

## TO DISCUSS GRAIN QUESTION

Common Problem of Western  
Farmers to be Threshed  
Out in Conference.

The Manitoba Grain Growers' association has issued the following circular to the reeves and councils of municipalities and sub-associations of grain growers throughout the province:

At the request of the executive of the Manitoba Grain Growers' association, and on the recommendation of the committee of agriculture the government of the province of Manitoba has called a conference of the reeves of each municipality and others to discuss the situation surrounding the storage, hauling, sale and transportation of grain and make such recommendations as circumstances may warrant to the government of the province in matters over which the legislature have jurisdiction, and to the Dominion government in matters which can only be dealt with by the federal authorities. Among the subjects to be brought under consideration will be:

1. Amendments to the charter of the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange.
2. Dealing in options.
3. Amendments to the criminal code in respect of combines in restraint of trade, boycotts, etc.
4. Government ownership and operation of elevators both terminal and line.
5. Reciprocal demurrage.
6. The employment of the central as a sale unit.

The Manitoba Grain Growers' association have pronounced on a number of these questions at their annual convention and the conference being called at the request of the executive of that body, their officers have deemed it expedient to appoint a conference committee to prepare this circular setting forth the views of the association and presenting arguments in support of the same.

Amendments to Charter of Grain Exchange.

The membership of the exchange is practically the only avenue through which the grain produced by the 50,000 farmers of Manitoba can now pass on its way from the producer to the consumer. Upon the character and practices of the exchange, created as it avowedly is for the financial advantage of the traders in grain, therefore depends in a large measure the prosperity of this great body of producers.

It is proper that the traders in grain should associate themselves under charter for mutual protection and benefit; but it is equally proper that such limitations should be set to their corporate powers as will effectually safeguard the interests of the producers and also the interests of a minority of grain traders both within and without the membership of the exchange.

**A Tendency to Absolute Monopoly.**

The present tendency in the evolution of the grain exchange appears to be in the direction of a combination in restraint of trade which if unchecked may lead to the creation of an absolute monopoly. Amendments to the charter which will introduce the following provisions and limitations for the subjoined reasons appear to be urgently needed to check this tendency.

**Prevalence Versus Performance.**

(a) There must be no limit set by its members to the members which may enjoy its privileges.

The number of memberships is now limited by by-law to 316 (300 active members and 16 associate members) all disposed of. Of this number many are held by non-traders. Among such are the warehouse commissioner, the chief grain inspector, the secretary of the survey and grain standards board, a general freight agent of the C. P. R. and fourteen bankers. One hundred and thirty-two do not reside in Winnipeg, while sixteen are residents of the United States. Seven memberships are held by the members or employees of a single elevator company.

Since all the brokers and all the large milling and export companies in western Canada as well as are connected with the exchange, and consequently restricted by by-law, from dealing on as favorable terms with those outside its membership as those within, it is almost impossible for an outsider to establish himself in the grain trade. He must be financially strong enough to become an independent exporter. Even then unless he is individually as strong as those within the exchange are collectively he can be put out of business by competitive methods. The limiting of membership, therefore, may at any time create a barrier to entrance to the exchange, and, consequently, to competition either from the fact that no more "seats" are available by purchase or that by reason of their security they are held at prohibitive figures. The exchange has lately fixed the price of membership at \$4,000, the original price in the days of unlimited membership was \$100.

(b) No reputable person, firm or corporation engaged in or proposing to engage in the grain trade shall be denied membership if they desire it and tender the price of same—such price as to maximum amount to be fixed by charter.

To leave with a body of organized grain traders incorporated under charter the privilege of denying membership to a reputable competitor is in effect to give them the power to limit competition by arbitrarily saying how many and who shall engage in the privilege to trade with members of their body is to endanger the freedom of trade. The price which has been advanced from \$100 to \$4,000, may be advanced to \$40,000, or even to a larger amount.

(c) The question of reputation in the case of exclusion on such grounds must be subject to appeal from the

decision of the exchange to an impartial tribunal named in the charter.

The necessity for this is that otherwise, the body of traders could arbitrarily exclude a person on technical grounds by alleging him to be disreputable simply because he might not be considered to have the proper attitude, either personal or general, towards certain members of the exchange, or to the methods adopted by the exchange. It must be remembered that the exchange is neither a club nor a fraternal society, but an association of traders ostensibly created in the interests of all the traders in certain commodities.

(d) A firm or corporation must be eligible to apply for and hold membership and enjoy privileges in its own name and exercise the rights of membership through an employee whom it may designate for that service.

At the present time a firm or corporation can only enjoy the privileges of the exchange through a membership held in the name of one of its members, in the case of a firm, or one of its principal officers, in the case of a corporation. This manner does not in itself entitle the firm or corporation to the privilege of membership. It must apply for and secure registration under this membership. This registration may be refused without assigning any reason, or if granted, may be withdrawn on the giving of twenty-four hours' notice, also without any reason being assigned.

(e) A member, whether person, firm or corporation, must be permitted to delegate the work of trading to an employee.

A membership in the exchange is secured for trading purposes, and as it is customary for men to employ others as their representatives in business, it is but reasonable that a member should be allowed to delegate the actual work of trading to an employee instead of being forced to do it in person or through another member, as provided by by-law. Why should the traders in grain be more exclusive than other traders. Are they of higher rank and importance, or are there trade secrets to be guarded from the prying eyes of employees.

**Maximum Price "Fixed."**

(f) There shall be no restrictions upon members as to prices paid, commissions charged nor as to agreements entered into with employees.

The rules relating to commission and the maximum price rule enforced as they are by fines and penalties when taken in conjunction with the agreement to be governed by them which every applicant for membership must sign, constitute, in effect a law in restraint of trade, created as it avowedly is for the financial advantage of the traders in grain, therefore depends in a large measure the prosperity of this great body of producers.

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without any desire of expectation that delivery will be made is a pure gamble that the price will rise. No good can come of gambling in a price which is associated therewith. Professional gamblers are a burden to the community which permits their presence, as by the nature of things they cannot live on one another.

**Legitimate Functions.**

In general reference to 1 and 2 it may be said that a grain exchange has many legitimate functions to perform. By co-operation quotations can be secured at reasonable cost for the common use of the members. Trading terms can be defined by mutual agreement that no confusion will arise as to contracts. Provision can be made for the arbitration of all commercial disputes between members. Satisfactory quarters can be provided for carrying on trading operations and recording sales and purchases. Officers and servants can be employed to carry out the work of the association. Places of meeting for committees and general meetings of members can be provided. Recommendations can be made by the united wisdom of assembled traders to legislative bodies from time to time as seems necessary.

All these useful functions could be performed, however, without any fixing of prices, action by the exchange, exclusion of dealers or the arbitrary interference with the business methods of members by any elaborate system of fines or penalties. Lack of business morality would bear its own inevitable penalty as it bears in the outside business world, and the man who was either not financially sound or had the reputation of not fulfilling his business obligations would soon cease to be in a position to trade with the reputable members.

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value, whether cars were available for transportation or not, which would be an immense advantage, not only to the farmer, but to every business man in the country, except perhaps the grain dealer, who could no longer take advantage of a blockade to "choke" the producer.

The fact that the elevators were used solely for the purpose of special binning grain and were entirely free from the control or manipulation of buyers would eliminate to give light weights, take heavy dockages, misgrade or change the identity of the stored wheat. It would put an end to the improper allotment of cars which now makes a mock of the grain act, and the street selling would soon become a thing of the past.

By appointing the operator as shipper's agent for declaring intention and ability to load, as required by the grain act, the applicant for cars need never lose his turn, nor need cars be allotted to those no longer requiring them. A check upon unequal distribution of cars between shipper's points could be provided by daily reports from the operators received at the department of agriculture.

The grain being officially weighed and inspected before being handed over to the railways, they would become responsible without evasion for all shortage in weight and deterioration of grade in transit from shipper's point to destination. Another advantage of having the weight and grade at point of shipment is that cars could be shipped to point either east or west of the point of shipment and sold for delivery to millers for grinding, or farmers for seed purposes, either in the west or eastern Canada, on either grade or sample without risk of fraud as the selling is protected by the official grade sample and weight in case of dispute, and the buyer has no reason to complain of the transportation companies in cases of discrepancy.

It is now customary in the case of shipment to Nova Bay to ship the cars through the elevator at a cost approximately of seven-eighths of a cent per bushel for the purpose of cleaning and obtaining official weights. This change would be obtained by cleaning and weighing at terminal points.

Again many types of wheat do not lend themselves to being classified according to the present grading system. Take for example pump frosted grain, bleached grain or grain slightly smutted. By storing in a public elevator under control of a public official, official samples of grain of this class could be secured for use by customers anywhere, making selling a sample practicable. Also a sample could be secured for use by customers anywhere, making selling a sample practicable. Also a sample could be secured for use by customers anywhere, making selling a sample practicable.

**Karl Blind Dead.**

London, May 31.—Karl Blind, the German patriot, died here today suddenly, of heart failure. He was born in 1826.

A superintendent will be stationed here and three sets of despatchers, one for the territory between here and St. Paul, Current, then from here to Calgary, and the third from here to Lethbridge.

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accredited delegates attending the conference. Each delegate should buy a single-fare ticket to Winnipeg and get a standard certificate from the railway agent for same, which will entitle him to a free return ticket. It is hoped that the various municipal councils will call a special meeting if necessary and appoint delegates to accompany the reeves and that they will arrange for the payment of their additional expenses, in order that the farmers' interests may be strongly represented at the conference.

## C.P.R. RUSHING THE "SHORT LINE"

Expect to Close in the Gap From  
Saskatoon to Battle River  
This Season.

Saskatoon, Sask., May 31.—F. J. George, engineer in charge of the C. P. R. construction going on from Saskatoon westward to the Battle River, is in town after having covered the grade line from there to the city. It is about 235 miles from here to the Battle River bridge, now nearing completion. From there to Wetaukwin, the road is finished, and daily trains are running over the line, a distance of a hundred miles. Completing the road between here and there this year, is a big task, but every effort will be made to do so. Contractor McArthur has every team in sight bought or hired.

In six weeks time he expects to see the grade completed from Saskatoon to Round Valley, a distance of 120 miles, which will leave 100 miles still in the hands of the contractors. Expectations are that next week steel will be laid west of Asquith. The situation is, 235 miles of road to be opened between Saskatoon and Battle River 135 miles practically finished, and as big a force as the contractors can get hold of will put forth their greatest efforts to close the remaining 100 mile gap in time to have the steel laid before the season closes. This means that the chances are bright to have C. P. R. trains running east and west of here before the end of the year.

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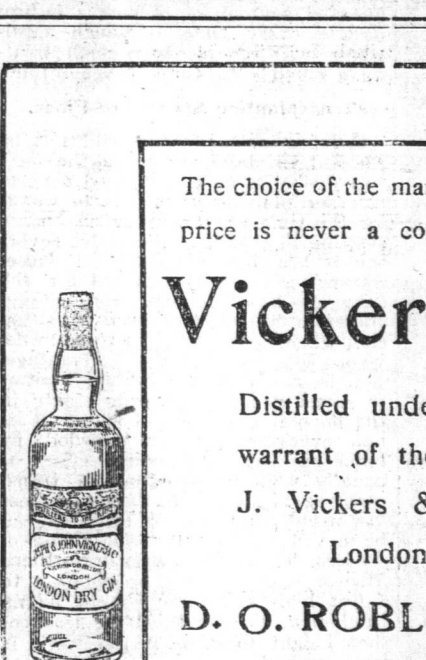
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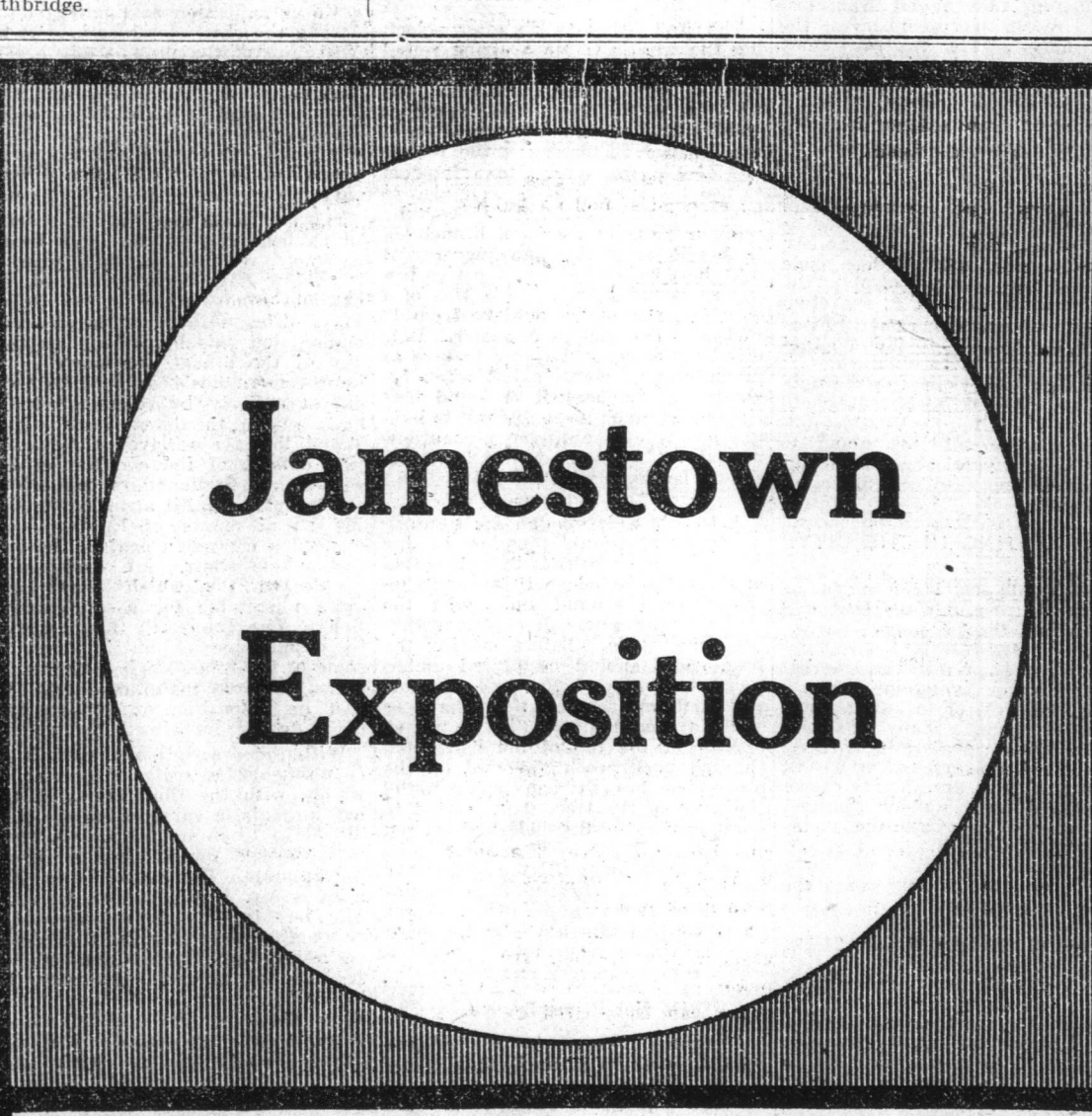


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