

the people at any time can decide any issue. If sectional and political considerations would enter into a naval referendum, how much more is that true of a general election, when the control of the government, as well as of the legislative body and the ambitions of the respective candidates are at stake? On a naval referendum, while some would, no doubt, vote for the policy approved by their party leader as a matter of course, many would use their discrimination and would support the policy of the party to which in other matters they were opposed. What is more important, however, from our viewpoint, is that those who are opposed to both naval policies, those who believe in peace and arbitration, would have an opportunity of recording their opinions in a referendum also. In a referendum the government policy might be approved or rejected without changing the government, without a single postmaster or homestead inspector losing his job, and without any signs of the upheaval which always follows a change of government. The people will have to pay the bill whether we have a Canadian navy or whether we present dreadnoughts or money to Great Britain, and the people certainly should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion before any such expenditure is undertaken.

SASKATCHEWAN CO-OPERATIVE ACT

At the last session of the Saskatchewan Legislature an Act was passed providing for the incorporation of co-operative societies. Under the provisions of the Act, any five persons may incorporate themselves as a company for the "purpose of producing, purchasing or selling live-stock, farm produce or supplies on the co-operative plan." The word "supplies" is interpreted in the Act as follows:

"Supplies" shall mean building and fencing material, fuel, flour, feed and such other commodities as may be shipped in carlots and distributed from a warehouse. The word shall not be interpreted as applying to a retail business.

The Government has appointed a registrar who will assist in the incorporation of these societies and help them to conduct their business properly. Standard by-laws will be prepared by the registrar for each association. The Act provides that 75 per cent of the shareholders in each association shall be agriculturists. Shares may be transferred or may be re-purchased by the association itself. Profits are to be distributed: 10 per cent. to a reserve fund until the reserve equals 30 per cent. of the paid-up capital; 6 per cent. will be paid on capital stock; and the balance will be distributed to the patrons of the association in proportion to the volume of business done by each, whether or not they are shareholders. The dividend due to a non-shareholder may be held to his credit until it equals the value of one share, at which time a paid-up stock certificate shall be issued and he will then become a regular shareholder. Special provision is made that all business must be done on a strictly cash basis and no credit is to be allowed. These are the main provisions of the "Agricultural Co-operative Associations Act." While this Act is not as wide in its provisions as the Co-operative Acts of Manitoba and Alberta, it will furnish an opportunity for the farmers of Saskatchewan to make a beginning in the handling of their necessities upon a co-operative basis and to learn the true principles of co-operation. Once co-operative trading is properly under way amendments to this act must be secured to widen its provisions. No provision is made in the Act for a wholesale purchasing agency for these societies, but it is understood that when 25 local associations are organized under the Act, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company will be in a position to act as wholesale purchasing agent, until such time as the local associations may decide to develop a whole-

sale in connection with, and as a part of, their own associations. The prospect is that the farmers of Saskatchewan will shortly embark upon co-operative trading in earnest, and, if by reason of special assistance, they make rapid progress, it is their duty to be cautious and not aim at too sudden development. True co-operation is something new in this country and the foundations should be well and truly laid in order that the superstructure that will rear itself all over the prairies will be able to withstand the test of time.

NO SEED GRAIN RATE

Up to the present time the railways have not granted the usual half-rate freight charges on seed grain in the Prairie Provinces, and no information is ascertainable as to whether such a reduced rate will be granted. In previous years it has always been announced in December. No explanation is forthcoming from the railway companies as to why, in their inscrutable wisdom, they have made up their minds that the farmers of Western Canada who are rolling in boundless wealth should contribute a little more to impoverished railway companies. All of us will agree that the railway companies need this extra money, because last year the Canadian Pacific Railway only had a net profit of \$46,000,000, while the C.N.R. got \$15,000,000 out of the public treasury as a gift and the G.T.P. \$15,000,000 from the same source as a loan. Stand up, farmers, and take your medicine.

MANITOBA AND DIRECT LEGISLATION

C. D. McPherson, M.P.P. for Lakeside, is to be complimented on the speech which he made in the Manitoba Legislature on Tuesday last, in favor of Direct Legislation. Following Mr. McPherson's speech the debate was adjourned by Hon. Dr. Montague, the new minister of public works in the Roblin government, who, however, has not yet resumed the debate. Mr. McPherson's motion is as follows:

"That this House is in favor of the principle of Direct Legislation by means of the Initiative and Referendum, and is of the opinion that the introduction of the same into our legislative system would prevent the enactment of unwise measures and provide at all times for an appeal to the electorate on specific questions without in any way derogating from the usefulness or dignity of this assembly."

The speech of Hon. Dr. Montague is being looked forward to with interest for he has the reputation of being an able debater and it may be expected that if there is any effective argument against Direct Legislation he will discover it. It is generally admitted that the speeches against this reform made by Sir R. P. Roblin and Hon. G. R. Coldwell last session were no real answer to the arguments of the supporters of Direct Legislation. However clever Hon. Dr. Montague may be, however, Mr. McPherson is quite well able to meet him, for the young member for Lakeside has on previous occasions shown himself to be thoroughly acquainted with the benefits which have been gained thru the use of Direct Legislation in many of the States of the Union, as well as in Switzerland. It is gratifying to supporters of Direct Legislation, also, to know that Mr. McPherson believes in and advocates real Direct Legislation of the Oregon brand; Direct Legislation which would enable the people to veto any act of the legislature of which they did not approve, and which would permit them to initiate any bill which the public considered should be passed. Last session the government majority in the Manitoba Legislature defeated a motion calling for the taking of a plebiscite on Direct Legislation. It is naturally presumed that the government will also

defeat this motion, but Sir Rodmond has been known to change his mind before and eventually, no doubt he will let the people have their own way in this matter also.

THE MOORE CASE

We are in receipt of further information from a correspondent from Alsask, Sask., in regard to the imprisonment of John W. Moore, which was mentioned in our editorial columns in the issue of January 7. Our correspondent writes as follows:

"We notice in the last issue of The Guide an editorial in regard to the Moore case tried here by Magistrate Quinn. You state that Quinn exceeded his authority in sentencing Moore to gaol altho the fact is that the law provides for just this procedure, and the case in question was passed on by a competent authority, which upheld the magistrate in the decision he made. As a matter of fact, Moore was sentenced to four months in gaol, not five as stated by you, and that he spent only two weeks of the sentence in gaol was part of the plan of the magistrate, who only passed sentence of this kind with the idea that it was necessary to do so in order to bring the implement company to a proper sense of their own responsibilities and make them live up to their promise made to Moore to take care of the wages if the proceeds of the threshing season were turned over to them. This course has been amply justified by the course of events, as, immediately on publicity being given the case, the implement company did pay the wages and Moore was released. Every effort had been made previous to Moore being sent to gaol. Sentence was only imposed as a last resort. The laborers who sued for their wages were quite dependent on this money and were without other funds to face the rigorous winter season."

The information which was published on this case two weeks ago was received from the Warman Grain Growers' Association, and we have no further information on the case except what is published above. We are glad to make this correction, but would state that when it becomes necessary to imprison a farmer simply to bring an implement company "to a proper sense of their own responsibilities," there is something wrong. No doubt there are two sides to this question as to every other. Farmers should be careful not to assume too large obligations with implement companies or anyone else, because trouble is very likely to be the result.

When sending remittances to The Guide for subscriptions, or in payment of advertisements, farmers should not send cash where it is possible to avoid it. Cash is liable to be lost and cannot possibly be traced. It is far better to send a postal note, post office order, express money order or bank money order. Each of these methods is cheap, and the sender in each case retains the receipt. There is no possibility of money being lost, because if it is missing it will be refunded. If it reaches its destination and has been cashed it can always be traced. We would ask our readers to use any one of these methods and to avoid sending cash whenever possible.

Lloyd George has sounded the alarm against Winston Churchill's killing armament appropriations. The Chancellor says it is time for a halt and is giving newspaper publicity to his views. It is probable that the British government will be forced to agree at the Hague Conference this year that the laws of war on land shall also apply to war at sea, namely, that private property at sea be not subject to capture in time of war. Such an agreement will remove the chief excuse for armaments.

Since dragon's blood, diamonds, fish offal and ice have for years been admitted to Canada free of duty, could not agricultural implements be placed on the free list without endangering our patriotism.