

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, March 22, 1916

MANITOBA GOES DRY

When it is considered that practically half the population of Manitoba is contained in the city of Winnipeg the remarkable majority in favor of the Temperance Act on March 13 is all the more a cause for congratulation. The liquor interests are strongly entrenched in Winnipeg and have a large amount of money at their disposal, yet even the city of Winnipeg went dry by a good majority while the rural vote greatly increased the popular demand that the retail liquor business be wiped out. The question was placed fairly before the people. Both sides were given ample opportunity to present their arguments and after calm deliberation the men of Manitoba went to the ballot box and wiped out the liquor traffic once and for all. To have taken part in such a campaign is something to be proud of and on this question as on other moral questions the record of the Grain Growers is such as to inspire the members with pride. Year after year the Grain Growers' Association at the Brandon convention has unanimously declared in favor of temperance and when the opportunity came they showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were willing to back their resolutions by their votes.

We were frankly disappointed when the announcement was made some months ago that altho the women of the province of Manitoba were to be enfranchised they would not have an opportunity to vote on the liquor question at the referendum. We felt certain that the women would give a very large majority against the liquor traffic and with the ballot in their hands at the referendum there could be absolutely no doubt that the decision of the people would be so overwhelming that there would be no further room for debate. We believe now, however, that even the women will agree that the men have acquitted themselves splendidly and that under the circumstances it was better for the men to clear out the liquor traffic and remove it from the field of politics in order that when the women exercise the franchise they may devote their energies to other much needed improvements and have a far cleaner field to work in.

Another feature of the referendum vote which should not be overlooked is the magnificent justification which it affords for the enactment of the principle of Direct Legislation. The fundamental principle of Direct Legislation is that it gives the people an opportunity to decide upon important questions at a referendum vote without being confused by the appeals of two political parties. Had the liquor question in Manitoba been made the subject of a general election with one party in support of it and the other opposed to it, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the liquor party might have been elected. The politicians would then have told us that it was the will of the people when as a matter of fact the people would have had no opportunity to express their will. The heart of the people is sound on moral questions and when they are given an opportunity to express their will without confusing the issue with party politics they can be relied upon to do what is right. Any person who believes in progress and democracy must come to the conclusion that the Initiative and Referendum are two of the most important implements of democracy. On June 1 the retail liquor licenses in Manitoba will expire and will not be renewed. Henceforth the bar room will no longer stand as a blot upon the civilization of Manitoba and a higher type of manhood will be developed when this degrading influence is removed.

If you have signed a note which must be paid on May 1, the winter is no doubt passing away plenty fast enough to suit you.

CAR DISTRIBUTION

The amendment to the Canada Grain Act which was crowded thru the House of Commons last week by Sir George Foster strikes at the very root of the rights gained by the organized farmers after many hard fought and expensive battles. The distribution of cars according to the car order book was fixed by statute for the protection of the grain growers, the new amendment gives the Board of Grain Commissioners such wide discretionary powers that it is possible for the car order book to be set aside at any time. In order that our readers may understand thoroughly the new amendment we produce herewith Section 207 of the Grain Act as amended:

The Board may, in its discretion, order cars to be supplied contrary to the provisions of this part:

- (a) to elevators that are in danger of collapse;
- (b) to places where grain is damp and thereby liable to become damaged;
- (c) for the purpose of distributing seed grain to any point in the Western Division;
- (d) in cases where the operator of any country elevator reports in writing under oath that some portion of the grain in such elevator is heated, and that in order to preserve such grain it is necessary to ship such heated grain to the terminal elevator for treatment. Provided, however, that no relief shall be granted in such last mentioned cases as long as the warehouseman has sufficient room in his building for the rehandling of such grain;

(e) whenever after due examination the Board considers it necessary and advisable in order to relieve congestion and facilitate the despatch of grain that is insufficiently housed and liable to become damp or injured.

Clause (e) is the new amendment introduced by Sir George Foster. It is in principle the same that he tried to put thru three years ago and actually succeeded in getting thru the House of Commons tho in response to the request of the organized farmers the Senate killed that section of the amendment. No person would object to the Board of Grain Commissioners being given discretionary power to any extent necessary to save grain that is in danger of ruin. The Board should be empowered to deal with such cases and to deal promptly. But to give the Board of Grain Commissioners the power to say that there is congestion and to suspend the car order book is an altogether different matter. It will be quite easy in any grain shipping season for the railways and elevators to bring about congestion at any point and it will then be possible for the Board of Grain Commissioners to suspend the car order book at that point and order in a number of cars to the elevator or elevators. Such an action would be supposed to be for the benefit of farmers with street grain to sell, but if the elevator operators ship out only their low grade grain it is quite easy to see that the only relief that would come to farmers would be by their accepting a low grade on their street grain. The railways and the elevators worked together in the olden days to skin the farmer in the marketing of his wheat and they did skin him properly. After a long and hard fight the Grain Act was amended to protect the farmer from this "skinning" process and now Sir George Foster has partially removed this protection. True, discretionary power will be left with the Board of Grain Commissioners but the railways and the elevators can create conditions over which the Board will have no control. There is no assurance that the Board of Grain Commissioners will always enjoy the confidence of the Western farmers. In fact today it is one of the few of the many commissions in Canada that enjoys any great measure of confidence on the part of the people. The biggest single industry in Canada today is grain growing and upon this industry depends the prosperity of practically every other industry in the country. Why should it be thus placed in danger without

any just cause whatever? Sir George stated in the House of Commons that Hon. W. R. Motherwell was strongly in support of this amendment, but Mr. Motherwell has absolutely repudiated any support of that part of the amendment relating to "congestion." This is the only part of the amendment that the organized farmers will object to and it would seem reasonable that they should at least have been consulted before any such radical change was made in the Act. Only a few days ago the chairman of the Grain Commission publicly assured the organized farmers that no amendment would be made in the Act this session. What does it all mean? Who is behind this "congestion" scheme?

The Canadian Council of Agriculture, thru the secretary, R. McKenzie, has protested by wire both to Sir George Foster and Sir Wilfred Laurier as well as to the leaders of both parties in the Senate. It is possible yet that the amendment may be corrected before it becomes law.

RURAL EDUCATION

Before our rural schools can inculcate a love of rural life we must not only adapt our curriculum to that end but we must develop a class of teachers who themselves love the farm and who have more intimate knowledge of farm life. It is not necessary that every rural teacher be an agricultural expert, but at the present time a great many rural teachers have had neither opportunity nor inclination to become familiar with farming operations. The fact that most of them are women accentuates this difficulty. But times are changing and the changes are taking place in rural education as in everything else. In this issue of The Guide we have given a great deal of attention to the development of Boys' and Girls' Clubs which are as yet in their infancy in this country. This work, we believe, is one agency thru which our rural educational methods will be revolutionized. Our boys and girls in the country schools will find there are more beautiful things in nature than they ever dreamed of and they will also find practical problems in the development of their club work the solution of which will be a liberal education. They will have deeper sympathy with rural life and less desire for the city. It would be neither wise nor desirable that every rural pupil should be trained with the only thought in view of becoming a farmer or a farmer's wife. But the educational work of the Boys' and Girls' Club movement will be as valuable to the boy or girl who later may enter professional life as to those who remain on the farm. One of the greatest products of the Boys' and Girls' Club movement will be a class of school teachers with a new educational viewpoint, with a new sympathy towards rural life and with a wider outlook upon the future. Another product will be the development of ratepayers, male and female, who will be willing and anxious to pay for the development of a real high-class school, who will take an interest in the work of the school and who will be more than ever anxious that their children should have every possible benefit which the school can give. The organized farmers will have every sympathy with the Boys' and Girls' Club movement and in the next few years it will cover every community in these wide Prairie Provinces.

THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

The result of the referendum on the liquor question in Manitoba should have an important influence upon the Parliament of Canada. Manitoba has now gone dry, Alberta also has gone dry and Saskatchewan will hold a referendum vote this fall on the question of