

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, August 19th, 1914

THE WAR

The most remarkable feature of the present war situation is the scarcity, in fact, the almost entire absence, of reliable information from any of the countries involved in the war. This is due to the most rigid press censorship that has ever been established in war time. Each of the great nations involved in the present titanic struggle knows that it is a fight to the bitter end, a matter of life and death, and for that reason they are allowing nothing whatever to be decided by chance. The general public, of course, is clamoring for news, and a large number of the ablest war correspondents in the world are located in different parts of the field of struggle. If these correspondents were allowed freedom of action their dispatches would be of the most intense interest to every person in Canada, but at the same time they would reveal to the opposing forces the location of their enemies.

At the present time news to hand indicates that the greatest battle the world has ever seen is either now taking place, or will take place in a very short time, in Belgium, where the German army numbering probably more than a million soldiers will meet the equally powerful army composed of English, French and Belgians. The outcome no one can forecast, but that it will mean the death of tens of thousands of the very finest physical specimens of manhood that these nations have produced is absolutely certain. Each of the parties in the great war realizes the tremendous importance to them of victory or defeat. Germany is face to face with the realization that defeat means the loss of territory, the payment of a heavy war indemnity and the loss of her prestige and position as a world power. On the other hand, if Germany is victorious in the present war it will mean annexation of Belgium and Holland, and it is impossible to conjecture what it will mean for France and England. But there can be no speculation as to such an outcome, because Germany cannot be permitted to triumph no matter what the cost. Germany victorious would mean the hand of civilization being set back half a century at least.

Already the loss to business houses throughout the affected area must have aggregated a gigantic figure. The seizure of a large number of German merchant vessels must have brought bankruptcy to many shipping firms in that country, and their failure would be absolutely certain to wreck strong financial houses. Germany's shipping is tied up all over the world and the seas are absolutely closed to her vessels, while English and French commerce is being carried on practically without interruption. This tremendous loss to German business interests is certain to create a reaction against the war party, which is headed by the Kaiser and the Crown Prince. The very fact that German commerce is ruined will cause a great food shortage in the German Empire in a very short time. Every source of food supply is cut off, as importation of wheat from Russia, Australia and Canada will be discontinued, and nothing from Argentina will be permitted to enter German ports. Undoubtedly the Germans had a good supply of food in advance, but it will be a matter of but a few months until they face a famine unless they triumph over their enemies and clear the seas for German commerce.

Up to the present time British financial institutions are standing the strain exceedingly well. The first days of the war produced a panic which, if continued, would have ended very shortly in a financial crash. But wise counsels have prevailed and business

has steadied wonderfully in the past few days. Hard times will necessarily follow the war, but careful preparation will enable Canada and Great Britain to pass thru the crisis in better shape than was at first predicted.

FARMERS MUST BE ACTIVE

Even tho times are hard and we are in the midst of the greatest war the world has ever seen, it is absolutely necessary that the farmers keep their own organization in the best possible condition. It will be extremely unwise for the farmers to relax their educational and organization work in the slightest degree. The present war is bound to be brought to a close within a comparatively short time, and the present financial situation is bound to become easier. But even tho the war clouds clear away and finances become easy, that will bring no relief to the farmers of Western Canada from the artificial burdens created by the protective tariff. It will be more difficult at the present time to interest the farmers in this question than ordinarily, but in self-defence it is the duty of every farmer to enlist the support of his neighbor as far as possible. It is to encourage this work during these strenuous times that we are sending The Guide to any address in Canada from now until the end of the year for 25 cents. We hope that each and every one of our friends will assist in securing a few of their neighbors as subscribers at this rate.

REGULATING THE PRICE OF FOOD

It is announced that one of the first things to be done by the Canadian Parliament, which met yesterday to deal with the war situation, will be to take action to regulate the price of food during the war. The war will bring hardship and privation enough to this country if prices are kept at the normal level, and we trust that the Government and Parliament will not hesitate to take drastic action, if necessary, in order to prevent selfish dealers who may have a supply of food or other necessities of life on hand from taking advantage of the war to exact exorbitant prices and thereby bring about a virtual famine. There are some foodstuffs on which higher prices will be justifiable if the war continues for long: goods which are imported and which cost more at the source of supply or on which the freight is increased by insurance against war, such as tea, raisins and probably sugar. There is, however, no justification for the raising of prices at the present time on goods which were bought before the war under normal conditions. The increase in the price of flour, for instance, which has already been imposed to the extent of \$1 a barrel, is an unscrupulous attempt to profit by the war at the expense of those who are already hungry and, in many cases, starving. The flour that is being sold at high prices today was ground from wheat bought weeks and months ago, much of it on a basis of less than 90 cents a bushel at Fort William. The price of wheat is high at the present time it is true, owing to the efforts of speculators, but very little wheat is being bought, and it is almost certain that when the new crop reaches the market in any large quantities prices will fall considerably. If, however, the war should be prolonged and production in European countries be greatly reduced, then wheat will remain at a high price and an increase in the price of flour will be justified. Under ordinary conditions it is regarded as legitimate, tho not always just, to sell at the high-

est price which can be obtained. But in this crisis selfishness must give way to mutual protection, and if necessary the power of Parliament must be invoked to stay the hand of the greedy.

PANAMA CANAL OPENED

The Panama Canal, which was officially opened for traffic on Saturday, is the greatest engineering accomplishment of the age. It cuts a continent in two, and joins the Atlantic and the Pacific where for ages the way has been barred by a mountain range. The canal is 40½ miles long and 41 feet deep. It has an average width of 649 feet, with a minimum of 300 feet. For thirty-one and a half miles of its course the canal is from 82 to 87 feet above the sea level, and ships are carried to this level by a series of locks at either end, each of which is 110 feet wide and 1,000 feet long. By the canal the sea route from New York to San Francisco is shortened by 7,800 miles, and by its use millions of dollars will be saved annually in ocean freights. Tho built by the United States the canal will be of benefit to the whole world, and Canada, by reason of her proximity, will reap special advantages by the opening of the new route from the Pacific coast to Europe. This advantage will be more marked in Alberta and British Columbia than in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and a C.P.R. official a year ago prophesied that the opening of the canal would reduce the freight on wheat from Alberta to Liverpool by 12 cents per bushel in winter and 5 cents in summer. The canal was constructed by the United States government but, under the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, is open to the vessels of commerce and war of all nations on terms of entire equality as to tolls and otherwise. The work was begun in 1904 and the cost has been upwards of \$375,000,000, including \$50,000,000 paid to the French Canal Company and the Republic of Panama for rights in the canal zone, and upwards of \$20,000,000 spent on sanitation. It is an interesting comparison at this moment to note that while the Panama Canal cost \$375,000,000 Great Britain alone has already voted \$525,000,000 for the European war, while Germany and France have voted larger sums.

THE PRICE OF BINDERS

The following letter just to hand in regard to the price of Massey-Harris binders in Alberta is of interest in view of the statement of the Massey-Harris Co., published in The Guide recently:

High River, Alta.,
August 12, 1914

The Grain Growers' Guide,
Winnipeg.

Dear Sirs:—I note the Massey-Harris reply, re the price of binders. That they sell them as far North as Edmonton for \$170.00. This is not true. The retail price of an 8 ft. Massey-Harris binder is \$177.50, and has been their price for the past five years. I sold thirty of them in one season in High River, and this is their price on an 8 ft. binder.

\$177.50, cash on delivery.

\$180.00, 1st October payment.

\$185.00 2nd Oct. payment, 8% interest.

\$190.00, 3rd Oct. payment, 8% interest.

I am today selling the John Deere binder at the same price and with the same equipment as the Massey-Harris. If this information is of any use to you, use it, and my name if you wish to.

Yours truly,

W. STIRLING.

In view of the statement published in our last issue as to the cost of production in the United States and Canada, and also as to the equipment furnished on both sides of