

The Brain Browers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, February 28th, 1917

BRITAIN'S MINIMUM PRICES

The British Government has established minimum prices for home-grown wheat and oats for the next six years, and for potatoes this year. The prices are \$1.77 $\frac{3}{4}$ per bushel for wheat during 1917, \$1.62 $\frac{7}{8}$ during 1918 and 1919, and \$1.33 during 1920, 1921 and 1922. Oat prices are to be \$1.13 per bushel in 1917, 93 $\frac{3}{8}$ cents during 1918 and 1919, and 72 cents during 1920, 1921 and 1922. Notice these prices are for home-grown wheat and oats. They are not necessarily the same for imported grains. Tho a war measure, everybody hopes and believes the war will be over long before 1922. The British Government, however, if it hoped to secure the fullest co-operation of the British farmer at the greatest crisis in history, had to hold out something more than a transitory price to induce him to undertake the additional costs of extended operations. The government could take no chances and is only now doing what many have advocated for two years. The new prices tho not as high for this year as the present prices of grain in Britain are much higher for 1920, 1921 and 1922 than the British farmer got before the war, when wheat was, Lloyd George states, \$1.01 $\frac{1}{4}$ per bushel. The new price for the years mentioned will be over 30 cents above that. What will be the effect? Undoubtedly it will stimulate British production this year very greatly. Indeed if it has not the desired effect we are practically sure to see compulsory tillage and perhaps even state control in Britain. Already in Ireland farmers tilling less than a ten per cent. increase are subject to heavy fines and the Department of Agriculture is planning to cultivate the land of those who do not obey regulations.

THE SUBMARINE BLOCKADE

The war is fast approaching an acute crisis. Two blockades are going on, the Allied blockade of Germany and Austria and the submarine blockade of Great Britain and Ireland. Each is trying to starve the other. The ancient game of starving cities has been transformed to the modern one of starving great states made up of millions of people. Lloyd George has just announced the inevitable to the people of Great Britain. Minimum prices are to be established for wheat and oats, minimum wages are to be guaranteed farm labor and importations of everything, but the most essential food products and munitions are to be virtually prohibited. In short, Great Britain is facing the necessity of bending every energy to the maximum production of food during the coming season. She must do that or stare defeat in the face. She is in danger of a big food shortage. Persons who have been lulling themselves under the assurance that everything will come out alright in any case the latest announcements ought to set thinking hard. It may not come out alright if every individual not only in Great Britain, but in Canada does not bend his greatest energies during the next few months to the solution of this greatest problem that Canada, the British Empire and the world has ever faced.

There is little doubt of the ultimate efficiency of the submarines. Admiral Jellicoe declared before the recent German declaration of unrestricted warfare that the danger from them was never greater than it is today. We have had Sir Edward Carson's warning that the problem is far from solution. Every day we read of the sea littered with the wrecks of merchantmen. Every day brings nearer the possibility of this blockade strangling Britain to the point not of privation, but of starvation. Never before in the history has the world

been surfeited with such an orgy of sensational news, every bit of which ought to have a personal significance, but too much of which has been received in a state of mental torpidity. The fears for the food supply of Great Britain that have been surging to and fro have now broken and the steps urged very many months ago by some of the clearest headed men in that country are now being adopted for they can no longer take chances on the vital matter of isolation. The British Navy will likely be able to meet the situation; but the country cannot afford to take chances.

The measures adopted by Great Britain are such as to guarantee a maximum of food production at home for this year, but it is impossible for that production to be sufficient to feed the people of those islands. They must depend on an outside supply and that supply ought to be as close to hand as possible. Canada is in the enviable position of not only being fairly certain of having a market for her supplies but also perhaps of completing that service which she has already begun by her contribution of men. She may have it within her power to supply Great Britain and the Allies at the critical time just the food they need. It may be a race of weeks, yes, even of days. The nation, Empire and the world are standing at the farmer's door asking for food. It is the duty of the farmer of this country in so far as is humanly possible to answer that demand. There should never be any possibility of reproach to the farmer for not doing his full duty at this time of the Empire's crisis.

PREPAREDNESS IMPERATIVE

One of the gravest problems the Western farmer is facing the coming season is a shortage of machinery repairs and supplies. The demand for steel for munitions has virtually created a famine in this material from which seeding, haying, harvesting and threshing machinery is made. Some companies are placing orders six to nine months ahead. Steel which was selling at 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents a pound one year ago has been selling today at 25 cents a pound. Coke for iron work that was worth less than \$3.00 a ton last year is worth over \$8.00 now and there is no certainty about getting it even at that price. The prices of steel plates, pipes and tubes are in much the same proportion. There is a scramble for pig iron. One company we know that recently had \$80,000 worth of boiler tubes on hand could have cleared them all out easily, but believed the demand from threshermen will be so insistent this fall that they would only be doing their full duty by holding part of these to supply that demand. But that is not all. The car congestion from the Atlantic seaboard back to Chicago has become so acute that cars of supplies which came thru in a few days last year are taking several weeks under present conditions. And every day the congested area backs farther inland. The lesson is obvious. All farmers who need repairs ought to get their orders in at once and all farmers who feel sure they will need certain new machinery ought to order that machinery now. The fullest co-operation is required to meet this situation and the farmer can do his part as well as the dealer or manufacturer. It is quite true that farmers cannot foresee weather conditions and that what may look like a good crop on the first of August may turn out two weeks later to be no crop at all. Neither can those supplying machinery foretell either disaster or bumper crops. The farmer should make his plans now in so far as possible and fulfil his part in solving this problem for it can only be solved by the co-operation of all concerned.

CAR SHORTAGE PROBLEM

Tho the car shortage problem in Canada is very serious, in some parts of the United States it has become desperate. The Chicago board of trade is frantically appealing for help to save that great city from famine. The board of trade claims that the railways and the Interstate Commerce commission have both failed to meet the crisis and an appeal is to be made to President Wilson. Slowly but surely public opinion is learning that great public utilities should be owned and operated by the government. Canada and the United States are the only two important countries in the world where the railways are in private hands.

A FARMERS' SUNDAY

To the United Farmers of Alberta belongs the honor of starting the movement for the setting apart of a special farmers' Sunday. It was proposed by resolution at the convention in 1916 and the executive selected May 21 last as the date of the first official observance. The convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, held at Moose Jaw recently, thought so well of the idea that a similar resolution was passed and Grain Growers' Sunday will be recognized officially in Saskatchewan this year. The intention is annually to set aside one Sunday on which special services will be held and special addresses to organized farmers given. As President Wood, of the Alberta organization, has pointed out, it is well to consider Christ's teaching as a factor in the solution of civilization's problems, for no matter what may be a man's orthodox opinion, he cannot afford to ignore the teachings of Christianity if he is investigating the laws of right. Here will be found the one and only key to the true and final adjustment of human affairs, social, economic and political.

The observance of a special Sunday has become a common practice among many different organizations in all walks of life; fraternal societies and labor long have had their special days. Why not the farmer? There is probably no more deeply religious class than those who till the soil. The more closely man lives to nature the more he becomes impressed with fundamental truths and the futility of superficial things. Out in the country, away from noise and distractions, there is opportunity for quiet thought and self analysis, for an "old-fashioned" Sunday of Bible study, profitable reading and church-going.

THE WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT

There is little doubt of the great danger to be claimed by the advocates of woman suffrage that the strongest reason for giving women the vote was that they had a special contribution to make to society and their outlook upon life was different from that of men. The best evidence that this claim had a solid foundation in fact is to be found in the new sort of resolution that is finding its way into the conventions of the organized farmers. Since a woman's department has come into being and the two conventions are conducted side by side, and the two executives work hand and hand during the year, a more social type of resolution has engaged the attention of the delegates. In their infancy the deliberations at these annual gatherings were concerned chiefly with economic problems, how to buy and sell to the best advantage, adjusting claims with railway companies and elevators and similar questions of dollars and cents.

This year a new note was struck. Much attention was given to medical aid for rural