

The Brain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, April 14th, 1915

VOTES FOR SOLDIERS

News from Ottawa indicates that legislation is to be enacted which will send the ballot boxes used in the next Dominion general election to every corner of the earth. It has been decided by the Government that the soldiers of the Canadian expeditionary forces shall be permitted to exercise their franchise wherever they may happen to be when election day arrives, no matter whether they may be in Canada, on the high seas, or in Germany, Belgium, France, Turkey, Egypt, Africa, the Bermudas, or wherever duty may call them. We agree absolutely that the soldiers who are fighting in defense of the Empire should be permitted to exercise the franchise. But the idea of setting up polling booths on the field of battle is so grotesque that it is difficult to believe that it is seriously meant. There is absolutely no good reason why any election should be held this year. The term of the present parliament does not expire until the fall of 1916, and if the war is not over before that time, then it would be proper for the Canadian Parliament to take the course which the British Parliament will adopt and pass legislation extending the life of parliament until six months after the end of the war. The expense to the public treasury and to private individuals would be sufficient to equip another Canadian contingent, and the time which would be spent by public men and public officials in electioneering would be very much better employed in attending to the details of business made necessary by the war. It would be impossible, if voting took place on the battlefield, for the agents of the candidates to be present to see that the election was properly conducted, and there would be the greatest opportunity ever offered for officials and officers, many of whom are keen party politicians, to use their position to secure votes for their party. The soldiers would not even know the names of the candidates, and it is proposed that they should simply vote Liberal, Conservative or Independent, as they may choose. Many of the soldiers will not, owing to redistribution having taken place since the last election, know what constituency their home is in. Then there would be unparalleled opportunity for tampering with the ballots after they had been marked by the soldiers, and before they could be received by the returning officers in Canada. The Liberals in the House of Commons apparently will not make any very strenuous opposition to the bill, being afraid, no doubt, that such action would enable their opponents to raise a loyalty cry against them and charge them with wishing to disfranchise our brave defenders. The Senate, however, should be above such considerations, and if that chamber is still worthy of a place in the Canadian constitution it will certainly reject this measure. By all means let the soldiers vote. They can do so, if the election is delayed until they return victorious from Berlin.

We fancy there is a close relationship between the rotten leather which was put into our soldiers' boots, and the rotten politics which have disgraced Canada.

BETTER BUSINESS

The struggle for improved economic conditions in Western Canada will continue for some years to come before the situation is satisfactory from the standpoint of agriculture. But while the campaign is being carried on for lower transportation charges and lower tariff taxes, there is a great deal that can be done by the farmers themselves to improve these conditions simply by improving their own business methods. A great many farmers suffer because they do not exercise reasonable business judgment, and in their dealings with others frequently forget the Golden Rule. A few instances of many that have come to our notice will suffice to illustrate the point.

A farmer purchased the implements necessary for a quarter section of land from one of the implement companies. He was given credit for the entire purchase, covering it by notes falling due over the period of two years. As the various notes fell due he received due notices from the implement company but did not answer any of them. When the two years had passed and every note past due, he had not paid a cent of either principal or interest on any of them, but he was still using the implements. He refused to answer any of the notices, and when the Company's agent went to his farm for more security he declined to give it. When the Company took action in the court the farmer wrote to The Guide asking for sympathy and help. In this case we were able to get the Company to give him even a further extension of time, altho he had forfeited all right to further extensions. Such actions as this on the part of a few farmers has an injurious effect upon farmers' credit generally.

Another case is that of a farmer who had borrowed money from the bank and whose note fell due in the fall of the year. He ignored the various notices from the bank and made no effort to meet the note when due. When the bank took action to protect themselves the farmer wrote to The Guide demanding that we expose the action of the bank. This was a case where the farmer was to blame for the trouble he got into. He declared to us that the bank knew that he was in good standing and need not have worried about his account. If this was the case we presume he might easily have gone to the bank and made arrangements for the extension of his note. At any rate, his method of doing business was not such as to inspire confidence in him.

We have seen crates of eggs shipped in to the city as "new laid" which contained ten per cent. of musty or decayed eggs. This was dishonesty on the part of the shipper in most cases. Accidents, of course, will happen, but those who make any attempt to take care of their poultry properly will know a fresh egg from an old one before they ship it. Such actions naturally destroyed the confidence of the purchaser in the city and lost business for the dishonest or careless shipper, as well as casting suspicion upon honest shippers. Poor quality poultry and butter are often sent to private customers as well as to dealers in the city, and such produce is bound to

bring a low price while any kind of reasonable care and attention would give the purchaser a guarantee that the goods could be relied upon and prices would be proportionately better.

These are but a few of the methods by which farmers lose money, and all the economic improvements that the organized farmers have asked for would be of very little benefit to farmers who conduct their business in this way. The only kind of business that is profitable year in and year out is that which is satisfactory to both parties in the transaction. A farmer may deceive the customer once or twice by shipments of poor produce, but he cannot do it very often. Carelessness in grain farming gets its reward when the Inspector places low grades and heavy dockage upon the sample of the car passing thru Winnipeg. On the very same principle the farmer loses by carelessness in producing any other crop.

Better business is just as much desired as better farming or improved economic conditions. We are not defending the banks nor the dealers in any way. There are plenty of sinners among them, but that does not excuse the farmer for not doing his own business carefully and honestly. We make this appeal not only for the benefit of the careless farmers but for the benefit of that large number who do their business as it ought to be done. Such experiences as we have related above reflect upon farmers generally and make trouble for the very best farmers, because they tend to cast suspicion upon farmers as a class. We shall be glad to hear from our readers on this matter and to know if they have any remedy other than we have suggested.

THE LIFE OF LORD STRATHCONA

One of the most remarkable books published in the last decade is "The Life of Lord Strathcona," written by W. T. R. Preston, a man who has been intimately acquainted with Canadian politics for the last thirty years. Lord Strathcona came to Canada over seventy years ago a poor boy, but before he died he succeeded in amassing the greatest fortune that Canada has ever produced. How he accumulated that fortune Mr. Preston describes in his book, which is reviewed at considerable length on another page in this issue. Lord Strathcona was a big figure not only in financial, but also in political life in Canada, and it certainly cannot be said that his influence was such as to raise the standards of public morality in Canada. As long as it is possible by political intrigue to amass such fortunes, so long will money so accumulated be used for corrupting political life. "The Life of Lord Strathcona" is a book that should be widely read, and we trust that sometime in the future it will be published in a cheaper edition, so that it will be within reach of the general public. What Canada needs is a smaller number of millionaires and multi-millionaires, and a larger number of contented and prosperous citizens. It is impossible to have great fortunes without having also the most abject poverty. Both of them should be eliminated, and a study of this famous book will assist in