



ALBERTA SECTION

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by Edward J. Fream, Secretary, Innisfail, Alta.

Private versus Government Control Of Chilled Meat Trade

Private Company Solicits Support of United Farmers for Chilled Meat Proposition. A Review of Previous Investigations and Conclusions. Urgent Need of Action. Secretary Fream favors Government Ownership

A COMMUNICATION has been received from Mr. E. G. Palmer, secretary, Meat Exports, Ltd., dealing with a scheme concerning the proposed chilled meat trade which is now on foot.

Mr. Palmer requests that his letter be published in THE GUIDE, but this is a matter in which the farmers of Alberta especially, are strongly interested in, and it is thought advisable to hold the letter at present, as no information has as yet been secured as to the officers of the company when the company was incorporated and such other matter of a business nature which should be known.

In Alberta this matter has been before the public for some time; in fact in 1908 a committee of five was appointed to investigate the whole question. This committee prepared a very complete report and the thanks of the committee (of which the writer was a member) is certainly due Mr. Palmer for all the assistance given by him at that time.

The Committee dealt with the necessity of providing a stable and remunerative market, the failure of existing methods to achieve the desired results, the methods adopted by other meat producing countries for disposing of their surplus, encouraging the industry and some of the results of those methods, and examination as to how far the system and methods of other countries can with advantage be applied to Canada. Recommendations for adoption in this country. Approximate cost of establishing a thoroughly organized system of meat chilling, etc., throughout the Dominion; and the benefits to the producer and country generally.

It was soon shown that there was strong necessity for improving the position of the stock-raising industry and the need of a market, this being emphasized more by the evidence taken by the beef commission, a few years ago, than anything else. It was ascertained too that the present system of marketing is very wasteful, and the objections to same were many; the live stock trade being subject to too many fluctuations and also being subject to the possibility of the doors of the great meat consuming countries being closed against us through reported diseases.

Canadian System Out-Of-Date

It was ascertained also that the advantages of chilling were many and that practically all other meat exporting countries, except Canada, were devoting their energies more and more to the chilled meat side of the business; in fact, in a bulletin issued by the United States Department of Agriculture in 1905, dealing with this question, the following words were used: "Argentina now favors the export of the product of her pastures in the form of meat and meat products rather than as live animals."

It is needless to go over all the details which will simply emphasize the necessity of this project. All the farmers' associations of the west have endorsed the idea of the chilled meat project, and the only stumbling block now is in the matter of finances.

A proposition was presented to the Minister of Agriculture and was turned down as being too vast for the present requirements of the country, and an amended proposition presented. Both these propositions, however, were such that the majority of the farmers of the western provinces would not be in favor of them. They called for a proportion of capital to be subscribed by a company and the balance to be subscribed by the farmers or patrons. The voting power given was such that the bond-holders or

capitalists who put up the first amount of money would have full control of the company.

It is true that provision was made for the live stock commissioner of the Dominion to be on the board of directors, and the Dominion minister of agriculture to act as chairman of the board, if possible; but this would not give these officers any voting power, and it would mean that the control would be entirely in the hands of the capitalists, and if such a scheme as outlined was adopted, it would mean the formation of another gigantic monopoly.

To Safeguard the Producer

It is true also that provision was made for the government to purchase the interests of the capitalists at any time, but if this was done, why not arrange from the first for the money to be provided by the government and the interest of the farmer as well as the consumer thoroughly safeguarded for all time.

THE LABOR QUESTION

In the effort to assist in solving the labor problem on the Alberta farms it was decided to organize a labor bureau in connection with the central office of the U.F.A., and a short time ago blanks were sent to all the unions dealing with this matter.

Although at the time of writing these lists have not been in the hands of the unions for more than one week, already applications have been received for seven men and two women to work on farms, the wages quoted being from \$30.00 to \$40.00 per month for the men and \$25.00 per month for women. This will give some idea of the scarcity of labor in the province at the present time.

THE WESTERN CONVENTION

Arrangements for the western convention are growing apace, and the answers received from the different boards of trade, agricultural societies, etc., are most enthusiastic. It is expected that the convention will be a large and representative one, both provinces being largely represented, and we look for good results from the conference. The time of the convention will be announced at an early date.

A USEFUL FLOUR MILL

Several of the unions of the U.F.A. have made enquiries recently as to the possibility of securing a flour mill of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the district and yet cheap enough to enable same to be erected by a few farmers in the district. I have just received particulars of a roller mill, manufactured in England, which should answer this purpose. It does not require a skilled miller to operate it and it will run all day without attention except for occasional lubrication. It is stated that the flour produced is of first quality and it has been ascertained that when working on hard Canadian wheats imported into England the capacity of the mill is as high as 270 lbs. of wheat per hour, from which it will produce 190 lbs. of flour. It is claimed that the invention of this mill has for the first time in the history of milling brought the latest type of roller flour mill within the reach of farmers and small millers. I have full particulars and price, etc., and if those who were enquiring about this matter will write me I shall be pleased to give them the necessary information.

EDWARD J. FREAM.

As a member of this committee, I have given this proposition considerable thought, and although when first glancing over the financing proposition it appealed to me as a good one, still the more I have studied it the more I am convinced that it is not to the interests of the farmers to endorse such a scheme.

I am strongly in favor of, and believe there is the greatest need of a chilled meat project for the west, but believe that when this comes it should be from the start under the control of the Dominion government, and therefore there is no need for any company to be established to take up this matter.

In Alberta we are striving for all we are worth for a pork packing plant, which will be under government control; and it would not be consistent on our part to emphasize or assist in any way in the formation of a company which must necessarily be opposed to the in-

terests of the producers, and I therefore have come to the conclusion that the time has now come when we must be prepared to state definitely whether we wish the chilled meat project under the control of the government or in the hands of a private company.

I place these facts before the members and would ask them to discuss same at an early opportunity, but would say, finally, that I stand strongly for the government ownership and am against the guaranteeing of bonds for any company

EDWARD J. FREAM.

PUT YOUR SHOULDERS TO THE WHEEL

Under the heading, "Push Along the Pork Contracts," will be found a resolution unanimously adopted by Tofield Union.

This resolution is one which covers much ground, but at the same time is such that should apply to all the members of the U.F.A.

The rejection of the principle of co-operation as laid down in the report of the pork commission and in the draft agreement which has been submitted by the government to the farmers for signature would strike at one of the most vital points of the U.F.A., for if the guarantee is not forthcoming in this case it will mean that we shall be quoted the length and breadth of the country as failures, and as inconsistent in our demands.

UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA

PRESIDENT: JAMES BOWER, Red Deer

VICE-PRESIDENT: W. J. TREGILLUS, Calgary

SECRETARY-TREASURER: E. J. FREAM, Innisfail

DIRECTORS AT LARGE: James Speakman, Penhold; D. W. Warner, Clover Bar; L. H. Jelliff, Spring Coulee.

DISTRICT DIRECTORS: T. H. Balaam, Vegreville; George Long, Nampa; F. H. Langston, Rosetown; E. Carswell, Penhold; J. Quinsey, Barons; E. Greishach, Gleichen; A. Von Mielecki, Calgary.

the live stock commissioner, but four unions—Agricola, Belcamp, Pleasant Valley and Gleichen—have forwarded signed contracts to me and in each case requested a further supply of contract forms. This is the goal to lead up to. It does not require very much—an average of only ten for each member will provide the guarantee. But before signing the contract, even if you are tempted to sign for the mere ten, I would suggest to you that you consider the advisability of increasing this to at least twenty-five. It will be, comparatively speaking, no harder to provide twenty-five than the ten.

EDWARD J. FREAM

A GOOD SUGGESTION

At the regular monthly meeting of Stettler Union held on April 1, the following resolution was unanimously carried:

"That, in view of the valuable time that is being lost in dealing with the hail insurance question and the difficulty experienced in bringing about an unanimity of opinion amongst the various unions it is felt that unless some definite move is made quickly this all important matter will drag on indefinitely. Therefore, be it resolved, that in the opinion of the Stettler Union all unions should be asked to at once adopt a resolution, to leave the framing of a suitable measure based as far as possible on the resolutions that have already been received from the different unions in the hands of the directors of the central organization."

H. A. STEELE, Secretary.

LAC ST. VINCENT ORGANIZES

A meeting of the farmers of Lac St. Vincent district was held on April 2, to consider the advisability of organizing a union of the U.F.A. Mr. Dan Fay was voted to the chair and twenty-three people voted in favor of the proposition, though only ten paid their fee at the time.

It was moved by A. A. Emery and seconded by A. Scott: "That John B. Green be elected president." This was unanimously adopted, and the president thanked the members for the honor they had conferred on him in a very able speech.

On motion of Messrs. Bertrand and Green, Mr. W. E. Fay was unanimously elected vice-president.

On motion of Messrs. Green and Scott, Mr. J. E. Bertrand was unanimously appointed secretary-treasurer.

The meeting then adjourned till Saturday, April 23rd next, at 7 p.m.

J. E. BERTRAND, Sec.

WILL FORM COW-TESTING ASSOCIATION

Alix Union held its regular meeting on March 26, with Col. Marryat in the chair. Among other business it was decided to write the live stock commissioner and ask him to give an address in Alix on the pork packing proposition. A committee was appointed to interview farmers interested in dairying, with a view to forming a herd testing association.

A resolution was passed expressing approval of consolidated schools, and recommending to the Central committee that in view of such schools having proved successful in other parts of Canada they should urge the provincial government to grant powers to any district to carry on such schools.