

STOP GAMBLING IN WHEAT

I DON'T know Mr. Henry Lance, the writer of the article "Conscript Canada's Crop," in your issue of June 2nd, but I recognize very plainly, as every Western farmer will, the brand of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange on the hand which wields his pen. He writes nominally on grain conscription, but his article is, in fact, a defence of the grain dealers. Articles such as his have appeared in a great number of papers, and a good many of these papers refuse to publish matter refuting the statements in these Grain Exchange articles. I know the Courier will be fair enough to publish this reply to Mr. Lance. I am a member of the Thornhill, Manitoba, Grain Growers' Association, and I write as such under my own name and out in the open. There is a consensus of opinion as to wheat gambling among at least 95 per cent. of the Western farmers, and I want to set out their views in reply to the argument of Mr. Lance on behalf of the grain men.

Mr. Lance says "It is no time to talk of the dealers in grain as if they were a set of grafting middlemen getting rich on the necessities of Europe." My simple answer to this is that it depends on whether you are out to defend the grain men or to tell the truth. The fact is that the wheat trade of Canada, which is centred in the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, has exploited the producer and the consumer for many years, millions of dollars have been taken out of the public with the result that the members of the milling companies, the elevator companies, the big commission houses and the exporters are enormously wealthy, many of them being millionaires. The war simply offered new and greater opportunities for exploiting the people than peace did. At present the millers and the other grain men are trying to blame one another for the scandalous price of wheat and flour caused by speculation.

There has been for years, through gambling on the Grain Exchange, regular persistent mulcting of all and sundry who could be got to gamble in futures. Not only have these lambs been bled, but the price of actual grain has been so manipulated that when the producer has grain to sell the price is low, when the grain men have got the grain the price is high. The result is that the farmer gets too small a price, the flour consumer pays too much and the grain man grows wealthy—in a word, the people are robbed.

The worst result at present is not the plundering of the public, but that the grain men are actually helping the Kaiser. The Winnipeg Grain Exchange deserves a big iron cross from the Kaiser. I thank Mr. Lance for the words "a set of grafting middlemen." It describes them well.

THE Winnipeg Grain Exchange has established a virtual monopoly of the grain business—practically no grain trade of any moment can be carried on except through the Exchange. Monopoly is always selfish and mean, and monopoly in this case robs both producer and consumer—it has made the grain dealers selfish and mean.

In addition to handling actual grain the Winnipeg Grain Exchange carries on an enormous gambling business, betting on the future price of grain, largely wheat. Men go through the form of selling and buying millions upon millions of bushels of wheat that never existed. They make formal contracts to buy and sell this wheat. They put up margins of 5 cents a bushel or more. If the price goes up the buyer wins, less a substantial commission to the broker, who manipulates the betting, and if it goes down the seller wins less the commission. This gambling is, by the rules of the Grain Exchange, the Clearing House and the Grain Dealers Association, so intertwined with legitimate dealing in wheat that it is virtually impossible to carry on a legitimate business in buying and selling grain without gambling on the future price of grain.

This gambling is called by euphemistic names—buying and selling futures, hedging, options—but it is nothing more or less than betting on the future price or, in other words, straight gambling. Defenders of this gambling try to get around the point

The author of this answer to Henry Lance is a farmer and a lawyer (K.C.), an accredited member of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association. He thinks as a farmer and writes as an able lawyer. Hence—good reading.—The Editor.

By A. McLEOD

by saying that buying and selling wheat for future delivery is legitimate just as buying and selling dry goods by sample before manufacture is legitimate. Buying or selling dry goods, wheat or anything else is legitimate if the transaction is bona fide and real and is carried out by delivery. But apart from the sale for future delivery of real wheat that is actually delivered there are fictitious sales of millions of bushels of the kind of wheat that only grows on

telegraph wires, cement curbs and marble-walled grain exchanges, and the gambling in this is intertwined with the sale of real wheat and is used to manipulate the price of real wheat. The result is simply as I have said, robbing the producer and the consumer for the benefit of the grain trade.

The price of wheat for the grain trade of Canada is fixed by the mouth of a member of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange and by no other means. The price can be artificially lowered or increased and this is systematically done. The grain men profit by this artificial fixing of prices in 90 cases out of 100 when they squeeze out the poor devils who lose in this

TWO STYLES IN WAR GEAR



WINNIPEG owns two of the finest bands in Canada; the Citizens Band, now overseas, under the baton of Bandmaster Banaclough, and the 100th Regiment Grenadiers under Bandmaster Burt, completely reorganized after the war owing to enlistments for overseas. This handsome picture is the real Grenadier Guard pomp and circumstance.



A FEW days ago a small detachment of American soldiers, college recruits from the big border camp at American Niagara, came across for a sociable visit to Toronto. This young soldier made it quite plain that the military tune in his head was not "The Girl I Left Behind Me."



Those American Soldiers Visiting Canada recently Wore an Odd Style of Semi-Sombbrero Hat.