

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, June 13, 1917

## EACH BUSHEL MEANS SIXTY LOAVES

The spectre of hunger is not confined within the battlelines of Germany and her allies. The whole western world is face to face with a food shortage. Millions of men have been withdrawn from agriculture to man the trenches and the munition factories and their places are but partially and less efficiently filled. The production of last year was still further reduced by widespread unfavorable weather conditions, while of the grain that was marketed large quantities have been sunk by submarines. The Russian surplus of unknown and uncertain quantity is shut out from the British and French markets. The food resources for 1917 will be subject to many of the same limiting factors. The man power of France and of all British countries is becoming continually more depleted by the wastage of war. This depletion in the ranks of the food producers of the Allies will be still further augmented by the raising of an army of one million and perhaps two million in the United States and by the absorption of other millions in shipbuilding, munition making and such industries as are stimulated by the entry of that nation into the war. Then there is the increasing difficulty of maintaining tonnage for the long carriage of wheat supplies from Australasian and South American ports. But this is not all. Argentina has harvested one of the most disappointing crops in her history. The winter wheat report of the United States revealed such a decided shortage that it was one of the great factors in the rapid rise of wheat during the last few weeks. Now come the reports of the 1917 spring wheat crop. They are anything but reassuring. Late frosts and prolonged drought have resulted in unfavorable prospects in many parts of Western Canada and the northern wheat states. Only the immediate arrival of the most favorable growing weather can ensure an average crop. But production for 1917 is now largely out of the control of the farmer. From every reason of patriotism and self interest he hopes that the weather conditions will be such that the surplus for export will be the largest in history.

But the 1917 wheat crop will not solve the world's food problem. No combination of favorable circumstances can remove the threat of famine before the 1918 crop is marketed. The increase in British crop acreage for 1918 may avert actual starvation in Britain, but will be far short of the ordinary food necessities of the Allies. Every motive calls for the best efforts of Canadian farmers to ensure maximum production for that year. Work in the preparation for that crop is already under way. Breaking has commenced and summerfallowing will soon be general. This work will be followed by fall cultivation, seed selection and later by the great spring drive next season. The thoroughness of these operations will tell in next year's crop returns. A world facing the immediate threat of famine is crying out that into these operations the farmer shall throw the last resource of his intelligence and industry. That the pecuniary reward will be great there is no question. Whether prices are left to be regulated by supply and demand or are set arbitrarily it is inconceivable that they should be anything but remunerative. The forces that tend to keep prices above the cost of production cannot, under present conditions, be circumvented. But there is another and loftier motive for the bending of every effort for a maximum crop in 1918. It is the motive that is now stimulating thousands of farmers to exertions beyond anything heretofore attempted. That motive is the sense of responsibility, they feel that on their shoulders rests the duty of sustaining their brothers in the great struggle. It is the knowledge that each man has that his increased effort will

result in the production of enough extra food to sustain many men through a year's campaign in the trenches or a year's arduous toil in the munition factory. It is up to the farmers of Canada as never before to endeavor to create the biggest surplus possible in 1918. One ship carrying wheat to Europe from our Atlantic ports is worth two carrying from the Argentine or three from Australia. No matter how the uncontrollable factors may affect that surplus it will be swelled by every ounce of extra energy that will be expended on the 1918 crop between now and the sowing of the last seed next spring. Remember, each extra bushel means another sixty loaves.

## JUNE IS A VITAL MONTH

The duty of the Canadian farmer on these prairies is no less imperative or clearly defined than that of the soldier in France. Food supply is equally important with man supply. Hence the necessity of immediate preparation for next year. The next few weeks are decisive ones in such a campaign of preparedness. Two principal immediate methods of preparation lie open in increasing the 1918 crop—extensive and intensive summerfallowing and new breaking. It is questionable how much of the latter the labor shortage will permit of. Doubtless a certain amount of breaking will be done, but it is scarcely likely to be as great as in previous years. Therefore, thorough cultivation of the summerfallow, good after harvest tillage and fall plowing will be the most potent influences affecting next year's crop from the cultivation standpoint. These do not partake of the nature of a gamble. They are playing safe and labor expended in this way is almost certain of returns. Such is the only way we can afford to work at such a critical time.

Moisture is the determining factor in crop production over nearly all the best wheat producing sections of the prairies and the main purpose of the summerfallow is to conserve moisture. Weed eradication is an important but secondary consideration, depending, of course, on locality. The summerfallow that is not now well started should be put off no longer. The lateness of the season has delayed such work, but first plowings that are not done in the next couple of weeks run chances of being much less effective in yields. Generally speaking, deep plowing the first time is advisable unless the ground should be very weedy. Deep plowing gives greater moisture holding capacity; especially when it is immediately followed by a harrow or packer, which gives no opportunity for any moisture already contained or caught soon after to escape. Such harrowing or packing should be done the same day if possible. Further rains can only best be conserved and weeds kept down by frequent cultivation immediately following rain. This is a year we should be thorough. Much the same applies to breaking. Earliness is most important. Breaking done a few weeks hence is not apt to be nearly so effective as that done this month. This is perhaps the most vital month so far as preparation for next year is concerned and on our labors, and especially the thoroughness of them, now will depend the measure of profit and patriotic satisfaction we may feel in the fall of 1918.

## COALITION HAS FAILED

Negotiations have been in progress for nearly two weeks between Premier Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in an effort to form a coalition government. Finally matters came to a deadlock and Sir Wilfrid Laurier rejected the premier's proposals last week. Full details are not available at the time of writing. The

offer of the premier was to form a government equally divided between the two parties, but it apparently was on conscription that the plan failed. No doubt Laurier was in a hard position. By advocating conscription he would practically abdicate his position as French leader, and by refusing to support conscription he would alienate a large number of the English speaking Liberal party. More will be known when the facts are published. It is now suggested that Premier Borden is proposing a coalition with the Liberal party which will exclude Sir Wilfrid Laurier. If this fails, undoubtedly there will be a general election very shortly on purely party lines, which would be one of the most unfortunate occurrences conceivable. The time to form a coalition government was shortly after the war broke out as was done in other British dominions, but our politicians were not big enough to see it. The formation of a coalition government today is infinitely more difficult, due to partisan bickerings and the political conduct of the war. It is to be hoped, however, that a coalition government can still be formed without Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and that the war can be carried on and conducted in a business-like way. It is no time to play politics when life and death are at stake. If Sir Robert Borden can form a coalition government fairly representative of both parties, and including some independent men of ability from the outside, he can avoid a general election. His policy then should be that the entire resources of the nation should be mobilized for the prosecution of the war. This would mean the mobilization of the money power as well as the man power, and if that policy is adopted we believe it will have wide spread support from the people of Canada. We are quite apparently approaching a crisis in our internal affairs which will demand the greatest display of statesmanship and firmness ever required in the Dominion of Canada. The nation today looks to Sir Robert Borden to solve this problem.

## FARMERS' LEADERS NOMINATED

Year by year as the organized farmers have prosecuted their educational work for better economic conditions there has been a stronger feeling for political action. It has been forced in on the minds of farmers generally that agitation and education will not alone bring the desired results. Consequently there has been a steady demand for candidates in the federal political field to uphold the farmers' rights. Last December the organized farmers formulated their demands and issued a political platform which was unanimously endorsed by the three great provincial conventions. The demand for farmer candidates has been more insistent since the platform was adopted. The great farmers' organizations have decided it to be unwise officially for them to enter the political field and nominate candidates. They have, however, encouraged individual members and farmers in every federal constituency to make sure that there is a candidate nominated who will uphold the farmers' platform. Last week the grain growers of the federal constituency of Moose Jaw unanimously selected as their candidate J. A. Maharg, president of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. R. C. Henders, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, has for some time been the farmers' independent candidate in the federal constituency of Macdonald, Man. Both these men have long records of outstanding service in the cause of the organized farmers. They come into the field absolutely independent of party alliances and free to advocate and support the rights of the farmers of this country. They will undoubtedly receive