

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, July 28th, 1915

ALBERTA GOES DRY

Direct Legislation has had its first test in Canada and has been proven an unqualified success. On July 21 the people of Alberta, at a referendum vote under the Direct Legislation Act, declared in favor of total prohibition by a vote of nearly two to one. As a result all the bars and grog shops will cease to sell liquor after July 1, 1916, and all other liquor licenses, wholesale and retail, will be abolished. The Alberta vote could probably be duplicated in every Canadian province, for the tide of public opinion has set in irresistibly against the wastefulness and degrading influences of the liquor traffic. But the people of the other provinces have no opportunity of expressing their opinion on this great question, for the reason that no other province has the Initiative and Referendum on the statute books. The liquor interests of Canada have maintained their hold up to the present time by dickering with the few men who constitute the provincial governments and by corrupt methods have been enabled to continue in the traffic. But in Alberta under the Direct Legislation Act the liquor interests found that the question was out of the hands of the government entirely and rested with the mass of the people absolutely. To corrupt the people of a province is impossible, and the liquor traffic in Alberta has been abolished. Those who believe in clean politics and democratic government henceforth cannot oppose Direct Legislation. The Saskatchewan government may now revive its confidence in the people of that province and bring into effect the Direct Legislation Act which they have kept in cold storage so long. The \$12,000,000 which the people of Alberta have yearly been spending on booze will now be saved for useful purposes. It is quite appropriate that one of the youngest provinces of Canada should be the first to put the liquor traffic down. It is an evidence of the new progressive spirit of the West. It is also an evidence that at heart the people are in favor of clean politics and democracy. Now it is up to Manitoba to clean out the booze business. The people are ready for it, and if given an opportunity will wipe this disgraceful stain off their record, where it has remained for many years. The people of Manitoba will not be satisfied until they have joined the ranks of their two sister provinces to the West.

THE RURAL TELEPHONE

One of the greatest advances that has been made in recent years towards making farm life more attractive is the extension of the telephone into rural communities. Just as the telephone has become a necessity to the business and social life of the city, so it has been found an essential to the well equipped farm and up-to-date farm home. Rural communities where the telephone has been installed and efficiently administered would rise in armed rebellion if this great convenience were taken from them. The city man uses the telephone to talk to someone a few blocks away or even in another part of the same building, but the farmer needs the telephone to talk with his neighbor on the next quarter section, or to the doctor, the minister, the veterinary, the grain deal-

er, the implement man, the railway station or the telegraph office in the town several miles away. The rural telephone need not cost a great deal of money, especially if the farmers will co-operate with their neighbors in cutting and erecting the posts and stringing the wires. A good telephone with a lightning arrester, two batteries and the necessary inside wire and ground rod can be bought for less than \$15.00, and all the wires and fittings necessary for the line for about \$16.00 a mile. With the subscribers living not more than a mile apart it is thus possible to instal a telephone system with a cash outlay of not more than \$30.00 per phone. To save a single drive thru a January blizzard to perform an errand which means life or death, may be worth a good deal more than the cost of a telephone, while the convenience of being able to keep in touch with the markets and to know what is going on all over the world without leaving the farm is of immense value to every progressive farmer.

FREE TRADE AND THE LIBERAL PARTY

A number of newspapers have assailed The Guide for making the statement in a recent issue that "the Liberal party officially have given no indication that they will reduce the tariff if given an opportunity." The Liberals, it is said, are on record as tariff reducers, and it is pointed out that they went out of office in an effort to further reduce the tariff, and that they protested against the increases recently made by the Borden government. The Guide is prepared to admit that Sir Wilfrid Laurier and other leaders of the Liberal party have at different times made eloquent and convincing speeches against the iniquities of a protective tariff. Sir Wilfrid has said that Protection is bondage, even as African slavery is bondage, and that for every dollar the tariff puts into the public treasury, it puts three dollars into the pockets of the protected manufacturers. But the trouble is that Sir Wilfrid and his party, tho they talk Free Trade when in opposition, have so far always practised Protection when in power. In the last session of parliament under the Laurier government a most interesting debate occurred between Hon. W. S. Fielding and the Hon. Geo. E. Foster, the former claiming that the tariff was on the average lower then than it was when the Liberals took office in 1896, while Mr. Foster asserted that the duties collected were actually higher on the average than they were prior to the Liberals taking office. Both had facts and figures which strongly supported their case, and it was shown that while some duties had been reduced, others had been increased and in a great many cases valuations had been raised so that some of the reductions in duty were more apparent than real. It is true that the Liberal party, after being in power for fifteen years endeavored to take a step towards Free Trade by means of the Reciprocity Agreement, and The Guide did everything in its power to support them on this issue. The farmers are often blamed for the defeat of the Reciprocity measure, but we are convinced that the real reason for the defeat of the Liberal party in the elections of 1911 was not the antagonism of the people to Reciprocity. The bad record of the

Laurier government in its dealings with government contractors, its maladministration of the public domain and its extravagance in dealing with the public funds caused many people to turn against Laurierism, while the fact that both Liberal and Conservative leaders had been educating the people to Protection for fifteen years made it difficult for many people to see the benefits of Reciprocity. The record of the Liberal party at Ottawa certainly does not inspire one with the belief that the return of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, with a safe and solid majority at his back, would mean even a considerable approach towards Free Trade. We know what Sir Wilfrid has promised and what he has not done in the past, but what his policy is for the future no one seems to know. He is under no pledge, so far as we know, to reduce the tariff if returned to power. If any of the Liberal papers that have been criticizing The Guide can tell us when Sir Wilfrid Laurier pledged himself to Free Trade or tariff reduction since 1896, we shall be glad to hear from them.

THE SESSIONAL INDEMNITY

A number of Canadian newspapers, Conservative, Liberal and Independent, have expressed their approval of the suggestion recently made in these columns that the salary of members of the Dominion Parliament should be increased to \$4,000 or \$5,000 a year. In the United States the salary of members of congress, both in the Senate and in the House of Representatives is \$7,500, and in addition each representative has for his use a private room and a secretary, while senators each have two rooms, a well paid secretary and a stenographer. The chairmen of committees have additional clerical assistance and office room. Unlike members of the Canadian Parliament the members of the United States Congress have to pay their fare wherever they travel on the railroad. Formerly they were given free passes by the railways and telegraph companies, but this custom is now prohibited by law. Congressmen, however, receive an allowance of 20 cents per mile each way from their homes to the capital. The actual fare is only from 2 to 3 cents a mile, but all efforts to reduce the mileage to actual expenses have been ineffective. This arrangement is a financial gain to those members who live at long distances from the capital, the Pacific coast for instance, who receive considerable sum of money in mileage, but usually make only one trip a year. Those living near the capital, on the other hand, receive only a small allowance and spend considerable sums in travelling expenses thru frequent visits to their constituencies. The American system in this respect works out very differently from that in force at present in Canada, where members of the Dominion Parliament receive no travelling expenses, but are allowed by law to travel on the railway at all times free of charge. The Canadian method of providing for transportation seems to be better than that of our neighbors to the South, but in the payment of members and the provision for clerical assistance necessary for the discharge of their duties we might benefit from the example of the United States with good results. With a salary of