

The Grain Growers' Guide

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Only one more week remains in which to send in new subscriptions or renewals to The Guide at the old rate of \$1 a year. On April 1 the price of The Guide will positively be raised to \$1.50 a year and those who wish to take advantage of the old rates must send in their subscriptions or renewals at once.

THE HOPE OF THE WEST

The signs of the times indicate that a general Dominion election will be held before harvest. Both political parties at Ottawa seem to be playing the game solely with the idea of getting ready for an election. The life of the present Parliament does not expire until September, 1916, and there is no good reason why an election should be called, at least until the war is over. The two political parties in Great Britain have set a splendid example to our politicians on the question of an election during war time. Andrew Bonar Law, leader of the Unionist party, has agreed with Premier Asquith to pass an act extending the life of parliament until the war is over, so that there will be no election in Great Britain until some time after peace is declared, no matter how long the war may last. Our politicians claim to set great store by British institutions and British precedent. Here is one they might follow. But politicians in Canada only bring forth their loyalty to the Mother Country when it is to their political advantage to do so. If an election is held this summer, it will simply be because the government thinks that the time is opportune to get another five years' lease of power. But, with an election in sight, what is the prospect of the people of Western Canada securing the reforms which they have repeatedly demanded, and which have been as frequently denied them by both political parties?

The present government was put in power by the money and influence of the corporations and protected interests. The recent general increase in the protective tariff was chiefly given by the government as a reward to the protected interests, the war and the need of revenue being a mere subterfuge, as a great many of the increases in the tariff are purely protective, and will not produce additional revenue. Had there been no war to distract the attention of the Canadian people, and to furnish a cloak under which to hide such an act, the government would never have dared to make such increases in the tariff. Investigation has shown that the so-called "reduction in duty" on binders and mowers a year ago was a deliberate swindle, because, when the duty was lowered the valuation of these implements for customs purposes was increased, so that the tariff tax remained just the same. In the new tariff increases provision is made that manufacturers will pay no duty on raw materials which they import to be used in the manufacture of goods for export. The purpose of the present government, judging by their action since they came into power, is to legislate for the benefit of the corporations and protected interests, and the demands and interests of the Western people in regard to the tariff receive no consideration.

Nor is the policy of the Liberal party any more reassuring to the Western people. It is quite true that the Liberal

party protested against the tariff increases. But when the Finance Minister showed that additional revenue must be secured the Liberal leaders had absolutely no alternative to propose. Revenue must be secured from some source, and, if the Liberal party has nothing to propose, they certainly have but little ground for complaint against the government. The Liberals claimed that it was unpatriotic for the government to increase the tariff on British imports, but this argument comes with poor grace from the Liberal party, because in 1907 they arbitrarily increased the duty on a large portion of British imports without even the excuse of the war or falling revenue. In the speeches of the Liberal leaders on the budget they have ignored the question of the reciprocity agreement with the United States, and they have not indicated that they would reduce the protective tariff in any respect whatever if they were returned to power. Judging by the speeches of its leaders the Liberal party has thrown overboard its Reciprocity and Low Tariff policy. It is quite true that some of the Western members spoke strongly and well for a lower tariff, but unfortunately they have always stood by their party, and the Eastern Protectionist majority of the Liberal party dominates that party. It looks very much as though the Liberals were endeavoring to curry favor with the Eastern protected interests, in order to win their support in the coming election. This being the case, the Liberal party, when the election campaign begins, will no doubt preach Protection in Eastern Canada and Free Trade in Western Canada, and if they are returned to power there is nothing to indicate that they will do any better than they did from 1896 to 1911, during which time they were ardent supporters of a protective tariff.

The hopelessness of the situation must now begin to dawn upon the Western people. Of the twenty-seven members from the three Prairie Provinces now in the House of Commons, every one is a loyal supporter of one of the two parties, and neither of those parties has the slightest intention of listening to the voice of the West. At the next election there will be forty-three members elected from the three Prairie Provinces, and at least thirty-seven of these will be elected by the rural vote. Are the Liberal farmers of Western Canada going to vote for the Liberal party, and the Conservative farmers for the Conservative party? If they are going to stand blindly by their old parties they may expect to get just the same kind of treatment that these two old parties have given them for the last twenty years. All attempts to reform the parties from the inside have been dismal failures. If the farmers of Western Canada are to receive any consideration in our Canadian parliament, it will only be when they are represented by independent men with courage and backbone to speak and vote at all times for the interests of the people who have elected them. As long as we send men to Ottawa who will vote as they are told by their party leaders, just so long will Western Canada get the treatment it has been getting. If the Western farmers are ready to elect men independent of both political parties there is some hope of reform.

SUPPRESSING THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

Temperance people all over Canada received with the greatest satisfaction the announcement made last week by Premier Scott of Saskatchewan, that the Government of that province had decided to take drastic steps for the suppression of the liquor traffic, at least during the war. For the purpose of giving effect to the proposals of the Government, the Saskatchewan legislature is to be called together in May and asked to pass legislation abolishing all hotel and club licenses from July 1 until the end of the war, and providing for the transfer of the wholesale business throughout the province to the Government. In the meantime a proclamation is to be issued closing all bars at seven o'clock in the evening, beginning on April 1. Whether or not the bars shall be reopened after the war is to be decided by a referendum to be taken at the time of the municipal elections held after peace is declared but not earlier than December, 1916. Wholesale liquor shops, to be known as dispensaries for the sale of liquor, will be established in each city or town where wholesale liquor licenses at present exist, and the question of establishing such dispensaries in towns and villages where there is at present no wholesale license, is to be determined by a referendum at municipal elections. All dispensaries once established, however, must remain in operation until the year 1919, when they may be abolished by a referendum vote, if such is asked for by a petition signed by 25 per cent. of the electors who voted at the next preceding provincial elections. It is thus made much easier to establish government liquor shops than to get rid of them, and this feature of the program will, no doubt, be the cause of a good deal of criticism by temperance people. The passage of the Direct Legislation Act, so that the people may be placed in complete control would be an appropriate supplement to the liquor legislation. If this program is enacted into legislation, however, and Premier Scott has already been assured of the support of the opposition, as well as of his own followers in the legislature, Saskatchewan will have the honor of taking the most advanced position of any part of the British Empire in dealing with the liquor traffic during the war. Alberta is not likely to be very far behind her sister province, a referendum on Prohibition being scheduled for the month of July under the Direct Legislation Act of Alberta. Manitoba was the first Canadian province to restrict the sale of liquor during the war, the hours of closing hotel bars being cut down to seven o'clock every night, while the licenses for the sale of liquor in a number of low class clubs were cancelled in December last. It is evident that Manitoba is now about to be outstripped in temperance zeal by the provinces further west, and many temperance people were disappointed when a resolution in favor of the adoption of total prohibition in the province was defeated in the Manitoba legislature a few weeks ago. The policy of the Manitoba Government is declared to be prohibition by means of local option, and there is no doubt that a great effort will be made to extend the local option territory in the province at the municipal elections next December.