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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

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Our Ottawa Letter

Laurier Refuses to Join Coalition Government—Rogers Resigned—Livestock Loans
(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, June 8.—The failure of the negotiations to bring into existence a coalition government to conduct the affairs of the Dominion until the war is over was the chief development of the week at the capital. On Friday last, when the previous letter to The Grain Growers' Guide was written there was a feeling in the air that the negotiations were at the point of failure. This impression grew steadily and it was practically certain early in the week that nothing definite would come of the conferences between Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The negotiations were finally called off on Wednesday at noon, when Sir Wilfrid Laurier went to the office of the Prime Minister in the east block. The point at issue between the two leaders had been that of conscription; and at this meeting the leader of the opposition gave a definite answer to the effect that he could not enter a coalition government upon the basis of the introduction and passage of a measure of selective conscription, to be endorsed by the people at a general election, as was proposed by Sir Robert Borden.

The failure of the negotiations has created a new and just as uncertain situation at the capital. Having failed to induce the Liberal leader to join his government it is believed that Sir Robert has since approached a number of Liberal members who favor conscription, with offers to join his administration. It is

pretty definitely known that he sent for and conferred with, Fred Pardoe, the chief Liberal whip, and it is thought that Hon. George P. Graham, F. B. Carvell and A. K. Maclean have also been approached. At the time of writing it is by no means certain that the Prime Minister will be successful in his second effort to form a coalition government. Should he fail it is likely that he will try to bring in new men, either Liberals or Conservatives, from outside of Parliament, as recent events have indicated that the Conservative leader is not himself satisfied with the personnel of his cabinet as at present constituted.

Laurier May Quit

The Liberals were in caucus today and from what can be gathered their disposition is to stay together by some device or other. While the proceedings are known to have been fairly harmonious despite the vigorous expression of divergent opinions, the final settlement of the vital question at issue was deferred until after the government's selective conscription bill is introduced in the House on Monday. Rumors have been about that before another week has elapsed Sir Wilfrid Laurier will retire from the leadership of the party, handing it over either to Hon. George P. Graham or F. B. Carvell, he continuing himself to be the Liberal leader in Quebec. Should such a dual arrangement as to leadership be arrived at the Liberals in the next general election would be in a position not dissimilar to that of the Conservatives at the last general election when they waged a successful battle against Sir Wilfrid Laurier with the assistance of Henry Bourassa and his group of Quebec Nationalists. Under such an arrangement the English speaking Liberals who support conscription would be free to vote as they please, while the French members would do likewise.

During the coalition negotiations the impression prevailed that in the event of their failure there would be an immediate appeal to the country by the government. But apparently this will not occur as all the indications point to the House remaining in session for several weeks to pass the selective conscription measure and the other important legislation now on the order paper. What will be done in regard to the extension of the life of Parliament is not known at the present time, but the majority opinion at the moment appears to be that the government will seek an endorsement of conscription from the people not later than the month of September.

That conscription was the sole issue on which the coalition negotiations failed is shown by correspondence between Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier which was given out on Thursday.

Rogers Gets Re-Hearing

The members of the House got quite a surprise on Wednesday when Sir Robert Borden rose and announced that a royal commission composed of Sir Ezekiel MeLaud, chief justice of the Superior Court of New Brunswick, and Hon. Louis Telfer, retired judge of the Superior Court of Quebec, had been appointed to hold an investigation into the findings of Mr. Justice Galt, reflecting upon the honor of Hon. Robert Rogers, minister of public works.

Livestock Loans

There was an interesting discussion early in the week on Sir Thomas White's bill to amend the Bank Act so as to authorize the banks to loan money to farmers, and those engaged in raising stock, on the security of their livestock. The minister stated that last year the Bank Act was amended by providing that banks might loan to farmers or persons engaged in the livestock industry upon the security of livestock, taking as security bills of sale or chattel mortgages upon such livestock. It was provided that such bills of sale, or mortgages, should be registered in accordance with the laws of the several provinces in which they were taken. The legislation was introduced at the request of the United Farmers of Alberta, but in its working out has proved to be cumbersome and expensive and has not been taken advantage of to the extent expected, for the reason that many farmers have a strong objection to giving chattel mortgages, and for the further reason that the drawing and registration of these chattel mortgages entailed considerable expense.

Sir Thomas said that during the past year he had a further request from the farmers of Alberta to consider the matter and enact legislation enabling the banks to make loans upon the security of livestock, taking a simple form of assignment which might be registered at a trifling expense. It was now proposed to enable the banks to make loans, taking an assignment in simple form. The legislation would also provide that if under the provisions of any law in force in the province in which are the livestock mentioned in any security under the act, any such livestock shall be exempt from seizure and sale under any writ of execution. Sir Thomas continued: "In this legislation, as in the legislation of last year, we shall have regard to the provincial law in force in the province in which the security is taken. There will be a further provision in the act that in any province in which there are statutes or laws of the province in force relating to mortgages of goods and chattels or bills of sale, if the office or person with whom or in whose office a chattel mortgage or bill of sale may be registered or filed is authorized and empowered by the legislature of the province to receive and file the security taken under this act, then it shall be so filed. In order that the province may, as it sees fit, protect the rights of creditors against the lien, we provide that the officers charged with the duty of receiving and filing mortgages and bills of sale, being so authorized, may receive and file an assignment given as security for a loan under this law."

The only serious objection taken to the bill was that should the provincial governments not take steps to provide for the registration of the liens held by the banks they would be secret liens and other creditors of farmers would not be afforded protection.

Dr. Mulloy, of Provencher, said that the only thing wrong with the legislation is that it does not go far enough. The banks should be permitted to lend money to the farmer on his livestock without taking either mortgage or assignment. Any man who is a bona fide settler and a worthy citizen should be able to borrow from a bank, for the purchase of livestock. The banks would not lose because they never lend money to anyone without expecting to get it back with good interest.

J. G. Turfitt thought that the time had come when the government should do something in the way of assisting the

establishment of farmers' banks throughout the country from which the farmers could get short term loans. Should such a step be taken it would be absolutely necessary to protect these banks against the regular banks.

WAR TAXATION CEASES THIS YEAR

In an official statement issued last week Sir Thomas White, finance minister, said, that the liability to taxation under the Business Profits War Tax Act ceases at the end of the present year and that the proposed increased taxation applies only to the last annual accounting period of the three accounting periods to which the act of last year applies. In other words, the increased taxation will affect only annual accounting periods which end after December 31, 1916. For example, if a company's accounting period ends on May 31 of this year, the company will pay the increased tax in respect of its fiscal year commencing June 1, 1916, and ending May 31, 1917. The new tax, therefore, cannot apply to new companies about to establish themselves in Canada.

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