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Alberta

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by P. P. Woodbridge, Secretary, Calgary, Alberta, to whom all communications for this page should be sent.

GRAIN GROWERS' GRANT

Dear Mr. Woodbridge:—I have much pleasure in enclosing herewith the Company's check for \$1,000, being the second instalment of the grant voted to your Association by our directors for the current year.

During the past five years our Company has contributed over \$25,000 to the three Provincial Grain Growers' Associations. The Grain Growers' Grain Company was originated and has been developed with the primary object of improving conditions for the people on the farms of the three Prairie Provinces. Such an object necessitates a great deal of educational work, a great deal of which, in the nature of things, must be done by the Association; and it is because our board has recognized the valuable educational and organization work being done by the Association that these grants have been freely given.

One of the chief aims of the Grain Growers' Grain Company is to use its best influence towards building up a great and united farmers' organization in Western Canada, with the hope that it will eventually spread thru the Dominion. Such an organization—when united and harmoniously devoted to a single purpose, will be a powerful factor in improving the economic and social conditions now surrounding our farm life, and will very greatly hasten the day when the man on the land will enjoy the full return for his labor. In this matter the farmers have to work out their own salvation. The Grain Growers' Grain Company in the last six years has given in cash grants over \$60,000 to educational work in bringing this about.

It is our hope that no difference of a local character will in any way be permitted to interfere with the larger objects our farmers have in view, and we trust that the assistance we are giving you herewith will enable you to prosecute your work to this end with increased vigor.

I am, your truly,

T. A. CRERAR

It need hardly be pointed out that our Association has recognized for some time past the advisability or rather absolute necessity of working together and building up a great and united farmers' organization in Western Canada along the lines of the policy outlined in Mr. Crerar's letter. The farmers' organization may be classified under three headings—educational, business and publicity. The first in the field was the educational organization, taking up a specific line of work, and dealing more especially with the great economic evils of the time. The study of these questions naturally led to other matters, and consequently after a few years the leaders of the educational movement embarked on a business enterprise and the Grain Growers' Grain Company was formed, later on to be followed by the Provincial elevator companies. In order to provide a connecting link for all parties and still further strengthen the work, the Grain Growers' Guide was also established as the official paper of the different organizations.

The point that should never be lost sight of is that the business organizations are the direct offspring, the children of the educational organizations and while the various companies are rapidly growing and becoming a more powerful factor in the business world probably than the most optimistic had hoped for, their growth is after all more or less dependent on the advance of our educational campaign and the endorsement and moral support of the parent organizations is now and always will be of considerable importance to them.

It requires no very great amount of foresight or business sense to see that in these days of big business if the farmers are to do their most effective work they must get as one man. This does not mean that the different organi-

zations as at present constituted must lose their particular identity. Each can maintain its own individualism and independence, and thus act as a check on each other, but in business where each has a common object in view, namely, the good of the farmers, and where each has to meet a common enemy, each must co-operate and assist the other as may be most in the interests of all.

It is interesting to note that since the organization of the U.F.A. and including the present donation, the Grain Growers' Grain Company have given altogether the sum of \$5,800 in cash to assist in our work, or approximately 20 per cent. of our total income since organization. While the Grain Growers' Grain Company have given these sums for organization work, we have had to use our own discretion very largely as to how it should be applied, and during the whole of the time only slightly over \$3,000 has been actually spent in placing organizers in the field. The balance has been devoted to perfecting and enlarging the capacity of our Central Office.

It is obvious from these figures that the parent organization without this strong and sturdy offspring to help it would be very seriously handicapped in its work, and that both the organization and the service which we are able to give from the Central Office would be less efficient than it is today. The interests of our farmers' companies are inextricably bound up one within the other and each has its part to play. We are all in reality part of one great farmers' organization and while it is right, and common courtesy demands, that each should be grateful to the other for help rendered, it is after all a duty and a pleasure which we owe to ourselves to render each other every assistance whenever the cause is just, and thus become a practical example of the doctrine of co-operation or "each for all and all for each."

OCEAN FREIGHT RATES

The executive of the United Farmers of Alberta in meeting on May 6, after very careful consideration unanimously passed the following resolution:—

"That while we regret the rise in ocean freight rates on the Atlantic, we believe that the remedy asked for by the Dominion Millers' Association is worse than the evil complained of.

"We further believe that this evil would be largely alleviated by the opening up of the market to the south of us, so that we could ship a large proportion of our grain to the south and thus avoid the ocean freight rates, and possibly help to bring them down by sending less business there.

"We further believe that the opening up of the Panama Canal route would materially alter the aspect of the whole question."

The executive also asked me, in view of The Guide leader of April 29, to write an article for The Guide explaining our position. The Dominion Millers' Association have so far been our worst enemies on the question of free wheat. We owe our defeat on this question chiefly to them. They have shown themselves shortsighted, absorbed absolutely in the pursuit of their own ends, regardless of the interests of the Canadian people in general and of the Canadian farmers in particular. All this may afford no reason for refusing to work together with them in a clear and fair cause, but it certainly demands a very keen scrutiny of any proposal they may make for co-operation.

In the present case we have come to the conclusion that the millers' proposal is not in the interests either of the general public or of the farmers. The chief grievance of the millers is not so much the rise of freight but the great difference in freight between flour and wheat, which makes it easier to ship Canadian wheat to Great Britain than

Canadian flour. This of course is a hardship to our millers, but it is not easy for farmers to feel very much interest in this so long as the millers sell Canadian flour about \$1 a barrel dearer in Canada than they do in Great Britain.

We also see that the Canadian public suffer from the higher freights by paying higher prices for articles imported from Great Britain, and we should be glad to find out a reasonable remedy for this, but we do not believe that the statement of the millers in regard to the special loss of farmers on exported wheat is a correct one. The millers say that the combine of Atlantic steamer lines in 1912 took over six and a half million dollars out of the farmers' pockets in freight increase. Now in their memorial presented to the government on February 27, in paragraph six, they themselves say, "representatives of steamship companies themselves acknowledge that there was a combine and the rates on flour were fixed at the North Atlantic conference, but the rates on wheat were open and subject to competition." The rise in wheat freight rates, therefore, was not caused by the combine, but appears to be the natural result of the working out of the laws of supply and demand, the larger quantities shipped and the method of trying to pour all the large quantities thru one spout in a very short time. Evidently during the rush season the over supply of cargo and the difficulty of finding steamers to carry the grain would have the tendency to raise freights.

Further, there is no evidence to show that the "six and a half million dollars taken out of the pockets of the farmers" were paid by the farmer at all. They were added to the prices of the wheat and paid by the British consumer just as the increase of freight on articles shipped from Great Britain to Canada is added to the price of the goods and paid by the Canadian consumer. There is nothing to show that the freight rates on wheat give excessive profit. The millers take the average of the last five years and show that 1912 rates are 43% higher. They might have gone five years more back and shown a similar result, but if they had taken the average of the last thirty or forty years they would not have found the present rates excessively high.

Everyone acquainted with shipping conditions will probably agree that flour and wheat do not come into the same class. While flour and a good many other articles of merchandise are largely shipped on the regular line steamers, such bulky articles as grain draw upon a much larger supply of steamers and grain freights are much more subject to the natural laws of supply and demand. The freights are high, but probably they will be as long as we raise increasing quantities of grain and are forced by millers and other interests to ship them all in one direction and in large masses during short periods. Give us freedom to ship South. On all that goes South we escape the high ocean freights anyhow, and by taking off some of the pressure on the Atlantic we have a chance of getting lower ocean freights on what we may continue to ship East.

The establishment of a line of government steamers under our conditions would almost certainly lead to a large waste of public money. It might for a short time, at our expense, artificially lower the rate on flour on the line steamers and so help the millers to give cheap flour to the British consumers. It would do very little or nothing for us on wheat, and it would be building up another bulwark against Free Trade to the South. Already the chief argument against us is this: Look at our magnificent transportation equipment for the trade movement East and West, with the enormous public and private capital invested in our railways and canals; are we to sacrifice all this by turning our traffic southward? Imagine how much stronger this argument would grow if we added to our present equipment an investment on a fleet of Atlantic steamers. The present moment is a particularly foolish one for establishing such a government owned fleet on the Atlantic, as in a very short time the opening of the Panama Canal route may completely revolutionize the grain shipping in our Western Provinces.

JAS. SPEAKMAN.

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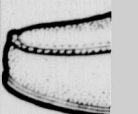
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JOHN Frede

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