

## CAN WESTERN FARMERS DISPOSE OF FARM PRODUCTS BY CO-OPERATIVE METHODS

The Secretary of the Macgregor Branch of the Grain Growers' Association sends us a copy of a resolution passed at a recent meeting urging the Grain Growers' Grain Co., Ltd., to add a department to their grain business for the purpose of disposing of farm products.

That something needs to be done to improve the unsatisfactory methods of distributing farm products is apparent to all. The city man wonders why the farmer is not prosperous when he has to pay so much for his beef, poultry, etc. The working man who has to pay a price for these commodities out of all proportion to the wages he earns, wonders what more the farmer can want.

The trouble lies in the fact that the farmer does not bring his product to the door of the city man and get the price that he has to pay. Between these two—the producer and the consumer—stand a line of middlemen who all take toll off the goods as they pass, part of the toll coming out of the farmer and part out of the not too generous wage of the working man.

The farmer toils incessantly for months to produce his grain, field roots, butter, eggs, etc. Years to produce his beef and pork. He then carries it to the first middleman who is to handle it and get what he calls the market price. It is wonderful how quickly it grows in value as it rapidly passes through the hands of the men who carry it from the producer to the consumer, and it is wonderful how much of the value of these articles the middlemen can manage to annex in the short time it rests in their hands.

The wholesale man gets it from the original buyer,

invests his money in it, leaves it there for a day or two, or a week or two, maybe longer, and then turns it over for a handsome profit. The retail merchant now handles it, pays a clerk to deal with it, and pockets the profits. Then there are the railroads, commission men and bankers who supply the money, besides all sorts of other "middlemen." These all exact their profit out of what the working man pays for his food.

Various methods are suggested of getting rid of these middlemen. Some of them sensible and some not. There are middlemen who earn what they get out of the crop by rendering service equal to the tax they levy on it. There are others who are pure "parasites."

It should be the duty of every farmer and working man to stand at opposite ends of this human pipe line to distinguish between the useful and the useless, and eliminate the latter.

The plan suggested by the Grain Growers of Macgregor is spoken of most frequently, and suggests a feasible and at any event workable proposition, being based on the co-operative principle that has proved so effective in other places. A farmers' agency in Winnipeg, on lines similar to the Grain Growers' Grain Co., to handle all kinds of farm products, properly equipped with abattoir, cold storage facilities and all modern requirements to handle food products economically and hygienically, with Government ownership of elevators, having an agent at every shipping point to look after shipping of grain, collecting farm products, cattle, hogs, etc., fires the imagination and would be an ideal condition compared with the

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