

FREE WHEAT AT LAST.

IT IS always an amusing and edifying spectacle to see a good idea struggling through the heads of the Conservative Government. For years they have had it dinned into their ears that the Western Canadian Farmers should be allowed free access for their wheat to the United States market. At first they point blank refused to countenance the idea at all. It was new, and therefore, from a Conservative standpoint, must be wrong. It would interfere with the Railway and other vested interests, the inviolable maintenance of which is the pet doctrine of Toryism. Moreover it was high treason to even think of having "truck or trade with the Yankees." It was of no avail to point out that the United States' market was the natural market for our Western producers, and that while the Government might for revenue purposes have the right to regulate the price which the farmer has to pay for his commodities, they had no moral right to refuse him the right to sell his produce where he pleased. The Government could not see the matter from the farmer's standpoint at all; they viewed it solely from the point of view of the big interests, and went directly in the face of the soundest political economy, to wit, that of selling one's produce in the best market.

The Result of Liberal Advocacy.

But the farmers, and the Liberals who championed their cause, were not to be denied. At almost every Session of Parliament a resolution favoring the idea was introduced and supported by the whole Liberal contingent, but defeated by the overwhelming party vote of the Conservatives. The Government, however, never felt sure of their ground. At heart they were impressed with the merits of the case, and their defence was, consequently, lame and halting. We honestly believe that they would have liked to accept the idea, but fear of the interests withheld their hand. Then came the awful war with its topsy turvy results in matters and questions political. With the outbreak of hostilities wheat started to jump in price and kept increasing, to the great benefit of the Western farmer. The high prices naturally pleased the farmer and minimized to some extent his legitimate grievance of being denied free admission of his products in the American market. The point we wish to make in this connection is that there was very much stronger reason and necessity for taking action years ago when the price of wheat was less than \$1.00 per bushel than there is to-day, (although the reasons are more than sufficiently strong to-day) yet the Government denied the farmer his rights when he needed them most and when it was an actual living necessity that he should have them.

Government Acted Unwillingly.

But although the idea has at last struggled through the heads of the Government they surrounded their acceptance of it with circumlocutory phrases and verbiage intended to confound, but which nevertheless makes clear the impression

Fresh — Fragrant and

Delicious

'SALADA'

is laden with the invigorating and refreshing qualities that are only to be found in perfect tea, fresh from the mountain gardens of Ceylon.

that they would not have acceded to the farmers' demand if it had not been for the conditions created by the war. They are unwilling to admit that the farmer was right so the war is dragged in and used as the cloak and excuse. Then too, they had to justify themselves, to their friends the vested interests, railway and other, and that broad phrase "war conditions", which has been used to cover a multitude of political sins, was again brought into requisition. And what of the 1911 cry about having "No truck or trade with the Yankees?" Well! they simply swallowed that holus bolus. They never really believed in it anyway. It was their favorite election cry, and, having served its purpose, they care not what becomes of it.

Farmers Will Smile.

The Western farmers, who as a class are particularly intelligent, will doubtless smile inwardly when they read the Order-in-Council on the subject. They, better and quicker than anyone else, will realize that the belated move of the Government is for political purposes—in view of the possibility of early Provincial and Dominion elections—and is the direct result as we believe, of the political excursion recently made in the West by the Hon. Arthur Meighen, Solicitor General.

Though the act of the Government is of the nature of a deathbed repentance, we welcome it, congratulate them upon it, and earnestly urge them to go further by making all food stuffs free of customs duty.

May we say in conclusion that the remarkably volte face of the Government has provided much amusement to the general public, and is another illustration of the hypocrisy of Conservative politicians when they are striving to remain in office.