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THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

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Sign The Pork Packing Contract Now

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would make merry over the fact, and at their sumptuous banquets they would drink toasts to the utter destruction of the packing plant and every other movement for emancipation put forth by the farmers.

Some claim that the agreement as it stands at present, if carried into completion, would create a government monopoly, and bring the patrons of the plant under the rule of its dominating power. A trust or monopoly is a good thing for the possessors of same. The unification of small concerns into a mammoth trust makes it possible to a great extent to reduce expenses and eliminate waste. The worst feature in these cases is that it is not the masses who receive the benefits from the combination, but a few privileged individuals. There is evidently something radically wrong in the construction of our whole social fabric and this state of affairs should be changed as speedily as possible.

A monopoly ceases to be a monopoly when all are included in its franchise, and it is evident that when there is no one outside of the franchise to be monopolized a monopoly cannot exist. Again there are others who maintain that the present high price of hogs ought to satisfy the most pessimistic of us, and we could not expect a better price under government ownership. I admit that the present price of hogs is satisfactory but we must admit also that the price of hogs is high everywhere. There might be times such as the present when the government plant would not pay more than the private concerns, but the immense profits gathered in by the packers through the sales of the cured article would to a large extent be eliminated under government ownership.

Combine Clears 100 Per Cent.

In the late investigation in the western states as to the workings of the meat combine it transpired that these concerns made at least a hundred per cent. clear profit in the handling and curing of cattle and hogs. The laboring classes suffer the most from these exorbitant profits and unless the government puts a stop to this predatory manipulation these people will have to give up eating meat. The only practical plan to put a stop to this big profit system is for the government to take over, own and operate the meat industries in the interests of the people. When that time comes the laboring classes will be assured of meat in abundance at all times to satisfy their daily need, instead of having, as in continental Europe, to perform their daily labor without this necessary article of diet.

What assurance have we that these high prices will continue? The hog raising industry has in the past been a very uncertain one in Alberta, and many people have gone out of business entirely on account of the fluctuations in prices. Notwithstanding the fact that there has always been a good demand in the province for the finished article, the market price for the live hog has always been considerably lower than in Chicago, even when the home-cured finished article has commanded a price equal to, if not greater, than the finished article would after being shipped from Chicago, freight, duty and all other charges having first been added. In other words, hogs could be shipped to Chicago, cured into bacon, shipped back and sold to the consumer as cheaply as the packers sell the home-cured article. There were times in the past during which the price of hogs was so low that they did not pay for the wear and tear on the bale of the swill pail used to feed them. This is no overdrawn picture.

The \$50,000 which the government has appropriated to build and equip the plant looks mighty big to some people and there are men who think the government should not embark upon such an undertaking without taking time to fully consider the matter, as the result might be disastrous. Well, I think the government has taken ample time to study out the plan in all its details and if they now undertake the erection of the plant, with all due deference to the government, it cannot be said that they acted hastily in the matter. It has taken as many years to bring about the possibility of a government packing plant as it is often required in weeks only to get a franchi-

se from the government to build a railroad by some private individual, even to the extent of guaranteeing bonds.

It has been whispered around that the government was not sincere in this matter and were, therefore, not very anxious for the farmers to accept the proposition as presented to the annual convention, and for this reason the contract was made so that some might designate it a little too binding in character, the object being to make it as difficult as possible to secure the requisite number of hogs. If this rumor is true, and we hope it is not, the only alternative left is for every member of the association to get to work at once and secure as many patrons for the packing plant as possible so that the requisite number can be easily pledged.

If the government are sincere in this matter and with the farmers' sympathy and co-operation in the movement, there is no reason why the plant should not be in operation by next fall. When once completed and in running order it will not be a difficult job to increase the capacity from year to year as the business warrants, and the influx of settlers and the building of railroads, together with the congested population of our towns, which will ever be on the increase, will furnish a ready market for all the hogs which can be raised for many years to come.

We have been clamoring for government ownership. The critical moment has now arrived and we must show our prudence and wisdom by embracing the opportunity which is presented to us. We must grasp the chance now as there may never be another opportunity.

At the annual convention Premier Rutherford made the boast that the Alberta government owns and operates more public utilities than any other province in the Dominion. Let these glorious words of the premier arouse every man of us to action, so that Alberta shall still continue to wear the laurel wreath among the sister provinces, and ever shine forth as a star in the galaxy of nations along the line of government ownership.

When the government plant is completed and in our control we shall have reached another milestone on the road to that utopian system, the great co-operative commonwealth, under whose regime all will have equal opportunities.

JAMES FLETCHER,

Kingman, Alta.

BUT WHAT WAS HER AGE.

Toward the close of a lawsuit in Massachusetts, the wife of a Harvard professor arose, and with a flaming face, timidly addressed the Court.

"Your Honor," said she, "if I told you I made an error in my testimony would it vitiate all I have said?"

Instantly the lawyers for each side stirred themselves in excitement, while His Honor gravely regarded her.

"Well, madam," said the court, after a pause, "that depends entirely on the nature of your error. What is it please?"

"Why, you see," answered the lady, more and more red and embarrassed, "I told the clerk I was thirty-eight. I was so flustered, you know, that when he asked my age I inadvertently gave him my bus time measurement."—Everybody's.

Glady.—Mama, my teacher was talking about synonyms to-day. What is a synonym?

Mrs. Catherwood.—A synonym, darling, is a word you can use in place of another one when you do not know how to spell the other one.—Record. Herald.

"Algernon is very interesting," said the stockbroker's daughter.

"What does he talk about?" inquire her father.

"Why, he's ever so well posted on Shakespearean quotations."

"Young women," said the financier, sternly, "don't let him deceive you. Don't let him make sport of your ignorance. There isn't any such stock on the market. I ought to know, for I've been on the Exchange long enough."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

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