

C.P.R. AND SCHOOL TAXES

Certain Eastern newspapers and politicians are very fond of talking about the debt which the West owes to the East for its self-sacrifice in bearing the whole cost of building the C.P.R. into this country. As a matter of fact, however, anyone who knows anything about Western conditions knows that the West is every day paying very dearly for the C.P.R. and for the bad bargain which Eastern politicians made to secure the construction of that road. The 25,000,000 acres of land which the C.P.R. got in the original contract were all Western lands, and many a Western farmer will have to hand over half the proceeds of his crop this fall as an instalment on the purchase of some of the land that was thus given away by the government. Everybody knows, of course, that the government has always allowed the C.P.R. to charge the people of the West from 66 to 100 per cent. higher rates for the carriage of freight and express parcels than it charges in the East for the same service. What we want to call special attention to just now, however, is the heavy burden which is placed upon the people of the West by the clause in the C.P.R. contract which exempts the lands granted to the C.P.R. from taxation. This exemption was supposed to extend for 20 years, but, through the carelessness of the people's representatives and the cleverness of C.P.R. lawyers, it is still effective though the contract was made 32 years ago. The result is that in many rural municipalities and school districts there is very little land which can be assessed for taxes. The lack of schools and roads in such districts can easily be understood. In such districts either the few farmers whose land is assessable must be excessively taxed, or schools and roads must be done without. This condition is seen at its worst in the C.P.R. irrigation district, in Alberta, where the railway company secured both odd and even numbered sections. Lands owned by the C.P.R. or held by others under agreement of sale are not liable for taxes. Those which have been patented to purchasers are liable, but there is such a small area taxable that in the school districts of Irricana, Crowfoot and Goderich it has been found impossible to support the schools. Goderich and Crowfoot schools have consequently been closed, while at Irricana the school is being maintained by private subscriptions. The C.P.R. in the year ending on June 30 last, made a profit of over \$46,000,000. Nevertheless, the children of farmers living on the prairies of Saskatchewan and Alberta are deprived of even a common school education because the C.P.R. through a legal quibble has escaped the obligation of paying taxes. It certainly is not justice that districts like those mentioned should be made to suffer through a mistake made by Parliament years ago, and it is now the duty of the government either to pass an amending act, requiring the C.P.R. to pay taxes on their land the same as other people do, or to make a grant from the Dominion treasury compensating municipalities and school districts for their loss of revenue.

CANADIAN WELFARE LEAGUE

To Winnipeg has fallen the honor of being the birthplace and the chosen permanent headquarters of the Canadian Welfare League. The league was organized at the conclusion of an important conference of Charities and Correction, attended by the foremost social workers of Canada and the United States. What augurs well for this new organization is not only its inspiring program but the fact that it begins its career of civic and national upbuilding free from all connections or affiliations which might hinder its work or give any grounds for prejudice in the minds of any class, section or

creed. Social workers frequently find their efforts defeated because the people they try to help look askance at the church or religious society which maintains them. New-comers are apt to think that denominational rivalry is the motive behind any philanthropy expended on their behalf, quite as much as their own betterment. All such obstacles are swept aside by the formation of the Canadian Welfare League. Dominion wide in its field of activity, its social outlook is just as broad, all classes, creeds and nationalities claiming an equal attention. It sets out with the ideal of being the clearing house for all progressive movements. The Welfare League will unify and direct the social work which now is often dissipated and turned in wrong channels by existing societies. But it will do more than this. When advanced public opinion knows that educational and reform work is being conducted as intelligently and efficiently as the most up-to-date business, there should come a marked impetus to every form of welfare work. The problem of the city will engage the Welfare League, and how best to grapple with the evils of slums, excessive rents, unemployment, child labor, the extortion of monopolies, the organized liquor traffic, and kindred wrongs. Rural life has its problems, too, and as most of the social work is now concentrated in towns and cities, the Welfare League's activity in bettering the conditions and removing the handicaps of country life should prove of special benefit. From the strong personnel of the Canadian Welfare League success would seem assured. Rev. J. S. Woodsworth, upon whom the brunt of organization work has rested, was unanimously chosen secretary, and the word "Failure" has never been written over any undertaking to which he has set his heart and brain. The Guide cordially supports the Canadian Welfare League and wishes for it a successful and aggressive future.

The Calgary News-Telegram still continues its bombardment of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company and The Grain Growers' Guide. In each issue The News declares that its attack is prompted solely by a pure and abiding love for the 700,000 common people of the Province of Alberta. If an investigation could be made into the ownership of The News-Telegram, it is very likely that the explanation of these volcanic eruptions would easily be ascertained. We would not expect The News-Telegram to admit that it had any connection with Messrs. Mackenzie and Mann, nor with the private elevator interests of Alberta, in which R. B. Bennett, M.P., and Sir Max Aitken, M.P., are interested. But there is a "nigger in the woodpile" somewhere. Fortunately no one will put any faith in the noisy protestations of The News-Telegram, but will realize that it is merely obeying orders from the interests that control it. On the whole we fancy that these attacks by the News-Telegram will be more beneficial than otherwise, and the longer they continue the greater will be the success of the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company. As far as The Guide and the Grain Growers' Grain Company are concerned they have both become so accustomed to mud-slinging and falsification from institutions that hate a square deal that they pay little attention to it.

The Montreal Journal of Commerce is authority for the statement that the Balkan war has cost 358,000 lives and \$1,300,000,000. Rather costly, but then the armament trust needs the money.

The annual convention of the Dominion Hotel Keepers' Association and the Canadian Conference of Charities and Corrections met simultaneously in Winnipeg last week. Is this a mere coincidence?

The Winnipeg Telegram of September 13 contained a despatch from Ottawa which began as follows:

"From a laudable desire to benefit the Canadian producer and consumer, the Borden administration is considering the feasibility of regulating ocean rates through the Railway Board precisely as rail rates are regulated. Mr. Drayton has been investigating the subject in England and is returning, it is said, with a mass of useful information."

Western farmers and shippers will be glad to note the Dominion Government's tacit consent that ocean freights are unreasonably high. It is difficult, however, to suppress surprise that Chairman Drayton should find time to investigate ocean rates when the railway rate case is still hanging fire, though it is nearly twenty months since gross discrimination against the West was proven. In this long interval the Board has authorized several increases in freight rates at the request of the railways. In view of these facts, when we are told that ocean rates will be regulated "precisely as rail rates," all we can say is "we hope not."

On his return from the Pacific Coast, Hon. Robert Rogers stated that if the Dominion Government chooses to sell Stanley Park, Vancouver, when its lease to the city expires, that is, in eighty years' time, the proceeds would pay off Canada's national debt. It is to be hoped that eighty years from now Canadian ministers will take account of other values besides money, and will realize that such a magnificent park is too valuable to be destroyed for any price. If the Dominion Government devoted the surplus millions of revenue to paying off the national debt instead of handing them to Mackenzie and Mann and other millionaire adventurers it would not take anything like eighty years to wipe out the whole debt.

Our wheat crop is a good one, safely harvested about three weeks earlier than last year and of exceptionally high quality. This is proof of our contention that this western country is naturally without superior. But after all that Nature has done we shall now see how the man-made "improvements" will prevent the profits from the wheat crop going into the hands of the men who produced the wheat. Now that we have the crop let us try to make conditions such that we shall get the benefit of it. Watch the price fall and see the better market to the south, from which we are fenced out to satisfy the "loyalty" of the Triple Alliance.

The Dominion Government expenditures for August totalled \$18,227,069, according to the official figures of the Finance Department. This means an increase of \$6,772,193 over the expenditure during August, 1912. The net public debt increased by \$3,681,217 during last month. Are we dreaming, or did Mr. Borden preach economy and retrenchment during his days of opposition?

The annual convention of the Canadian Bankers' Association will be held in Winnipeg on Thursday, September 25. A splendid subject for debate would be:

"Resolved, that in future Western farmers shall be charged only the same rate of interest as other people."

We are afraid this would not pass, but they might discuss it anyway.

A newspaper heading says: "Sir William Mackenzie looks for easier money very soon." Easier money, indeed! Wasn't that \$15,600,000 he got at the last session of Parliament "easy money" enough for him?

When the Canadian Senate vies with the House in passing a low tariff measure, as the American Senate has been doing, it will be soon enough for us to regard our Parliament as abreast of the times.

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