

good things provided for him, will be a more contented and happier man, and probably more prosperous as well.

NO USE FOR THE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS.

The Commercial has had considerable to say regarding the proposed changes in the grain grades. Our criticisms on the action of the inland revenue department in this matter, particularly in our issue of October 5, have been considered by some as rather harsh. Subsequent events, however, have proved that the criticisms of the Commercial were quite moderate, in view of the extraordinary action of the department in this matter. Indeed, the action of the department is simply incomprehensible. This whole question concerning the Manitoba wheat grades has been handled by the department in a most peculiar manner. The department has treated the vast commercial interests involved with complete disregard, if not with absolute contempt. In fact, we might say, with out exaggeration, that the policy followed by the department has been one of studied insolence toward the commercial interests connected with the grain trade.

Prominent members of the new Federal government, including the premier himself, have assured the people of Canada that the various commercial interests of the country would be fairly treated and would receive every consideration. No changes affecting the commercial interests, we were told, would be introduced until those interested would have been conferred with. The grain trade is a commercial interest of the greatest magnitude to Western Canada, yet the interior department suddenly announces a series of changes in the regulations governing the inspection of grain, without even considering, much less consulting, with the commercial interests involved. The department has even gone further than this. The minister even refused to discuss the question with an accredited representative sent to confer with him, by those who are so deeply interested in the matter. Such arrogant treatment of a commercial question of such far-reaching importance has not been witnessed in Canada for many a day. This is the more strange as the head of the department, Sir Henri Jolly, has always been represented to the people of Canada as a man possessed of a keen sense of justice, who would treat all matters in a moderate and impartial manner.

The strength of a chain, it is sometimes said, is measured by its weakest link. Perhaps, it would not be a fair comparison to say that the strength of a government would be measured by its weakest department, but the comparison is not altogether out of place. Certainly the weakness of any single department will reflect upon the government as a whole. The Commercial believes that the new Federal government is anxious to promote the welfare of the commercial and industrial interests of Canada. But if each department were to adopt a policy toward the commercial interests similar to that followed by the interior department in dealing with the commercial side of the grain question, the whole country would soon be thrown into a state of confusion.

We say "commercial side of the grain question" advisedly, for the matters

which the department have been dealing with are purely commercial in their nature. The interest of the agricultural class in this question is almost entirely of a sentimental nature. It is true grain questions have been favorite themes for demagogues and professional agitators to prate upon. They have afforded scope for designing persons to push themselves to the front as champions of the rights of the farmer. In order to gain some notoriety it was first necessary to create a grievance, and secondly to champion the cause of the aggrieved. Questions connected with grain matters have been handled in this way in Manitoba to a considerable extent, and some unnecessary discontent has accordingly been worked up among the farmers. The agricultural class, as a whole, however, were apparently contented with the grain grades, and there was no apparent desire for a change at the time the department sprung the changes upon the trade.

The Commercial will not again at this time discuss the question of the changes in the grain grades upon its merits. This has already been fully discussed. It is sufficient to say that the changes would have proved most damaging to the trade, not only on account of their nature, but also on account of the unreasonable time at which they were announced. The most inappropriate time in all the year was selected to announce the changes. A more unreasonable thing could not well be imagined than this proposal to change the grain grades right in the middle of the rush of a new crop to market and with the elevators already crowded with wheat.

The reasons given by the minister for announcing changes in the grades do not appear to be such as should have influenced the department to take such action, and certainly not without first consulting with the trade. It was the business of the department to inquire fully into the matter and not accept the representations of two or three members of Parliament. These members of Parliament at best represented only a sectional interest. It was the duty of the department to stand between the various interests involved, and see that all were dealt with fairly and reasonably. But instead of doing this the department accepts the views of those who at best have only a sentimental interest in the matter, without even considering the actual and practical interest. Here is a purely commercial question, affecting an interest representing a business of over \$10,000,000 annually, passed upon by the department without the slightest reference to, and we may say with the coolest contempt for the vast actual interest involved. The report of Secretary Bell, of the Winnipeg board of trade, which was published in The Commercial last week, shows that the department never considered the commercial interest in announcing changes in the wheat grades, the action being taken solely on the alleged ground that the farmers desired the changes, though, as we have already stated, there is no proof to show that the farmers wanted these changes. But even if the farmers had been agitating strongly for these changes, a reasonable regard for the other interests involved would have prompted the department to consult with the trade before announcing the changes.

The action of the interior department in this matter is certainly worthy of

quite as sharp criticism as the Commercial has applied to the case, the principle involved in following out the policy adopted by the department being such as to call forth the strongest condemnation. In fact, the proposed changes in the grades are of less importance in themselves than the principle involved in the action of the department in ignoring the commercial interest, together with the unreasonable proposition to make changes of any kind in the middle of the season.

LATEST REGARDING THE GRAIN STANDARDS

The resolution passed by the standards board, which met in Winnipeg on Wednesday in opposition to the changes in the Manitoba wheat grades, was at once wired to Ottawa. Later a reply came from Ottawa to the effect that the department would act upon the resolution and would withdraw the new grading. The new grading would have gone into effect on Saturday, Oct. 24, but the action of the standards board gave the department a loophole through which to escape the consequence of its hasty and unreasonable action. All's well that ends well, they say, and with all this fuss over the standards there will be no changes after all. The uncertainty, however, has been a cause of much annoyance to the trade and has prevented exporters from doing business. Regarding scoured wheat, inspectors will be instructed not to admit scoured grain into the grades of No. 1 and No. 2 hard and No. 1 Northern, as requested by the standards board.

There is a disposition in some quarters to blame the Western members of Parliament for all the trouble about the grain standards. These men, undoubtedly made a great mistake in meddling with a matter which they did not understand, when they undertook to press the department to change the Manitoba wheat grades. They were, however, acting as they supposed, in the interest of the farmers. They made the mistake of thinking that the dozen or so members of the Farmers' Institute who asked for the changes, represented the general feeling among the farmers. The action of those Western members, however, does not relieve the department in the least. The department is wholly and entirely responsible for the muddle. It was the duty of the department to inquire into the matter, rather than accept any one-sided representations. Instead of doing this the department even refused to listen to representations from the commercial interest, and that in a matter which is a commercial question principally.

The standards board also passed the following resolution:

That this board request the Dominion government to establish a commission to inquire into the whole inspection system and practice, its different interests, farmers, dealers and millers to be represented equally on commission, which shall make such recommendations to the government for any changes in the inspection system as they may deem necessary. This board also urges that the above commission shall be appointed at an early date."

The Bank of England has advanced its rates of discount from 3 to 4 per cent.