



THE GUIDE'S "MAILBAG"

SELECTIONS FROM A MASS OF CORRESPONDENCE RELEVANT
TO THE PURPOSES OF "THE GUIDE"



Thinks Government Ownership a Duty

To the Editor, GRAIN GROWERS'
GUIDE

Dear Sir,—If you will allow me a little space in your valuable paper, I shall endeavor to express my views in relation to that most vital and important question of the day pertaining to Western Canada—"The Government Ownership of Elevators."

The petitions which have been circulated everywhere throughout the three provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and signed by the farmers from the Eastern boundary of Manitoba on the east, to the summit of the snow-capped Rockies on the west, asking the Government to take over, own and run the elevator, is an epoch which marks the advent of the greatest economic and political movement ever written in the annals of agrarian history. This giant petition for the Government ownership of elevators voices the sentiment and the earnest desires of more than a hundred thousand farmers who have been victimized by the exploitations of capitalistic combines for years, and who wish to ameliorate their present conditions. The farmers are now beginning to realize their importance, and through their organizations are endeavoring to do something for themselves.

This burning question of the day—Government ownership of elevators—has been handed to the premiers of the three provinces in the form of a monster petition, and the outcome of this great economic and political movement is being watched with great interest by people of every nationality all over the civilized world, and should it be brought to a happy and logical consummation, it will ameliorate the existing grievances of the farmers to a very great extent, and strengthen the economic solidarity of Western Canada.

This great burning question of the day—Government ownership of elevators—has been discussed "pro" and "con" in all its different phases and bearings, in the February number of the GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE. In the letters addressed to the GUIDE, the Premiers' reply to the

solicitations of the farmers has been somewhat criticized and not without just reason. In these letters, the writers are invariably of the opinion that the reply of the Premiers is a diplomatic manoeuvre on their part so that they may gain time, that they may not act too hastily in such a stupendous undertaking. It must be admitted the Premiers are up against a very complicated problem. The dictates and behests of capitalism on the one hand and the petitions, solicitations and desires of a hundred thousand farmers on the other hand. Gold has been the means of corrupting judges and bribing juries and the dominating influence of capitalistic combines have in past ages, on many occasions, been the means of polluting the halls of legislation, but it is admitted that the moral tendency of the political arena of the present day is happily on the improvement for the better, and the day is not far off when we shall have a Democracy—a Government by the people and for the people. I sincerely believe that the Premiers feel deep down in their hearts that this Government ownership of elevators is the only panacea to ameliorate the grievances that the farmers have so long been subjected to, by speculators on farm produce, and that they will, in the near future, see their way to bring this great scheme to a happy consummation. Legislators are getting to be more and more in favor of Government ownership of elevators. In Alberta we have the creameries, the telephone system and the hail insurance policy, owned and run by the Government, which is acknowledged by everyone to be conducted on a more economic and substantial basis than they would be if operated by private concerns.

Then there is municipal ownership of street cars, gas plants, and electrical plants in our cities, which go to show that the people are in favor of Government ownership of the important enterprises and industries. Some capitalistic papers advocate that the Government ought to appoint commissions throughout the three provinces to look after the interests of the farmer and to see that he receives

equitable value for his grain, from the speculators who buy the produce from him—the commission to be elected to hold office for life.

Why not take over the elevators by the Government, especially when the farmers who raise the crops so earnestly desire it, in preference to paying thousands and thousands of dollars every year to men to compel capitalistic combines to pay the farmer a fair and equitable return for his crops, which amount will largely have to be paid by the farmers in the form of taxes. I might here make the statement that it is too well known that when the speculators have cornered the supply of wheat and made it into flour they charge the people double what the farmers receive for their wheat.

Even centuries ago, when the world was brutalized by the most fearful oppressions, it was a crime to speculate in the bread of the people—but this will continue as long as private ownership continues. When the public owns the elevators and mills, there can be no speculation in any cereals raised on the farm. Then you will not see great mansions and palaces rising in the cities on the spoils taken from the producers. Speculation and exploitation are only possible when and where the things used to produce and distribute are privately owned. You can see readily that if the elevators and mills were public property that no one could speculate on grain, and that all the thousands of millions that every year are gathered in by the schemers would remain in the hands of those whose labor had actually produced the wealth. There is no sense in regretting and bemoaning

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