

Manitoba

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by R. C. Henders, President, Culross, Man., to whom all communications for this page should be sent.

TACKLING THE FRUIT PROBLEM

In accordance with instructions given by the executive committee of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, as well as the information and co-operation of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the writer spent the greater part of three weeks investigating fruit conditions in the province of British Columbia. I am specially indebted to Mr. Acheson for detailed information and introductions to many of the prominent fruit growers in that province. The first item of interest and importance to which I wish to refer is the convention in Calgary composed of the Board of Trade of the city of Calgary, the fruit jobbers of Calgary and the representatives of the fruit growers of British Columbia. In this convention some very startling revelations were made. Serious complaints were offered by the fruit growers in which they asserted that last year's prices were so ruinous to the industry of the fruit growers that a repetition of such prices this year would put many of them out of business.

The Tariff

The principal object of the convention seemed to be that the various represented organizations might get together and present a case before the federal government thru which they hoped to secure special protective tariff arrangements by which they could exclude American fruit from the market of the three prairie provinces. Closer investigation, however, revealed the fact that the difficulty was not with the necessity of more tariff but that there were so many middle charges and of such an extortionate nature between the producer and the consumer present conditions were made prohibitive as far as producing was concerned, and also prohibitive from the consumers' viewpoint. A statement was made and was not challenged by the convention which revealed the fact that while the producer of fruit received 17 cents for a certain package the consumer paid \$1.50 for the same, thus making trade conditions practically prohibitive for both producer and consumer.

I wish to make it clear that while there is room for some changes in transportation arrangements that would work to the advantage of both producer and consumer, the prices charged for transportation would not seem far out of the way when compared with the middlemen's charges. Upon them—the middlemen—very largely rests the responsibility for the trying conditions surrounding the western fruit trade at the present time.

When the full facts of the case were brought out concerning the handling of fruit instead of the appointment of a delegation to wait on the Dominion government to ask for increased tariff protection, the convention did ask for a commission to make full inquiry into all charges of middlemen in connection with the handling of fruit. I have every reason to believe that if this commission is appointed and the information is collected, as a result of their work there will be evolved a scheme that will bring producers and consumers very much closer together than at the present time.

In the Fruit Districts

Proceeding to the fruit growers' district, I interviewed more than one hundred prominent fruit growers and business men engaged in the fruit industry. I visited the following places in the Okanagan Valley: Penticton, Summerland, Gilletty, Kelowna and Vernon. At each of these points I interviewed the principal shippers, making it a point to discuss the fruit business from every angle. I also procured annual reports and statements from the different agencies; from all of which I gathered a very considerable amount of valuable information.

From the Penticton district I proceeded to the Salmon Arm fruit area. There I had the privilege of meeting a number of prominent men in connection with the Union Fruit Growers' Association

of the Okanagan Valley, and so important did they deem the opportunity of such an interview that they arranged, on my return from the coast, that I should spend additional time with them and deliver an address to their whole organization on the work of co-operation as carried on by the associations of the prairie provinces.

The Main Purpose

From there I proceeded to the Kootenay district. It was my privilege there to make the acquaintance of a number of fruit growers, prominent among them being Jas. A. Johnston, from whom I was able to get a great deal of very useful information. In all our interviews, while I was able to look into the conditions surrounding the growing of fruit and see the vast possibilities along that line that opens up to the people, the matter of primary importance I had to deal with was to evolve some means by which this great industry, with all its possibilities, might be preserved in such healthy conditions that the prairie provinces might be enabled to secure for themselves fruit at such prices as would bring it in considerable quantities to the homes of the people. Closer investigation brought out the fact that in a good many instances in connection with the collection and packing the fruit in the hands of the transportation companies, there was not as close attention given to business arrangements as might be, and I considered that too much money was spent in the collecting and packing of the fruit. A simpler and less expensive method of packing could meet all the requirements of consumer viewed from the Grain Growers' viewpoint, and we believe that suggestions along that line would result in considerable benefit to both producer and consumer.

A Selling Arrangement

I also made the discovery that last year there was a disposition on the part of the Fruit Growers' Association to tie themselves up to the old line of selling thru ordinary jobbers, wholesalers and retailers, and when first approached there was some difficulty manifested on their part with regard to making any change from their former arrangement, their fear being that any such change might result in leaving them to some extent at least shut out of the market for which they had been catering. Many of them, however, took a different view of the situation. They could see great possibilities in connection with a union that would link them up practically with half of the population of the western provinces. Such union, if properly consummated, would result to the advantage of both producer and consumer. I had therefore little difficulty in effecting an arrangement by which we hope to bring the fruit of the west in small as well as in carload lots direct from the organization of the fruit growers to the organizations of the grain growers.

By this means we hope to build up a permanent business that will result in great good to all concerned.

To this end we have circularized our various local branches, and we hope in a few days to be in possession of the information necessary; we therefore request our secretaries to give special heed to the instructions given in the circular already received, as everything depends on this matter receiving their prompt attention.

Yours truly,
R. C. HENDERS

PATRIOTIC FUNDS

The Cordova Grain Growers' Association have this week forwarded a contribution towards the War Relief Fund of \$7.00.

The Mountainside Branch have forwarded a contribution of \$20.00 this week towards the Red Cross Fund.

Many of our secretaries are sending in for extra pledge books for the Patriotic Acre. The canvassers seem to be meeting with a ready response to their appeal.



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without the possibility of the slightest deterioration is ensured by the new wrapping in which

BLUE RIBBON TEA

is now packed and sold. The old lead packets filled the bill—but had several drawbacks. Every housewife knows them. Easily torn—liable to puncture and rust—only custom made them acceptable. The new "BLUE RIBBON" wrapper is a perfect packing for tea. Strong, clean, handy, dust-proof, impervious to moisture. In short—

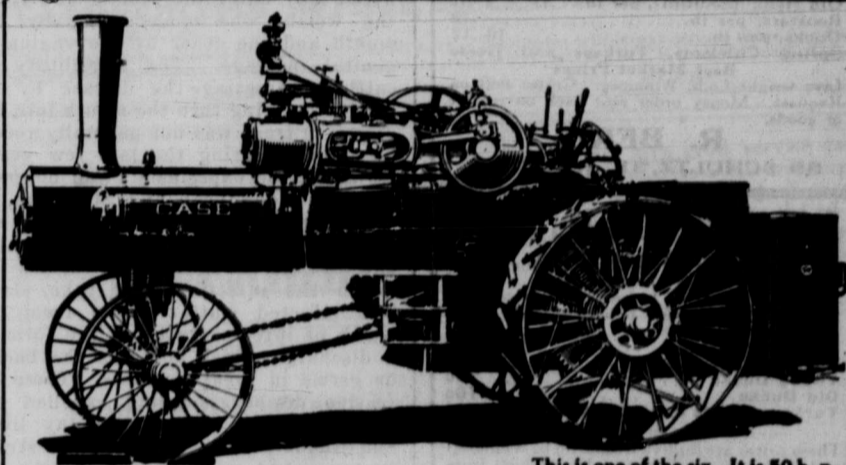
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Our handsome new book tells all about our Tractors, Plows, Steel Threshing Machines, Automobiles, Corn Shellers, Hay Balers and Road Machinery. A postcard brings you a free copy, together with our latest booklet of evidences, "Facts from the Field."

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