

FREE WHEAT PERMANENT

In discussing the order-in-council by which wheat and wheat products were placed on the free list, Sir Thomas White stated in parliament last week that the order-in-council had precisely the same effect as an act of parliament. He further stated that these items would remain on the free list until changed by act of parliament and produced authority from the deputy minister of justice in support of his contention. This seems to cover the situation thoroughly and should be all that is required. Parliament of course has authority to change the duty on any item at any time.

DIRECT LEGISLATION

At the big Liberal convention held in Moose Jaw some few weeks ago in preparation for the provincial election there was no discussion on the subject of Direct Legislation and it is not mentioned in the platform of the party. This is a serious omission. Direct Legislation was in the platform of both the Liberal and Conservative parties in Saskatchewan prior to the last provincial election. After the election a Direct Legislation bill was put on the statute books. It was then put to a referendum of the people, but with restrictions which killed the bill. The restrictions were of such a character as to justify the belief that it was intended that the bill should be killed. If the people of Saskatchewan and the Grain Growers' Associations really want Direct Legislation it will be necessary for them to be active, because if it is not made a subject of discussion during the campaign both parties will rightfully feel that there is no great demand for it on the part of the people. Direct Legislation should have a place on the statute books of every province. It is one of the finest pieces of democratic machinery that has been invented and it will help amazingly to put our public life upon a higher and cleaner basis.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND WAR

The greatest American, Abraham Lincoln, said, when the Civil War was almost over:—

"Yes, we may all congratulate ourselves that this cruel war is nearing its close. It has cost a vast amount of treasure and bloodshed; the best blood of the flower of American youth has been freely offered on our country's altars, that the nation might live. It has been, indeed, a trying hour for the republic, but I see in the near future a crisis approaching that unnerves me and causes me to tremble for the safety of my country. As a result of war corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption in high places will follow and the money power of the country will endeavor to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people, until all the wealth is accumulated in a few hands and the republic is destroyed. I feel in this moment more anxiety for the safety of my country than ever before, even in the midst of war. God grant that my suspicions may prove groundless."

Lincoln's suspicions have not proven groundless. They have become living realities in the life of the American republic. What he said at that time might be repeated today without one iota of change. Graft and exploitation during the Civil War laid the foundation of many enormous American fortunes and the program is being repeated in Canada today.

It is to be hoped farmers will be able to combine to take full advantage of the new Livestock Encouragement Act in Alberta. By this act five farmers by signing a joint note and thereby becoming jointly responsible are able to purchase livestock on government security up to the value of \$500 each. There are of course certain rules to be followed and certain supervision is necessary, but the machinery is comparatively simple and should be readily adaptable. It should help to give those farmers with available feed, but no money, a chance to make greater use of some of the natural advantages which surround them and which in the past have too often counted as disadvantages.

The Dominion Millers' Association at a

meeting held last week discussed free wheat and was not fully decided whether to accept it as a temporary measure or to oppose it generally. It is quite evident that the government has decided that the political strength of the Western farmers is greater than the political strength of the millers. The right thing for the millers now to do is to join with the organized farmers and use their united strength to have the tariff removed from other articles which enter into the cost of milling and the cost of living.

We imagine President Wilson will prosecute the war just as vigorously and with the same ability that he has endeavored to remain at peace. Germany before the war had a population of 65,000,000 and Austria 55,000,000. The United States alone brings against them a population of over 100,000,000 and with resources and wealth practically equal to Germany and Austria combined.

It is announced that the new federal grading system in the United States will entirely replace the individual state system of grading. The wheat grades have already been promulgated and will take effect in Minneapolis very shortly. There will be considerable difference between the new grades and the Canadian grades.

Of the taxation proposals in the platform of the organized farmers the government has accepted only the graduated corporation tax. This is the one which hits most heavily the farmers' own organizations.

Has anybody heard of the Economic and Development Commission appointed a year or two ago to revolutionize agricultural methods? It will be remembered that most of the commissioners were financial magnates whose chief experience in agriculture was accumulating the wealth which the farmer created. If the commission has anything to report, we should hear about it soon.



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