

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 29, 1918

The Challenge

The farmers of Canada today are facing a direct challenge from the powerful interests in Canada who enjoy special privileges. One by one the great fundamental principles laid down in the farmers' platform have been placed on the statute books of the provinces and the Dominion. But there still remains the protective tariff higher than before and placing a heavy burden upon consumers. Some farmers who are enjoying high prices and good crops are not able to see the danger which lies ahead. They are satisfied for the moment; but therein lies the real danger. The close of the war will see a rapid decline in the prices of grain, while the price of everything the farmer buys will remain high for a much longer period. Trade freedom is the only salvation in sight for the farmers of Canada.

During this summer a big membership drive is to be made by the farmers' organizations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The hope is to secure enough recruits to increase the ranks of the organized farmers by at least one-half. This can be done if the farmers themselves now in the organization realize the extreme need of increasing their numbers. It has been only through organization that the farmers of Western Canada have made it possible for themselves to make a decent living in this country. But the forces that prey upon the farmers are steadily organizing and becoming more powerful month by month. The only answer the farmers have is to increase their own numbers and rally round their leaders for the terrific struggle which is not far distant.

In the present House of Commons the organized farmers of Western Canada are well represented. The struggle which is in sight will have its centre in parliament but our representatives in parliament can accomplish very little unless they have behind them a powerful organized force in the country. It is not necessary for every member of the organization to be a great speaker or a highly educated man. But it is all important that every possible farmer be brought into the local associations, there to join with their fellow farmers in support of the policy laid down by the conventions. It is therefore most highly important that every local association should increase its numbers to include every farmer in the community. It will be necessary to make some sacrifice to accomplish this end but if the farmers of the West are not prepared to make sacrifice now to increase their own strength, it will be a very short time until they will be forced against their will to make a greater sacrifice for the benefit of other interests that will be more powerful. It is very difficult to convince some farmers that it is in their own interest and for their own self-protection to be members of the farmers' organization. But they must be brought in. They must be shown the fool's paradise in which they are living. Every interest is organizing. The farmers must not remain behind.

When increasing the organization it is equally important that The Grain Growers' Guide be placed in the hands of every new recruit. There is no other method by which the farmers can be kept in touch with the work of their own great organization and with the movement of other farmers' organizations throughout Canada. The Guide is the farmers' own paper, owned by the organized farmers and published for their benefit. The Guide not only gives its readers

the news of their own organization but also keeps close tab of every move of the enemy. There is no better nor easier way to increase the membership of the organization than by increasing the number of readers of The Guide.

Some Relief Granted

The Dominion Government last week announced that leave of absence would be granted in extreme cases to the men drafted in the 20 to 22 year class. No special provision has been made for farmers but only for cases where the dependents are suffering or in the case of the only remaining son of military age. We are reproducing the government announcement in full herewith.

The attention of the government having been directed particularly to cases of men of 20, 21 and 22 called up for military duty, who were the sole support of their parents or of other helpless dependents, an order-in-council has been passed providing for the consideration of extraordinary cases of extreme hardship to the dependents of men called up for duty.

The urgent need for men overseas is such that leave of absence can only be granted in these cases of extreme hardship to dependents or in cases in which the man concerned is the only remaining son of military age (19 to 45) other members of whose family are in military service or have been killed or disabled.

All applications for leave of absence pursuant to these provisions must be made by the man himself at the depot battalion after he reports for duty. Such applications cannot and will not be considered either at the headquarters of the military district, or at militia headquarters at Ottawa. Correspondence sent to these headquarters will only result in delay and confusion.

Every man applying for leave of absence must make a statutory declaration in a prepared form, which may be obtained at the depot battalion, where an officer will be especially detailed to deal with such applications.

Men whose cases come within the authority granted by the governor-in-council may be given up to 30 days' leave of absence without pay by the officer commanding the depot battalion, and such longer leave as the case may require, will be granted if the recommendation is concurred in by the district officer commanding and at militia headquarters, or, in any case of doubt, if it is approved by the central appeal judge under the Military Service act, 1917.

The original leave may, in the event of delay in a decision being arrived at, be further extended by the district officer commanding by periods of ten days.

Those entitled to leave of absence under this regulation should act promptly. The terms are very clear and specific so that there should be no difficulty in understanding them.

The Harvest Problem

The government has taken the responsibility of calling the young men from the farms in the full knowledge that food production will be curtailed. The government, however, has not in any way sought to minimize the great need of food production. No doubt the national registration to be made next month will help to solve the labor problem, but there is another field from which labor can be drawn for the harvest.

In the central states to the south of us, harvesting will be done before cutting begins in the prairie provinces. The Dominion government should be on the alert to bring those harvesters north to help gather our crops. Undoubtedly the American government will be quite willing to co-operate. Canada and the United States are in the same war and fighting for the same end. Towards this end it is just as necessary that the

Canadian crop be harvested as that the American crop be harvested. If the Dominion government can bring from 10,000 to 20,000 experienced harvest hands from the American harvest fields, it will help greatly to meet a problem caused by drafting so many young men from the farms. Now is the time to consider the matter as the problem promises to be very serious.

Parliament Has Adjourned

The first session of parliament under the Union government came to an end last week. The people of Canada have had an opportunity to size up the work that has been done. The general public have taken a keener interest in the work of this parliament than ever before. Many votes would be reversed if an election were to be held again today. Whether the Union government would be returned again it is idle to speculate, but it is plain that they have lost some and gained other supporters. The big work for which the government was returned was to go on with the war. Toward this end there is no doubt they have made progress. In fact, the chief debate is whether the government has not been too drastic in its war measures. The general feeling among farmers all over Canada is that the government did not consider the best interests of the nation in calling out all the boys in the classes of 20 to 22 years inclusive. The government assumed a tremendous responsibility by such action, and food production will undoubtedly be cut down as a result. Good work was done by the government in abolishing the liquor traffic and in extending the franchise to women, as well as in extending the civil service and thus putting an end to patronage. Probably only a Union government could have accomplished these desirable ends.

One of the outstanding features of the new parliament has been the fact that the government has enacted such a large number of laws by order-in-council instead of by parliamentary vote. In fact the members of parliament have felt that they should have been consulted more than they have. Another feature has been the lack of party strife. The opposition has given the government very little trouble and as a result the chief criticism has come from the government side of the house. There has been no division of opinion between members from the prairie provinces. They have worked together and have learned that their interests are all one. Whether, when the war clouds have passed and the party whips begin to crack, they will be foolish enough to divide their forces again, remains to be seen. The new parliament has endorsed a number of the planks of the farmers' platform. Next session there will be an opportunity to take up other planks, particularly the tariff. This is bound to precipitate a struggle which may make considerable changes in the alignment of the parliamentary forces.

Titles Under Ban

Any farmers who have been hoping to be adorned by a title and be allowed to attach "Sir" to their name are due for a sad disappointment. Last week the House of Commons debated the question and instructed the government to notify the King to cut out the titles for Canada. The resolution asked that no hereditary titles be granted. R. L. Richardson, M.P. of Winnipeg, however,