

The Brain Growers' Guide

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Military Administration

Last week the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario, held a two-day session in Winnipeg. The Council is composed of the executive officials of the farmers' organizations in each province. The most important subject under discussion at the Council meeting was the administration of the Military Service Act and its amendments, and of the order-in-council and amendments cancelling exemptions. After careful consideration, the memorandum, which appears on another page of this issue of The Guide, was drafted and forwarded to the government at Ottawa. This memorandum is worthy of the careful consideration of the government. It was prepared by men whose knowledge of the subject under discussion is probably wider than that at the disposal of the government. As expressed in the memorandum, the organized farmers of Canada are determined that the war must be prosecuted to a successful conclusion no matter what the cost.

Much narrow-minded and ignorant criticism has been levelled at the farmers of Canada recently. They have been accused of selfishness and lack of patriotism, but their record warrants neither accusation. The support given by the farmers to the prosecution of the war has not been surpassed by any other class in Canada. There are exceptions, of course, to every rule, and there are just as many exceptions amongst the other classes. The crux of the situation is largely summed up in that clause of the organized farmer's memorandum which reads as follows:—

That the desire of the Government that leave of absence should be granted in cases of extreme hardship has not been achieved in a large number of cases as a result of the ill-advised and arbitrary actions of minor military officials, which has led to much unrest throughout the country, and we would instruct our executive to lay the situation thus created fully before the Government with the object of preventing further miscarriage of justice such as has occurred in connection with the drafting of young men between the ages of 20 and 22 years, and of ensuring leave of absence as provided for by the government to those entitled to that right.

Unrest and discontent at the present time throughout rural Canada is due largely to the administration of the order-in-council cancelling exemptions on the 20 to 22-year class. The amendments made to the order, made by the government, provided leave of absence, which practically meant exemption, for extreme cases of hardship. Evidence gathered by the farmers in all four provinces represented at the Council meeting showed that the intention of the government in many instances was not carried out in the administration of the order. Neither does it appear that the intention of the order was deliberately disregarded by the chief military authorities. The injustices which have been committed have been due largely to arbitrary action on the part of subordinate military officers who have, in many cases, according to the evidence, absolutely disregarded the government order and have refused or prevented exemption to a considerable number of young men who were fully entitled to receive it. The effect of this has created widespread unrest and discontent not only in the East but also in the West.

The successful prosecution of the war necessitates a spirit of co-operation among the people of Canada. That spirit cannot be

maintained if even-handed justice is denied or prevented. The organized farmers have announced their willingness to place the facts before the government. There is no desire on the part of the farmers as a class to shrink their duty. Judicious and sympathetic administration of the order-in-council would have resulted largely in a selective draft from the 20 to 22-year-old class. Cases of hardship would have been exempted and those absolutely necessary to the farms would have remained. The fact that this spirit was not everywhere maintained in the administration is what has brought forth the memorandum from the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

When Sherman said "War is Hell," he told the truth. That, every Canadian knows full well. This war has levied a terrific toll upon Canada and has caused sacrifices beyond computation. Further sacrifices will be necessary, but it is imperative that the utmost wisdom should be used in the administration of every war measure, particularly with those affecting the lives of human beings. Our boys at the front must be supported and the war must be fought through to victory, but even this determination should not in any way interfere with a just and sympathetic administration of any and all orders drafting young men for the army.

New Freight Rate Increases

It is announced that the Board of Railway Commissioners has authorized all the railways in Canada to increase their freight rates by 25 per cent. on transcontinental shipments, to take effect the beginning of August. This 25 per cent. increase is to be in addition to the 15 per cent. increase granted by the railway commission a few months ago. No explanation whatever is given for this enormous increase in the freight charges.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the freight rate increase, however, was published the statement that 50,000 railway employees have demanded increases in wages amounting to 100 per cent. It may, therefore, be assumed that the freight rates are to be increased to provide the revenue to meet the increase in wages to employees. That such an extraordinary increase should even have been proposed, let alone authorized, without any explanation is a most astounding action on the part of the Board of Railway Commissioners. No doubt an attempt will be made to justify the increase because the United States Government authorized a similar increase on American railroads a few weeks ago. But there is a vast difference between the situation in Canada and the United States. In the great republic the government operates all the railways and the owners receive only a guaranteed dividend based on their past earnings. In Canada the government owns a part of the railroads while the others are in private hands.

There will be no general protest against freight rate increases that may be necessary to pay the railway employees wages adequate to the increased cost of living, but there will be a most vigorous protest against making any additional donations to the private railway companies who have already received too generous treatment at the hands of the government and the public. The people of Canada will anxiously await the statement to which they are entitled, giving some explanation of this extraordinary freight rate increase. If the government

proposes to make the increase in freight rates following the American example, then the government should also follow the American example in taking over all the railroads and operating them as public utilities, or by paying the owners dividends based upon their past earnings with a reasonable maximum. This arbitrary ruling on the part of the Board of Railway Commissioners with absolutely no explanation will not serve to increase the popularity of that board throughout Canada. The Canadian public is willing to pay any reasonable rate for service rendered, and pay satisfactory wages to all employees, but they have a perfect right to know what they are paying for, and why they are asked to pay it.

"Crowning a Cause"

Dr. J. H. Jewett, the great Congregationalist preacher, who for the past few years has occupied a prominent pulpit in New York, recently returned to his native England, and in a sermon delivered shortly after his arrival, in Westminster Chapel—a sermon which was described in the press of London "the greatest utterance of English character since August, 1914," he said: "There is one chief danger for us in this war. We are more intent on winning a fight than crowning a cause. Let us remind ourselves of our cause. Let us look up to the mountains. The snows of Lebanon are the source of every silver ribbon in the valley. Let us use the great Alpine words—Freedom, Justice, Truth, Righteousness—as Wordsworth used them, and Milton."

At the outset of the war, four years ago, the expression was frequently used by preachers, writers and political leaders, that "this is a war to end war." The words became almost hackneyed in their contradistinctive use with such words as Autocracy, Tyranny, Oppression, Militarism. Then, President Wilson about a year ago coined a phrase which has become almost the exclusive expression of the people of the allied nations in describing the purpose of their struggle against Germany. "To make the world safe for Democracy," he said, and the man on the street today has incorporated that epigram into the country's speech.

But in spite of these high-sounding professions, there are indications in Canada, even more pronounced than in England, which would suggest that some of us at least have forgotten that in 1914 this country set forth to crown a great cause, not simply to let loose the vials of rage and vindictiveness, and win a fight. We read, for instance, that in Toronto, "the city of churches" and notorious piety, a number of clergymen have issued an edict against playing the famous old Mendelssohn's Wedding March in their churches, because the composer happened to be partly German. It is also reported that in the same city the officials of the Canadian National Exhibition have forbidden any German compositions appearing on the musical programs of their annual fair this year. There has also been an agitation in Toronto and other centres, to abolish the teaching of the German language from the schools and universities, notwithstanding the fact that in Great Britain recently a special commission recommended to the Imperial Government the greater cultivation of modern languages, including German, in the educational courses of the United Kingdom. Doubtless, however, such mighty agitators are firmly convinced that they are not only "crowning a cause," but contribu-