

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, July 14th, 1915

## ALBERTA FOR TEMPERANCE

One week from today the voters of Alberta will have an opportunity of exercising the right of free born citizens to self government. On July 21 the first Referendum ever taken in Canada under a Direct Legislation Act will be held to decide whether or not the sale of liquor for beverages shall be prohibited thruout the Province of Alberta. To this question the electors will vote "yes" or "no" and a straight majority of those voting will decide the issue. The Liquor Act which is to be voted upon is a prohibition act. If it is carried it will close all bars, wholesale houses and clubs as places where liquors may be purchased and consumed and thus will abolish the treating system. In times of prosperity as much as \$12,300,000 has been spent for liquor in Alberta in a year, and if the liquor traffic is abolished the money which is now squandered over the bar will be spent in other ways—in the purchase of food and clothing, in better homes, in agricultural implements, in pure bred stock, in barns and granaries, and much of it probably in the payment of debts. The bar-keepers will lose their present jobs, the brewers will only be able to sell their products for consumption outside of Alberta and business with them will not be as good as it was, but the grocer and tailor, the hardware man, the furniture dealer, the builder, the implement dealer, the manufacturer of every useful thing that the people of Alberta want will find their business increasing when the liquor traffic is abolished. There are vastly more wages paid in the production and distribution of a thousand dollars' worth of useful articles than in the manufacture and sale of the same quantity of liquor, so that apart altogether from the moral and physical benefits that the people of Alberta as a whole will reap from prohibition, the economic effect will be in every way beneficial. The liquor men, of course, are using every method, fair and unfair, which they think will help to defeat the liquor bill. If the voters will take the trouble to go to the polls, however, there is no question that prohibition will carry by a large majority. No man who has the interest of the people of Alberta at heart will stay at home on July 21. The biggest possible majority should be rolled up by the temperance forces. A small majority would not be accepted by the liquor men as decisive. With a big majority it will be established beyond all possibility of doubt that the people want prohibition and the question can thus be settled once and for all, and the government given notice that the people will expect rigid and effective administration of the law. Every member of the U. F. A. should vote for the Liquor Act on July 21.

## BONDING PRODUCE MERCHANTS

There is one department of the farmers' business which is not receiving the attention today that it should. More production than usual is a phrase which is now almost worn threadbare and yet, with all the advice given and enquiry made, scarcely any extra attention has been paid to ways and means of disposing of farm produce. Marketing is a part of production. Why has more attention not been paid to it? It is being urged from many quarters that the keeping of chickens, making butter and dairy produce and the growing of vegetables can all easily be made profitable sidelines on any farm. But what facilities are there available to enable farmers to sell this farm produce? Leaving out any consideration as to whether he will obtain a fair market price, what guarantee has any shipper that he will receive payment even for his shipment? Complaints are heard

on every hand concerning the state of the produce market and the blame for the present state of affairs rests just as much with the farmer as with the produce dealer. Reasons for this condition are many and varied, but chief among them is the fact that there are no definite standards set as to grade and quality of product: farmers do not know or realize the importance of conforming to local market requirements respecting the article which they have for sale and finally under existing conditions there is every opportunity for unscrupulous dealers to receive and sell country shipments and simply pocket the proceeds therefrom. Not only this, the produce business is one which requires very expert handling. Depreciation, shrinkage and delays during transit all play a very important part in determining profits and, to be successful, a man must have a very wide experience of market conditions and requirements. There are perfectly honest and yet incompetent produce merchants just as there are the same class of men to be found in any other business occupation, but why should any shipper be expected to stand the risk of receiving no payment for his produce just because his dealer is incompetent? No such condition of affairs is allowed to exist in the grain trade. There is no reason why it should be tolerated in the produce trade. Track buyers and grain commission merchants have to be licensed by the grain commission and in addition have to furnish a satisfactory bond. Why should not the powers of this excellent commission be enlarged to include the licensing and bonding of produce merchants? This matter has received considerable attention in the United States and today eight States have laws in operation controlling produce commission merchants. Two more have the matter of passing similar legislation at present under consideration. The principles involved in this legislation are substantially the same and a standard bill has been adopted based largely upon the one at present in operation in the State of New York, a copy of which appears on another page in this issue of The Guide. With slight modifications to suit conditions this bill could be used in Canada. The act could be passed by the Dominion parliament to be operative in the several provinces upon proclamation by each respective lieutenant-governor. The machinery for its operation, as mentioned above, is already in existence. Farmers should consider this matter carefully and do all they can to insist on immediate action being taken in this important matter.

## THE AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

While the appointment of a federal commission to endeavor to discover a means of increasing the agricultural production of this country is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, it is to be regretted that the scope of the promised commission, as indicated by the minute of council issued by the government, is not wider. Attention has already been called in The Guide to the fact that the government has determined in advance that it will not consider any proposal which might endanger vested rights (which very frequently would be better called vested wrongs) and a comparison of the statement issued by the government with the memorial presented to Premier Borden by the joint delegation of farmers and manufacturers last November suggests other defects in the reference. Practically every question on which information is now sought—agricultural education, co-operation, marketing, cold storage, transportation and immigration, were suggested as subjects of enquiry by the manufacturers' and farmers' delegation and in addition the

request was made that the proposed commission should study the rural school and also ascertain to what extent the protective tariff was responsible for the handicap under which the farmer labors. No investigation of agricultural conditions can pretend to be comprehensive which ignores the protective tariff. If the government appoints a commission to discover why the agricultural population is decreasing, actually in the East and relatively in the West, and forbids that commission to expose the way in which the farmers are being robbed and the agricultural industry made unprofitable by protection, it will be stultifying the commission before it begins its work.

## THE LABOR SHORTAGE

The likelihood of sufficient help being available to harvest the crop properly seems at the present time quite remote. The military authorities have arranged to allow private soldiers and non-commissioned officers leave of absence to work in the harvest fields, but for no other purpose. This will afford considerable relief but there will still be a considerable shortage to be overcome. The provincial departments of agriculture are taking hold of the matter vigorously and the railway companies also. Farmers will now begin to have an idea of the amount of help they will need and should lose no time in contracting for men wherever possible. There are many idle men in the cities and towns, a large proportion of whom will be of use on the farms and it would be good policy for farmers who can to get men in advance and put them at odd jobs on low wages so as to have them on hand when harvest begins. The shortage in help will also turn the minds of farmers to labor saving machinery, and it will turn the minds of inventors and manufacturers in the same direction. There are always many of such inventions being placed on the market, some good and some useless. But labor saving farm machinery has made great strides in recent years and live farmers are equipping themselves to meet the shortage and high price of human labor.

## POLITICS IN MANITOBA

Up to the present time the countercharges of the Conservative party in Manitoba of political corruption on the part of the Norris government have proved a sort of boomerang. It is quite true that the Liberals, or at least some of them, had arranged with the Conservatives for a saw-off of election protests, which in itself is decidedly reprehensible, tho it is the ordinary procedure in politics thruout Canada. The charge that the Norris government sold out to the Conservatives for \$50,000, however, has failed to make good even on the evidence of the accusers. The most interesting point in evidence is the story told by Hon. Jas. H. Howden, Attorney-General in the late Roblin government. Mr. Howden says he got \$50,000 from Dr. Simpson, President of the Conservative Association, with which to buy off the Grits from prosecuting election protests. Mr. Howden disclaims all knowledge of where Dr. Simpson got the money, but it is quite evident that it was a campaign fund produced from somewhere. This money Howden paid to one Chambers, but Chambers was unable to make any deal with Mr. Norris. He tried to return the money, but Howden wouldn't take it. Howden, as Attorney-General, was chief law officer of the province and the legal advisor of the Crown. His evidence before the Royal Commission indicated that he had a very low and decidedly immoral conception of the duties of his high office. No wonder politics in Manitoba have been rotten with