

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, September 1st, 1915

THE WHEAT MARKET

The near approach of heavy wheat shipments is having the usual effect on the market, and prices are steadily falling. It would appear from conditions that the fact of war being in progress has very largely been discounted already so far as wheat prices are concerned, and it is probable that prices will drop considerably lower than at present when the big rush comes towards the end of this month and thru the month of October. The heavy drop of wheat prices during the shipping season is largely due to our unwise system of offering the bulk of our wheat upon the market in a short period before the close of navigation. There should be a considerable percentage of farmers in Western Canada this year who can afford to hold a portion of their crop and market it leisurely thru the winter. If this course is followed it will help to prevent the low prices during the next month or two, because wheat thrown on the bargain counter is bound to bring bargain counter prices, while wheat that is held until the demand is stronger will bring better prices. The opening of the Dardanelles, which is expected any time now, will probably not affect the wheat market seriously, as it has already been taken into consideration. There is bound to be a big shortage of wheat in all the warring countries, and all that Canada can export will be required. But even tho the demand will be strong while the war is in progress there now seems a strong likelihood that there will be an even greater demand as soon as peace is declared and the warring nations have begun to put their houses in order and return to peaceful occupations. However, the best thing our western farmers can do for themselves in the meantime is to hold a good portion of their wheat from the market, and store it as far as possible on their own farms, where storage is cheap. It will not only be better for them financially and better for the market, but it will also give them more opportunity to get their land into good shape for next year's crop, and they can haul their wheat to market after the freeze-up.

THE MANITOBA SCANDAL

The opponents of the late Roblin Government for a number of years before its dramatic downfall in May last, endeavored to convince the people of Manitoba that the public treasury was being looted and the voters debauched by corrupt politicians and dishonest public servants. The government, however, was never charged by its political opponents with half the villainy of which some of its members and officials are accused by the report of the royal commission headed by Chief Justice Mathers, which presented an interim report last week. The commission reports that after a careful consideration and review of all the evidence it finds all the charges made by former opposition members of the legislature fully proven. It finds, moreover, that the plot to rob the province was hatched by Sir Rodmond Roblin, Geo. R. Coldwell, who was then acting minister of public works, and Thomas Kelly, who conspired to take large sums of money from the provincial treasury as "extras" in connection with the parliament buildings contract, and to

thus create a campaign fund with which to keep the government in power. The commission finds that before tenders were asked for it was decided that Kelly should be awarded the contract and that changes should afterwards be made which would be the excuse for the extra payments. In the carrying out of the scheme and in endeavoring to keep it hidden, the original conspirators had the assistance of the provincial architect, V. W. Horwood, and later of Dr. W. H. Montague, who became minister of public works, J. H. Howden, attorney general of the province, and Dr. R. M. Simpson, formerly president of the Conservative Association, and collector of the campaign fund. Inspectors, engineers, detectives and a lawyer also lent their assistance in falsifying records, giving perjured evidence and in bribing witnesses to leave the country in a last desperate effort to prevent the truth being made known. Members of the Manitoba legislature also assisted the conspirators, for the Conservative majority on the public accounts committee succeeded in having a report adopted which declared that all expenditures had been properly made and full value given by the contractors. Previously, when charges were laid against the Roblin government, the opposition were met by a denial, by counter charges against some other Liberal government, and by a refusal to permit investigation. The same defence was made on this occasion, and it is possible that the mass of villainy that has been laid bare by this commission would have remained hidden if the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Douglas Cameron, had not asserted his authority as the representative of the Crown and insisted on the appointment of a royal commission, composed of men in whose integrity the public of all shades of political opinion had absolute confidence. The guilty have now been exposed, ejected from office and humiliated, and their political opponents who made and proved the charges against them are in power. So far, so good. Two things more the public demand—the recovery of the money which has been stolen and the punishment of those who have been guilty of crime. The new government has given its undertakings that this shall be done. Caveats have been placed upon all the property known to be owned by Thomas Kelly & Sons, or members of the firm, and a civil action will be brought to recover the amount of the overpayments. Criminal prosecutions are also being prepared for and the arrest of some of the ex-ministers and others involved will probably take place in the near future. If we are to have clean politics and honest government, it is necessary that thefts by cabinet ministers and government contractors for the benefit of themselves or the party campaign fund should be punished in the same way as the thefts of other criminals.

IS CONSCRIPTION COMING?

A significant change in the regulations governing enlistment in Canada for service in the war, is the announcement that henceforward married men and youths between 18 and 21 years of age will be accepted without having the consent of their wives or parents. The request has also been made that men who

were rejected earlier in the war, on account of physical defects, should again offer their services, the requirements having been relaxed to some extent, and arrangements having been made to perform operations in cases where this will make the volunteer fit for service. This may be taken as an indication that the Canadian military authorities now realize the necessity of training and equipping every fit and willing man to fight the battles of the Empire in this crisis. In some quarters it is regarded also as a step towards conscription. We do not believe, however, that in Canada at any rate, compulsory military service is either necessary or possible of enforcement. There are large numbers of men in this country, among them a great many Canadian born, who have no desire to go to war and who can only do so at great sacrifice, but who are willing to answer the call when they are convinced that it is necessary for them and others similarly situated, to enlist in order to carry the war to a successful issue. Many of these are enlisting at the present time, and it is largely such as these, with a few who were rejected at the outbreak of war, who have been filling up the new battalions which have been raised in record time in the West during the past few weeks. After harvest and threshing, when a large number of men are released from the farms, there will no doubt be a big rush of recruits without any compulsion. It is reported, however, that some of those engaged in recruiting are making verbal threats that conscription is bound to come. The people of Canada, we believe, will not tolerate conscription. The British Empire is fighting for freedom and freedom itself requires that no man shall be able to compel another to fight and possibly to sacrifice his life against his own free will. It is easy to imagine what would happen in some of our foreign-born communities if conscription were attempted. We must win this war, as far as Canada is concerned, at least, with volunteer troops.

NOVA SCOTIA'S HORSE GRAFT

The Davidson Royal Commission now investigating the purchase of horses in the Maritime Provinces for military purposes, is unearthing a miserable situation. Horses were sold to the military authorities that were unfit for any purpose whatever, some of them being over thirty years old, and neither sound in wind nor limb. War horses need to be young and sound. The horse scandal is as bad as the graft in surgical supplies and boots. It is to be hoped that when Commissioner Davidson hands in his report to Premier Borden he will instruct the Department of Justice to prosecute every offender to the limit and punish them as they deserve. Public opinion is strongly in favor of putting an end to the reign of graft. As in Manitoba so in Nova Scotia several of the chief witnesses wanted by the Royal Commission have found it convenient to remain in the United States. But sooner or later they must face justice and pay the penalty for their misdeeds.

The people of Alberta have finished the booze business without upsetting the "constitooshion."