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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE
"Equal Rights to All and Special Privileges to None"
A Weekly Journal for Progressive Farmers

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Lloyd George on Food Production

The British plan of Maximum Prices for Wheat, Oats and Farm Labor, and Restriction of Imports

The speech of Lloyd George before the British House of Commons on February 23 is undoubtedly the most significant one to Great Britain since the outbreak of war. Without the use of a superfluous word the British Premier laid bare the problem of meeting the difficulties under which the submarine menace is placing Britain and proposed drastic measures to meet that problem. Whether he told all the measures now in hand no one knows but briefly the proposals now framed are as follows:—

All non-essential imports are to be prohibited. Included in this list are coffee, cocoa, tea, raw fruits (except lemons and oranges), hides, leather, boots and shoes, agricultural machinery, glass, canned lobsters and salmon, furs, wines, wood and timber, typewriters, many periodicals and works of art, photographic apparatus, etc.

Brewers in 1917 will be allowed to make only 10,000,000 barrels of beer against 26,000,000 last year.

The new restrictive import measures are of course made to relieve the shortage in tonnage. Nearly half the British tonnage is now engaged in war work. In the 12 months before the war 50,000,000 of tonnage entered British ports. In the last twelve months this only totalled 30,000,000 tons. The reduction is mainly due to the allocation of a large part of British ships to other Allies and to carrying goods direct from America and elsewhere to Southern Europe, Egypt and India. The main reduction is not due to the work of submarines but the loss thru their depredations is also serious. Regarding submarines he said: "The government is hopeful of finding means of dealing effectively with German submarines, but we should be guilty of criminal folly if we rested our action or our policy on a tranquil anticipation of being able to realize that hope. We must be able to carry the war thru to a victorious end, however long victory may tarry, even if we fail to hunt the submarine out of the deep. There is no sure foundation of victory except that. I want the house and the country to realize that we cannot build on anything else. A great deal of our tonnage has been sunk, and I dare say that a good deal more will be sunk, before we succeed in overcoming that menace."

The measures proposed to meet this menace are to hunt the submarines in every conceivable fashion, build new ships and restrict imports as named above.

Wages To Be Increased

Wages are to be increased for ship workers according to the work done and no reduction in rates will be countenanced when workers appear to be making unusual wages.

Speaking of timber imports the Premier said: "The first article of great bulk which consumes our tonnage is timber. Last year we imported 6,400,000 tons of timber from abroad. Of these, two millions were pit props for the collieries. The bulk of the remainder was used for the military forces here

and in France, being necessary for the efficiency of the army, for the construction of dug-outs, for trench boards and for a variety of other things.

"Arrangements have been made for going into this question of timber supply, both here and in France, as to the best method of economizing the use of timber. The army in France is a very considerable consumer of timber, and appeals have been made from time to time to the French government, and the French government has been extraordinarily liberal in responding. They have already placed two forests at the disposal of our army, and I am afraid we shall have to appeal to them to make greater sacrifices of their beautiful forests, as tonnage is as vital to them as to ourselves in order to conduct the war successfully.

"If we can manage to secure a sufficient number of forests in France and also to secure labor for the purpose of cutting down the trees, there will be an enormous saving of tonnage in respect of timber."

Home supplies Lloyd George believed could be worked by a proper mixture of skilled and unskilled labor so as to supply most of the rest of the timber required. A new army of woodsmen will be enrolled for this purpose. Much tonnage had been used in importing iron ore. There was plenty of this at home—the not always of the best grade. More blast furnaces were needed and here again a proper distribution of the little skilled labor available with the unskilled. The supply of iron ore for the army and navy was essential.

Production of Food Supplies

But it was to the increase of home grown food supplies that Lloyd George devoted most of his remarkable speech. It is so concise and lucid that it is reproduced in full. The minimum prices proposed are figured at the present rate of exchange and are put in dollars and cents. Lloyd George said: "Now I come to the third, and perhaps the most important, decision in which by home production we can assist to enable the country to overcome its difficulties and that is the production of food supplies. Twenty years after the Corn laws were abolished in this country we produced twice as much wheat as we imported, and since then four or five millions of acres of arable land have become pasture and about half the agricultural labor population has emigrated to the colonies. No doubt the state showed lamentable indifference to the importance of the agricultural industry and to the very life of the nation, and that is a mistake which must never be repeated. No civilized country in the world has spent less on agriculture, or even spent as little either directly or indirectly, as we. Between 70 and 80 per cent. of our total food supply has been imported yearly; and at the present moment I want the country to know our food stocks are low—lamentably low—lower than they ever have been within recollection. This is very

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