

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, September 9th, 1914

THE WAR

The titanic struggle in Europe continues with unabated spirit. Slowly but steadily the forces of Great Britain and her allies are closing in on their enemies. Reliable news from the war zone is very scarce, but it is certain that thousands of good men are daily going to their death. Canada is doing her duty, and we can only await the outcome with patience and with deepest sympathy for all those who are suffering.

THE WHEAT SITUATION

The new wheat is moving thru Winnipeg towards Fort William in a steadily increasing volume, and yet the price remains firm and, in fact, it is rising. Last year when the crop began to move prices steadily declined until in the heaviest shipping season in October, 1 Northern wheat brought only 78 cents at Fort William. After paying freight, commission, elevator charges, threshing charges, and the other charges upon the wheat, it did not at that price return to the farmer in the majority of cases the cost of production. One Northern wheat worth \$1.20 per bushel at Fort William, in the shipping season, is something the farmers of this country have never seen before, and at this price there is a wide margin of profit for the producer. The abnormal conditions prevailing in Europe on account of the war have produced the high prices, and tho there may be some decline it seems altogether likely that prices will be very high thruout the season. It is probable that the Austrian and French harvests were completed before the outbreak of war. In Germany, Belgium and Russia the harvest would probably be only partially completed, and on the balance there would be a heavy loss. Wheat consumption by men on the battlefield would be heavier than during times of peace, tho whether the total consumption of wheat in the warring countries would increase or decrease is an unanswerable question. It is quite certain that there will be a big decrease in the fall seeding in the war areas and if the war continues for a few months longer, which it undoubtedly will, there will be a big decrease in the spring seeding as well. Considered from every standpoint it seems certain that there will be a tremendous shortage in the food supply of the war zone for the next eighteen months at least. Of course it is probable that the purchasing power of all these people will be considerably reduced on account of the war, and that they may on that account resort to cheaper foods. But there is bound to be a big shortage in all kinds of local food supplies in the warring countries, and the demand will fall upon the wheat fields outside of the war zone. For this reason it would be advisable for every farmer in Western Canada to do his share towards supplying the increased demand for food. If an extra effort is made the crop area can be increased considerably. It is not advisable to seed ground that is not well prepared, but in an emergency like the present fall plowing might be increased and everything made ready for a heavy seeding in the spring. It is the duty of the Canadian farmers to lend their best help in the present crisis. It would be decidedly unpatriotic to corner the food supply and extort high prices during war time, but wheat prices are entirely beyond the influence of the Canadian farmers and present prices are not of their making. For several years many of our farmers have been selling their wheat at cost, and some at less than cost, so it will be a welcome change to have a good profit for one season.

HELPING DRY BELT FARMERS

The Guide is just in receipt of the following letter, which, on account of its exceptional interest, we publish herewith:

"Chipman, Alta., Aug. 28, 1914.

"The Grain Growers' Guide,
"Winnipeg, Canada.

"Gentlemen:—Since I became a reader of The Guide I heartily appreciate its co-operative sentiments. Yes, it is just about time for us farmers to get around and help one another, and not let the business men corner up and take our profits in many ways at the time when we are hard up to buy or sell. I read in the last Guide of a drought in the southern parts of Alberta and Saskatchewan, where the farmers are compelled to sell their stock on account of lack of feed, or give them away in order to get rid of them. The Guide is trying to find out what can be done to help the farmers in such cases. Now consider the following plan:

"I would take 400 or 500 head of cattle or even more, for I have the feed and water and could fix up the barns in a very short time. I would take the cattle on the following basis. If a man gives me 25 cows I will keep them the whole year for half of the calves that are raised from them. The 25 cows and 50 per cent. of the calves would then belong to the owner of the herd, and 50 per cent. of the calves would belong to me for my work and feed, etc. Steers are not so profitable to the keeper, but I will take steers at \$3.00 a head and keep them for one year. I have been keeping cattle on this basis for the last three years. One man bought ten head of cows for \$350.00 and gave them to me three years ago on this basis. Today, his share is worth \$1,000 or more. If anyone cares to send his cattle out here 40 miles east of Edmonton, I am willing to take them as stated above.

"If you wish you may publish this letter in The Guide.

"Yours truly,

"H. KICHLBANCH."

We have no acquaintance with the writer of the above letter, but as it bears the stamp of sincerity we publish it as an indication of the means by which the stock in the dry belts may be taken care of by farmers in the good crop districts, who have plenty of food this year. We would suggest that the farmers in the dry belts of Saskatchewan and Alberta who have stock which they cannot feed during the winter should communicate with the Departments of Agriculture at Regina and Edmonton. It would be advisable for those farmers also who can feed extra stock to communicate with the Departments of Agriculture in their own province. These departments, which are established for the aid of the farmer, will then be in a position to assist in placing the stock where it can be taken care of to the best advantage.

DIRECT LEGISLATION IN ALBERTA

As our readers will have noticed from an article on the Alberta page in the last issue of The Guide, the executive of the U.F.A. has presented a memorial to the Provincial Government urging the necessity of a number of important amendments being made to the Direct Legislation Act now on the statute books of that Province. A committee has also been appointed to wait upon the authorities and press for action in the matter. This is a very proper step on the part of the executive, and it is to be hoped that the local unions and individual members of the U.F.A. will give the committee every possible support in their effort to have the Direct Legislation Act made workable. At present the Act is practically useless; it is a Direct Legislation Act in name only. It was passed in March, 1913, but has never been used. This is due to a number of defects which the U.F.A. are now asking the legisla-

ture to remedy. The most important changes asked for, briefly stated, are: That all bills passed by the legislature, except emergency measures, be made subject to the referendum on presentation of a petition signed by 10 per cent. of the electors within ninety days after the close of the session; that the number of signatures required for the initiative be reduced from 20 per cent. to 10 per cent.; that the limitation of the initiative to bills which will involve no charge upon the public funds be eliminated; and that a petition signed by ten per cent. of the electors be sufficient for either initiative or referendum irrespective of the place of residence of the petitioners. These amendments, together with others which deal with matters of detail, are all necessary in order to make the Alberta Direct Legislation Act a real instrument of self government, and they are all features of the Direct Legislation law in Switzerland and in those States in the South where the reform is in successful operation. Having passed a Direct Legislation bill, and thus approved the principle involved, the Alberta Government and legislature should not hesitate to put that principle into actual working practice.

THE WAR BUDGET

Our readers are aware that the Minister of Finance has made provisions for a part of the \$50,000,000 voted for war purposes by increasing the tariff on sugar, coffee, cocoa, milk foods, sweet biscuits, preserved and candied fruits, jellies, jams and preserves, as well as increasing the import tariff and excise duty on liquor and tobacco. These new taxes, the Finance Minister explained, would not produce the entire \$50,000,000 during one year, but would probably produce about \$7,000,000 before the end of next March. Of the balance of the budget, \$15,000,000 will be produced by an additional issue of Dominion notes, and the rest by borrowing. The Finance Minister placed the increased taxes partially upon luxuries, but the largest portion of the revenue he expects to secure from the special taxes upon sugar. Sugar is a necessary article of diet in every household and this taxation will fall more heavily upon the poor than upon the rich. A multi-millionaire will not eat any more sugar than a man whose income is \$100 per month. The people of Canada will one and all bear without complaint any additional taxes to enable Canada to do her duty in the present war, but it is very important that these taxes should be levied as equitably as possible. The time allowed the Finance Minister in which to prepare his War Budget was very brief, and we would not at this time indulge in any criticism of his action. These war taxes, however, will be continued thru several years to come and fresh sources of revenue must be found. An income tax has been found necessary in the United States and Great Britain and South Africa to meet growing national expenditures. In view of the heavy additional taxation necessary for several years, the Finance Minister might consider this source from which a revenue of at least \$10,000,000 annually could be secured from those who are best able to pay it. Another source of revenue is the land. In Western Canada there is enough land held out of use by speculators to produce the entire amount of revenue needed for the war without taking one cent from any worker. We would urge the Finance Minister to turn his attention to this vast fund which has been created by the people, but which is withheld from them by speculators.