The Grain Growers' Guide

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CONSCRIPTION OF WEALTH

Lloyd George has frequently declared that this great war will be won for the Allies with the "silver bullet." In other words, it will be the financial resources of the British people and their allies which will enable them to triumph over Germany and her supporters. Realizing this fact the British government has imposed taxes upon the wealthy to a degree hitherto unheard of. All those in Great Britain who are making money out of munitions or from shipping or from other lines of business are being taxed very, very heavily to provide the money necessary for carrying on the war. In Britain the importance of the money is not overlooked; in Canada on the other hand, practically all attention is being given to recruiting. Public men and the press generally are devoting their chief energies to discussing plans to secure more recruits. A scheme is now under way for national registration, and there is always more or less talk of conscription. But neither the Government or the press are paying much attention to the financial situation.

Thruout Canada we are raising huge sums of money for Red Cross, Belgian Relief, Polish Relief, Returned Soldiers, Patriotic Funds and other war funds. With some small exceptions these funds are all being raised by voluntary subscriptions. Save for the corporation income tax there is absolutely nothing done to take into the public treasury a portion of the wealth of our wealthy people. The stamp tax and similar war taxes imposed a year ago bear more heavily on the poor than on the rich. With comparatively few exceptions the rich men of Canada are beyond the military age and are taking no personal part in the war. The young men are fighting the battle, sacrificing their lives and in the majority of cases the married ones are leaving their wives and families to an unknown future. Undoubtedly some of the rich are contributing to various funds, but despite all their contributions, are growing steadily richer and the poor steadily poorer while this war progresses. The young men are fighting for their country, but they are fighting to protect the property of the rich as well, and the rich are not paying their share of the cost. When people advocate conscription of men on the public platform, they should advocate conscription of wealth at the same time. If in defense of our country it is necessary for our young men to give their lives, surely it is equally necessary that our rich men give their money. If a young man who does not enlist is to be described as a "shirker" what term is strong enough to describe the man who is taking advantage of this great calamity to pile up wealth for himself at the expense of his fellows?

RETAILERS TAKING NOTICE

In Winnipeg city there is a growing protest against the high cost of living and vigorous demands are being made by several organizations for government investigation. Charges are freely made that manufacturers and dealers are taking advantage of war times to increase their prices and secure excess profits for themselves. Some of these charges made against the city grocers brought them together at once. They declared that about 90 per cent. of the goods which they carried had been increased in price by the manufacturers and wholesalers. The grocers in their public statement also included the following remarks:—

> "We would direct the attention of the Dominion and provincial governments, the city council, and all organizations who may be endeavoring to deal with this problem to the fact that the protection afforded manufacturers and combines in Canada is, in our opinion, responsible for many of the causes of advanced prices. The prices in Canada appear in many cases to be fixed, not upon the cost of production, but regulated by outside competition."

It is a very hopeful sign when the retail grocers of the largest city in the West begin to realize that a protective tariff is a factor in enhancing prices beyond a legitimate figure. Ordinarily these enhanced prices make little difference to the grocers because they simply hand it on to the consumer the only loss to the grocer being a proportionate decrease in the total volume of trade. Many of the grocers are no doubt enjoying very substantial credit from the manufacturers, and in normal times would not protest against the exactions of the protected interests, but when the city consumers begin to make it hot for the grocers they are compelled in self defence to uncover the real culprits in the rapid increases in the cost of living.

There is absolutely no doubt in the world that a protective tariff is accountable for a very large proportion of the increase in the cost of living. Sir George Foster, as we pointed out last week in these columns, stated that the protective tariff was given for the special purpose of permitting manufacturers to increase their prices. If they didn't do it when the law was specially passed to permit them to do so, they would hardly be human.

PROVIDING PROTECTION FROM HAIL

Hail damage to grain crops in Saskatchewan has been unusually severe this year. It is estimated that more than ten per cent. of the total crop has been destroyed. In ordinary years the average annual loss from hail is shown to be about two per cent. When the Municipal Hail Insurance Act was formulated and passed in 1913 it was anticipated that considerable losses might be experienced any year, but it was hoped that an adequate reserve fund could be built up to take care of any abnormal demands upon the resources at the disposal of the commission. Until the present year the Municipal Hail Insurance has been extremely satisfactory. Each year it has been possible to pay all claims in full and put aside a certain amount for a contingency fund. By keeping the business in their own hands, farmers have been able to carry their risks at the lowest possible rate; operating costs have been kept down to a minimum and the greatest possible percentage of the money paid in has been returned. In formulating any scheme to remedy the present condition of affairs, which shows a total revenue of $1,500,000 to meet claims estimated at $3,600,000, these principles should be retained. The problem is a difficult one and its successful solution will tax the best brains of all farmers, politicians or others, who have the successful development of the country at heart. The Municipal Hail Insurance plan is the best one yet discovered, and it should be possible to amend it to meet all contingencies. On the Saskatchewan page of The Guide this week, Mr. Musselman gives a well thought out plan towards this end which deserves the most careful consideration.

FARM COST ACCOUNTING

It cannot be emphasized too much that farming is a business and as such ought to be conducted in a business-like way. But is it? What percentage of farmers can show even at the end of the year what the profit or loss on their investment actually is? The average business man can see at a glance any time he wants to just how his business stands. Very few farmers keep accounts complete enough to be able to do this and it is questionable whether on the ordinary farm such would be practicable. But every farmer should have a system of accounts that will show him at the end of each year what each part of his work is costing. As is outlined in an excellent bulletin on Farm Cost Accounting by the late Professor G. G. White, Manitoba Agricultural College, a resume of which appeared in last week's issue, a complete accounting system for the average farm will require just three records, namely, an inventory, a financial record and a work record. With these every department of the farm can be checked up at will and any losses remedied. One of the reasons also why many farmers have much difficulty in securing bank credit is because they have no definite statement of their assets, no accurate record showing the profit in their business and even no memorandum showing what money they owe and what date payments on this have to be made. The keeping of suitable cost accounts is a paying proposition.

THE WASTE OF LIQUOR

The economic aspect of the liquor question is beginning to thrust itself on the British people. At the time when the nation is demanding every man, every pound of food, every ton of transportation, and every dollar, the tremendous burden of the liquor traffic is both a crime and a menace to the safety and freedom of the Empire.

A British statistician, Arthur Mee, presents some astonishing figures on this subject. Over 500,000 workers are engaged in producing intoxicating liquor. This liquor has used up since the war began over 3,000,000 tons of food which would otherwise have been available for the necessities of the people. The handling of this has necessitated the haulage of 60,000,000 tons of unnecessary material over the roads and railways. At a time when the price of coal has created a condition of privation for the poorer classes, the drink manufactories have used no less than 3,000,000 tons, whilst in conditions which have led the government to contemplate the serious curtailment of the space given to the transportation of various kinds of literature by the merchant marine, not less than 60,000,000 cubic feet have been surrendered to the carrying of the ingredients required for the drink trade. Finally, $2,500,000 a day are poured into the tills of the sellers of drink, and this at a time when the government is asking that the savings of the country shall be utilized for investment in the various war loans. Here is the British drink record for the first twenty months of war:

1,875,000,000	gallons	of	Beer
57,000,000	"	"	Spirits
17,000,000	"	"	Foreign Wines

For this drink, approximately $1,453,000,000, or enough to have purchased every day 80,000,000 cartridges or 300 aeroplanes, or three super-dreadnoughts every fortnight.

TRUTH WILL PREVAIL

In looking over the editorial page of the Toronto News of October 12, the mouthpiece of the Dominion Government, and the journalistic high priest of the protective tariff system, we were somewhat staggered to read the following:—

> "In this country we have commonly regarded manufacturers as among the leaders. They have been considered, owing to their success, as men whose opinions and actions were of consequence in the community. In many instances this deference has been justified. Not in all, for there are manufacturers here whose success is 99 per cent. tariff and one per cent. enterprise. Perhaps both the worthy majority and the others as well might be wise to reflect how the people by some measure of protection have supported their hands in the task of making Canada an industrial as well as an agricultural country. And they have an obligation to Canada."

Sir John Willison, editor of the News, must