

# What The Grain Growers Have Done For You

**T**HE Grain Growers' Association came into existence at a time that was full of hardship to the producer in the marketing of his grain. Soon after the coming of the railways into the west the production of wheat exceeded the local demands; yet it was some time before capital could be persuaded to invest in an elevator system. At that time the C.P.R., in order to encourage the building of elevators, granted a monopoly of the grain trade to those who would build standard elevators of not less than 25,000 bushels capacity. The company had no power to do this, but it suited their purpose.

Capital was not slow to take advantage of the privilege thus granted, and we very soon had the beginning of our present elevator system. The producer was not considered, except so far as he was useful in making profits for the railway and elevator companies. He had to put his wheat through the elevators and take the elevator grades and weights.

After a time the elevator companies organized for the better carrying on of their business, such as securing of bulk lots of wheat for export, better freight rates, both rail and water—things beneficial to the producer as well as the dealer. Monopoly is never satisfied so long as it can squeeze a cent out of its victims. The conditions which permitted the grain dealers to make the foregoing arrangements also allowed them in practice to control prices; the grading of the wheat; the amount of dockage they would take; and run the business in a way that would bring the highest profits to themselves.

## Farmers Wake Up

This was the state of the grain trade up till 1899. The farmers of Manitoba and the territories in the old settled districts by this time had gotten in much better condition financially and were protesting most seriously, through the press and by public meetings, against the exactions of the grain combine. This grew to such an extent that the federal parliament was induced to take the matter up in 1900 and legislation, known as the Manitoba Grain Act, by which the whole grain trade of the west was brought under control and supervision—was passed. Just as soon as parliament had taken this action the elevator combine took an advance step in perfecting their organization, which up to this time had been held together more by mutual consent rather than by rules, by-laws and regulations, for the reason that at times this did not prove binding enough on individual members.

## Elevators Go One Better

This consisted in organizing what was known as the North-West Elevator Association, and which was re-organized some years later as the North-West Grain Dealers' Association. Every member joining had to subscribe to their constitution and by-laws. The object was by removing street buyers agreeing on the price to be paid at the initial shipping points pooling receipts, etc., to remove competition entirely and reduce the grain trade of the entire west to one huge monopoly.

The purpose of the Manitoba Grain Act was to free the farmer from these exactions by allowing him to ship his wheat by direct loading of the cars through flat warehouses or however he chose. These privileges were most vigorously opposed by the railway and elevator interests, and the farmer did not reap the full benefit from it, partly because the railway and elevator companies ignored the act to a great extent, and partly because many of the farmers did not know the relief the act contained, and when they did were not in a position to enforce its provisions.

## Farmers Organize

This was the state of affairs in 1901, when the farmers, goaded to desperation by the wheat blockade of that year and the wrongs they were suffering, organized under the body known as the Territorial Grain Growers' Association.

This was shortly after followed by a similar one throughout Manitoba, and

**A Brief History of Reforms Achieved by This Association which has brought added Wealth to every Western Farmer. Giant Young Organization has produced a feeling of reliance among Producers, and Grain Growers stand for their rights with assurance that the Association is behind them, and that they will receive Justice.**

*A Circular written for the Saskatchewan Association by Fred W. GREEN, Gen. Secretary*

later on by one with the same aims in Alberta known as The Alberta Farmers' Association. These organizations have always worked in harmony for the general welfare of their common interests. To be in the best position to do this it was decided to have an organization composed of the executive elected from time to time from the different associations and known as the Inter-Provincial Council of Farmers' Associations. This body which met from time to time to take joint and concerted action on questions which affected the farmers of all provinces alike, is now superseded by the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

It was very fortunate for the young association that the men who were directing its affairs were not fire-eaters, or it would have been short-lived, doing little good for the grain producers and little harm to their oppressors, but would

company must grant site for an elevator. The permission to erect flat warehouses on a siding where there is no platform, or the existing one will not hold all asked for at one time. Compelling all grain dealers to be bonded, and many other minor amendments.

(3) The joint conference in Winnipeg in 1904 of the producers, grain men and railway interests to consider proposed changes in the grading and supervision of grain. The recommendations of this conference were embodied in the Grain Inspection Act, assented to 10th of August, 1904.

(4) A joint conference of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan representatives in February, 1906, to consider proposed changes in the Grain and Inspection Acts. The government granted the changes asked for in the Inspection Act, but claimed that they did not have the

to him for sale to immediately notify the consignee of the quantity sold, the name of the purchaser, the price thereof, the date of sale, the grade, the amount of advance and the terms of delivery of such sale. An applicant may order a car according to his requirements, and if he requires any special standard size he shall have such size stated by the station agent in the car order book, and in the event of the railway company furnishing a car or cars to that station of a size not required by the applicant, the applicant shall not lose his priority, but shall be entitled to the next car of the size designated which can be delivered at such station.

Anyone is liable to a fine of \$150.00 who:—Transfers or sells his right to any car allotted to him; accepts any transfer of the right of any applicant to a car; any party who loads a car not allotted to him by the station agent, or loads a car out of his turn, according to the provisions of the Act; any person who places a name on the car order book contrary to the Act; any person may institute proceedings, and upon securing conviction for infringement of any of the foregoing violations of the act shall be entitled to receive half the fine. All particulars in the car order book shall be filled in with ink. Every track buyer must receive a receipt from each car purchased made out on the authorized form. The railway company must keep an agent at a flag station where a certain amount of grain is shipped during the shipping season. Any grain dealer or drainer entering into an agreement to pool the earnings or receipts of country elevators shall be liable to a fine of \$1,000 for each offence. The warehouse commissioner shall have power in his discretion during the car shortage to direct the railroads to make an equitable distribution of empty grain cars to all stations in proportion to the amount of grain available for shipping from such stations. The Standard Board have been given the power to fix standards for oats that they now have for wheat. The binning of wheat at the terminal elevators is put under the control of the inspection department. The amount of domestic grain in dockage made by the inspector shall be marked on the certificate, and the shipper shall be allowed for the same at current price.

## How It Used To Be

Before we got the car distribution clause inserted in the Grain Act, a farmer could not get a car to ship his wheat if an elevator wanted it, and had to take whatever the grain trade offered him. Before the inspection act was amended preventing mixing at the terminals, etc., our wheat sold for 3 cents per bushel less than Duluth inspection in the British markets. It lately sold for 6 cents per bushel more. We got the practical control of the terminal elevators at the last session of parliament, all binning of wheat being done under a government inspector. The grain growers of the west have benefited 5 to 10 cents per bushel by these and other laws secured by this association, or from \$5,000,000 to \$10,000,000 on the estimated crop of the west for last year.

The different associations have decided on the government ownership of elevators, and are taking joint action to try and bring this about.

To put the associations on a more permanent basis and save the trouble and expense of collecting an annual fee, a permanent membership scheme has been adopted by which a member pays \$12.00 and becomes a member for life. The fund thus created will be invested and used for the work of the association. From time to time interested parties have tried to have legislation passed or present laws changed that would have been inimical to the interests of the grain grower, which the association has prevented, such as car distribution, etc., and by this work alone the grain grower has been very much benefited.

The vast amount of work done in such a short time for the grain growers, and done almost entirely by themselves, has been an object lesson and has produced a feeling of reliance and given them more than a passing glimpse of their own power.

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R. S. Ferris and his Greys, Holland, Man.

have stood as another monument to the old repeated assertion that farmers are not able to hold together.

The young organization immediately set to work to deal with the grievances calling most loudly for redress. It would be impossible in a short article of this nature to enumerate all the good works and reforms that this joint organization of grain growers of the three provinces has brought about.

## Benefits Received Through Organization

For new settlers and those who may not have had an opportunity to follow the history of the past events, we might make special reference to the following:

(1) The enforcement of the law in several cases, with the result of not having it fairly well observed.

(2) The joint delegation sent by Manitoba and the Territories to Ottawa in 1903, succeeded in securing all the amendments to the Grain Act asked for, including that valuable privilege the farmer now enjoys of securing a fair share of the available cars, and not being forced to sell his wheat at a sacrifice to the elevators. This has meant very much to the farmer, but he has not been able to receive all the benefits arising from it owing to the car shortage occurring from year to year. The appointment of a deputy warehouse commissioner requiring all dealers in grain to take out a license, leaving it to the warehouse commissioner to decide whether a railway

necessary information to deal intelligently with the changes asked for by the Grain Act. Our representatives then proposed that a grain commission be appointed to inquire into all phases of the grain trade. This request was acceded to, and the Royal Grain Commission was appointed which made an exhaustive inquiry. Their recommendations were discussed and considered, and with the exception of a few minor points, endorsed by the Inter-Provincial Conference at Saskatoon in February, 1908, and have now become law.

A few of the most important are: It is an offence under the Act for the elevator company to dispose of a bill of lading without the consent of the owner. If the operator of an elevator is found breaking the law by improper weights, dockage, or otherwise, he is liable to a fine of \$100.00, and the elevator company shall discharge him. He shall not be re-engaged by that or any other elevator company for the space of one year; if so, the commissioner shall cancel the license of the elevator. If any grain firm, member of a firm, or dealer, or any authorized agent of a grain dealer or firm shall influence by circular letter or otherwise, the manager of any country elevator, to give unjust weights or take excessive dockage, he or they shall be liable to a fine of \$500.00. It shall be the duty of every grain commission merchant upon selling any grain consigned

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