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PRICE INCREASES THAT ARE WITHOUT WARRANT

Advantage is being taken of the presence of war and its disturbance of conditions, apparently, to advance the prices of commodities without any close and perhaps without any real relationship. The world is familiar with the prompt application of the law of supply and demand whenever it can be found to furnish a pretext for advancing a price. It is complaisant about anticipations of shortage of supply or excess of demand. It is easy in its insistence that the other conditions, tending to a lower cost, shall be recognized as faithfully and promptly. But it may not be expected to be quite content when the advance in price is only and clearly the taking advantage of disturbed conditions, using them as an excuse when they are by no means a reason. That the price of sugar should advance when there is prospect of the closing of the German beet production is conceded to be in accord with the rules that have had sway too long to be idly put in question, but when commodities not chiefly supplied from the nations that have gone to war or otherwise involved in the situation are marked up on the shelf and counter, the public's patience, as we view it, is over-taxed.

Are we marking out another field for the public's advance upon what has been considered private business? The price-making power has a claim to being fundamental in not far different degree from the power to make rates for what are called public services. Both rest on the ground of the superior right of the whole people to that of a part of the people. Governments have already invaded the commercial field to the point of price-regulation as far as it is affected by the combination in defeat of competition. The distance to regulation of a price that may have been artificially advanced through any other advantage cannot be long.

Commerce seems never to value rightly its freedom from restraint. Thus it makes restraint necessary. The regulations of the recent years, with all their machinery of administration, derive from actual abuses of unhindered commerce. The law does not anticipate. It is amply occupied in overtaking the offender and measuring the new offense. The artificial advancing of prices of commodities of common need is the new invitation for government to add another to its instrumentalities of protection of the common against the special interest. It will probably not be accepted at sight, but none the less, in its slow way, the public takes note of the conduct of the portion of itself that is concerned in the business of supplying common needs. Some account will be kept of the use of the present unusual conditions, no doubt, and it would seem that trade would do well not to employ them beyond actual reason as a pretext for higher prices.

A BIG TIME

Mr. T. H. Macdonald, formerly of Glendale, who is now in the real estate and apartment house business at Victorville, is in the habit of running into Los Angeles on business occasionally and as their children and the Tatlow children had been playmates in Glendale, he came three weeks ago and brought his little daughter along with him, picked up Miss Grace Tatlow on the return trip, and as it is about a ninety-mile ride, they started the journey in gleeful anticipation of a big time, this in conjunction with the fact that at Victorville there is a regular old-time "swimmin' hole."

They had their big time, but not just what was anticipated. When they had gotten out about forty miles something "busted." Mr. Macdonald spent about two hours under the machine and after using up all the big words, such as "Now I lay me," etc., including several epithets not included in the Lord's prayer, and after having made a total wreck of a forty-dollar suit of clothes, which had just been presented to him by a number of appreciative patrons, whom he had induced to invest in Victorville real estate, another start was made.

They had moved barely forty feet when the dang thing busted again. Mr. Macdonald once again assumed the position occupied in such emergencies and the girls spying in the distance a beautiful little animal, gave chase. In the excitement Miss Grace tripped and fell and Miss Bertie went over her head, rolled down the bank and landed head first in an unused and ready-for-business cactus bush. The "beautiful animal" by this time had made several rods to the good, but as the girls could plainly hear that "pop" had not as yet exhausted his vocabulary, they continued the chase.

After getting "winded" several times, they had gained on the animal to such an extent that Grace was about to grasp the animal, as it suddenly stopped, looked around in order to "get its bearings," pointed its "business end" at the girls, and in an instant the air was filled with a hazy fog and a never-before experienced odor. The "beautiful animal" vanished, so did the girls. They arrived at Victorville nine hours late, leaving behind them a "dark brown taste," which travelers aver is quite noticeable.

The fact that they were approaching home was detected by the advance odor even before they were seen. A strongly disinfected com-

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mittee was appointed who met them with a change of ratment, which brought the trip to a much appreciated close.

NO CONSOLIDATION ENTHUSIASM

Oakland in the north and Pasadena, Alhambra, Long Beach and other cities near Los Angeles in the south are protesting vigorously against the proposed city and county consolidation amendment that has been put on the ballot by the efforts of San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Oakland Tribune well says that as long as Oakland has a per capita debt of \$29 and San Francisco of \$68, there will be no enthusiasm for annexation on the part of Oakland taxpayers.—Riverside Press.

Los Angeles with its half million population and a thirty-million dollar aqueduct has \$60 per capita invested in that one item alone. What is the total per capita when all the bonded debt of the metropolis is figured?

Several times that of Alhambra, at least. No wonder consolidation petitions are worth working for by the city of Los Angeles at the extremely high price of eleven cents per name. The Press is right. Neither Pasadena nor Alhambra want to be drawn into any such combination and there is a lot of other territory lying outside not incorporated that better be on the lookout if it would avoid being gulped down by the municipally hungry metrop.—Alhambra Advocate.

Santa Monica gets a \$200,000 hotel to be erected by a couple of Pasadena hotel men. Wouldn't it be the right kind of a boost if these men would think enough of Glendale to erect a family hotel of some size here?

Speaking of the modern tendency to make things smoother all around, the United States last year produced 24,563 short tons of pumice, valued at \$55,408.