

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

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Commission to Investigate the Elevator Question.

The Minister of the Interior has appointed the following as a commission to investigate the question of elevators and flat warehouses, and presumably other matters connected with the grain-handling of the West: Judge Senkler, of St. Catharines (Chairman); W. D. Sirett, M. P. P. for Beautiful Plains; C. C. Castle, Foxton, and William Lothian, Pipestone; and C. N. Bell, Secretary of Winnipeg Grain Exchange, as Secretary.

Grain Standards Board to Meet.

The Western Grain Standards Board has been called to meet on October 25th, in order to fix commercial grades of frosted grain, which are not provided for in the regular standard grades defined in the new Act. Some slight damage has been done by frost in a few sections in the northern and western districts, and in order to handle this class of grain it is found necessary to fix samples, which can be done only by the Standards Board.

C. P. R. Live Stock Distribution.

In connection with the scheme for the free distribution of pure-bred stock by the Canadian Pacific Railway, which has been referred to in previous issues of the FARMER'S ADVOCATE, it is now reported that the Company are not likely to go further with the free distribution, as it certainly would be very detrimental to the interests of the breeders of this country, who have done so much already to advance the live stock industry. It seems likely, however, that the company, which never does anything by halves, once having become fully alive to the importance of the use of pure-bred sires in building up the stock industry of this western country, will not abandon the idea of encouraging this important branch of agriculture when it is in their power to do so much at so comparatively small a cost by reducing local freight rates on pure-bred stock for breeding purposes to a minimum, and afford other facilities to encourage the local breeder and bring the stock within easy reach of the average farmer.

The Survey Board.

Under the new grain-grading regulations provision is made for a Board of Survey, which is made up of "twelve competent persons," six of whom are nominated by the Winnipeg Board of Trade, three each by the Governments of Manitoba and Territories. On this Survey Board, Messrs. Wm. R. Motherwell, Abernethy; Henry Dorill, Moose Jaw, and R. J. Phin, Moosomin, were nominated by the Territorial Government; Messrs. N. Bawlf, C. Young, and W. L. Parrish, by the Manitoba Government.

The Board at its first meeting arranged rules, fees, etc. Three members form a committee to make a survey at the nominal fee of \$1.00 each per sitting, so that a survey only costs \$3.00, which is paid by the party losing the award. If the grading of a car of wheat is not satisfactory to the seller, appeal may be made past the Inspectors to the Survey Board, whose ruling shall be final. In cases of dispute on wheat in transit, it is most important that no delay be caused, hence the desirability of having such matters dealt with in the least possible loss of time, and under the present arrangement a small committee of three, from the nine members, who are all members of the Grain Exchange, can be got together on short notice, and the small fee makes the survey charge merely nominal. The members nominated by the Territorial Government, living at so great a distance, will hardly be able to act. The acting members of this Board, being all members of the Grain Exchange and intimately associated with the Elevator Association, it is scarcely probable that wheat-growers will make many appeals to their arbitration, but will rather abide by the decision of the Inspectors.

The New Grain Regulations.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

Whether the new Grain Inspection Act, which has recently come into effect, will likely work out satisfactorily to both the producer and dealer is rather a difficult question to answer.

We will take first the new No. 1 hard. The regulation says that "No. 1 Manitoba hard shall consist wholly of wheat grown in Manitoba, etc., and shall be 'plump,' sound and well cleaned, weighing not less than 60 lbs. to the bushel, and shall be composed of at least 75 per cent. hard red Fyfe wheat."

The particular innovation is the insertion of that little word 'plump.' Myself, I feel certain that future developments will prove that a very big mistake has been made in this respect.

No. 1 hard should be such a grade as would meet the average crop conditions year after year, that was met fairly well under the old No. 1 hard, but I will be agreeably surprised if the new regulation does not prove a plumper in reducing our average in certain seasons to a No. 2 hard basis.

Of course, we understand the object of a grade in the first place is to facilitate the barter and sale of our crops, and it makes no difference to the dealer, so long as he knows just where he stands, whether wheat is No. 1 hard or No. 2 hard—the loss of a grade falls wholly on the producer.

The regulations as a whole should prove satisfactory to the trade.

My contention is that, so far as the farmer is concerned, no matter how perfect the grain classifications may be or all the other regulations of the trade, so long as there is no controlling power over the trade itself as between the dealer and producer, the good intentions of the Act as applied to the farmer is very largely nullified.

Of course, you understand that the crop conditions this year are very nearly perfect—a fine sample and very clean—and there should be no difficulty; still, I meet this feature: at a certain point farmers were dissatisfied with the weights given them; they would try first one elevator, then another, with the same results. The explanation given to me by a business man was that the respective firms employing the buyers at these elevators demanded that these men should guarantee both grades and weights, and it was further stated that, in addition to giving bonds, a certain portion of their salary was held back to secure their employers in that respect. If that is really being done, one can readily understand that somebody is going to lose, and one can also understand what I mean when I say that the intentions of the Act are being nullified so far as the producer is concerned, as under such conditions a man could be shaved so that his No. 1 hard crop would net him a No. 2 hard price, with fair weights.

From the producer's standpoint, I have nothing further to add to my statements in the FARMER'S ADVOCATE of June 20th, but will simply re-affirm the position that you need never expect a satisfied agricultural community with present conditions. There has got to be a controlling power supervising the whole grain trade of this country. This power should be a Board of Control, located in Winnipeg and completely independent of the grain interests. More than that, farmers will never be satisfied until they are entirely liberated from present compulsory restrictions.

I think that our Western representatives fully understand that there is nothing more potent to make or unmake members of Parliament than this very matter.

W. B. UNDERHILL.

The Importation of Cottonwoods.

To the Editor FARMER'S ADVOCATE:

On the representation of the Hon. Thomas Greenway, the Hon. Sydney Fisher, the Minister of Agriculture, has had an order-in-council passed allowing anyone in Manitoba or the Northwest Territories, who wishes to do so, to import, for planting here, cottonwood trees from Dakota and other north-western States, from the present time up till the first of January next. These shipments must be made via the port of Brandon, where they will be examined by Mr. S. A. Bedford, Superintendent of the Experimental Farm at that place, or by one of his officials. There are many farmers and others who consider the cottonwood one of the very best trees for planting here, and it is claimed that the young trees can be more easily obtained in the United States than in our own river bottoms. The

so-called Dakota cottonwood is identically the same tree as our own native cottonwood. It is also known as the necklace poplar, which is simply a translation of its scientific name, *Populus monilifera*. This tree grows not only from seed, but very rapidly from cuttings, and many thousands of these cuttings have been planted out of late years. The cottonwood is very similar to several of the species of Russian poplars which are so highly spoken of, and of which a great number of cuttings have been distributed from the Brandon and Indian Head Experimental Farms. It is not yet known whether this order-in-council will be renewed after the 1st of January, but in the meantime it would be very wise for all who wish to obtain these trees to send their order as soon as possible.

J. FLETCHER.
Central Experimental Farm.

[On the Brandon Experimental Farm nearly every cottonwood tree has been attacked by some fungus growth, resembling rust, in many cases as badly as to kill out the trees. Other varieties of trees are so far not seriously affected by this rust. At Indian Head Farm the cottonwood is also proving rather disappointing, and when planted simply along avenues has killed out or proved so unsatisfactory that the Superintendent has decided to replace them with elms or other more suitable varieties. Cottonwoods are rapid growers where they are healthy, and can be purchased very cheap from the nurserymen of the north-western States, where they are to be had by millions growing in the wet sand of the river bottoms. Cottonwood grows along the banks of the Red River, the Assiniboine as far up as the mouth of the Souris, and up the Souris River; we are not aware that it grows further up the Assiniboine, or in any of our other streams. It seems very probable that sand-beds, where the seeds of the cottonwood lodge and grow, may exist on the Souris River this side of the boundary line; if so, doubtless immense supplies could be secured for the packing and shipping.

There is room for some of our enterprising nurserymen to make a fortune in the near future out of trees for shelter and ornamental planting. Even the better sorts of the common trees will be in ever-increasing demand, and if grown on a good large scale, at some favorably-located spot, could be sold so reasonably that the trade would in a few years be enormous. The native maple, elm, ash, Russian poplar, some of the willows, and the native spruce, together with some of the hardier ornamental shrubs, etc., will, without the least doubt, be in demand far exceeding any possible supply, for the settlers in the country are making homes now for their families, and these homes must be surrounded with trees and shrubs before they are worthy of the name of comfortable home.—Ed. F. A.]

Preserving Seed Potatoes.

We hear repeated complaints about poor crops of potatoes, and one of the chief causes of failure has been the poor growth made by the seed. A potato-grower who understands his business greatly dislikes to plant anything but sound seed that has not sprouted, and if he is to have such seed to plant, he must keep his potatoes, from digging time to planting time, so that they will not deteriorate by sprouting, heating, freezing, or other causes. Farmers as a rule do not fully appreciate the injury sustained by the seed sprouting. The first sprout makes the strongest plant, and when that is broken off nature will send out a second sprout from the same eye, but it will be much weaker. If potatoes are kept warm all winter and sprouted two or three times, they will be almost worthless for seed or for eating either, as the tuber is then well-nigh exhausted. Since like produces like, it pays to plant good-sized seed of smooth form, and enough of these can be selected at digging time to plant next spring. Now, in order to keep these properly, they should be stored where it is dark and the temperature is down near the freezing point. If potatoes are put away dry and clean and under these conditions, there need be no fear but what they will make good seed when wanted next spring. Some potato-growing specialists have their seed held all winter and spring in cold storage, but this is hardly practical for the ordinary potato-grower. A compartment of the cellar where no effect of fire reaches can with care during the winter be held about right, but the trouble arrives with the warm days of spring, when the windows (double) should be opened on cool nights and kept tightly closed and dark at other times.