

CHIPS & SAWDUST

(By the "Slabby.")

It is the intention to insert items of interest appertaining to the sawmilling industry in this column every week. Any information forwarded to "Slabby," care "Digger," "News Office," Invercargill, will be greatly appreciated.

THE WRONG BULLOCK.

The road was boggy, the bullocks tired. They wouldn't pull, they seemed inspired, And stubbornly baulked and wouldn't go, And the bullocky hadn't called out "woa."

He cracked his whip, and didn't swear, At least his language was only fair. Along the road a parson came And urged old bullocky to refrain. He said to him, "my son, take care, To move those bullocks just say a prayer, And you will surely have evidence To trust these things to Providence."

The bullocky spat, looked down the road, And said: "Old fellar, you be blowed, For you are talking jolly rot, He's the worst bally bullock that I've got."

Mr Tas. Dawson, of Colac Bay, is now managing the Lauriston Timber Co's mill at Catlins River.

The secretary of the Southland Sawmill Worker's Union (Mr Tom O'Byrne), is now busy compiling the annual returns to the Government.

"Slabby" is pleased to report that "Mick" Hughes who met with a very severe accident some time ago is on the road to a satisfactory recovery.

"Slabby" was pleased to see a well and favourably known sawmill owner, register a win at the recent S.R. Club's racing. A lot of the boys were 'on' Dan's niddy.

By the time these notes appear in print most of the mills will have commenced operations again in full swing. The boys were favoured with ideal weather for their holidays and seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly. Among the well-known sawmillers in town were the following: Dick Donaldson (Port Craig), Tim Halpin (Monowai), Banjo Patterson (Spar Bush), Buff Bates (Monowai), Stewart Bros. (Catlins River), Sam Fister (Forest Hill), Tom Hansen (Spar Bush), etc.

A fine example of the interest taken in his employees is observed by Dr Truby King, of the Lauriston Timber Co. (Catlins River). He has just awarded prizes to the extent of £70 to his workers for the best kept garden, house, etc. A prize of £10 was awarded for the best garden, then £9 for the second and so on down to a few shillings, so that every employee who showed any signs of industrial activity was rewarded for his efforts. Prizes were awarded for the bachelor workers keeping their huts, etc., in the cleanest and tidiest condition. At this mill the Dr has over 20 four-roomed modern worker's dwellings, and he also gives to the workers' wives and children the benefit of his medical knowledge gratis. As one enthusiast remarked: "He is a grand old man."

THE RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX.

Thou gazing face above the shifting sands! Oh, turn thy tearless eyes and answer me! Will honour come to thee and to thy land, That this should be? Those swarthy adamantine breasts of stone Are now matured beneath thine Egypt sun. Wilt profit by this brood of iron done That this be done? Oh, answer me, thou silent gazing face, All-gifted with the wisdom of the years. These teeth of Jason,—will they bring thee grace Or bring thee tears?

Brazil nuts grow in such profusion that thousands of tons are wasted every year. More than one baby out of every four born in France dies before the age of one year.

ANZAC TWEEDS.

A HUGE SUCCESS.

HIGH WAGES AND BONUSES.

Despite the gloomy forebodings of the Repatriation Department, which twelve months ago wished to stop the manufacture of Anzac hand-woven tweed by returned soldiers, the industry, in the hands of the Returned Soldiers' League (states "Melbourne Age"), has now proved to be a much greater success than was anticipated even by those who had faith in it. What malign influences were at work to induce the department to attempt to close down the factory are not known, but had it not been for the League and a strenuous campaign conducted in the columns of the "Age," those influences would have had their way, and many returned soldiers would have been the poorer. At present the factory is working ten looms at high pressure; and its products are being sold in four States. The men make splendid wages, and have just received a bonus of ten per cent. on their earnings for eleven months. The factory is now governed by three directors appointed by the Soldiers' League, and is independent of the Repatriation Department altogether.

A very happy dinner at the Grand Hotel on 22nd December was attended, with two exceptions, by every man connected with the industry, from the smallest earner at the loom to the board of trustees. The dinner preceded the presentation by the chairman of the trust, Mr G. J. C. Dyett, of the bonuses earned by the operatives. In making the presentation, Mr Dyett said that some twelve months ago, after two and a-half years' operation, the Repatriation Department decided to close the factory down. After a number of deputations from the League to the Prime Minister and Minister of Repatriation, and in the face of much opposition, the Government decided to hand the industry over to a board of trustees from the league. Those appointed were Messrs Dyett, Cull and Lowry, of the Soldiers' League, with Mr J. M. Gillespie as financial adviser and Mr Ackeroyd as secretary. Since then success had followed on success. It was now his pleasing duty to hand over to the operatives a bonus representing 10 per cent. of their earnings in the past eleven months. It was interesting to know that the average salary earned in the factory was now £8 a week. Some men earned as much as £10 a week and over. One man would receive £25 as bonus and he had only been at the factory nine months. The results were highly satisfactory. The business belonged to the men. The trustees were the managers, but they received no payment. Mr Gillespie had devoted a great amount of time to the financial work, and the thanks of all were due to him for his efforts. Business had developed to such an extent that there were now 21 employees instead of the four which the trust had taken over eleven months ago. The output had increased by over 400 per cent. If the business were wound-up to-day each man, apart from his salary and bonus, would receive £m £150 to £200; but he hoped that the industry would go on as it had been going until each man's share would be worth £1000. Everything depended on the men themselves, whose services had been loyal and praiseworthy. During the time the Repatriation Department had been in control the industry lost over £1000. Before the League could take it over the trustees had to borrow money. The department had advanced £1000. They would be pleased to learn that the money had been paid back in full. (Cheers). The industry had now no liabilities. The trustees were anxious to get a larger building, and they hoped to be able to secure certain looms which could be operated by soldiers having but one arm or one leg. The latter proposal would depend on whether larger supplies of yarn could be obtained. About £10,000 would be required to obtain the larger premises and equipment required. The trustees could have paid the men a much larger bonus, but it was desirable to have a big reserve capitalised in the interests of the operatives. A bonus of five per cent. on the earnings had been paid to the woman employees in the industry. There was one matter he could not omit, and that was the very large part played by the "Age" in keeping the industry alive. He would remind them that but for the strenuous fight put up by that journal for the retention of the industry there would have been no Anzac tweed factory to-day. (Cheers).

Mr J. A. Gillespie said he was very keen on the co-operative principle in business, and he believed in employees having a fair share of the profits. They had had a very good demonstration of the success of the principle that night. (Cheers). Mr J. H. Donnelly, foreman at the fac-

tory, said 732 yards of cloth per week were being woven by ten looms, or an average of 73.2 yards per loom. The yarn used amounted to 750lb. The factory was now exceeding the supply limit of yarn by 250lb per week. The 732 yards of cloth when finished represented 624 yards. In an average working day a power loom would weave 29 yards of cloth. The average at the Anzac factory was about 14 yards a day of eight hours, but each operator had to wind his own bobbins, which took an hour and a half to two hours a day. If that time had not been so spent the output by hand loom would be as great as that by machine.

GERMAN SOLVENCY.

ABILITY TO PAY.

The memorandum which the German Government presented to the Allies on the question of solvency is one that could have been foreseen. It follows up in argumentative form the hints and suggestions that have appeared from time to time since the signing of the Peace Treaty that the obligations which the German Government was then compelled to shoulder were too heavy and threatened the Republican State with insolvency for the sins of the Imperial regime. By insinuating doubts into the minds of the Allies it is hoped that concessions may be made. The general purpose of the document in question is thus to create the impression that Germany as an economic unit is disrupted and impoverished by the Treaty and reduced to a nerveless and hopeless position, and that nothing but financial chaos confronts her. In this, as in other things, there is room for argument, but there is no harm in bearing in mind that no sooner did Spa loom on the horizon than a remarkable change occurred in the value of the mark. Instead of standing at 360 to the £ against the par of twenty, the rate fell swiftly to about 120, and today German currency exchanges at the rate of about 150 marks to the £. This extraordinary improvement does not agree with the picture now presented, and as the recovery is attributed to heavy purchases of marks by such shrewd speculators as the Dutch and the Americans, it would be remarkable if financiers in both these centres could have so misread contemporary signs in Germany. Private advices which reach trading and financial houses in the City speak confidently of Germany's recovery, and this information usually comments upon the more hopeful feeling among the German people and the desire that is universally encountered to get down to work. If impartial business men in Holland consider it prudent to advance credits to German firms and Dutch financial houses lead the speculation in the mark it may be as well to disregard the too sombre hues painted into the memorandum.

—Dubious Assertions.—

It does not follow that there is not a limit to Germany's capacity to pay, but the prophet who cares at this stage to predict that Germany cannot pay more than two, three, four or five thousand million sterling is possessed of more courage than prudence. It is true, as stated in the memorandum, that the terms of the Treaty deprived her of valuable assets, that the burden of the indemnity falls upon a Germany shorn of territory which contains valuable ores and agricultural areas, and that her traders are crippled by the loss of these points d'appui in former enemy countries and in the colonies. But the reparation clauses of the Treaty were framed in the light of these penalties. It is therefore open to Germany to state what total she can bear—a course which so far seems to have been sedulously avoided. The mere state-

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ment that under the Treaty Germany is obliged to pay interest and sinking fund on a total of forty billion gold marks as a beginning, equivalent to a yearly charge of almost 2.4 billion marks (£120,000,000), is an assertion the validity of which can only be proved by time. It is necessary that Germany should make an effort to repair the damage wantonly inflicted upon her late enemies. What is now claimed in the petition is that she must be freed from those restrictive conditions, so that she may choose the ways and means which could lead to the recovery of her economic life and to the salvation of her finance. Without freedom of economic action, it is stated, and without economic co-operation with other nations, Germany can neither rebuild her economic life nor put financial affairs in order. Without financial order Germany clearly cannot punctually meet her liabilities. But what this may mean precisely will no doubt emerge at the Conference now sitting. If it involves the raising of foreign credits, it will present new difficulties to the Allies, yet it is not easy to see how, without a supply of essential raw materials from abroad, Germany can be restored. At the same time there is the fact that while the most productive regions of France have been intentionally devastated far beyond any requirements of civilised warfare, German industries are untouched and her agricultural possibilities are the same as before. This is what has to be brought home to the German mind.

CAN WOMEN BRING DOWN THE COST OF LIVING.

We are always being told they can, and the process sounds so simple. "Do not buy unnecessary clothes and refuse to give the exorbitant prices asked for quite ordinary things," we are told.

There seems to be quite an erroneous idea abroad that women folk generally enjoy buying expensive things and unnecessary ones. But do we?

Most women, that is average women, would only be too thankful to purchase inexpensive things, but so many, in fact most so-called inexpensive things are not in the long run the cheapest or most inexpensive, and certainly not the most thrifty, for the simple reason that they are so often rubbishy and wear out long before you expect them to. One has only to look at the prices of footwear (certainly we are told this is going to "come down" considerably quite shortly, and it would be quite interesting to know how many people are "hanging on" until the happy great reduction moment has arrived!), millinery and drapery in its widest sense of the word, and in fact clothing generally, to grasp the fact that dressing oneself has reached a fine art point, and how to do it at the ruling prices one of the problems vexing the minds of many to-day.

No, most women do not enjoy buying terribly expensive clothes nowadays, any way, for there is so much to be done with limited means, and nearly everyone tells you their means are very limited.

The average woman has to "cut her coat according to her cloth" these times, and the marvel is how so many manage as well as they do. Certainly, many women are wonderful managers, and when it comes to clothing a family—well to any one who has not got to do this wonderful thing—it seems miraculous how it is done and done so well.

Many people tell you they don't have clothes these times, only coverings. Quite dainty and pretty coverings one must admit, but not unselfish one's sense of humour makes one think the word "covering" requires a good deal of imaginary stretching.

Quite a feature of the times is that

people who apparently seem to have plenty to dress on are the ones who wear least dress, at any rate as regards the amount of material used in fashioning their wearing apparel.

But, all this does not bring us any nearer the reducing the cost of living and clothing. In some parts of the world men have refused to pay the exorbitant prices demanded for suits, and attire themselves in overalls, dungarees, one gathers. Women need scarcely do this, but we could dress more simply if we all decided to not buy just what we like and to come down to having what may not be quite as dainty or pretty or smart. If we all did this we could bring down things a bit surely. If men can do it why cannot we. It is because women do not stick together as much as men, or because so many hate to have unbecoming clothes, and perhaps be 'just like' so many other people with no individuality or personality; because we must all admit these two qualities do play a big part in good and becoming dressing? The question is a difficult one, but it seems one we must decide for ourselves. Men folk will no doubt continue to tell us "It is you wretched women who keep up the high cost of living" (and they nearly always mean clothing), but they cannot solve the problem. It will take a woman's mind to do that. So the sooner we get busy and to solve the problem so much the better for us all; but like so many other problems of to-day, "co-operation" seems the keynote necessary in the solution.

As regards food and the ever-soaring prices, it is some consolation to know women are not responsible for that. The "lords of creation" have the working out of that matter, for although women are quite capable of spending their money catering and housekeeping, they themselves are generally responsible for the production of foodstuffs and the price fixing. To most of us the cost of living as regards food is much the most important problem needing attention, for it is after all the most essential, and how large families on small incomes are to exist these times is a thing perplexing the minds of many. If women can reduce the cost of clothing, one wonders why men—business-minded men cannot work out some system by which ordinary necessities of life can be obtained at prices, the wrestling with which at the present time is the bane of many a worried, wearied housewife.

"Planting operations in both the North and South Islands are being carried on, and we are seeking the co-operation of the various nurserymen and nurserymen's associations in the work of stimulating the private planting of eucalyptus and conifers by farmers, both for timber plantations and for wind-breaks," said the Director of Forestry (Captain McIntosh Ellis), in discussing the operations of the Department of Forestry. "As settlement stabilises, we will find, I believe, that the farmers will pay more attention to the aesthetic value of wind-breaks and also the economic advantages of planting out plantations of conifers, etc. Remarkable results, I may mention, are being obtained from the planting out of pinus insignis in the Canterbury district, and recently a man was interviewing me as to planting these well-tried and commercial exotics on a large scale in the North Island. Companies have also been formed in the Nelson district to carry on planting operations on a large scale. One company is planting 1000 acres of pinus insignis for making fruit cases, so that the growing of timber by private people is a practical and economical industry in the Dominion. The Department is not only willing but anxious to give all the advice and information in its power to those undertaking such work."