

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, September 26, 1917

PRICE FIXED FOR WHEAT

On another page we publish in full the official statement of Dr. Robert Magill, Chairman of the Board of Grain Supervisors, showing why the prices of wheat were fixed as they were. We have published this statement in full because it is of paramount interest to every wheat grower in the prairie provinces and deserves careful study and consideration. The reasons for fixing the prices at the figures stated are fully set forth. While it was generally expected that the Canadian prices would be somewhat higher than the American prices because of the higher cost of production in this country, the new prices are generally satisfactory. Every wheat grower who has a fair crop will get a good return for his labor. The cost of production this year is much greater than before the war, but the increase is not as great on the average as the increase in the prices of wheat. There was practically no profit in wheat growing at the prices prevailing before the war.

It is to be hoped the Food Controller will now fix the prices of flour as recommended by the Board of Grain Supervisors. It is also important that if possible a minimum price should be fixed for the 1918 crop. By special Act of Congress the minimum price of wheat in the United States for the 1918 crop has been fixed at \$2.00. There is no doubt about the need for the biggest possible wheat crop in 1918. If the government of Canada desires to ensure the highest possible production in Western Canada it can only be done by a guaranteed minimum price. If such a minimum is not guaranteed there will be a very strong tendency on the part of farmers to seed larger acreage to other grains which are bringing high prices and for which the prices are not fixed. This matter should receive the very early consideration of the Canadian government. The time to fix the minimum price on the 1918 crop is now. The government has power to fix such a price by order-in-council. Farmers are beginning now to lay their plans for next year's crop. Many of them are deciding what grain they will sow. In most cases it is natural that they will sow what they believe to be the most profitable crop. The United States in fixing a minimum price of \$2.00 for the 1918 crop has also taken the power to stop the importation of wheat from any other country if it is found desirable. It is a big problem in an exporting country like Canada to fix the minimum price on the most important crop a year in advance. But the government should attack the problem and give a decision at the earliest possible moment.

THE SASKATCHEWAN LOAN SCHEME

What is termed the Saskatchewan Greater Production Loan has been launched in that province. It has been made necessary by the success of the Farm Loans Act. The applications to the Farm Loans Board to date total \$2,500,000 and the condition of the money market precludes the possibility of securing the required amount outside of the province. Unless it is forthcoming, many farmers will be cramped financially and production will be hindered just when it is imperative that it be increased. The loan has been launched with the idea of making surplus capital within the province available for distribution under the Farm Loans Act. Two million dollars is being asked for and will be raised by the sale of debentures bearing five per cent. interest.

The loan has many features to commend it to the investing public. First of all is the absolute security it offers. The debenture is a strictly gilt edge proposition, being secured by first mortgages under the Farm Loans Act. The rate of interest should prove an attraction.

There are millions of dollars in savings accounts in the province of Saskatchewan bearing only three per cent. This loan offers facilities of re-investing such money at nearly double the rate of interest. Another very strong attraction is that the government will buy back the debentures at any time upon three months' notice. This is a new feature in government loans and should be a great aid in securing the money required.

The denominations in which the debentures are issued offer accommodation to all classes of investors, being as low as \$20 and as high as \$1000. The interest is paid half yearly. All that is necessary to do is to clip off the dated coupon which will be cashed at par at any branch bank. The debentures offer a splendid opportunity for farmers of Saskatchewan to invest money at a fair rate of interest knowing that it goes to help their needy brother farmers and increase agricultural production. The Saskatchewan government is to be commended for designing a scheme to make available the surplus capital of the province to the farmers upon whose prosperity the prosperity of the province chiefly depends.

WEST IS IN DANGER

Before the Conscription Bill was introduced in parliament, feeling throughout the prairie provinces was running high in favor of the organization of an independent Western party. The Western people generally have lost confidence in both the old political parties. Both have been protectionist and both have been dominated by the big financial, transportation and industrial interests. The West has been looked upon somewhat as a poor relation by the Eastern politicians and as a magnificent field for exploitation by the big interests. The headquarters of both political parties have always been in the East and Eastern views are dominant in both. If the West remains divided between the two parties it will have no voice in national affairs. If the West becomes united in one party, however, organized to secure a square deal for the Western people it can accomplish much.

The introduction of the Conscription Bill upset all political calculations. The old party alignments were broken and public attention was withdrawn from other pressing national problems. Then came the proposals for a Union government or a National government. No doubt Premier Borden was sincere in his coalition proposals, but the rank and file of the Grit party and the Tory party have no sympathy with the proposal for coalition. Each one of them wants the honors and the plunder of office and they do not want to share it with anyone else. It is not at all probable there will ever be any real Union government in Canada, at least before the general election.

The next outstanding event was the introduction of the War Election Franchise Bill, which was undoubtedly aimed chiefly to ensure the return of the Borden government at the next election. The prospects are, judging by the present situation, that the Borden government will come back to power, although as Sir John A. Macdonald said, "An election is as uncertain as a horse race." Following along with these various political moves has come a suggestion that the two old political parties should get together in various constituencies and nominate "win the war" candidates who would have no affiliation with either of the parties, but whose sole duty would be to help win the war. Already in a number of Western constituencies this fusion movement is gaining ground. At the risk of being charged with a lack of patriotism we are pre-

pared to state that this "win the war" candidate movement in the West is dangerous to the best interests of Western Canada. If the new government to be returned only to deal with the war, and the war alone, it might be advisable to elect "win the war" candidates. But the new government will have all the problems of the general administration of the affairs of the country. "Win the war" candidates will be men who have been affiliated with one or other of the old parties and no doubt it will be arranged that they will be pretty equally balanced. They will be expected to go down to Ottawa and sit on the back benches. They will make one or two patriotic speeches during the session and vote as the party whip tells them to. They will be expected to keep mum on the tariff, the railway question, banking and other vital questions in which the West is intensely interested. Altogether it appears to us that these fusion candidates if elected will give mighty little satisfaction either to themselves or to the constituencies which they will represent.

In our opinion, and in this matter we know we represent the views of a very large number of people in this country, the wisest move for the Western people to make is to elect independent Western candidates. The rural vote in the prairie provinces will control the election of at least thirty-eight out of the forty-three candidates to be elected in the three prairie provinces. Every one of these should be independent, owing no allegiance whatever to either the Grit or the Tory party. If these were united in a Western party with a Western leader they would be a real power in the House of Commons. They could and would assist the government in the prosecution of the war just as effectively and much more wisely than any group of "win the war" candidates that could be elected. Neither of the two old parties have any monopoly on patriotism. The record of the West speaks for itself. The West stands for the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion and its representatives would do the same. But when other national questions came up in which the West is especially interested, such a Western party would be able to put the views of the West before the House of Commons in a manner in which they have never before been presented. Support would be forthcoming from individual members of both the Eastern parties and the West could no longer be ignored nor left free for exploitation. Western Canada will never get a square deal in Federal legislation until there is an independent Western party in the House of Commons.

THE QUEBEC BRIDGE

The successful connection of the centre span of the great bridge at Quebec caused a feeling of relief throughout Canada. The progress of no building enterprise in the history of the country was followed with more interest than the three days' work of hoisting the 640 foot span 150 feet into the air and securing it to the great cantilever arms reaching out from the north and south banks of the river. The collapse of the first bridge in 1907 with a loss of 70 lives and \$8,000,000 expenditure delayed the completion of the bridge for nine years. The second disaster, which occurred last September, when a part of the hoist mechanism gave way and precipitated the centre span into the St. Lawrence, cost 14 lives and a monetary loss of \$500,000 besides adding another year to the delay. This evidence of the difficulty of the work together with the importance of the project from the transportation standpoint, created great interest in the final stages of the construction of the