

Farmer's Advocate

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EDITORIAL

It would appear that the Railway Commissioners are more concerned about pleasing the railroads than the people they are paid to protect. It is said that even where the farmers' representative is the possessor of strong backbone, the other two members are against the people.

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Parsimony has a bad effect on railroads if given full fling. One railroad staff knows the road should have six new snow-plows, but the cheeseparer gets busy and the requisition is changed to two; another road was advised several years ago to double-track the line from Winnipeg to Fort William, but it spent the interval in buying steamship lines and outlining plans by which three freight trains could pass one another on a single track without head on collisions.

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Could the railway service reasonably be expected to be better when the heads of it are dabbling in twenty other lines of work—running banks, insurance and trust companies, street cars, gas works, electric light plants, and what not? They are undoubtedly clever chaps, these railroad magnates, but they are only human in their capacity after all, and when overtaxed, blunder.

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It is not the policy of the Dominion Department of Agriculture to give financial aid to live stock sales where interprovincial barriers are erected. The Live Stock Commissioner dubs the policy governing such restriction of trade as picayune.

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It is abundantly evident that the Manitoba Department of Agriculture might with profit to the country and itself do more in the way of furthering an annual fat stock show and winter fair.

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Professor Bolley rather startled his audience at Brandon when he stated that the result of treating wheat with bluestone (copper sulphate) was to decrease the yield, while the use of formalin (40 per cent. formaldehyde solution) had exactly the opposite effect.

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Superintendent Wolverton thinks red clover can be grown with a nurse crop, and is not satisfied with the experiments carried on so far, that point in the opposite direction. Grapple with the problem, professor, because if you do or do not, the Ottawa chaps will not!

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Granting that the average seed flax is full of foul weeds, we do not think such sufficient reason for the abandonment of such a valuable crop. Why not clean seed?

Corn Maxims.

Land should be thoroughly and deeply broken for corn. This is the time in a system of rotation to deepen the soil.

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A deep soil will not only produce more than a shallow soil in good seasons, but it will stand more wet as well as more dry weather.

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It is absolutely impossible to have lands rich so long as they lack in vegetable matter (humus).

The Part of the Railway Commission.

Provincial pride often restrains men from honest public protest of their grievances when the existence of such grievances is freely admitted between neighbors. The farmers and business men of Western Canada, and that includes all the population, have a grievance the seriousness of which can only be determined or suspected by personal contact with those affected. Isolated instances of protest appear from time to time, but the unanimous voice of the people gave expression to the actual suffering which is being experienced, at the Grain Growers' Conventions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The rotten element in the state of Denmark is the inadequacy of the service which the common carriers of the country give to those upon whom they depend for their very existence. The public is willing to make, and has made every allowance for such a state and has impartially received the apologies of the representatives of the railways, but when everything is taken into consideration there is still a long list of shortcomings that cannot be excused by the most lenient, if impartial, judge.

The exonerating conditions which are advanced as excuses for the execrable misservice of the railways have received the consideration they deserved, but on enquiry the conviction is always forced home that their policy is one of procrastination and their excuses fail of satisfactory explanation. The lapse of service during the extreme winter weather the public is willing to excuse, but no explanation of the failure to move less wheat in the open favorable weather of the fall months than was moved in 1905 will down, especially in view of the fact that due warning of the freight to be offered was early given. The whole trouble lies in the policy of the railway companies and in their conceptions of their relationships with the public.

It has been supposed that the interests of the public would be properly safeguarded by the Railway Commission, and we would fain not write disparagingly of that body, but what service can the Railway Commission show that it has performed to alleviate the distressful condition of traffic in the wheat belt? We have looked and still look to the Commission to take some line of action that will result in the railways taking freight when it is offered them rather than when they care to move it cheapest, and in this the public asks only for its rights. The people of the West look to the Federal Government to exercise their power to protect these rights either by enforcing a system of reciprocal demurrage or by curtailing concessions until an improved service is an assured fact. These suggestions of the public are made now because they do not want to again experience the inconvenience and stand the cost resulting from the failure of the railways to move the past season's crop. Permanent adequate facilities it is recognized require time to install, but there are many schemes that can be utilized at short notice to insure temporary improvement. To inaugurate means that will result in these improvements we take to be the first duty of the Railway Commission, and we trust the members will apply themselves to this duty when it shall be pointed out to them by the resolutions of the Grain Growers' Conventions and probably by the officers of the associations in person.

Railways Lying Down.

The announcement is made from figures compiled by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture that our great central province produced 37,000,000 bushels of wheat in 1906. If the marketable portion of the crop could have been placed where its value could be realized early in the year it would have meant an addition of many millions of negotiable wealth to the province. As it is, a

part of the potential wealth of the country has partially materialized, but in its present state, owing to the inadequate service of the railways, it is as useless as a means of exchange as the gold that lies in uncovered mines.

Conservative estimates place the amount of wheat still in Saskatchewan farmers' hands at over 20,000,000 bushels with little prospect of its being marketed until after seeding. In the meantime the cost of storing this wheat goes on everywhere a bushel of it is under cover. Merchants who ordinarily give farmers a line of credit find it necessary to charge interest on their store accounts of goods bought last summer, besides enduring the strain of business stagnation due to the farmers' lack of cash. Farmers also who ordinarily have cash for current expenses are obliged to ask for credit on the most paltry purchases and pay a stiff interest on all outstanding accounts. About all that has been accomplished so far is to move out enough wheat to pay the cost of harvesting and threshing, and in some places this demand is not met. It is almost safe to say that there is not a farmer in the whole grain growing part of the province who has not had his name on the car order books since last September and has been living since then in the disappointed hope that he would be able to realize on his crop before seeding, but so far relief is not in sight. Storage on wheat for this length of time, whether in elevators or on the farm, will average at best 5 cents per bushel, and the cost of marketing it in the summer, when the land requires attention, will be no inconsiderable amount.

All this has a sinister effect upon the character of the people as well as upon their pocket book. The Canadian farmer is a thinking man. The fact that the railway companies were given most of the land upon which the wheat is grown to enable them to provide that service which they are not giving, and that this land was afterwards sold to farmers whose payments have gone to swell the revenues and credits of these companies, which in turn and according to all the rules of reason would be devoted to the increase and improvement of service, is clear to their minds, and the unjustness of their positions is resented.

It seems there are greater spoils than in war, and these have been going not to the strong, but to the more selfish and astute. The former now demands a "square deal," and why the railway companies should delay in answering that demand is beyond human comprehension, since within the British Empire are men enough and in the railway coffers money and credit enough to satisfy the most exacting clamor for railway facilities.

Government Meat Inspection in Canada Soon to Begin.

Following hard on the heels of the bill to provide for the inspection of meats and canned goods is the announcement to veterinarians to be found in our Gossip columns. The item states definitely that qualified veterinarians up in meat inspection are required by the Department, and that proper means are going to be taken to secure them; viz., by an examination which will ensure the public getting value for the salaries paid. The innovation of Governmental inspection of meats for export comes not one whit too soon; ample provision is now made for ensuring the stamp of reliability being placed upon all meats sent by Canada to foreign markets. Unfortunately the Canadian veterinarian has as yet to go abroad for training in meat inspection, a condition that will, we understand, be remedied shortly by the University of Toronto. The export meat trade of Canada is bound to improve as a result of Government inspection and marking and stamping of meats and canned goods. The new Meat Inspection Act contains penalties not too severe for violation of the code, yet enough to deter persons from handling diseased food products.

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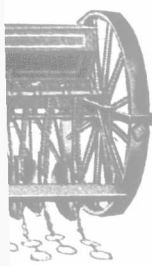
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