

Common Business Honesty

In The Farmer's Advocate, of Winnipeg, its issue of October 8, in large type on the first page, there is an article dealing with the circulation of the paper, in which they make the following statement:

"The Canadian West is a big stretch of country. In it are many farm homes including homesteaders' shacks. During September of this year, The Farmers' Advocate every week reached about 33,000 of these homes of one class or other. While this number is greater than can be shown on mailing lists of other farm journals, we know that it still can be increased. In fact, we really want to have the total reach at least 35,000 by the end of the year."

And in The Farmers' Advocate of October 15, in the same prominent position, appears the following statement:

"A careful count of our present lists of subscribers shows that The Farmers' Advocate and Home Journal now goes to 33,444 homes every week."

These two statements in The Advocate are published to convince the public that The Advocate has a larger circulation than The Grain Growers' Guide. We are prepared to wager \$100.00 that The Farmers' Advocate has not as many legitimate subscribers as The Grain Growers' Guide. We have asked the Postal Authorities what constitutes a legitimate subscriber, and have the following reply:

"Subscriptions to weekly papers more than one year in arrears are invalid. Publishers found tendering such matter at bulk rate will be required to pay thereon the regular transient rate of one cent per four ounces or fraction thereof, to each separate address, and are warned that continued attempts to forward such matter will be followed by suspension of postal privileges. Subscriptions are valid only when personally authorized. It is not possible for any person, firm, institution or interest whatsoever to validate a subscription to a second person or persons."

Regulations Not Enforced

Very few farm journals adhere to the postal regulations in this respect. Many of them get a farmer to subscribe for one year, and then continue to send him their paper as long as he will take it out of the Post Office. The fact that a large circulation brings better advertising patronage causes many journals to use unscrupulous and illegitimate methods to circulate their paper, and also to publish false statements of their number of subscribers. The Grain Growers' Guide, in five years, has built up the largest list of subscribers (in accordance with Postal Regulations) of any farm journal in Western Canada, and today we have 31,423 subscribers who have actually paid their subscriptions to The Guide. A man who allows his subscription to become more than one year in arrears is not very much interested in the paper, and is not likely to be much of a buyer of the goods advertised in it. We believe that advertisers are entitled to an honest statement of the number of paid subscribers of every journal with which they do business, and the Post Office, or some other reliable authority, should provide and guarantee such a statement.

Some journals issue statements of "guaranteed net circulation" or "bona fide circulation," but these words are meaningless, because they may include subscriptions from one to ten years in arrears, sample copies, copies sent free to advertisers, complimentary, exchanges, etc., which are, of course, no use for advertising purposes. Let them issue statements of "paid" circulation in accordance with the postal regulations. "Paid" subscriptions are the only ones of value to advertisers, and the only ones entitled to postal privileges. The Guide is today

printing 34,000 copies every week, and, therefore, is entitled to claim 33,750 "bona fide" or "guaranteed" circulation, but because we have only 31,423 "paid" subscribers, we claim only that many; the balance being sent to advertisers, exchange copies, file copies and news-stand sales.

Our Challenge

In order to settle the question of circulation, we hereby challenge The Farmers' Advocate to submit its own subscription records along with The Guide subscription records, to a complete and thorough investigation by impartial authorities, each journal to pay half the cost of such investigation, and to have the result of such investigation published in both papers. The investigation is to show the actual number of "Paid" subscriptions of each journal on or about October 15, 1913; arrears for a period not greater than one year; exchange; advertisers, etc., etc.; the actual number of copies printed each week, and the total amount of cash received for papers during the year. If The Advocate can show more Paid Subscriptions than The Guide, in accordance with the above postal regulations, The Guide will at once send them a check for \$100.00 to pay for all their trouble and inconvenience in submitting to the investigation.

Guide Leads Canada

To show how rapidly The Guide has grown, and for general information, we have asked the other farm journals for their circulation statements, and herewith publish those received. The others are, we believe, approximately correct:

The Grain Growers' Guide	Weekly	Winnipeg, Man.	31,423
*Farmer's Advocate	Weekly	London, Ont.	31,000
Farmers' Advocate	Weekly	Winnipeg, Man.	29,355
Nor'West Farmer	Semi-Monthly	Winnipeg, Man.	28,007
Homestead	Weekly	Edmonton, Alta.	20,614
Farmers' Magazine	Monthly	Toronto, Ont.	20,000
*Canadian Farm	Weekly	Toronto, Ont.	19,046
Farm and Ranch Review	Semi-Monthly	Calgary, Alta.	18,000
*Canadian Thresherman and Farmer	Monthly	Winnipeg, Man.	18,000
*Country Life in Canada	Monthly	Winnipeg, Man.	16,000
Farm and Dairy	Weekly	Peterboro, Ont.	14,250
*Saskatchewan Farmer	Monthly	Moose Jaw, Sask.	4,750

* Indicates that no statement has been received. If a sworn "paid" statement is later forwarded by any of the above we shall be pleased to publish it.

The Guide intends henceforth to do all in its power to see that advertisers are enabled to secure honest circulation statements, and will join in any movement to bring this about.

If the statement made by The Farmers' Advocate, as quoted above, is an honest one, we expect that journal to accept our challenge forthwith, and demand our \$100.00. If the statement was not an honest one we shall expect The Farmers' Advocate to withdraw it at once. This matter must be settled promptly. The Guide has spent a great deal of money and in five years has built up a very efficient subscription system. We intend to have full credit in the advertising world for the honesty of our subscription list.

This is our challenge. We hope to announce in the next issue that The Farmers' Advocate has accepted it.

(Signed) THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE.

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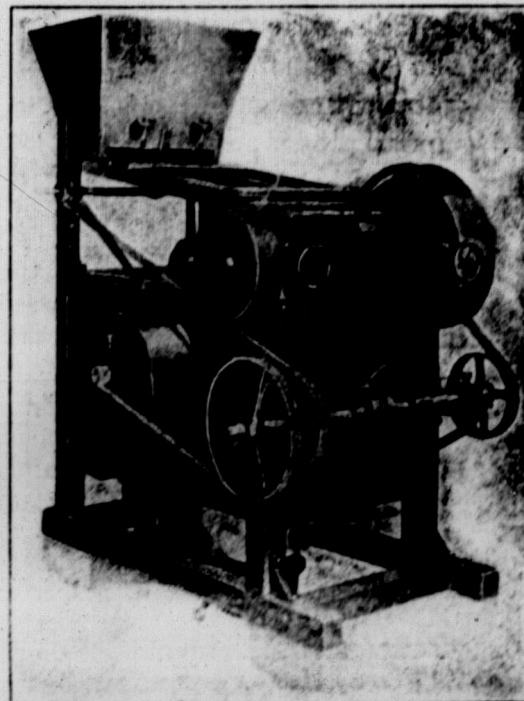
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