The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, January 29th, 1913

SASKATCHEWAN PEOPLE DISAPPOINTED

On another page we publish a detailed and critical review of the Saskatchewan Direct Legislation Bill, written by the secretary of the Direct Legislation League of that province. It will at once be apparent to even the casual observer that the Direct Legislation Bill which the Saskatchewan Government has prepared and placed upon the statute books falls far short of what the Saskatchewan people have expected. This Bill still leaves all expenditure of money in the hands of the legislators, and not subject in any way to the will of the people. Control over expenditure is one of the essential requirements of any satisfactory Direct Legislation bill. The lack of a publicity pamphlet is also a serious error in the Bill, as it has been found where used to be a great relief from the misrepresentation of party newspapers. But, as Mr. Farmer points out, the Bill might have been made some use of, had it not been for the provision by which it is to be put to a referendum of the people. The Government has decided that this cannot become operative unless it is supported by at least 30 per cent. of the total number of voters in Saskatchewan. Mr. Farmer's figures, showing that at the last election the Liberals polled only 33 per cent. and the Conservatives 24 per cent. indicates, in our opinion, the utter impossibility of securing a favorable vote upon the Direct Legislation bill. It would require an organization with tremendous financial backing to secure the thirty per cent. affirmative vote in a special election upon this bill. If it were otherwise quite satisfactory there would be some inducement towards an extra effort to have the bill endorsed at a referendum, but it seems useless to spend every ounce of energy in an almost hopeless attempt to secure the passage of a bill which in itself will be of very doubtful value when secured.

ST. GEORGE, THE MODERN DRAGON SLAYER

St. George, England's Patron Saint, lived in a past so distant that his exploits, save the vanquishing of the dragon, are lost in the mists of antiquity. England's modern Saint George, none other than Lloyd George, the little Welsh barrister, is likewise obscured by the hundred battles of which he is the centre. He wrestles not with mythical dragons, but with the real monsters ever preying upon the hearts and hopes of the common people. Land monopoly, perhaps the parent of all other economic evils, has read its death warrant in the famous Lloyd George Budget, although a reform so revolutionary cannot be worked out all at once. Other monsters obstructing the path of labor are being put to rout by the Insurance Act. Even death and taxes are not such terrors to the mind of the working classes as the haunting dread of sickness, unemployment and penniless old age. These are the real dragons which will bite the dust if this new Lloyd George measure accomplishes its purpose. Old age pensions, of course, are already in force. The Insurance Act insures 15,000,000 workers against sickness and those of certain trades against unemployment. With certain exceptions every person between the ages of 16 and 70, employed in the United Kingdom under any contract of service or apprenticeship and whose yearly income does not exceed £160 must become insured. This embraces 75% of the adult male population and 25% of the women. The fact that he is compelled to insure necessarily arouses the ire of the typical John Bull, but now that the benefits are falling due this hostility steadily wanes, and thousands who a few weeks ago were bitterly cursing Lloyd George, are already rising to call him blessed. The Chancellor never expected this action to be popular with the people for a good while at least, since it took fourpence a week out of the pockets of 14,000,000 workers and as much as £10,000 a year from the employing class. The employer's share of the insurance premium is threepence to the workingman's fourpence a week, while the Government provides two-ninths of the benefits. Taking sickness and old age pensions as two divisions of one scheme, a yearly provision is made of £31,750,000, of which the employers pay £8,750,000, the workers £7,500,000, while the Government pays £15,500,000, or practically half of the total. A resolute crusade is undertaken by the same Act to stamp out sickness among the working population. Generous appropriations are made towards medical service for every worker, the State paying nearly £2,000,000 a year to the doctors. £1,500,000 is set aside towards the building of sanatoria, for the white plague in England and Wales sweeps away 50,000 lives every year. For the first time the nation finds itself organized to combat disease and its inevitable consequences, unemployment and penury. The sick pay, ten shillings a week for men, seven shillings and sixpence for women, while not large, will serve to keep many homes together which must otherwise be broken up, and is expected to reduce by fully one-half the pauper population. Every year 800,000 mothers will receive a maternity allowance of thirty shillings. It goes without saying that the heavy expenditures incurred by these schemes of social betterment are derived in large measure from the new sources of revenue discovered by the Lloyd George Budget. All in all, the common man in Great Britain stands a better chance in the stress of present day conditions and has more for which to thank his national Government than the workers of any other of the great nations.

PROTECTION IN NEW ZEALAND

Protection has fallen on evil days. The most highly protected countries the world over are passing through a period of reaction, and the advocates of trade restriction are being driven into a corner. The only party which frankly supported the high tariff of the United States was annihilated in the recent election. The German Reichstag, so protectionist for a generation, defeated by only 34 votes out of 314 the proposal to abolish all import duties on food and other necessities of life. The report of the Toronto Board of Trade special committee to enquire into the cost of living laid special stress, as will be remembered, upon the Canadian tariff in unduly raising prices. New Zealand is the latest to furnish evidence of how narrow is the circle benefited by a protective tariff while the overwhelming majority must bear the burden. The protectionist government of New Zealand appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into the same fruitful topic—the increased cost of living. The findings of this commission furnish cold comfort for the protectionists. The following quotation is a sample:

> Highly protected local industries mean that the farmer, gold-miner, coal-miner, flax-miller, gum-digger, and all people employed outside protected industries, including the operators in such industries, must pay more for their living. It also means that the British public, who alone provide us with a free and open market for our exportable products, are treated as aliens, and prevented from sending their products into the Dominion on the same terms as they admit ours. If the British Government adopted the same attitude to New Zealand, and put a duty on New Zealand meat, grain, butter, cheese, and wool, in order to protect the British farmer, the position would be parallel to our attiture in placing high duties on their manufactures.
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> The plea that by protecting local industries, the money is kept in the country is a fallacy, as the quantity of locally manufactured raw material would otherwise be shipped abroad, and return the same value. The only real justification is in providing employment for the people; but it has been already shown that only 5 per cent. of the population are affected. Labor-saving machinery is continually supplanting skilled labor in all industries, and the average wages earned in protected industries prove that other and more profitable channels for employment are open.

If protection increases the cost of living to 95 per cent. and gives employment to only 5 per cent. of the population it directly contravenes that great rule of justice, which was Gladstone's aim as it must be the ideal of all public policy, "The greatest good to the greatest number." Nor are even the employees of the protected industries to be reckoned among the benefited few, as is shown by the grinding conditions of the steel and woollen workers in the United States, despite lavish tariff bounties. Protection gives a licence to one per cent. or so of the popuation to pillage all the rest of the people, the consuming public. This inhuman system exists only by virtue of the deceptive mask it wears, always hidden behind laws and customs, false economics and the subtle appeals of its advocates, now to the selfishness of the individual, now to his unselfishness, now to his patriotism, to any sentiment, in fact, which will disguise the inward greed of the system. Founded on this defective concrete of error and avarice, protection must totter and crumble just as soon as the people become awake to the facts.

SOUTH AFRICAN SCRIP

During the past few days we have received a number of letters from readers who appear to have a very real grievance in the matter of South African Scrip. Those who make the complaint are farmers who bought scrip during the year 1911 and registered themselves as substitutes prior to December 31 of that year. On December 4 Hon. Robt. Rogers, then Minister of the Interior, announced through the press that an extension of one year would be granted, and many purchasers of scrip, relying upon this statement, delayed the location of their land until a more favorable season. Mr. Rogers, in due course, introduced a bill providing for the extension. The bill as introduced extended the time for the location of scrip to the volunteers only, and provided that if the volunteers did not desire to locate personally they could surrender their warrants and receive $500 from the Government in exchange, while warrants which had been sold by volunteers could be redeemed at the same figure. When the bill reached the committee stage, however, Mr. Rogers introduced an amendment which made the bill include the volunteer "or his substitute duly qualified in that behalf," and this became part of the bill.

Believing that under this clause their scrips were still available the purchasers who intended to become settlers selected their land and made preparations to commence their duties. But on going to the land office to record their selections they were told that as they had been registered as substitutes prior to January 1, 1912, their entries could not be accepted, and that their only course was to redeem their scrips at $500 each. One of those who has written to us on the matter had actually travelled to the Peace River