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EDITORIAL

Forcing Men to be Good.

Much interest should attach to the perusal of the arguments advanced by the conference committee of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association which are published in another column. The statements made there will we think meet the views of a very large class, but there are others that will not approve of all that is said. We allude particularly to an apparent contradiction of principle. The Association contends for a more free and open intercourse upon the Grain Exchange, deprecates the restrictions that are placed upon the increase of membership, and the secrecy that is maintained in deals, but on the other hand would enact that the personal liberty of a member be curtailed to the extent that he be prohibited from dealing in futures, in other words from making a bet with his friend or neighbor that wheat will be up or down during a certain month in the future. In the effort to secure more free and open dealing we believe every grain grower and impartial observer will concur. It appeals to the Anglo-Saxon sense of fairness and justice, but this very same sense is inclined to dissent from the principle of prohibiting option dealing. Not that gambling is actually approved of. Everyone deprecates it, but the sense of personal liberty in such matters is assiduously guarded, and if the principle underlying a deal in futures is made illegal, then a man must feel himself a violator of the principles of the law every time he risks anything on a bargain to be consummated in the future. The acceptance of money on a bargain to deliver cattle or hogs at a future date would constitute a violation of the principle of the law, yet no person can be brought to regard it as illegal and consequently the respect that should be due to law is sacrificed in the endeavor to enforce laws that do not appeal to a man's sense of reason. And this loss of respect for the law we contend is more fraught with danger to the common good than is the privilege of a form of gambling in certain quarters of the grain trade.

We do not wish to preach in the defence of gambling, but the tendency that invariably prevails in new states and provinces to make laws which are impracticable of operation, and contradictory of the principles laid down in the common laws of the country, should be guarded against. This we are free to admit is of the spirit of conservatism. In time we may all become more radical.

Large Machines and Wages

When a man buys a machine larger than the one whose place it will take, he does so in the expectation that the increased amount of work that the new implement will accomplish will more than compensate for the increased cost. And if this were not the case there would be no demand for larger machines than two horses could handle. There is a constant race between the cost of producing crops and the returns derived for them. The competition of countries such as the Argentine, Russia, India, etc., where cheaper labor, the lower cost of transportation facilities or other advantages which they possess over Canadians and Americans have made it imperative that we have larger machines to equalize this cost of production. And the implements that have been placed upon our markets have gone a long way to reduce the cost of growing a crop, notwithstanding the big difference in the first cost of the machines. But these larger and more complicated machines have not operated exclusively in one direction. The very fact that they are constructed to save manual labor makes it necessary that whatever labor is

expended in operating them shall be of a high standard. Thus much of the saving that large implements have been built to make is required and is demanded by the men who run them as compensation for the greater labor, skill, and attention which these machines require.

This increasing demand of labor does not exist like the demands of the Alberta miners, in so many pages of written agreements, but operates rather by men who are capable and efficient workers being drawn by larger pay into some other line of work. The blame for this of course is usually put upon the other work, but the man who has a farm to operate should not lose sight of the fact that the work he has for his men to do often requires more intelligence to satisfactorily perform than the average mechanic possesses; That in the labor market he is in competition with trades and professions. The case is simply this: that the farm has been demanding an increasing amount of intelligence and skill in its workers by the increase of more complicated machinery, while at the same time and owing to the same causes, there is less demand in the trades for skill, dexterity and intelligence. Economic conditions are tending to an equalizing of the wages of country and city labor, and the means of transportation being readily at hand there is a constant interchange which does not tend to increase the efficiency of the farm workers. Added to this there is the opportunity of the capable farm worker to engage for himself in farming. The result is that if the more capable class of workers are to be retained to operate the large machines required on every farm, wages will have to be sufficient inducement, and the farmer in order to afford to pay the higher wages will have to study more closely how he can increase the returns from the labor of the men engaged. One way is to drive them to the point of endurance. Another is to so plan and arrange work that everything done will be of more value than it cost, to study to secure the best returns from labor expended upon the land. We submit that a little of the former and much of the latter will result in the most permanent advantage to the employer.

Dollar Wheat.

Although the spring has been backward, entailing a lot of worry and expected loss to the 1907 crop, still the weather has been responsible in raising the price of the 1906 crop to a point far beyond what the most sanguine had hoped to see, and that at a time when there is still wheat in the farmer's granaries. The situation is one of the most unique in the history of modern marketing. Prices have gone higher, but in practically every case after the crop had got into dealers' hands. And the fact that so much of the 1906 crop is still in the farm granaries is largely responsible for the high prices. If wheat had been shipped out all winter to swell the visible supply it would have removed a lot of the uncertainty in the trade which has been influential in creating the upward movement. The car shortage and railroad blockade were a severe trial during the past winter, but no one even supposed that such compensations would follow to those who suffered from it. The puzzle with many now, who have wheat on hand is to know whether or not to sell, and no one can give reliable tips upon the subject. Many shrewd farmers are ready to sell when the price goes above 90 cents. Market forecasting is dangerous work.

Council and Conference.

Few of us would have thought that as much distinction could have been thrust between the words "council" and "conference" as was developed at the recent meeting of Colonial and Imperial representatives in London. We had sat up expecting that our own Premier or the first citizen of some other colony would have come forward with some proposal of momentous economic significance to the Empire, as occurred at the

time of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's projected preference propaganda, but such was not the case, and the meeting settled down to the consideration of things political rather than economic. The crux of the discussions of the assembled statesmen centered upon the difference between council and conference.

The projection of this difference into the assembly was a fortunate circumstance, for it at once precipitated a discussion upon a phase of the relationships between Imperial and Colonial Governments that should be clearly defined. The Empire has been preparing for the moment when lines should be distinctly drawn. Sentiment has been assiduously cultivated the past few years, and at one time it looked as though sentiment rather than sound business and political sense would dominate the spirit of these Imperial gatherings. Fortunately this has not been the case, and we are not committed to the task of trumping up tariff arrangements with other Colonies in the delusive belief that such agreements would be of benefit to us because they "strengthen the ties of Empire." Trade arrangements to be satisfactory require as basic principles something more practical and advantages more tangible than Imperial sentiment and the self-satisfaction of being part of a great Empire. Whether or not it is best for us it is nevertheless true that we care less for pageantry of state than for the participation in the progress of the world, and as Canadians we one and all possess that confidence in ourselves that we can work out a broader destiny untrammelled by complicated political compromises with the Motherland or sister Colonies. The tendency of Colonies should be rather to more absolute autonomy in trade than to circumscribed arrangements within themselves. A Colonial Conference facilitates the practicability of the former—an Imperial Council would have precipitated the latter. We are thankful for the difference in the words and more thankful that the delegates preferred the latter.

The Crop Cultivation Practice.

The demand is for a system or practise that will increase the yield of crops from the land under cultivation. Numerous opinions have been published in our columns the last few weeks upon the value of grasses in the economy of fertility and of the use of a light harrow after crops are up. These aids to crop improvement are more generally employed than most people have been aware of, but they are by no means so commonly used as their merits warrant. There are many farmers in the country who can no longer say, "I will just put in ten or twenty-five acres more to make up for any lightness of crop." These men have all their land utilized and cannot secure any more near at hand, yet are able to do more work if they had the opportunity. To them the practices referred to should appeal. A little more work on the crop already sown has been shown to invariably increase the yield. In the case of our correspondent Mr. Willing, May 1st, page 646, this increase from harrowing has been as much as ten to fifteen bushels to the acre, a much better and cheaper way of adding to the total yield of a farm than to seed a larger acreage. The purpose in giving the subject of cultivating crops prominence has been to make its adoption more general. It is also noticeable that unlike other subjects there has not been an adverse opinion expressed so far to the practice of harrowing growing grain. The precautions are also simple. Use the lightest harrow available and where possible use those with sloping teeth. Harrow on a bright day when the plants are tough; harrow when the weeds are small and tender; do not try to harrow where stubble and rubbish are thick upon the ground; risk considerable in harrowing to break up a hard, dry crust. The objects gained are, destruction of weeds, moisture conserved, and the grain crop consequently assisted to make the best use of the plant food available.