

The Grain Growers' Guide

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INCREASE TRADE WITH BRITAIN

At this time when Canada and Great Britain are so strongly drawn together by the necessity of self preservation, it would be eminently fitting and proper for the Canadian parliament to remove, or at least to reduce, all obstacles which stand in the way of trade between this dominion and Great Britain. Britain during the past few years has drawn increasing quantities of food from Canada, and it is anticipated that during the war every bushel of wheat and oats, every barrel of apples, every cheese, and every pound of butter that Canada can spare will be eagerly bought, and at good prices, in the old land. It would appear to be good business as well as sound patriotism if Canada would take her pay for these things in the products of the British Isles. Exports, except such as go to pay debts, are always paid for by imports, and at the present time particularly, it must be obvious to everyone that it would be to the advantage of the Empire, of which Canada is a part, for as much of our imports as possible to come from Britain. The way to favor the British producer, and thus help to keep British industries going, is to lower the obstacle which the Canadian customs tariff places in the way—in other words, to increase the British preference. Within the past few days announcement has been made by the C.P.R. that the thru rate on goods from Great Britain to Canadian points will be withdrawn on September 15, which means that in future the cost of transportation will be very considerably increased. The question of whether or not the increased rate is justified by conditions demands prompt investigation by the government. If the advance is allowed to stand it will be such a handicap to British trade that we shall be almost compelled to buy from the United States practically everything that we have been accustomed to import from Great Britain. This makes the case for removing the duties from British goods so much stronger. There is no doubt that during the war the United States will get a large share of the trade which normally would be done with Europe, and our government has a great opportunity to display practical, statesmanlike patriotism by giving Great Britain every opportunity to trade with Canada. A substantial reduction in the tariff on British goods would not necessarily mean a diminution in revenue, for it would certainly tend to increase the imports.

PROTECTION AND PATRIOTISM

Considerable criticism is being levelled at the Massey-Harris Co. for its precipitate action in closing down its various plants and throwing 5,000 men out of employment at the opening of the war. The reason assigned by the president of the company, Senator Sir Lyman Melvin Jones, is not sufficient to inspire the confidence of the public, and the example is certainly not what would be expected from a highly protected and exceedingly prosperous manufacturing establishment. The Massey-Harris concern is one of the largest manufacturing establishments in Canada, and one which has enjoyed high tariff protection from its very beginning. It is common knowledge that the company has made very large profits and its leading partners have become millionaires, and some of them multi-millionaires. If the financial end of the business has been managed prudently a very large reserve fund must have been created during past years. These extraordinary profits that the company has earned, including the reserve fund, have been created by the labor of the employees of the

establishment. The wages paid to the employees have undoubtedly been kept down as low as possible, and full advantage taken of competition in the labor market. Many employees have probably been with the firm for ten or twenty years and given loyal service during that time, and it would seem only right that when a crisis approaches that the interests of the employees should be considered quite as carefully as the interests of the shareholders. No doubt the closing of the European market would seriously affect the export trade of the Massey-Harris Company, but at the worst the war is but a temporary disturbance of conditions, and in the meantime Canadian farmers have every inducement offered to them in the way of high prices to extend their acreage and increase their crops to the utmost extent. It would have been a patriotic action, under the circumstances, for the Massey-Harris Company to keep their plant running at least two or three days a week and sell their implements at a cost basis to Canadian farmers. Undoubtedly the reduction in the price would increase the sales and thus increase the work in the factories, even tho it would not increase the fortunes of the shareholders. One of the strong arguments in defence of the protective tariff is that it encourages home industry and thus gives employment to a large number of people. If protected industries are operated by men who pocket these tariff taxes in favorable times and discharge their employees at the first sign of stringency they are deserving of the severest censure, and tariff protection should be immediately withdrawn from them. It is a poor demonstration of their patriotism in the time of a national crisis to throw 5,000 men out of employment because they are no longer able to earn, not only a living for themselves and their families, but a handsome surplus for their employers.

WOMEN AND WAR

That the old theory that war makes for good times is a fallacy, and that instead it bears very heavily upon the home is being keenly felt already by the women of Canada. Following the general issuance of ultimatums by the various European powers to each other, the price of such necessary food commodities as flour and sugar began to soar, not because of present economic necessity, but in anticipation of future scarcity. The money to meet this increased cost of living has to be schemed somehow from a household budget that has not increased its dimensions. Where there were enough funds to come and go on the housewife immediately began to lay in supplies of these articles of food, thereby contributing to the scarcity of them and increasing the cost of living for those whose salaries just tide them over from week to week. With the war has come also a financial panic, such as has not been known in years, resulting in the immediate discharge of hundreds of employees and a curtailment of the salaries of hundreds more. Here again the women feel the pinch as keenly as the men. How to feed and clothe their families is the problem confronting scores of them in the homes where the breadwinner has been given an unwelcome holiday. Some of them are going out and offering their services as wash and scrub women, but there is not, with the increasing financial stringency, an unlimited market for such labor. With a long cold winter facing them these women have every reason to be concerned for the future. Women are also feeling the effects of the war directly as competitors in the labor market. Partly owing

to their recent invasion of the field of business and partly to the tacit understanding that marriage will, sooner or later, cause them to leave their work, the posts occupied by women are usually of a subordinate character, and it is in this quarter that the weeding out begins when the pressure of hard times is felt. Firms that employed six stenographers are managing with half that number or less; the department stores, where women employees are greatly in the majority, are weeding out the newcomers and incompetents; women are discharging their housemaids and doing their own work. As a result hundreds of women employees have found their means of livelihood in the business world suddenly stopped and themselves cut adrift at a season when there is not such a thing as a vacant position anywhere. In the countries of Europe, actually engaged in the combat, women are having to assume the burdens laid down by the men who have been called away to the battlefield. The President of France has even issued a public proclamation calling upon the women of his country to gather in the harvest. In Germany it is almost certain that whatever of its industries are carried on will have to be largely directed by the energies of women. On every occasion, when such an emergency has arisen, the women of the countries concerned have risen bravely and accepted philosophically the double burden. History also records many occasions on which, under stress of great need, the women of a country or city have armed themselves and gone forth to do battle for the protection of home and country. History does them the justice, moreover, of admitting that on these occasions they proved themselves to be no mean warriors. Since the time of Florence Nightingale women have always gone to war as the healers and comforters of the maimed and dying, and have thereby lessened in some small measure the horrors of the conflict. To some who do not go to the front an indefinite occupation of nursing begins with the return of their mangled loved ones at the close of the war, while husbands, fathers, sweethearts and brothers of others remain on the distant battlefields, and these have only sore hearts to nurse thru the coming years. So that from whatever angle war is viewed, whether economically or sentimentally, women pay the price of it equally with the men in privation and suffering.

THE SAME OLD GAME

From an article recently published in the Co-operative Herald, Fargo, North Dakota, we notice that the old line elevator companies have the same spirit on both sides of the international line. Special Privilege has no flag and no country, but bestows its blessings indiscriminately upon all peoples and races. At Benchland, N.D., there is a farmers' elevator as well as two line elevators. On November 10, 1913, the market price for No. 1 Turkey Red wheat was 61 cents, and that was the price paid at the farmers' elevator. The Rocky Mountain Elevator, however, on the same day and at the same place was offering the farmers 63 cents for their wheat. Just six miles away is the town of Windham, where there is no farmers' elevator. At this point the Rocky Mountain Elevator paid 59 cents on the same day. Where they met the competition of the farmers' elevator they offered two cents above the market price, and where they had the farmers at their mercy and no competition they forced them to take two cents under the market. To the credit of the farmers, however, the report states that at