

FARM LABOR QUESTION

There has never been a time since the Canadian West has been growing wheat for export and quite possibly there may never again be a time of equally imperative demand for the absolute maximum of production in the Canadian prairie provinces as that which obtains for the year 1917. Food supplies of all kinds the world over are low, dangerously low, and should the war continue in Europe for another year or two there is danger of a very wide-spread scarcity bordering on famine with possible consequences of the utmost seriousness. But even if the war should end before the year 1917 has spent itself there is sure to be the utmost need for every bushel of wheat which the western prairies can produce.

It is true that the suggestion of the Federal Government to take over the entire 1917 wheat crop at an arbitrary price which would probably bring a net return to the western farmers very close to, if not actually under the cost of production has placed somewhat of a damper upon what had been an enthusiastic campaign for a maximum of production. It is scarcely conceivable, however, that after the action which was taken by the Canadian Council of Agriculture the authorities at Ottawa can be so short-sighted as to discriminate against western agriculture by commandeering the 1917 wheat crop at an arbitrary price, close to the cost of production, while at the same time allowing all other industries to fix their remuneration for production or for service with no limit other than that which is forced upon them by the competition of other countries over a high wall of protective tariff.

Believing fully that the Federal Government has thought better of its contemplated action in this regard and that the wheat production of 1917 will be permitted to compete with the wheat of the world in establishing its value, we believe that every farmer in Western Canada should bend his energies to secure a maximum production for 1917 and if allowed the same opportunities in the marketing of his crop that are allowed to all other producers we feel confident that he will secure a return which will make the heavy sacrifices necessary to attain such production a sound investment.

Ottawa Not Practical

One of the great difficulties with those who at Ottawa control our destinies is their lack of familiarity with local conditions as they are in the west. It has been in the minds of many that vast acreages of new land could be brought under cultivation in the spring and produce a paying crop during the current year. Every westerner knows that this is utterly impracticable. The only ways in which the production for 1917 can be materially increased are by such means as better cultivation of the land in the spring and possibly following up with harrowing after the crop is up in order to conserve the moisture and thus help to insure the crop against possible drought during the summer. The only means by which any considerable acreage could be added to the normal acreage for the current year would be by plowing and putting into grain such lands as under normal conditions would be put under summerfallow. Every experienced farmer knows that to crop land in any year which ordinarily and in the regular rotation which every good farmer practices should this year be brought under summerfallow is nothing less than mortgaging the future for a term of years. Once a regular rotation has been interfered with by foregoing a year's summerfallow it means not only that there cannot be a maximum production in 1918 but also that for several years there must be a special effort and sacrifice to bring back the farm into the regular cycle of operations. It is therefore essential that a more than ordinarily profitable price should be obtainable for the crop of 1917 or no farmer can reasonably afford to increase his acreage by putting into crop such land as he would normally summerfallow.

It is of course true that here lies an excellent opportunity for truly patriotic endeavor by men on the land who can afford to take the risk themselves and who will not be in danger of financial failure by so doing. But on the whole the best permanent interests of this country can be served only by the practice of the very best methods of culti-

vation, war or no war. There was the same imperative demand for maximum production during 1915 and 1916, though certainly the food shortage of the world was not then so evident, but it should be apparent to everyone that a maximum production in any one year must discount the possibility of production during the succeeding year.

No pains should be spared in assuring that such acreage as is sown is put in in the best possible shape and with the best possible cultivation and to ensure this it is absolutely essential that a very large amount of outside labor be imported. The government—both federal and provincial—are doing splendid work in this connection.

The Department and Labor

The following is a copy of a circular letter sent out by the Bureau of Labor, Agriculture Department, Regina, to all local secretaries of the association. It is sincerely to be hoped that each has responded with alacrity to this appeal for co-operation in an effort to solve this pressing problem in the best interests of all.—J.B.M.

Regina, March 16, 1917.

Dear Sir:—The Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the Dominion Immigration Department, is sending special farm labor agents to the United States for the purpose of securing farm help for Saskatchewan.

In order that our agents may be able to select the right kind of men it will be necessary for them to have definite positions to offer prospective laborers. It is therefore essential that we secure as quickly as possible applications from farmers requiring help for the coming summer. Will you be good enough to bring this matter to the attention of the farmers in your district at the earliest possible date.

In order to secure men from the States it will be necessary to pay a higher wage than that paid in the States. A wage of \$50.00 per month for eight months' engagement will make it possible for us to secure first class men. We expect that the men secured by our agents from the States will begin to arrive about the end of March and the first week of April. Only those farmers who have applications on file with us will be assured of getting men. Will you accept applications from farmers in your district and forward same to us. Applications for men should state wages and length of engagement, whether all-round farm hands or stock men, it should also give the name of some person at the nearest railway station who will direct men to farmers.

Thanking you in anticipation for your co-operation in this matter.

Yours faithfully,
THOMAS M. MOLLOY, Secy.

A GRAIN GROWERS' SUNDAY

Central Secretary:—Traversing A. E. Randall's ideas totally, I see no reasonable objection why we should not have a G.G. Sunday. There are many good reasons why there should be such a day set apart for us who want it. It will not be compulsory for Mr. Randall to observe it. Mr. Randall selects the strangest bodies—Buddhists, Mohammedans, Mormons, Confucians, Agnostics, Pagans—this is the usual "smart" Free Thinking "style" to lump us up together. We have many nationalities here, Japanese, Chinese, etc., but the people with Christian views outnumber these strange bodies. We learn at church the Almighty One is "Our Father" and these strange people, even Agnostics, are His children and we must be charitable to all men because of this. The Christian church is the greatest unifying factor in our midst. It is complained that we farmers and our families live isolated lives. The church brings us together on these prairies week by week, rubs the rough edges off us, makes us friendly and does more to make us good neighbors and sociable than any other organization we have. Frankly, I go to church because I note the best people of our neighborhood go, the people with the best reputations, those (on the

whole) who are the most straight forward and upright in their lives and dealings. Mr. Randall gratuitously says: "There is no good in going to church; those who don't go are just as good." I have mixed freely with men calling themselves Free Thinkers and Atheists, and I know better. At church one's thoughts are directed to the best views of life. We are lifted above our narrow self. We learn there are greater ideals in life than grasping dollars or material success. We find the purest and highest ethical principles taught there.

I am glad that in some Grain Growers' Conventions the meeting begins with singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the Lord's Prayer is offered. I have seen Catholics and Protestants meet at the same church on these prairies. They are not my "creed" but I have regularly attended Methodist, Presbyterian and Moravian services and find no difference in the teaching. Many of the sects differ only on points of church government and are steadily uniting. For ten years I was connected with a large Union church and no man was asked of his "creed."

I had a son killed in France last November. He wrote home that the men are not altogether saints but only a few believe there is no God and no hereafter. "Ralph Connor" (Dr. Gordon) tells us he has ministered with acceptance to dying Catholic soldiers and carries a Crucifix for the purpose. Indeed our soldiers at the front are being ministered to by Chaplains of all Christian denominations and find little difference. We farmers, too, can have a united service once a year surely.

WM. HORDEN.

Dundurn, Sask.

CRAIGEN ROUSES ENTHUSIASM

Central Secretary:—I feel I should be remiss in my duty should I omit to write a few words of appreciation of our District Director, P. L. Craigen, who held a meeting here on February 1.

Owing to 30 degrees below weather, only about 20 stalwarts braved the elements, but they were amply repaid by the very interesting and highly instructive address to which they were privileged to listen.

One point that especially commended Mr. Craigen's words was the lack of more or less abusive comment against the local powers-that-be—storekeepers, lumbermen, etc. Many speakers, while doubtless equally sincere in their wish to better conditions for the agriculturalist, adopt unfortunate methods and leave everyone feeling rather sore and an unavoidable suspicion of mistrust between country and town.

Mr. Craigen touched briefly upon conditions in the early days which led up to the necessity for the farmers' organization and traced the history and developments of the movement from that date till the present time; and of the various offshoots from the original association.

We were especially interested in the elevator question as we are hoping to see a co-operative elevator at Vidua and indeed, the history of the phenomenal success of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company would excite enthusiasm anywhere. The same success has attended all the farmers' associations and I think it speaks volumes for the ability of the leaders that with no more support than they have had, they can point to such achievements. It makes one wonder, supposing all the farmers would get in line, what is there that the association could not do for its members?

Mr. Craigen is certainly the "right man in the right place," and we hope he will be able to make us many more visits as beneficial as that of February 1. One such meeting creates more interest than weeks of well meant but more or less unavailing effort on the part of our local leaders, "prophets without honor," and we trust that in time it will be possible for the central

executive and district directors to visit all locals at short intervals.

LEWIS JOHN HARVEY,
Secy.-Treas. Vidua G.G. Assn. Ltd.

ANNUAL MEETING AT SWANSTON

Central Secretary:—Owing to stormy weather which interfered with our annual meeting which was called for January 17, the officers of Swanston Grain Growers' Local were obliged to postpone their meeting until January 24. The meeting of this date was quite representative and the following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Percy E. Roblin; Vice-President, Peter Hill; Directors, R. Law, Wm. Walker, Jno. McKay, Webber Balkwell, Wm. Allen; Members, P. E. Roblin, Peter Hill, Jno. R. Law, Wm. Walker, Jno. McKay, L.M. Wm. Allen, Melville Allen, Jas. Hill, W. T. Patterson, Peter Hill, Jr., Geo. Foster, Webber Balkwell, Thos. Watson, Chas. Watson, Wm. Watson, Alfred Watson, Jas. Danbrook, all of Govan.

The newly appointed secretary was Webber Balkwell, Govan P.O. Kindly revise your mailing list to his name, instead of mine, as it now is. Mr. Balkwell is mailing you the central dues which I presume will reach you about the same time as this report.

In a recent letter from you, you intimated that you have not received the dues from this local for 1916. This, however, must be an oversight on your part, as we hold a receipt from you, dated February 5, 1916, for our dues sent you by Jas. Danbrook who was acting secretary in my absence. This receipt I have given Wm. Allen, our official delegate to Moose Jaw, and trust that the matter will be satisfactorily arranged.

PERCY E. ROBLIN, Secy.

PANGMAN W.G.G.A. COLLECTS

Central Secretary:—Find enclosed \$11.30 for the Belgian Relief Fund, the proceeds of a collection taken at a social on December 29.

MRS. C. CLEWS,
Sec., Pangman W.S.G.G.A.

LAC VERT WOMEN SEND \$50.00

Central Secretary:—Would you kindly accept the enclosed \$50.00, raised by the Women's Section of the Lac Vert Grain Growers in aid of the suffering Belgians.

PERCY HEUGH,
Sec.-Treas., Lac Vert Local.

GETS LIFE CERTIFICATE

Central Secretary:—Received the life membership certificate and frame which I consider splendid indeed. Please accept my sincere thanks for same and oblige,

R. W. HOLLAND.

TO EMERGENCY FUND

Central Secretary:—Enclosed is a money order for \$22.50 given by Thornfield G.G.A. for the Emergency Fund. This local has undertaken to collect subscriptions and renewals for The Grain Growers' Guide.

ALF. N. MANN,
Sec.-Treas., Thornfield G.G.A.

BUILDING FIGHTING FUND

Central Secretary:—Enclosed please find donation of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) toward the Fighting Fund of the association.

GEO. B. HARE,
Sec.-Treas., Camberley G.G.A.

RE FIGHTING FUND

Central Secretary:—Enclosed you will find money order for \$12.75 to apply on Fighting Fund.

B. A. HAMPTON,
Sec.-Treas., Kalamazoo G.G.A.

ORDERING LUMBER AHEAD

Central Secretary:—About January 24 I ordered a car of lumber thru you which I have finished unloading today. It is the best car of lumber I have had yet thru the Grain Growers and was all satisfactory.

J. W. BARKER,
Sec., Percy Co-op. Assn., Ltd.

Central Secretary:—I am dropping a line to you, to let you know that the car of lumber came thru in due time, and turned out to be exactly as ordered. The quality was excellent, and all parties concerned seemed well satisfied.

H. P. WICKENS,
Sec., Last Chance G.G.A.