

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, April 24, 1918

Through the Fires of Sacrifice

As the military forces of Germany during the past week have steadily regained and occupied the ground around Ypres, Passendale, Messines and Langemark, much of which was secured for the Allies three years ago by the blood of the first Canadian contingent, the bitter truth and seriousness of the war have penetrated and impressed the mind of Canada with a poignancy hitherto unrealized. For the first time, the frightful possibility of defeat has overshadowed our horizon most menacingly. Such complacent illusions as the weakening morale of the German soldiery, the shortage of food, and the embarrassment of our enemy by industrial unrest, with which the people on this side of the Atlantic have been deceiving themselves, are now dissipated. In the past ten days the power of the Hun has become a haunting reality. The German offensive on the West front was expected this spring, but the power of the allied arms to repel it was never once doubted. The example of the first days of the war was quoted, when, vastly outnumbered, the British and French hurled back the advancing Germans from the Marne. Four years later, with their strength multiplied a thousand-fold, the allied nations had every reason to be confident in the ability of their armies to beat back this last German attack. After two weeks of desperate fighting along the northerly section of the west front, the issue of the struggle is still uncertain, and Germany has driven her men forward over ground and through fortified positions which were thought a month ago to have been almost impregnable. To-day, in possession of Ypres the German is but 20 miles distant from the Straits of Dover which separate the British Isles from France.

Against the ominous, dark clouds which are hanging over Britain and France, the truth of Canada's place and responsibility in this crisis stands out in sharp relief. While the Canadian divisions, strongly entrenched on Vimy Ridge and Hill 70 and around Lens, were not engaged in the thickest of the fray which has been in progress farther north, they are now active in attempting, with the fresh French reinforcements, to make successful counter attacks against the enemy. Canada's five divisions of fighting men overseas must be kept up to strength now at all costs, and the federal government realizing this, and knowing the keen and awakened consciousness of the country in relation to the demands of the war, already have taken steps to apply the Military Service Act more closely than it has yet been felt. The speeding-up of the operation of the Military Service Act has been found absolutely necessary, and to do this, drastic amendments to the act have been made by parliament. All unmarried men and widowers without children, between the ages of 20 and 23 years inclusive, have been called to service by the government, regardless of claims for exemption. It is felt that no men of that age are indispensable to the country at the present time. All men of 19 years, it is also required, must register immediately. It is intended to call out men of other ages as the need for reinforcements continues to be felt. Canada, in other words, must provide all the assistance in her power, to stay the onward march of the Hun. It will mean national sacrifice in Canada during the coming months, for those who remain at home must work and

pay as they have never done in the past. Germany has placed every man in the Empire, between the ages of 17 and 60, at the disposal of the government. The enemy has thrown his entire weight into the proposition of bring the war to a successful end this year, and his intention is first to crush the British and French armies on the west front. The issue has been made very clear in the recent German official announcement that Germany would no longer consider peace without indemnities or territorial acquisitions, and that she intended to retain Belgium and North France. The coming summer months will see enacted the fiercest and most horrible struggle in history, and Canada's place is in that fight—at the sacrificial altar of the west front.

Income Tax Forms Inadequate

The Guide is being asked every day for information and advice concerning the making of returns on the Income Tax forms which have been distributed by the Department of Finance, at Ottawa, and it must be said that the work of the civil servant who compiled these blank forms, has been done badly. When it is considered that the raising of revenue by direct taxation is one of the most radical and important measures to be introduced into Canada since Confederation, the duty of the governmental authorities in the task of thoroughly acquainting the people of the country with the details of the new system, would appear to be beyond question. But in spite of the importance of the function of the Income Tax in Canada, a mere skeletonized form on which returns are to be made, has been issued by the Taxation Branch of the Department of Finance, without any literature to explain the new act, without any more illumination than a few perfunctory references to different sections and sub-sections of the law, and without even a formal invitation, or an address, through which the willing taxpayer might secure enlightenment and information. One authority who has given the Income War Tax Act close study, has informed The Guide, that at the very least, this indifferent and inadequate treatment of the documents on which returns should be made, will cost the country \$1,000,000 dollars in revenue which will not be forthcoming from the taxpayer, largely through lack of sufficient information. After a perusal of the elaborate instructions and income tax primer which have been issued by the Internal Revenue Branch of the Treasury Department of the United States in connection with the American system of making returns, the shortcomings of our own spare-looking sheets appear all the more marked.

Embargo Deferred Indefinitely

The advice has gone out from Ottawa that the recommendations of the War Trade Board for placing an embargo on imports of certain manufactured goods from the United States, as a means of improving the international trade balance between the two countries, have been held up indefinitely. It is understood that the strong opposition of certain members of the government who feared that such an embargo would be in substance an indirect method of protection for the Canadian manufacturer, was responsible for the shelving of the War Trade Board's recommendations. If this be true the gratitude of the West may be generously

expressed towards a government that could be so restrained.

One of the best evidences that the government has withheld its approval of an embargo on imports, is a complaining editorial, entitled "Procrastination at Ottawa," published in the last issue of The Financial Post of Canada, which is a consistent defender of the entrenched powers of special privilege. The Post complains that "more than three weeks ago the intimation came that imports into Canada from the United States would be greatly curtailed to right exchange"; and that "business prepared for it as it has to many other developments of the war." Since that time there had been no action, no definite announcement on the part of the government setting the mind of business at rest with regard to the proposed embargo.

As a matter of fact, the only intimation that came with regard to the restriction of imports, emanated from the War Trade Board, and not from the government. Sir Robert Borden, immediately after the report had been circulated from Ottawa, announced that the Cabinet had not then even considered the recommendations of the War Trade Board. Therefore, "business" and the Financial Post had no right whatever to assume that the War Trade Board was the government, and that an embargo on imports from the United States was a certainty.

Federal Franchise for Women

The bill extending the federal franchise to women, recently debated in the House of Commons and approved by all the members excepting those from Quebec, produced a pronouncement from J. A. Maharg, the Grain Grower representative from Moose Jaw, which has been quoted by the press from one end of Canada to the other. Mr. Maharg, in reply to the opposition to woman suffrage expressed by the followers of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, said that the Liberalism of Quebec is not the same brand as that which finds a home in the West. Mr. Maharg's statement was raised on the question of granting the franchise to women in Dominion elections, and he was right. Furthermore, Quebec's attitude on that question is not shared by any of the provinces west of the Ottawa River, including Ontario. The democratic victory of making "votes for women" a popular measure in the House of Commons, is, however, in no small measure due to the impetus which has been given to public opinion along all progressive lines by the people of the western plains.

Apart altogether from the political philosophy of the issue, the masculine mind of Canada at this time, irrespective of provincial distinctions, has no alternative but to extend the federal franchise to the opposite sex. The part that woman has played in the war in Canada and elsewhere, ought to place the question of her right to vote in federal elections beyond all shadow of doubt. Had Quebec been doing her duty in the war as in the same measure as the other provinces, since 1914, her representatives in the House of Commons in all probability would have been no more opposed to the extension of the franchise to women than the members from Ontario or the West.

Canada's War Bill

At the end of March, which is also the end of the Canadian fiscal year, the national expenditure for war, at home and abroad, had