

HUDSON BAY ROAD

The acting minister of railways, Hon. Dr. Reid, recently gave the House at Ottawa some information respecting the Hudson Bay Railway. Up to the end of last year, the expenditure upon this road, which will be an everlasting tribute as to what politics can thrust upon a country, was \$15,465,304. The length of the line from Le Pas to Port Nelson will be 424 miles. As acting minister of railways, Dr. Reid apparently felt it necessary to defend the road from its critics. He did it in a way which makes us believe that away back in Dr. Reid's innermost thoughts where political considerations are not allowed to enter, an opinion exists that the road is a farcical enterprise. He said, among other things, "While I myself may have had grave doubts as to the feasibility of this undertaking, yet I have come to the conclusion . . . that this road will be of value to the country in time to come." There was no doubt in his mind as to the navigability of Hudson Bay and Straits "for several months of the year." "But," he added, "it is true that during the first season, two vessels were cast away right at Nelson under circumstances which have never been satisfactorily explained," and "which have absolutely no bearing upon the practicability upon the Nelson route."

Dr. Reid even allowed his enthusiasm to say that he believed for the amount which the road will cost, it will "in years to come have a military value which will be well worth while," information which should be of interest to the minister of militia. "It is not expected, of course," said Dr. Reid, "that there will be any great rush during the first few years after the completion of this road and harbor." Continuing in the same strain, he says: "It is, of course, unfortunate that this great expenditure was commenced only a short time previous to the outbreak of war."

Dr. Reid's eulogy of the Hudson Bay railroad reads as if he, an unwilling victim, had been thoroughly instructed as to what to tell the House. But he said his piece very badly. However, what can we do when The Graingrowers' Guide, for example, says: "The East may as well understand that the West believes in the Hudson Bay route and will brook no interference with the scheme." Experience sometimes has to be bought dearly.

SOLDIERS' PENSIONS

It is gratifying to see that the Dominion government is seriously considering an upward revision of the pension scale for totally or partially disabled Canadian soldiers. The pension act as originally framed, appeared to be suitable at the time. After many months of experience, however, it is obvious that it contains many anomalies and unfair discriminations. This is an important matter because, first, it is an indication that we are not performing the duty we owe to our disabled soldiers and, second, that inadequate pensions will adversely affect the volume of recruiting. The analysis of this matter recently issued by Mr. Frank Darling's committee can have no adequate answer from the government except a revised act and the creation of a non-partisan pension board for its operation. The board should be composed of members representing various interests. The administration of the act is not properly a matter for the military authorities nor should it be involved in political considerations. The government appears to be friendly to suggestions of a revision of the act and the appointment of a board. The sooner this action is taken, the better the people will like it.

GUELPH'S COW

In the midst of our war preparations we should not overlook the fact that a Holstein cow at the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, has also been making a worthy record. She has thrown a challenge to all the cows that browse. On March 8th, she completed a new world's record for milk and butter fat production. From March 9th, 1915, to March 8th, 1916, she produced 20,072.9 pounds of milk containing 819.95 pounds of butter-fat, equivalent to 1,024.94 pounds of butter. This constitutes a record for cows milked twice daily, for both milk and butter-fat. All previous records of over 19,000 pounds of milk and 650 pounds of fat in a year have been made by cows milked three and four times daily throughout the greater part of the year. Only four cows in Canada, three Holsteins and one Jersey, have given more butter-fat in a year than has this cow. She was five years old at the commencement of her year's test, and was college-bred and raised at Guelph. At no time was she forced in feeding, the largest amount of grain fed being 12 pounds per day. Mr. Sam Shaw is the herdman who made this animal his special care. He and the animal are far more proud of the record than the Kaiser is of his iron cross factory.

HELP THE SEEDING

As a war measure, why not close the universities and the collegiate institutes on March 31st? Let the boys go back to the farm and help the cause. Mere talk of closing will not help get the seeding done.

GERMANY TRIES AGAIN

German government 5 per cent. bonds of its fourth war issue and 4½ per cent. treasury notes are being publicly offered at a heavy discount in New York. The banking firm making the issue there says: "Since the outbreak of the European war, foreign bonds have become increasingly attractive to the American investor, and we recommend the above-mentioned issues feeling confident that they will rank with the highest grades of foreign government bonds. Very attractive features are the high credit enjoyed by the issuing government, the present low rate of exchange as a basis for purchase, the high interest yield with rates for exchange at normal, and the substantial profit which will surely accrue to holders through the readjustment of exchange after the war."

German exchange in every financial centre is at more than 20 per cent. discount. British exchange is at only 2 per cent. discount in New York, and Britain has borrowed heavily and is buying millions of dollars worth of goods in the United States. The above description of the latest German offering in New York, therefore, has a supreme contempt for the facts. The statement that "substantial profit" will accrue to holders of these bonds after the war is made in face of the fact that when an attempt was made to sell \$10,000,000 of bonds in the United States last year, all the German sympathizers in that country subscribed between them only \$3,000,000 of the issue! They are, apparently, willing to back their country with many things but not money. German bonds are likely to be sold over Britain's gold counter at a substantial discount after the war, and much German paper money will be available as artistic wrapping paper.