

# The Brain Browsers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, July 18, 1917

## PROFITS OF FOOD SHARKS

The Cost of Living Commissioner created a sensation last week when he announced that The William Davies Company made a gross profit of \$5,000,000 last year on bacon alone, while Matthews Blackwell Ltd. made \$1,500,000. These two companies have a practical monopoly of the bacon business and apparently they put up the price on the British government in order to fill their own pockets. The head of The William Davies Company is Sir Joseph Flavelle, Baronet, also head of the Imperial Munitions Board. Before the war Flavelle made a margin of about three-and-a-half cents per pound on his bacon, but during the year 1916 he put up the margin to five cents a pound and exported 95,000,000 pounds, making a profit of practically \$5,000,000. These figures are given out by the Dominion government, as a result of the investigation made by W. F. O'Connor, the Cost of Living Commissioner. It is quite apparent that the pork barons have been skinning the public and also the British government good and plenty, though both deny it vigorously. Flavelle is a very strong supporter of the protective tariff in order to encourage infant industries while they are struggling. Some years ago there was a lawsuit in which Flavelle's company was investigated and it was shown that the profits of the company for 13 years had been 53 per cent, and that one year they had gone as high as 120 per cent. It is not much wonder that Sir Joseph favors a protective tariff because he can count its advantages in dollars and cents. It is no wonder that Flavelle can afford to work as chairman of the Imperial Munitions Board without salary, and it is no wonder that he can make some handsome donations to the patriotic funds. Under the circumstances it would also be worth while investigating to see whether as chairman of the Munitions Board he has been giving contracts for munitions to firms in which he is financially interested. Altogether too frequently we find corporation magnates who are very prominent in patriotic and public work who are taking it out of the public in some other way. The additional report of the commissioner shows that Pat Burns & Co., of Calgary, stored large quantities of eggs and sold them at 16 cents per dozen profit. These reports show the need of action on the part of the food controller. The food sharks must be brought to time for such robbery in the hour of the nation's need.

## THE LIBERAL OPPORTUNITY

The steadily growing complications in the political situation at Ottawa necessitate prompt action in Western Canada. All the signs point to a general election within the next two or three months. It will be an election fraught with greater importance to Canada than any held since Confederation. Whether it will be an election called by a coalition government or a mere party election there is no doubt the big question will be conscription. All this is an imperative call to the West to get ready. The Liberal convention for Western Canada called to meet in Winnipeg on August 7 and 8 should not overlook the signs of the times. There is an opportunity to unite the West solidly. If the Western Liberals are prepared to sever themselves completely from the Eastern Liberal party and throw open the convention to every progressive element and adopt a progressive platform, it can easily carry the West. Such a solid representation from the West can then be free to give its

whole hearted support to the prosecution of the war, and at the same time demand and secure many of those economic reforms which are essential to this country. If it is to be a mere party convention, affiliated with the Eastern Liberal party and dominated by private interests, then it will be of very little use to the West.

## THE FRENCH RED CROSS

France the imaginative, the oppressed, the defender of priceless liberty in her own and other lands, is the greatest human sacrifice of the war. Over her peaceful fruitful northern fields the heel of the oppressor has alike stamped and trampled out her crops, her vineyards, her quiet fields, her quaint towns and busy cities, her patient toiling peasantry. While her men of every serviceable age are bleeding and dying in the trenches her homes have been looted and burned. Much of the very area which gave the most bountiful crops in Europe has been rendered as unfruitful as the sandy desert. Homes, furniture, clothing and food have been swept away in the terrible storm of bullets, shells and hate. The boys and girls and young women in the devastated areas have been carried off and none left but the old men and old women and children, always the pitiful example of war's devastation. And it has all been borne in patient, unflinching silence. Without homes, in rags and in starvation, these have been endeavoring to do their best to reconstruct their homes and produce the necessary human sustenance. But the struggle is too great. They need help, and Canadians are being given the opportunity to assist in this humane work. The French Red Cross is accepting funds for the noble work of restoring the devastated areas and helping the helpless throughout the greatest struggle of their existence. Will you help them? The sacrifice of France has been the bulwark of civilization. The world owes her a debt. Here is the place to pour out the evidence of human brotherhood in the true spirit of cosmopolitanism. Help is needed and needed quickly. A special appeal is going out to Western Canada. The Guide will be glad to receive and acknowledge and forward all contributions to this worthy cause. Be sure to mark your contribution "For the French Red Cross."

## WASTE AND MORE WASTE

It is estimated that half a million dollars a year is being wasted in Toronto because of public refusal to carry small purchases made in large retail stores. Table waste has decreased by two-thirds since the first of the year according to the officials of the Street Cleaning Department, but there is still a large saving to be made in that regard. Clubs, restaurants and hotels, with few exceptions, continue to serve their members and guests with anything but a war diet. Three and four courses of soups, meats, vegetables and desserts mark the majority of menus. The representative of a large English tailoring establishment reports a larger sale of dinner coats in Canada this year than at any time in his experience. The last mentioned extravagance certainly cannot be attributed to farmers. These things do not indicate a spirit of sacrifice on the part of the general public. Toronto may feel the effects of munition making and extravagance on that account more than most places, but in many ways other cities are no better. Despite over two years and a half of war, millions are still being wasted

in Canada on luxuries, domestic extravagances and other expenditures that are indefensible under present critical conditions. Is this the spirit of sacrifice that a country contemplating conscription of men's bodies should assume at this time?

## LIQUOR ELECTION FRAUDS

At the recent meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly in Montreal, the Board of Home Missions and Social Service presented a printed report on their work. One extract from the report reads as follows:

"The war has brought into hideously bold relief the evils of the party patronage system and its consequent fruitage in graft of every form. The time has come for the abolition of the system, root and branch. No better illustration can be found of the brazen effrontery of some politicians in fraudulent manipulation of the people's means of ruling, viz.: the franchise, than the story of the soldiers' vote on Prohibition in British Columbia, which we give on the authority of Rev. J. H. Henderson, western field secretary of social service:—

"In connection with the Referendum on Prohibition, the very gravest irregularities in the taking of the soldiers' vote, are reported. The results of the polls which the Prohibition scrutineers attended in France were: For Prohibition, 354; against, 1,916. The unscrutinized polls in France were: For Prohibition, 143; against, 2,359.

More than 4,200 votes were taken in England and France in December, without notice given to the Prohibition scrutineers. At the same time the liquor agents were provided with facilities for organizing the polls. At the beginning of December, there were only 2,533 unpolled men in France and 4,132 alleged ballots were returned, all of which were counted. At Hastings and Crowborough, the military authorities certified that seventy-five per cent. of the supposed voters are not on the military lists. More than forty per cent. of the names voted at Epsom are not on the military lists. Over 600 ballots were contained in receptacles which were not sealed at the close of the poll."

The majority for prohibition in B.C. was 5,802, but the result of the soldier vote changed it to a minority of 822. This report indicates unparalleled election frauds perpetrated by the liquor interests in securing the British Columbia soldiers' vote in England and France. It is plain that the crookedness was not among the soldiers themselves, but on the part of the politicians and manipulators who had charge of the election. However, it is typical of the action of the liquor interests, and the only way to correct that evil is to wipe it out root and branch. The Dominion government still refuses to grant the provinces full power to handle the liquor question, but public opinion is growing strongly in favor of Provincial autonomy. We have politicians just as crooked and unscrupulous as the liquor interests, and if an attempt is made to take the Canadian soldier vote in Britain and France for a general election we may expect an attempt to duplicate these results.

## ONLY ONE SOLUTION

There is only one question to all this railway talk of freight increases and that is the question of what to do with the C.N.R. and G.T.P. The people of Canada have put up practically all the security for these roads. The promoters were in much the same position as wild catters in Western real estate in boom times. The value of these railways is not now what they may be at some future time. From a common sense business point of view, as well as from the standpoint of war expediency, now is the time to do something definite toward securing the property for the people. If we must assist the C.N.R. and G.T.P., let us assist them in our own interests and not in the interests of those that now dominate these