

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, March 13th, 1912

## GRAIN BILL PASSES COMMONS

On Monday last the Canada Grain Bill passed the House of Commons, still containing the clauses which the organized farmers have protested against, and it has now gone to the Senate. The strangest thing about the whole matter is the little attention that governments pay to the wishes of the farmers. Last year it was just the same in regard to the terminal elevators. The government then would not grant justice to the farmers on the terminal question, and the same applies today. If there is any question on earth upon which the views of the farmers should carry weight it is certainly the Grain Act. To deny to the farmers the right to say how their grain shall be marketed is tantamount to saying that the whole duty of the farmer begins and ends in growing the grain. But if this were so the farmers would be little better off than the slaves in the Southern States before the war. The farmers' interest in the grain begins with the seeder and ends with the loaf, and it is a vital interest all the way. No government has any moral right whatever to permit any middleman to collect toll from the wheat on its way to the consumer. The new Grain Bill removes from the old Bill the rights for which the grain growers fought for many years.

This injustice was plainly committed at the request of the railway and elevator interests. The farmers all opposed it and the Minister of Trade and Commerce was entirely ignorant of the whole question, so the natural conclusion is that he inclined his ear to the better dressed men who had not the rustic appearance. The new Bill completely removes the protection now afforded by the car order book. Under the new Bill the grain board can declare a congestion at any time and then suspend the car order book. This makes it very easy to play into the hands of the elevators. The railways can make congestion anywhere simply by not supplying cars. Then the board steps in and supplies the cars to the gentlemen for whose benefit this special clause in the Bill was enacted. The House was divided again on this clause on Monday, and Dr. Schaffner and W. H. Sharpe voted against the Government. These two members knew that the clause in question betrayed the farmers and could not support it. The other Western government members jumped at the crack of the party whip.

But strange to relate, on the same day, and almost at the same hour, the members of the Saskatchewan Legislature, Liberals and Conservatives of one accord unanimously passed a resolution condemning this clause in the new Bill which destroys the rights of the farmers. These men knew what evil was before the farmers. The Winnipeg Telegram might explain what knaves and crooks are the Conservatives of Saskatchewan, as well as Schaffner and Sharpe. They surely deserve severe chastisement for standing out against their party in favor of the people. There is some hope when party ties weaken. But the Grain Bill with its unjust provisions has gone to the Senate. The past does not lead us to look for relief from the Senate, but "while there's life, there's hope."

The worship of party is still too strong in the West. So long as men allow themselves to worship party so long they are standing in their own light. For generations men have declared with pride that they have been life-long Grits or Tories, as were their fathers before them. The result is the situation today. In the United States today the average citizen sees the corruption in both

parties and Insurgency is producing reform. When Canadians see how the two old parties have robbed them of their heritage the improvement will begin.

## TRIBUTE OF THE WEST

Very few people in Western Canada have considered carefully the enormous aggregate of the unjust toll annually levied upon the people of the Prairie Provinces by the barons of Special Privilege, supported and backed by legislation enacted by our provincial and federal parliaments. As we have said before in The Guide, we believe that there is no part of the civilized world where the people are bearing such unjust burdens as in the Prairie Provinces. The greedy hands of the corporations and barons of Privilege are continually in the pockets of the Western people. If the toll were levied directly the burden would be so heavy as to bring about a revolt in a very short time, but ingeniously it has been devised so that the burden is levied indirectly and the people do not feel it so much. But they pay it just the same. If all this immense wealth that is annually plucked from the Western people were allowed to go into the pockets of the people who create it, there would dawn an era of prosperity such as no country has ever seen, for in no other land has nature been more kind.

To begin with, there is the tariff burden. On the authority of such men as Sir Richard Cartwright and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, we have it definitely proven that under our present protective tariff system for every dollar that goes into the treasury from two to three dollars go into private pockets. Last year the revenue collected by tariff duties was \$73,312,367.19. It is not disputed that protected manufacturers in Canada add the full limit of their tariff protection to their selling prices, and by this means, according to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Richard Cartwright, they were enabled to take out of the pockets of the Canadian people last year at least \$160,000,000. Of this huge sum it is fair to assume that the people of the Prairie Provinces paid at least \$30,000,000.

The railway companies also enjoy the privilege of taxing the people as much as they like, with practically no hindrance, and are protected in so doing by the Parliament of Canada. Last year the Railway companies of Canada had a net profit of about \$60,000,000, and fully half this amount is certainly an unjust tribute. Of this \$30,000,000 plunder the Prairie Provinces undoubtedly paid at least \$10,000,000 as their share of the tribute, as this is the railway melon patch.

The land speculators, home and foreign, have also taken a staggering toll from the Western people. Every cent of land value in the West is created by the people. There are today approximately 100,000,000 acres of land in the Prairie Provinces owned by individuals and corporations. A conservative estimate of the increase in the value of this land during the past year would be \$1.00 an acre, which would make a fund of \$100,000,000. No one will dispute that at least one-half of this huge fund, or \$50,000,000 in hard cash, went into the pockets of land speculators who have done absolutely nothing to assist in the development of this country. This is a snug sum to pay for the mere privilege of living.

Then our loan and mortgage companies possess the privilege of taxing the farmer anywhere from 7 to 10 per cent. on mortgages, and we estimate that during the past year they have levied over and above what would be a fair charge at least \$1,000,000 of

unjust tribute. Another tremendous burden that is borne by the Western people is the loss which they sustain through having the Southern market closed to them. We estimate that the loss during the past year through the defeat of the Reciprocity agreement has been no less than \$30,000,000, and as the crop grows larger from year to year so will this loss increase. The tremendous additional loss due to bad weather is not taken into account here.

Our chartered banks in Canada are paying on an average over 20 per cent. profit yearly. Certainly 10 per cent. is a fair profit and the rest is tribute, which amounts to about \$11,000,000, and on this amount the Prairie Provinces paid probably, at least \$3,000,000, because the banks charge higher here than anywhere else. Many minor tributes are not considered.

Consider these figures again:—

Tariff tribute . . . . .	\$30,000,000
Railway tribute . . . . .	10,000,000
Land speculators' tribute . . . . .	50,000,000
Loan companies' tribute . . . . .	1,000,000
Loss of U. S. market . . . . .	30,000,000
Bankers' tribute . . . . .	3,000,000

Total . . . . . \$124,000,000

Now, this huge sum of \$124,000,000 was taken out of the pockets of the Western people in addition to all the legitimate taxes which they have been compelled to pay for the support of government and the administration of the affairs of the country, and also in addition to fair charges for all corporation services rendered. Such a huge sum is so large that it is impossible for us to imagine it. It amounts to nearly \$100 for every man, woman and child in the Prairie Provinces. Is not this a staggering fact to contemplate, and every bit of it is due to unjust legislation that is placed upon our statute books, provincial and federal, at the demand of Special Privilege.

The only organization actively engaged in an endeavor to lift this burden is the farmers' organizations in each of the Prairie Provinces. Business organizations can pass the charges along, but the farmer cannot. What are the farmers doing to combat the forces of Special Privilege? We notice from the annual financial statements of the three Provincial associations that the total revenue of the central offices for the past year has been \$21,058.09, and approximately another \$10,000 was raised and kept by the local associations for local purposes, so that the total amount raised by the farmers to prosecute their campaign for a square deal during the past year has been slightly over \$31,000. Yet if the people of the West were getting a square deal they would have \$124,000,000 more to put in their pockets every year. Surely to save such an amount is worth more than an annual investment of \$31,000. Richard Cobden, the great British Free Trader, told the people of Great Britain over sixty years ago that if they wished to save what little property they still had left they would have to contribute heavily to the fighting fund of the Anti-Corn Law League. When the appeal was made the common people of Great Britain responded nobly and contributed huge sums of money. The result was victory. The very same thing applies in Western Canada today. If the people of Western Canada today are not to pay even heavier tribute than they are now they must contribute of their remaining property to carry on the fight for a square deal. The Manitoba Grain Growers' association is now endeavoring to raise a fighting fund. The Saskatchewan association has an emergency fund, and the Alberta association is also in