

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 12th, 1915

ELECT FREE TRADERS

Week by week the feeling is growing that the only way that the West can secure a square deal in federal legislation is by sending down to Parliament men free from obligations to either of the old political parties. Seeding will be over in the course of a week or two, and the farmers of the Prairie Provinces will have considerable leisure during the next two months. If they would spend part of their leisure time in selecting and nominating men who will protect their interests in the House of Commons it will be energy well spent, and it will repay them mightily well for their investment. We do not consider that it would be wise to use the machinery of the Grain Growers' Associations or the United Farmers of Alberta for this purpose, but any such action that is to be taken must come from men who are also in these organizations because they see the need most clearly. What Western Canada needs more than anything else is Free Trade, and the revenues of the country raised by a direct tax upon land values. These are both fundamental reforms, and will bring the other necessary reforms along with them. For this reason, we believe the farmers should nominate and elect candidates who will develop into a Free Trade party in the House of Commons. It is, however, useless to attempt such action unless those in favor of it are willing to contribute their time and money to the support of their own candidate. It is also useless to attempt such action unless the farmers are absolutely going to throw aside forever their allegiance to the Grit and Tory parties. It will be no easy matter to elect Free Trade candidates independent of the two old parties, but, nevertheless, we see no hope in any other action, and the Free Trade movement can be made an overwhelming success if the farmers will take hold of it in earnest.

SASKATCHEWAN'S LIQUOR QUESTION

The courage of Premier Scott in tackling the liquor question in Saskatchewan has won for him the admiration of every believer in temperance reform in Canada. There is for him now no turning back. Every liquor dealer in the province is fighting him and his political future is absolutely bound up with the temperance cause. The legislature meets at Regina this week and all eyes will be turned in that direction anxiously watching the passage of the legislation embodying the measures for the suppression of the liquor traffic announced by Premier Scott a few weeks ago. Great efforts have been made by those interested in liquor selling to induce members on both sides of the legislature to vote against the government bill, but it is understood that these have not met with sufficient success to prevent the policy of the government being carried into effect. The proposals of the government, as outlined by Premier Scott are to abolish entirely the sale of liquor by private individuals in the province and to establish dispensaries or government wholesale depots in towns and cities where wholesale licences at present exist. It is proposed that other dispensaries may be established where a

favorable vote is given at the municipal elections, but that no dispensary when once opened, can be closed until 1919. Hotel bars and the sale of liquor in clubs will be absolutely done away with. If the law is properly enforced, and in the present state of public opinion, there is every reason that it should be, the passage of this Act will be one of the greatest blessings that any legislature in Canada has ever conferred upon the people. This is not to say, however, that the proposed law is to be regarded as perfect. It has been attacked by the liquor men, and those who speak for them, as autocratic and opposed to the principles of democracy. There is some foundation for this charge, and this ground of complaint should be removed by the enactment at the same session of the legislature of an effective Direct Legislation Act, accompanied by the enfranchisement of women on equal terms with men. The passage of the Direct Legislation Act would permit the amendment or even repeal of the new liquor law if the majority of the people of Saskatchewan so desired. It would be open, under Direct Legislation, for those who believe in absolute prohibition to bring on a vote to abolish liquor altogether from the province by closing the proposed government dispensaries. On the other hand, the liquor people would have the right, if they could obtain the required number of signatures to their petition, to bring on a vote for the repeal of the law and the re-establishment of the present system. This would be democracy and we believe that the people of Saskatchewan are to be trusted to use the instruments of democracy wisely, intelligently and for their own good. When the liquor question comes to a vote of the people of Saskatchewan, and whether it be on a referendum or at the next general provincial election, the women of the province should be given a voice and a vote. By enfranchising the women the Scott government would not only be doing an act of justice, but it would be also following the course of political expediency. The votes of the women in Saskatchewan, as everywhere else in the world, will be on the side of temperance, and since Premier Scott has staked his political future on the temperance platform, it is not difficult to see what an advantage enfranchising the women would be to him as well as to the cause of temperance.

A GOOD ADVERTISEMENT

We wonder if the Finance Minister, when he decided upon the stamp taxes which went into force last month realized what an advertisement the "War Tax" stamps would be of the failure of the customs tariff as a source of public revenue. Every letter and postcard that leaves this country bearing a "War Tax" stamp will carry its message. It will say to the people of all British countries and residents of the United States and Mexico, "The tariff has failed in Canada. It has been increased, it is a burden upon the people and sorely oppresses the poor, but still it does not produce sufficient revenue to carry on the business of the country." Whether or not the extra stamp on letters and postcards will produce increased revenues, or whether it will have the effect

of seriously reducing the business of the post office, remains to be seen. Besides its value as an advertisement, the stamp tax has the advantage that it is direct and the public know exactly what it costs them. The war tax, it should be noted, does not apply to newspapers, parcels, circular letters in open envelopes requiring only one cent postage, or to letters to European and other foreign countries to which the letter postage is already 5 cents.

BONDING PRODUCE MERCHANTS

Every year farmers all over Western Canada lose a large amount of money thru the failure and dishonesty of dealers in farm produce of various kinds. In the past few years a considerable number of tanneries, creameries and produce merchants have gone out of business, and the farmers who shipped them hides, cream, butter, eggs, poultry, dressed meat, etc., have received little or nothing for their shipments. It is time this situation was remedied. It can be remedied, and in the same manner in which the grain trade has been made practically safe to farmers. No individual nor company can go into the grain trade today without receiving a license from the grain commission, and the licence cannot be granted unless the financial standing of the applicant has been thoroughly investigated and a heavy bond has been executed. The same thing can be done in the produce business. Before any individual or firm is allowed to go into the produce business, they should be bonded in such a manner as would ensure farmers receiving payment for their shipments. This matter has been brought before officials of both the Dominion and Provincial Governments, and as is usual in such cases each thinks that the other should act first. As a matter of fact, either the Provincial or the Federal Government could handle the matter. The Provincial Governments, however, are nearer, and the farmers have more influence with them. If the farmers will exert sufficient pressure they can have legislation in all three provinces regulating the produce trade.

POLITICIAN FAVORS INDEPENDENCE

When the politicians themselves begin to grow sick of the rotten game of party politics there is some hope of reform. Hon. George H. Murray, who has been premier of Nova Scotia for the past nineteen years, made the following statement to the annual meeting of the Nova Scotia Fruit Growers' Association, Middleton, N.S., three months ago:

"I am a bit tired of both political parties in this country. I would like some day to connect myself—and probably it is because I am growing old and reaching a condition of mind where, perhaps, I can afford to take a non-partizan view of these questions—I would like some day to connect myself with a great independent party in this country, not attached to either of the great political parties. We have got to develop a public opinion in this country, irrespective of the partizan views of either party, and unless we do, what is the hope of this country? If I utter an opinion as to what is probably the great weakness of this country to-day, not only Nova Scotia, but the whole of Canada, I say it is perhaps in the lack of development of sound public opinion upon all the great questions with which we are confronted."

All that is needed to-day is a leader to start a revolt against the two political