on it all.

There are several reasons why eggs are high, principally the demand is greater than the supply, owing to war conditions. A great part of Eastern labor is pretty well employed in munition factories at good wages, and the eggs of that section are in demand, so they do not have carlots to dump on the Pacific Coast.

Then the Chinese egg cut quite a figure for a while, and poultry was dumped on the market of the United States, and we are reaping a harvest now of shortage, and a general boycott will help to curtail the production and act as a boomerang on the consumer.

Don't you know that there are thousands of families that have no eggs for Winter use among the rural population of this country of ours? It is true, however.

It seems a pity that now when the egg producer is keeping fowls at a loss that he should be barred out of the market till our more fortunate neighbors on the south can come in with their eggs; that the Oregon hen is barred, and no fault of hers for the condition existing.

The writer cannot see why eggs are picked out alone. Why not cut out sugar, rice, meats, beans, butter and flour? All are abnormally high. If a boycott is a good thing for one, why not for all? My judgment is we have not reached the highest prices yet, and no boycott will help to relieve the situation until those warring nations quit war and engage in the arts of peace.

We are not at war, but will have to pay war prices till that conflict ends. Now, I want to ask how long do the people think we poultrymen will keep our stock at a loss and no market for the product? And when the poultrymen quit the people will have the Chinese egg left yet, all right, but is it a square deal for a brother Oregonian that keeps a few hens to help pay expenses while trying to make him a home in these Western wilds? When feeds are so high you have never heard any protest from them when eggs are low, but they just took what they could get and called it good, but when the market is closed it is time to call a halt.

Suppose the egg producers would boycott Portland, eggs would be at a premium. There is no danger of it, but if one is fair both other would be, from the same standpoint.

The established poultryman is in the business to stay, but the same cannot be said of the amateur in the business. And from them the surplus comes, as a rule. So the public will be the loser, always, as a result of a boycott.

J. R. SPRINGER.

HIGHER WAGE IS ADVOCATED

More Pay for All Would Solve Food Cost, Says Writer.

PORTLAND, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor.)—The question of the hour is the question of living. To solve this problem public discussion seems to grope for a cause to rising prices, also for a remedy that is at once effective and expedient and yet one that will not disturb the industrial equilibrium of the Nation. The problem lies wholly within the sphere of economics and should be viewed from economic principles.

The price of any one commodity depends on the supply and demand of that one commodity. If the rise in prices only affected one or even a dozen of commodities, it would be an easy matter to apply this principle. However, since it is not merely potatoes or foodstuffs in general, but boots, steel, glass and everything else, the theory of supply and demand can only answer for the fluctuation of the ratio of the price of one commodity to another. In fact, though figures are not obtainable, yet the writer hazzards the opinion that the production of foodstuffs ran the same before the war as now. It is true that the success of the submarines is fatal to the food supply; it is true that the fields on the battle front are wasted; yet it is equally true that the fields intact are producing more, due to better methods of husbandry. Besides the demand on the food supply is less, since Germany is on half rations, also since the supply is consumed with less waste, due to the method of feeding armies by experts. Supply and demand remaining the same, the prices of the foodstuffs should not be more now than before the war.

Unfortunately this is not the case. The purchasing power of money depends upon the supply and demand of money. Money is the medium of exchange and as such, gold, silver, currency and credit serves the same purpose. If the warring nations print paper money they increase the supply, also if business assumes wholesale proportions instead of retail proportions, it facilitates the circulation of money. In fact, this is exactly what has happened—the warring nations have inflated their currency for revenue purposes. Too, instead of each soldier buying for himself, the government buys for a whole army. Instead of thousands of transactions before the war, there is but one contract now. This has lessened the demand on money and this condition abroad is driving the gold to this country.

The economists would sum up this condition in the manner of a rule like this: that the price of the total social income (all goods produced) is the volume of the medium of exchange circulating at a given rate. If, then, the currency has been inflated, the method of bargaining improved, the efficiency of credit stimulated and the circulation of money accelerated, the price of the total goods produced will rise in proportion.

To solve the problem of high prices by reducing the standard of living is an ignoble solution and incompatible to the well-being of society.

Since we are affected by the outflux of goods and the influx of gold, an embargo would no doubt be effective, but embargoes have a tendency to stop the wheels of industry and throw people out of employment. It is too radical a measure.

A boycott is pure discrimination against the producers of the boycotted article. To be just it would require a boycott on all goods, which is impossible.

Being a registered Republican, I would like to see the Republican principle that the best way to reduce the cost of living is by increasing wages. This is neither radical nor destructive in its influence and, further, it is consistent with a competitive system of economics.

Let labor raise its scale, the lawyer his fee, the minister his tithes and the clerk his hire. Respectfully,

O. P. T. JONSON.

130 West Webster street, Portland.

FARM ENFORCES ECONOMY

Country Woman Says City Woman Has Too Many Luxuries.

CANBY, Or., Dec. 8.—(To the Editor.)—I happen to be a "city lady" living on the farm, and I would not exchange the experience I have had on the farm for a good deal.

One thing I have learned is to discriminate between luxuries and essentials.

In buying, for instance, people in the city have so many temptations, for everything looks so good. We must have grapefruit, oranges, bananas and some celery, and I might go on and mention ever so many things that are not necessary.

Now, I like to live well, but the farm, after all, teaches from sheer necessity how to live well without these things. We have our homemade pickles, fruit and vegetables, which are each put up in their season, and we are very well satisfied. We do not buy string beans, peas and ever so many other things out of season, for we can't get them even if we could afford them. I have been boycotting the hen ever since September 1. We have 65 hens and about 45 of them should be laying. I have kept account the last month, which was a fair average, and I have had just six dozen eggs, average price 45 cents. I feed the hens one bushel of wheat every three days, besides bran, oil meal, beef scrap and ground wheat and oats. The time I put in and the steps I take no woman in the city would think of.

Another thing I would like to say: The city woman has many advantages and pleasures compared with the country woman. For instance, she dresses well, goes to the theater, belongs to the woman's club or some other organization, and rides around in her machine, has hired help and, if not, puts out the laundry and hires a woman to clean once a week. All of these things have become necessities with the women in the city and tend to make life pleasant. Why haggle over a few cents, or even dollars, over the essentials of life, when there are so many ways to economize, especially in a time when we have so much to be thankful for, when so many of the world's people are in want on account of the war. Human nature is the same the world over; it is all right as long as the right is directed against the other fellow, but when it comes home to ourselves it is a horse of another color.

Now, I know a good many of these perfectly well-meaning women who would boycott the foodstuffs and even suggest putting an embargo on to keep the prices down, and I also know that these same women thought it perfectly all right for the American manufacturer of munitions of war to supply the allies, thereby prolonging the war, but when it comes to sending food—that is a different thing, since that comes too close to their pocketbooks.

I sincerely hope that the American people will get a larger perspective of the whole situation, for, if we don't, I am afraid some catastrophe will overtake us to show us the justice and injustice of things.

A FAITHFUL SUBSCRIBER.

STOCKHOLDER MAKES PLEA

Man Who Has Invested in Street Railway Stock Discusses Jitneys.

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Dec. 4.—(To the Editor.)—I have followed with much concern the various articles in your paper dealing with the proceedings of your City Commission in reference to regulation of jitney travel and operation. Sneering remarks and references concerning the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company have been made in this connection and it is these that impel me to write a few lines.

Firstly, I want to say the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company are those who own its stock and I am only one of many here in Louisville who have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in this corporation, which same can be said of others living in Columbus, O., Philadelphia, New York and other places. They are not all of them rich bankers or merchants, but I have positive knowledge that many widows here in Louisville are interested financially in this concern. Personally I invested my money because I had a right to believe the company had an exclusive franchise for running streetcars. Had I expected competition in another form of course I should not have become a stockholder. As such, however, I, in conjunction with others, have rights not inferior to stockholders of a jitney corporation; especially so when these same jitney owners use the streets which I paid for in part.

Surely no one will deny the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company have paid millions of dollars for street paving and owe hundreds of thousands of dollars more which they are obliged to pay in the future. No one will assume that the streetcar company can afford to carry passengers nearly 18 miles for 5 cents without getting some of the short hauls as well. I do not think the stockholders of the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company have been treated decently in the matter of giving a rival electric light company a franchise in the congested district without making them compete for less profitable business in the outlying districts, and this jitney competition is the same thing in another form.

I cannot believe the majority of people in Portland are not in favor of fair play and it is this we stockholders want. We are entitled to returns on our investment; we haven't received any for over two years, because the company hasn't earned any, because of unfair competition by people who won't assume responsibilities that we (the stockholders) assume.

The pros and cons have been argued and I don't assume to advance any new thoughts in the matter I complain of, but I do want to voice my protest and the protest of other individual stockholders to the state of affairs that now exists and to the prejudice that is meant to be created by the references to the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company, which, after all, are many suffering stockholders in Portland and other parts of the country.

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The discovery in Sweden of a loaf of bread made from pea flour