

EXEMPTION OF FARM LABOR

By S. W. Yates

The many letters recently received at the Central office from farmers who consider they have been unjustly treated with respect to applications for exemption from military service are evidence, if such were needed, that a large number of our members are intensely interested in this question. Several cases have been brought to our notice in which the decisions of the tribunals would work incalculable harm if persisted in, and that at a time when farmers are being urged on every hand to increase the acreage under crop. In the particular cases in mind, indeed, the decision, if there were no intervention, would mean that the land previously cropped would have to go out of cultivation instead of its area being increased. Such decisions make one wonder whether the tribunals have received even the slightest consideration at the hands of the members of the tribunals, for it would seem that a mere statement of the facts, in many instances, would be sufficient to turn the scale in favor of the applicant. Two cases may be cited which have been brought to our attention. The first is that of Nelson Spencer, director of District No. 3 of our association. Mr. Spencer has two sons, one 20 years of age, on whom chiefly rests the burden of the farm, and another 14 years, who is unable to attend school owing to ill-health, whilst the father himself is not able to do much heavy work. Mr. Spencer owns a half-section farm and 50 head of cattle, most of which will have to be sold if the son is taken. The other case is that of a younger man at Waldeck, who runs three quarter sections without help, and who, as in the previous case, suffers from ill-health, and yet, in spite of these facts, has been granted only temporary exemption. These cases are no doubt typical of many others, and are such as scarcely leave room for doubt as to the course the exemption tribunals ought to have taken.

It will, therefore, be welcome news to our members that steps are to be taken immediately whereby farmers, farmers' sons and hired help will be left free to devote their attention to the land, where they can undoubtedly render the nation and the Empire the greatest service; and at the same time cases are to be appealed by the military authorities where exemption has been granted indiscriminately, or en masse as in Quebec. This means, of course, that those whose services are needed on the land are to secure exemption on appeal, while others who can better be spared for military service are to be sent to the army.

The memorandum issued by the government at Ottawa says: "The attention of the minister of agriculture has been drawn to a number of instances where some of the exemption tribunals have evidently misinterpreted the instructions of the military council respecting the drafting of men for overseas service, and have refused exemption to men who are absolutely needed to continue the operation of farms and the production of foodstuffs. The matter has been considered by the government and an order-in-council passed as follows:

"His Excellency the Governor-General, in council, upon the recommendation of the acting minister of agriculture, and under and by virtue of the provisions of the War Measures Act, 1914, and the Military Service Act, 1917, authorizes the minister of agriculture to appoint a representative of the department of agriculture in such counties or districts in any province of Canada as he may determine.

Order-in-Council

"1.—To attend the sittings of the

ORGANIZE A SEED CENTRE

The Grain Growers' Guide has arranged to give absolutely free of charge to every local association in Saskatchewan sufficient of world prize-winning registered wheat, oats, or barley to provide foundation stock for every member of the local. By securing this grain and organizing a seed centre, the yield of the entire community can be increased by at least five bushels per acre. Information is being forwarded to every local secretary. We will be pleased to forward full details to any member of any local making application. Address, Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg, Man.

Saskatchewan

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tribunals appointed under the Military Service Act, to guard the national interest in connection with the production of foodstuffs.

"2.—To appeal from the decision of the tribunals in any case where, in his opinion, the tribunal has not given due weight to the urgency of maintaining our food supplies.

"3.—To investigate and report upon appeals or applications for exemption where the ground of appeal or application is that the party seeking exemption should in the national interest be retained in food production rather than enrolled in the expeditionary force.

"The minister of agriculture has been looking into the matter very thoroughly for some days, and from information which has been received by him, he believes that some of the exemption tribunals have failed to give due weight to the urgency of maintaining our food supply. It has, therefore, been decided, on the recommendation of the minister of agriculture, that immediate action should be taken to prevent reduction of the output of foodstuffs and disorganization of work upon the farms.

"It has also been brought to the attention of the government by the minister of militia and defence that in some localities the tribunals have granted exemption indiscriminately and almost en masse, and the government has decided, on the recommendation of the minister of justice, to provide for the immediate hearing of the appeals taken by the militia authorities, so that the despatch of the necessary reinforcements will not be delayed by protracted appeals."

This will be good news, particularly to the many members of our association who have a special interest in this question, and if the instructions are faithfully carried out should ensure that the "soldiers of the soil" may make their plans for the future without any fear of further molestation.

TOM LAWRENCE DIES

By James Cruikshank

In the death of Thomas Lawrence of Hanley, the G.G.A. has lost one of its most devoted members, and Hanley has lost a man whose memory will be cherished for many a long day. Men and women he has known since his early days when the Saskatchewan valley



The Late Tom Lawrence

ley Land Company were developing the great tract of country lying between Regina and Warman.

He was late in years when he came to Hanley, but Old Tom, as he was known throughout the countryside, was a boy in spirits, and to the day of his death his zeal for reform and his ardor on behalf of any cause to which he allied himself surpassed the efforts of the great majority of men young enough to be his sons. A man of high principle

and fine business judgment, he made the modest capital which he brought with him from the United States to Hanley the foundation of a substantial fortune. A self-made man, who had experienced many buffets through life's way, he was generous to a fault, and could be depended upon to head any subscription list presented to him which, by any stretch of the imagination, could be deemed to be helpful to the community in which he lived.

A Man of Strong Convictions

Mr. Lawrence was a man of strong convictions, and took a most active part in the elections of 1908, 1911 and 1912. He did not seek political honors and could have represented his district had he cared to do so at Regina. He campaigned from the conviction that it was his duty to make others see the political issues of the day as he did, for he believed he was right and that the policies he believed in would best serve the country in which he lived. Everyone knew Tom Lawrence was sincere and his words carried weight in many a country school-house when the smooth eloquence of politicians fell unheeded, by uninterested and skeptical farmers.

There was no escaping Old Tom. He started out to convert a man to his way of thinking and stayed with it till he succeeded or the man subsided into silence. As a result, he was the prop and bulwark of the Liberal party in the Hanley district. Whatever candidate aspired for political honors in that neighborhood first tried to enlist Old Tom's sympathy. If he was worthy he got it and if he was not he was told so, just as plainly as it was possible to state the case. Many a man who is now a well-to-do farmer owes a debt of gratitude to the late Mr. Lawrence for a helping hand through the early days, when seed grain and even "grub" was scarce. As the first storekeeper in Hanley, he gave credit to scores of new settlers, and, while they wrestled with nature on the land, he was fighting his battles with the government from Hanley.

Enthusiastic Farmer

From the beginning he was an enthusiastic member of the G.G.A. and one of the first hundred life members. It was through his efforts that the Hanley local some years ago was awarded a prize for securing the most new life members, and he worked at that self-appointed mission as hard as if a million dollars were at stake. An ardent free trader, Mr. Lawrence was a member of the great delegation which visited Ottawa and met Sir Wilfrid Laurier with the demand for a revision of the tariff. The farmers were new to eastern politicians then, but within a couple of years the Liberal government of the day saw the force which was behind the Grain Growers' movement and endeavored to negotiate the reciprocity treaty which was defeated at the polls in 1911. Mr. Lawrence was one of the men behind that movement which led to the sending of the largest delegation which, up to that time, had ever visited Ottawa. By that time he could have moved to the Pacific Coast, as several of his friends had done. He was well-to-do and could have taken life easily for the balance of his days, but his heart was in Saskatchewan and he enjoyed fighting for reforms which he judged would improve the lot of the many people whom he had personally induced to come here.

Born in Ireland 73 Years Ago

He was born in Wicklow County, Ireland, 73 years ago, and came with his parents to Prince Edward County, Ontario, when four years of age. In early life he was engaged in the lumbering and farming industries, but, meanwhile, found time for participation in the public affairs of the district, being finally honored with the reeveship of the county.

After a residence of 39 years in Prince Edward, he moved to Polk County, Minnesota, where he successfully engaged in the farming and mercantile business. His ability and business experience, together with his strength of

character, soon brought him into public life, and he served as sheriff of the county for a number of years.

Heard the Call of the West

The opportunities of the Canadian West appealing to him, he moved in 1903 to Saskatchewan, settling in Hanley, where he opened the first general store. Quick to see the resources of the prairie, and with strong faith in the development of the province, he invested in farm lands in several different parts of Saskatchewan, and henceforward became an enthusiastic agriculturist. The advantages of the shorter water route to Europe appealed to him, and he advocated the construction of the railroad to Hudson's Bay, being one of the delegates who pressed upon Sir Wilfrid Laurier, during his western tour, the need for the road.

From its beginning he was an active member of the G.G.A., always attending its annual and provincial conventions, and taking part in the proceedings. The emergency fund of the association, to which he annually subscribed \$50, owes its origin to his efforts.

He was an active member and strong supporter of the Presbyterian Church of Hanley, and also an honored member of the Independent Order of Odd-fellows. His social sympathies and varied official and business experiences made him a pleasant companion and helpful associate, who will be greatly missed from the community.

Besides his many acquaintances, he leaves behind to mourn his departure a widow and two sons, G. D. Lawrence of Hanley and W. H. Lawrence of Aberdeen.

PATRIOTIC WOMEN GRAIN GROWERS

The following interesting reports have been sent in to Mrs. McNaughtan, and we have much pleasure in including them in this page.

Brownlee, December 3, 1917.

Dear Mrs. McNaughtan:—You will think the Brownlee Local very tardy in reporting. We have been very busy indeed. We held one very good meeting and will hold our regular monthly meeting again next Wednesday. Have one new member since writing you before, and others have promised to join at our next meeting.

On Friday evening, November 30, we gave a 10 cent social at the home of our vice-president, Mrs. Wendt, at which the sum of \$16.85 was realized, half of which we are giving to the Red Cross fund, and with the balance we are planning to start a library.

Enclosed please find membership dues of \$5.50. Some of our members have not yet paid their dues.

Yours sincerely,

MISS BESSIE BUCHANAN,

Sec'y Brownlee W.G.G.A.

WOMEN DIRECTORS MEET AT SWIFT CURRENT

The Women's Section district directors of District No. 14 held their meeting in the Red Cross room of the city hall, Swift Current. The attendance was small but interested and interesting. Mrs. Mitchell from the chair expressed her pleasure in meeting with the other women. She said there was a great amount of work for women to do, and counselled them to get women on the school boards and to attend the G.G.A. convention at Regina.

Mrs. English of Burnham local was appointed secretary of the meeting.

Mrs. Mitchell introduced Mrs. Haight, the vice-president, who is a splendid woman. Mrs. Haight took the lead in discussion on the "Plan of work," which included the work of the social service, trustees, medical inspection of schools, municipal hospitals, etc. Mrs. Haight gave considerable information in connection with child welfare, education, diseases, etc., showing that there was work for women which men could not be expected to do. She urged on the women present to take up the subjects for discussion at the different locals, and have resolutions sent in at once to the Central executive, so that they could be properly handled at the convention in Regina. She also spoke on the necessity of women on the school boards, also of the keeping after the different reforms until we got them, as it was most necessary for the welfare of the coming generations.

After a vote of thanks to Mrs. Haight and Mrs. English the meeting adjourned.