

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 17th, 1916

INCREASED SOLDIERS' PENSIONS

On another page we publish the new scale of pensions for disabled soldiers that has been recommended to Parliament by the Pension Committee. There will be general satisfaction expressed that the committee has recommended a very large increase in the pensions to be paid to private soldiers amounting to \$480.00 per year, which is more than double the present pension. In the case of those totally helpless provision is made for an extra grant of \$250.00 per year. If this report is adopted by Parliament a private soldier who is disabled for life and helpless may thus receive \$730.00 per year, or approximately \$61.00 per month. In the case of the soldier who is not absolutely helpless yet not able to earn a livelihood he will draw only \$40.00 per month. It will be apparent to any person that this is still too small to provide a reasonably comfortable existence for these men. In the same way the helpless cripple cannot command proper care and attention for \$61.00 per month unless it be from his own wife or family.

We cannot think that any true Canadian will object to paying his necessary share of the taxes sufficient to keep our disabled soldiers in comparative comfort for the rest of their lives. A young man who goes to the war in the flower of his youth and full of manly vigor and returns broken physically and absolutely unable to take care of himself, to say nothing of earning anything towards his livelihood, should be well taken care of by the nation. He should not be an object of charity. The new pension proposal provides that a lieutenant is to get \$720.00, a captain \$1000.00 and a lieutenant-colonel \$1560.00. In the case of absolute helplessness, however, these officers will each draw a special grant proportionately higher than the \$250.00 which will be paid to similarly disabled privates. In the Canadian army there is not the difference in ability, in sacrifice and in patriotism between the private and the officers to warrant such a difference in the pensions. In Western Canada we have seen college professors, ministers of the Gospel, lawyers and other men holding high positions, with good incomes, join the army as privates because of their patriotic desire to "do their bit" for democracy. While they are fighting they will draw less than half the pay of the lieutenants and captains who are in no way their superiors, and when they come back, broken for life, the discrimination remains. Officers' pensions undoubtedly should be somewhat higher than those of private soldiers, but there should not be the difference in a democratic army fighting for democratic principles.

RAILWAY NATIONALIZATION

The situation created by the financial losses on the Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern Railways will not be without its beneficial effect on the people of Canada if it results in all the railways of Canada coming under public ownership and being operated for the benefit of the people. For many years past the railway interests have been very powerful in Canada and have had a very great influence in moulding legislation and it will not be denied that the railway influence has not been for the benefit of the people at large. The inside story of the early days of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the methods by which the charter was put thru parliament forms one of the dark pages of Canadian history. The birth of the C.P.R. was the beginning of political corruption in Canada on a large scale and the railway influence from that date until the present has certainly not tended to purify public life. We

have witnessed annually a powerful railway lobby working at Ottawa and legislation has been put thru nearly every year for the past twelve or fifteen years for the purpose of taking money out of the pockets of the public and transferring it to the pockets of the shareholders and promoters of one or more of the three big railway companies. It is impossible to conceive that under public ownership the situation could be anything nearly as bad as it is at present. The tendency thruout the world is to take public utilities out of private hands. If all three railway companies in Canada were on a sound financial footing and making large profits every year it would be an almost impossible task to put legislation thru parliament that would nationalize these great institutions because their financial and political influence would be so great as to prevent it. Great Britain was practically the only important country in Europe that maintained a privately owned railway system up to the opening of the war. When faced with a great national emergency, however, the railways were nationalized in twenty-four hours and the details will be worked out afterwards. It is altogether unlikely that the British Government, after operating the railways of that country for several years during war times and having organized them up to their highest pitch of efficiency, will ever again permit them to go back into private hands. In Canada there is an opportunity also to take over the railways and by taking over all of them, the profitable as well as the unprofitable, there is an opportunity to make the whole thing a paying investment from the beginning, and it will certainly be a very gratifying relief to the Canadian public to know that railway promoters and capitalists are no longer camped at Ottawa seeking how much they can grab from the public treasury.

GRAIN MARKETING ENQUIRY

The Dominion government has appointed Messrs. Magill, Staples and Jones, of the Board of Grain Commissioners, as a special commission to inquire into the whole matter of the handling and marketing of grain in terms of the order-in-council which reads as follows:—

Certified copy of Report of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Royal Highness the Governor General, on the 22nd March, 1916.

The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 21st March, 1916, from the Minister of Trade and Commerce, representing that he thinks it expedient that an inquiry should be made into and concerning the whole matter of the handling and marketing of grain in Canada, and in particular, (1) the grading and weighing of grain; (2) the shipping of grain from country elevators; (3) grain exchanges; (4) the financing of grain; (5) the handling of grain at terminal points and in respect of the charges for the same; (6) the shipment of grain to Atlantic ports; (7) lake shipments.

The Minister therefore recommends that Robert Magill, Ph. D., of Fort William, in the Province of Ontario, Chief Commissioner of the Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada; W. D. Staples, of the same place, Esquire, Commissioner of the said board; and J. P. Jones, of the same place, Esquire, Commissioner of the said board, be appointed Commissioners pursuant to part I of the Inquiries Act, Chap. 104, Revised Statutes, 1906, to conduct such inquiry, and that they be authorized for that purpose to engage the services of such accountants, engineers, technical advisers or other experts, clerks, reporters and assistants, as they deem necessary or advisable, and also the services of counsel to aid and assist them in the inquiry, and to authorize and depute any such accountants, engineers, technical advisers or other experts, or any other qualified persons to inquire into any matter within the scope of such inquiry as they may direct, also that the said Commissioners be required and directed to report to the Governor General in Council the result of their investigation together with the evidence taken before them and any opinion they may see fit to express thereon.

The Committee concur in the foregoing recommendation and submit the same for approval.

(Sgd.) Rodolphe Boudreau,

Clerk of the Privy Council.

It seems remarkable that this order-in-council dated March 22 should only have been made public on May 12. The scope of the inquiry which is to be made by the Board of Grain Commissioners is very wide, covering practically everything connected with the grain trade. The reason for the inquiry is not given but it certainly should result in bringing forth valuable and important information. The Canada Grain Act today, altho it still affords room for improvement, is giving pretty general satisfaction to the farmers who grow the grain in Western Canada. The chief purpose of such an inquiry as has been instituted should be to make conditions even more satisfactory from the standpoint of the farmers because they are the people chiefly interested. Further announcements as to the method by which this inquiry will be carried on will no doubt be made in the very near future.

THE COST OF LIVING

In this issue we publish a summary of the report of the Cost of Living Commission which has recently been published at Ottawa. This commission was composed of government employees and naturally would hardly be expected to bring in a report that the government would not be pleased with. For the same reason it can readily be understood that such a commission would not make recommendations that would be of very great practical value. However, in the two large volumes there is a lot of valuable information and any person interested in economic conditions thruout Canada can well afford to study these two volumes, which may be obtained free on application to the Department of Labor, Ottawa. One striking fact given in the report is that there are in Canada 80,000 families whose homes consist of one room. With all the land there is in this country and the comparative scarcity of population, the vast natural resources and the comparative energy and intelligence of the people, it is a most extraordinary thing that such a large number of families should be compelled to live in one room. It is an illustration of the fact that our economic system is such that it gives too much wealth to a few and too little wealth to the many.

RECIPROCAL FREE TRADE

At the time of the reciprocity campaign four years ago there were a number of the opponents of reciprocity who claimed to be free traders. They said they were ready for complete free trade with the United States, but were opposed to what they termed a "jug-handled" proposition. The sincerity of these so called free traders will be put to a test if a bill now before the United States Congress becomes law. The important part of the bill reads as follows:—

"That on and after the first day of July, 1916, no tariff taxes shall be collected on importations of the products of any American country which shall admit the products of the United States free of tariff taxes, the President of the United States being hereby authorized and requested to notify all American countries of the passage hereof and to invite their adhesion."

The bill mentioned above will make a definite offer of absolute free trade with Canada as well as other countries on the two American continents. It was introduced by Warren Worth Bailey in the House of Representatives. Mr. Bailey is editor of the Johnston Democrat, one of the most progressive and democratic papers in the United States. A strong cam-