

each and small fruit at as high as \$5.00 per dozen, while Manitoba nursery men sell the same class of stock at 50c. and \$1.50 to \$2.00 per dozen. I saw a price list of an agent for an Ontario nursery a few days ago, which not only quoted prices 20 to 50 per cent. higher than Manitoba prices, but gave a list of varieties mainly entirely worthless here. This list stated on its face that the varieties were such as had been tested at the western experimental farms and were found safe to plant in the west, but as a matter of fact this statement was absolutely false, for most of the varieties were absolutely worthless. For instance, in a list of half a dozen plum trees, there was not one single variety that would ripen in this country, consequently any one who bought any of these plums, (and the agent said he had sold thousands of them) would absolutely throw away his money without any possibility of getting any value in return. Pretty much the same was true of the varieties of apples recommended. Most of the ornamental trees and plants recommended were utterly worthless in these provinces. Peonies, that Manitoba growers sell at 50c. were listed at \$2.00 each, and so on. This is sufficient to show how the farmers are duped when they buy this worthless nursery stock from agents of United States or Eastern Canada dealers. The cost of buying stock through agents is naturally excessive, as it costs about 50 per cent. of the price to deliver the stock, counting commissions, express, delivering, collecting, etc. Still, even allowing for this, the prices are high. If farmers would buy direct from home nurseries, they would get stock worth immensely more, and they would not pay as much for it.

## NURSERYMAN.

## ON COAL PRICES.

Editor, Guide:—The report of the committee of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, appointed to investigate the coal problem, is inadequate and would indicate that the enquiry itself was very superficial.

Any satisfactory investigation must begin with the mining. To whom should the coal belong? For whose benefit should the mines be operated? Are they at present being worked fairly for the common good? Or are the present proprietors exacting an undue profit. Then we should see if the railways are charging too high a rate of freight. These fundamental questions the committee has chosen to ignore, and has pounced upon the retailer as the chief sinner, no doubt because he is the easiest got at.

The evidence, as to the dealer's profits, is summed up thus—"About \$1.00 seems to be the profit the dealers demand for handling Souris coal, and \$1.50 for Lethbridge and Galt." Our own dealer in Gainsboro pays \$3.75 at the mine for Galt and \$4.20 freight and sells at \$8.50, selling at a nominal profit of 55c. per ton, but actually at a loss.

As the Souris forms the bulk of the trade in southern Saskatchewan we will examine it. Cost at mine, \$2.15. Freight \$1.00. Unloading 25c. This leaves a nominal profit of 60 cents per ton or \$600 on 1,000 tons, a good year's business. Deduct from this \$100 for waste and shrinkage, \$100 for rent and insurance, and variable sums for bad debts and loss of interest on overdue accounts. The dealer, accordingly, has less than \$400 for his year's work. How many farmers are "up against it" so badly? Would we sow in hope if that were our prospect? If the mining companies are unfair, let us make common cause with the dealers (we would not possibly do without them) and secure justice for all. Unquestionably the report gives the retailer a clear sheet; let us admit it, a thing which the committee does not seem to do. They say "Taking it altogether we find that there exists an association, the object of which is to protect the dealer, to keep up the price and to prevent freedom of trade in coal; they have not come to maturity yet, but are growing stronger." The committee does not say whether this is an association of mine owners or retailers. If it is of the mine-owners, it cannot be to protect the dealer, except as it benefits themselves to do so. If the Grain Growers' Association is to retain its present great influence, it must, above all things, be fair. It must not attack the wrong party. It must not run amuck. The retailer has hardships and

troubles that we never dream of and is vastly more at the mercy of the railway and the combine than is the farmer.

W. D. MOORE.

Gainsboro.

## SOCIALISM MISUNDERSTOOD.

Editor, Guide:—I quite agree with your correspondent, Mr. Boerma, that there is considerable misunderstanding about Socialism, and through ignorance of the subject too. I am, like probably 90 per cent. of the readers, rather in the dark myself, so as Mr. Boerma seems to be somewhat of an authority, besides being in touch with quite a reference library, would it be too much to ask him to kindly enlighten us, by giving this "Summing up." What is the aim of Socialism? How do they propose to attain it? For instance how will their industrial revolutions be brought about and by what means? Nationalism of the land accomplished, Government carried on, revenue raised, national debt paid, and what part will the millionaires play? Mr. Boerma is amusingly inconsistent. He tells us that New Zealand is still under "the production for profit system." That Socialism means production for use not profit. Then as an excuse for the prosperity of the farmer under present "enlightened?" system, he gives the short crops and resulting high prices; "but two good crops after this season in the principal wheat producing countries, will see prices take an enormous tumble." Now one would expect Mr. Boerma, as a Socialist to rejoice in the fact that a bountiful harvest would bring cheaper bread to his poorer brother; but no, he suggests that the farmer hold for higher prices, in other words for a larger profit. "One man's need is another's opportunity." This is a hard fact, and a fact that will remain so long as the character of the individual who go to the making of the community or state, remain imperfect. Man in the future may become perfect. It's my belief that, that is the goal, but it will be evolution through the agency of education, not by a Socialist revolution.

Boissevain, Man. E. B. CHAMBERS.

## EVOLUTION OF THE COAL TRADE

Editor, Guide:—I submit a few figures prevailing in early days of coal. Galt coal was \$2.00 per ton, f.o.b. Lethbridge, cash. Freight was \$3.50 per ton to Yellow Grass. The local agent signed an exclusive contract with the coal company, wherein he was authorized to charge 25c. per ton advance on car-lots; 50c. per ton when sold off cars, direct and 75c. advance when sold from shed. The early dealers lived up to the price part of this contract and the profits were sufficient, but by no means exorbitant. The price on board cars, was reasonable, but the freight was high. These prices prevailed in 1900 and 1901. Today, the retail price has risen from \$6.30 and \$6.55 to \$8.00 per ton straight. Part of this extra \$1.50 goes to the mining company, part goes to the provincial general agents, about 25c. per ton, and a considerable amount to the retailer.

Soft coal, lignite, sold in November, 1899, f.o.b. Roche Perce at 65c. per ton, a price barely sufficient to cover working expenses. After this little price war was over, prices advanced to \$1.25, then the Souris Coal Mining Co., absorbed several competitors and the price advanced to \$1.50 for 1901-2. The coal companies then doing business, would sell to any person, and the local dealer fixed his own profits, usually 50c. per ton. The freight rate, \$1.00 per ton was very high considering the distance.

Three parties, the mining companies, the railway and the local dealer, divide the price the farmer pays for his coal. Freight rates should be revised by the railway commission, when found excessive. All coal companies should be compelled to sell to consumers direct at the lowest cash rate, thus eliminating general agents as well as local dealers. This action would cause dealers to lower their price, to cover cost of handling retail and would cut out the general agents commission which is just a "graft."

In view of the large coal bearing areas now opening to railway communication around Willow Bunch, South Western Saskatchewan, some effort should be made to secure supplies from there or cost of mining; unlimited quantities of good lignite coal are to be found there.

EX-COAL DEALER.

Yellow Grass, Sask.

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## Seymour Hotel

Farmers from the Three Provinces make it their headquarters when visiting the city. Every street car passes the City Hall, which is only a stone's throw from the hotel entrance.

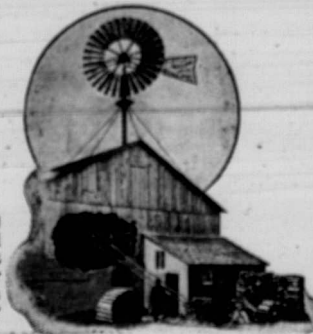
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