

but perhaps the lectures will be collated and distributed in pamphlet form among those to whom the information gained would be of such prime importance. The country will go on for many years to come reaping Nature's crop of native trees, the age and growth of which we know so little about except by deduction. The scientific side of the matter therefore needs probing so that there may be some certain knowledge of the secrets of Nature's bounty, and what man can do to reproduce in a comparatively brief span of time similar supplies of timber for industrial and domestic purposes. Afforestation strikes the layman as one of great necessity after listening to all the theories the experts express as to our fast diminishing timber supplies, and yet reafforestation does not appear to be one of the strong points with our expensive Forestry Department. Strict conservation of the existing crop seems to be the main line of action. If the scientist can enlighten the people with practical ideas governing the reproduction of forest areas, the service will be of great utility. Mr. Foweraker appeared to be one thoroughly engrossed in his task, and it is to be inferred his experiences here will be turned to good advantage when he is imparting knowledge through the comprehensive series of lectures he has just commenced in Canterbury.—*The Guardian*.

### A Fish Story

Put one hundred men on an island where fish is a staple article of sustenance.

Twenty-five of the men catch fish. Twenty-five others clean the fish. Twenty-five cook the fish. Twenty-five hunt fruit and vegetables. The entire company eats what is thus gathered and prepared.

So long as everybody works, there is plenty. All hands are happy.

Ten of the allotted fish catchers stop catching fish.

Ten more dry and hide part of the fish they catch.

Five continue to catch fish, but only work part of the day at it.

Fewer fish go into the community kitchen.

But the same number of men insist upon having the same amount of food as they had before.

The fifty men who formerly cleaned and cooked the fish have less to do owing to the under supply of fish. But they continue to demand fish.

Gradually greater burdens are laid upon the fruit and vegetable hunters. These insist upon a larger share of fish in return for their larger efforts and soon twenty of the twenty-five quit gathering fruit and vegetables. But the entire one hundred men continue to insist upon their right to eat.

The daily food supply gradually shrinks. The man with two fish demands three bananas in exchange for one of them. The man with two bananas refuses to part with one for fewer than three fish.

Finally, the ten men remaining at work quit in disgust. Everybody continues to eat. The hidden fish are brought to light and consumed. Comes a day when there is no food of any kind. Everybody on the island blames everybody else.

What would seem to be the solution? Exactly. We thought you would guess it.

For we repeat, that you can't eat, buy, sell, steal, give away, hoard, wear, use, play with or gamble with *what isn't*.—*Yates' Quality*.

### American Timber Prices Fall.

The downward march of prices (in the U.S.A. which seem to dominate prices) has reached hard wood, and most items show quite drastic reduction. Quartered oak, plain oak, gum, hickory and ash, and all Southern woods have dropped from 300 dollars in some cases 75 dollars per M. The Northern woods, such as birch and maple, have not had such sweeping cuts, but they have eased off to quite a degree. Flooring in oak and maple is now quoted at comparatively reasonable rates, and the declines in these commodities should have its effects on buildings.

It is hardly possible that prices of hard woods can ever go to the pre-war level. Few people have ever expected this. Many producers of hard wood claim that the present prices are below their cost of production. This is in a measure substantiated by the fact that a number of sawmills are closing down, their owners stating that they cannot run their plants at a profit on the prevailing wholesale prices. Be this as it may, the reductions are apparently very welcome to all concerned. They place the hard wood business on a more solid foundation.

The high crest of prices to which all building commodities had surged was bound to cause a corresponding reaction, and now that this has taken place, general business should flow along in more even and conservative channels. The inflated prices have been deflated. The wise wholesalers are making corresponding reductions to their customers in the prices of the goods they have on hand, and are striving to take the greater part of their losses this year. The excellent business enjoyed in all lines at high prices for the first nine or ten months of 1920 has placed most business concerns in a position to stand the very considerable loss entailed by the drop in the prices of stock on hand. By taking this loss this year—that is, by selling their stocks on the basis of the present low prices and not on the basis of the high prices which they paid for them—they will still have a profitable year and be ready to do business next year on the new levels with a clean sheet to work on. In other words, by cleaning house now, prices and everything else connected with business should become stabilised by the commencement of the new year.

All of which would seem to bring out the idea that now is a good time to buy or build, manufacture or make repairs.