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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

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EDITORIAL

What of our Fuel Supplies?

The frost of last winter is scarcely out of our bones before the problems of the next cold season arise. Last year the whole country was taken by surprise by a continuous siege of low temperatures and were it not for large accumulated supplies of wood there would have been many more tales of hardship. As it was, practically all supplies of wood and available coal were exhausted when warm weather arrived. Good resolutions were made that sufficient stocks would be laid in to insure against a famine: the railway companies gave assurance that their cars would be used to distribute the coal from our Western mines along all their lines, and the mine owners professed to be most anxious that there should be no want of freight. As a condition of mind for those represented in these different interests to be in, this was all very proper and satisfactory, but good resolutions are easily ignored. Local dealers do not report any very great demand for coal, nor do they appear anxious to provide themselves with supplies for the first or second demands that come on the approach of winter. At the mines work was delayed in the spring and is yet to a certain extent, because one class of men do not officially and openly recognize another class and the significance of that class in the operations of the mines, and now comes the report that the mine operators cannot get cars to distribute coal over the prairies where they have orders for it. Thus is the chain of indifference to the possibility of suffering from cold complete, and apparently the only insurance against a repetition of last year's hardships will be found in the fact of a warmer, shorter season. Should winter again set in in October and continue steadily up to April we do not wish to contemplate the suffering that is threatened and that will surely overtake us if Herculean efforts are not put forth to secure coal to mine and move it before the crop and cattle movements set in.

Success to Mr. Cross!

Reports from the capital of Alberta indicate that the Attorney-General is preparing to proceed against the organized lumber dealers of that province and is also enlisting the co-operation of the British Columbia Government in order that the real instigators of what the committee appointed by the Dominion Government found to be "exorbitant prices" may be apprehended. The action of the Attorney-General of Alberta, if it is within the bounds of political propriety (and this is a question which we have never seen decided), is most commendable. The actions of the lumber dealers in raising their prices almost immediately upon the finding of the Parliamentary Committee was, to say the least, defiant, and bordered very closely upon insolence toward the Federal Government. It certainly alienated any possibility of public sympathy and implied that the public's interest was not in the least theirs.

We in Canada are patient with manufacturing concerns—more so than they are in the Republic. Across the line the lumber trust is being regulated in earnest. The District Attorney for Minnesota is bringing action against the organized retail lumber men of that state, and the United States supreme court has declared that the increase of freight rates of from six to twelve dollars a car on yellow pine to the Ohio River is excessive, and claims of between three and four million dollars are being filed against certain

railways for a return of this excess freight charge. Whether or not it will be recovered we cannot say, but judging by the attitude of the court toward the Standard Oil Company, which was recently assessed a fine of over twenty-nine million dollars, it would appear that the railway companies and lumber dealers must more nearly simulate justice in their practices.

This is not just the time for industrial organizations to pinch the consumers. Money is none too plentiful nor free this season and the public mind is in no humor to witness extortion. Provincial Governments may depend upon the public endorsing any reasonable action to secure lower lumber prices, even to the extent if necessary of assisting honest competition from independent dealers.

The Eternal Bugbear.

As Western agriculture becomes a more established industry the problems of the farmer increase. We have been forcibly impressed with the persistence with which farmers ask for some suggestions upon the checking and eradication of weeds. This keen interest in the problem argues well for its solution, although it also indicates the alarming hold weeds have upon our fertile alluvial soil. As long as weeds did not completely crowd out a crop or cause a dockage of more than two or three per cent. in grain it was hard for farmers to realize that weeds were doing any serious injury and consequently they were not looked upon with any feelings of loathsomeness or antipathy. But when the presence of weeds makes itself felt in the immediate loss of from five to fifteen per cent. of the revenue of the crop, then the appearance of weeds naturally creates a feeling of revulsion in the man upon whose place they grow. Like disease they are little feared and little known until the contact with them becomes persistently intimate.

People have quite generally concluded that the solution of the weed problem is not to be found in legislation and that each landowner has to make a continuous fight against them.

The weed problem, however, gives point to the question as to what extent provincial Governments should take a hand in the adjusting of such difficulties. We have had suggestions made to us by farmers that the Government of the provinces should furnish farmers with chemicals for the destruction of weeds; that they should employ men in each municipality or rural improvement district to lead the campaign of weed extinction; that they should operate farms to demonstrate how weeds can be eliminated and engage in other less practical schemes. But in this question of weed eradication it is well to first inquire what is the function of the Department of Agriculture in a Government. In our estimation it should not be expected to go to the expense of furnishing materials to be used upon individual farms for the sole benefit of the owners. The second suggestion that there should be energetic leaders of a campaign against weeds is a good one and if the community does not produce them then the Government should endeavor to loan one to those districts where his services are most required. It should be remembered, however, that in every district there are such men, who though possibly unable by speech to lead such a campaign are nevertheless actually showing their neighbors how to keep weeds in check by their methods of conducting their own farms. This suggestion that there should be experts in plenty throughout the provinces we believe to be of more avail than the other that the Government operate a weedy farm, for the simple reason that those who most need help in getting rid of their weeds are the last to avail themselves of the reports of the results that would be reached on such a farm, and also the results would necessarily be slow in spreading through the province.

Manitoba is particularly in need of a vigorous war upon weeds; not that her farmers are less skilful in the handling of their land and crops, but early conditions resulted in the province being seeded thickly with weeds, and the soil throughout a large part of it being exceptionally fertile, these weeds spread before their noxiousness became known. Saskatchewan and Alberta, however, cannot afford to ignore the fact of the tremendous spread of weeds within their boundaries and should endeavor to be continuously on the lookout for schemes to check them.

With Manitoba especially in mind we offer the suggestion if it would not be fair and a good investment of public funds to expend as much time and money upon the educating of the public in the nature of weeds and their eradication, as upon local fairs and the demonstration of the relative value of different animals. The professors of the agricultural college and the other experts employed by the department to judge stock at the fairs have done good work this year and previously, but from the standpoint of an exclusive grain grower it might be claimed Prof. Rutherford, the agronomist of the college, should be furnished with the necessary funds and equipment to work upon the problems which are more essentially the grain grower's, the chief of which is that of weed suppression.

A Commercial Enigma.

That fact stated by Mr. Campbell at Dauphin, before the Beef Commission that "notwithstanding that export cattle cost more per pound here than the cattle killed for local use, and it costs about \$20 to \$25 per head to land them in the Old Country, a roast of Canadian beef can be bought in Glasgow cheaper than in Winnipeg," is one of the things that producers find it hard to view with equanimity. We recently heard the same complaint raised by a resident of Calgary when he found that the beer manufactured in his home town could be bought cheaper hundreds of miles away from the brewery than at its door. The man who purchases a Canadian-made implement in South Africa or Australia is not at any particular disadvantage by being a long way from the base of supplies and so we might go on enumerating home-made articles that may be bought cheaper abroad than in the town where they are manufactured, but the list of articles of foreign manufacture or production that can be bought in Canada is not by any means so long, notwithstanding the fact that we import very largely. Our tariff keeps the price of foreign goods up and allows our manufacturers an opportunity to strengthen their positions in the export business. The adjustments in trade due to tariffs, competition, combinations, etc., are numerous, intricate and subtle.

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July and August rains have set up a rank second growth in the oat and barley crops and have also brightened the prospects for heavier crops of wheat. In many places where the average yield was placed at ten bushels per acre in early July, it is now placed at from twelve to fourteen.

* * *

There appear to be more insects infesting the shade trees of Manitoba than have ever before been noticed. An official entomologist with the funds available to publish the results of his observations would add much to our educational and agricultural knowledge.