

The Brain Browsers' Guide

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PATRIOTISM OF U.F.A. QUESTIONED

In a long editorial article in the issue of February 7, the Winnipeg Free Press calmly and dispassionately dissects the United Farmers of Alberta as an organization, both collectively and individually and finds it lacking in responsibility towards the war and interested chiefly in making more money for its individual members. The article in question is based upon the conduct of the President and the members of the U.F.A. at the Annual Convention held in Edmonton a couple of weeks ago. President Wood is described as a fine type of American, but it is claimed that according to his annual address he "was more concerned with the rights and interests of the farmers of Alberta than he was with how our freedom was to be preserved." It is assumed that the Canadian and British born members of the U.F.A. have gone away to fight for their country and that their places have been filled by American immigrants and foreign speaking settlers, tho there is no good ground for the assumption.

The article also takes it for granted that the U.F.A. members have contributed nothing to Patriotic, Belgian Relief or Red Cross funds, while as a matter of fact all these funds and others have been contributed to very largely by U.F.A. members. Another criticism is that the United Farmers of Alberta did not adopt the Patriotic Acre scheme nor endorse the National Service plan. The whole burden the article is a criticism of the Convention of because it failed to pass patriotic resolutions and make patriotic demonstrations, such as the Free Press considered would be fitting, and the conclusion arrived at is "there is every need of missionary work to stir this great organization to a sense of its responsibility as representing the organized farmers of a great Province of a Nation at war."

If noise, flag flapping and resolutions are the true measure of loyalty, patriotism and Canadian sentiment, the U.F.A. Convention was somewhat lacking on this score. But we have yet to learn that this is the true measure. The Province of Alberta leads Canada in the proportion of soldiers it has given to the war and the number of soldiers from the farm homes of that Province is very large. Many Convention delegates had sons or brothers on the firing line. A very large number of local units of the United Farmers of Alberta are carrying on patriotic work of various kinds and contributing freely to patriotic funds. A considerable number of these contributions come thru their own central office, others thru The Guide office and others thru local organizations. While there is a large percentage of British and Canadian born members in the U.F.A., it is also quite true that there are a large number of American born and a smaller number who were born in other foreign countries. That there are no better citizens in this country than farmers who have come over from the United States is a matter absolutely beyond dispute. This country could ask for nothing better than a steady increase of the same type of immigrants.

Altho in noise and flag flapping and demonstrating and resolving the Convention did not excel along patriotic lines, yet the program itself was patriotic in the first degree. Free rural municipal hospitals, satisfactory rural credit, municipal hail insurance, development of the livestock industry, medical inspection for public schools, segregation of the feeble minded and many other similar subjects dealt with may be of a material nature, but they are nevertheless of the highest type of patriotism and public spirit and are in accord with the Golden Rule.

The United Farmers of Alberta is one of the largest and most progressive and withal

one of the most desirable organizations in Canada. It is doing its work well not only as an organization, but as individuals. While it does not make as much noise as some other organization and some other individuals we believe that the responsibility due to the war is by no means overlooked by its members and its officers. We can only further regret that in this time of stress, when passion runs high and mutual distrust is common, that a great journal like the Winnipeg Free Press should question the patriotism and sentiment of one of the greatest organizations in the land. There certainly was no occasion for it and there certainly can be no good come from it.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SUB. BLOCADÉ

The past few weeks have been momentous ones in the prosecution of the war. They have clearly revealed conditions and tendencies which mark the approach of the conflagration to a definite crisis. The two outstanding new features have been the floating of the British "Victory" war loan and the launching of Germany's campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare with its many complications. The first, the British financial campaign, is one, if not the greatest mark of supreme confidence and power and unflinching determination to see the war thru to peace and victory. It is by far the greatest loan that any nation ever floated and it is domestic; i.e., it is coming from the pocket-books of the British people themselves. The second event, the German campaign, in contrast is one of desperation. It is the last terrible resort of a nation led by desperate men to save itself from impending defeat. Germany and her allies with every advantage in the beginning of the conflict have found that advantage gradually fading away until it is replaced by an elusive spectre that goads them to deeds and to a disregard of world opinion that only madmen could contemplate. The break of diplomatic relations by United States is but an evidence of how all neutral public opinion regards the so-called submarine blockade, tho all the little nations of Europe cannot be expected at present to follow such a course. They hate to contemplate the horrors of Belgium and no one can blame them. Even the Pope has told Germany that this resort to frightfulness must place the Central Powers beyond the pale of all neutral sympathy and would justify the most extreme reprisals. Thus while making a last stand for so-called victory the Central Powers have already lost the war. Victory is absolutely beyond hope of achievement with them. No matter what might be the success of the submarine campaign in so far as sinking ships and isolating Britain is concerned, any success achieved by such a violation of every code of the moral law could be but transitory. The world will see the fight proceed and see Germany beaten to the ground so long as she makes "Mittel-Europa" or a united Central Europe dominated by Prussia her dream and denies the sovereignty of weak nations and States rights. Europe will never turn back the course of her history and again be slave to a single power. Right will triumph over might tho might will stop at nothing the human brain can conceive. The world is small. The effects of modern war extends in a measure to all nations and makes of them a family which cannot tolerate an outlaw in it. It makes of the world something more nearly approaching a community and a community in which it is to the interest of all to see that no one disturbs the peace while all have a maximum of freedom.

The previous brutalities have revealed Germany as capable of any extreme measures, immediate considerations appear to have

goaded her to this desperate step. The spectre of starvation and the dangers of internal dissension seem to have been great. The attitude of Austria is no less significant. The new Emperor afraid of the Entente in case of defeat and certain of becoming a vassal of Germany with a standing equivalent to a king of one of the German States in case of victory, appears to have been taking an attitude not at all what Berlin might wish. He has been deposing ministers avowedly in favor of German ascendancy in Austria and has been replacing them by men with more essentially Austrian ideals. It is even said that Austria has been trying to open conversation with Britain and France to discover a possible basis for peace and that the initiative in the recent so-called peace move came from her.

But even admitting the destructiveness and the danger of the so-called submarine blockade, it can not achieve its purpose. England is prepared against it and tho the first few days are showing great loss of tonnage, much of it is neutral and it not proceeding at a rate that could starve England out in anything less than several years. All remember the tremor of excitement when the first submarine blockade of almost two years ago was announced. Tho considerable, the losses in two years have not been serious. The menace was met when Britain was less prepared to meet it. Nevertheless it may become necessary for Britain to curtail food and to withdraw much tonnage engaged in neutral shipping to her own use. It may even become necessary to convoy fleets of merchantmen with destroyers. Then, and this is facing the thing squarely, the shortest haul with least exposure must result in the greatest transport of supplies. That must be from America. Hence the absolute necessity of making supreme efforts at the maximum food production in Canada this year. There ought to be an immediate co-ordination of the Federal and Provincial governments and the press to secure outside labor and to utilize city labor, much of which would gladly go out on farms for a while at least and to spare no effort to see that every possible acre of ground in Canada is seeded and seeded as well as possible. We are probably approaching a point when our food supplies will be of greater relative value to Britain than ever before. Let us have action.

SUCCESSION DUTIES

In the National Political Platform prepared by the Canadian Council of Agriculture and endorsed by the Manitoba and Alberta Conventions of the organized farmers, one plank proposes that Federal revenue be augmented by a sharply graduated inheritance tax upon large estates. This tax is usually called Succession Duties or Death Duties. In order to secure information upon this The Guide gathered the Succession Duties Acts from each of the nine provinces and a summary of the provision of these Acts is published elsewhere in this issue together with the amount of revenue now coming to the provinces from this source. The most lasting impression gathered from a study of these Acts is that they were prepared by lawyers, and were designed, almost if not fully, as much to provide revenue for lawyers as for the governments. There is an entire lack of uniformity and the proverbial Philadelphia lawyer would be taxed to his utmost to understand them. It is quite apparent that altho a considerable revenue is raised from this source that very large estates get off comparatively easy. One of the chief menaces to democratic development in Canada is the accumulation of large fortunes and it is highly desirable that they be curbed as much as possible. If these Acts