

The Grain Growers' Guide

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National Control of Railways

Recently, under powers conferred upon him by Congress, President Wilson took over national control of all the railways of the United States. Henceforth, during the war they are to be operated as one system. Each of the companies will be guaranteed profits averaging the same as those during the past three years; railway properties will be maintained in good shape and Government assistance will be given in the flotation of railway loans.

President Wilson's action was forced by the absolute inability of the American railroads to render the maximum service demanded by wartime conditions. Each railway company was largely animated by a desire to increase its own profits rather than to aid the nation in its crisis. The secretary of the treasury, Mr. McAdoo, will be director-general in full charge of the entire railway system and under him will be a committee of the ablest railway men in the states. Huge salaries will be cut down, freight will be routed by the most direct route and no red tape, jealousy or dividend producing arguments will be permitted to stand in the way of efficient service.

President Wilson has done practically what the British Government did the day after war was declared. The British government got results and greatly improved service and there is not the shadow of a doubt but that the American government will also secure great improvement. National control and operation of railways is now in effect in nearly every important country of the world except Canada. The Union government in Canada today has unlimited power and has the backing of the people. It has authority from parliament to take over the railroads immediately. Premier Borden, before the election, announced that something in the way of co-operative railway management in Canada would be inaugurated. The people are looking for it and expect that it will be thorough and complete. Increases in freight rates would not be opposed so vigorously in Canada if the dividends on profits were going to the national treasury instead of to private pockets.

Test Your Seed

The astounding fact has been announced that of the first 85 samples of grain received by the seed testing department of the Manitoba Agricultural College, only 1.4 per cent. tested as first-class seed while 43.6 per cent. proved to be entirely unsuitable for seed purposes. This emphasizes the great need of caution in selecting the seed for the 1918 crop. There need be no guess work in the matter. The germination test is a fair indication of the percentage of seed that will germinate properly. This will be gladly made for any farmer by the agricultural colleges. It can also be accomplished in the home. All that is necessary is to place 100 grains between sheets of moist blotting paper and to note the percentage of them that germinate properly and make a strong growth. Test your seed or have it tested. It may mean hundreds of dollars more for the crop from a half section next fall.

Conscripting Farm Labor

Despite Government instructions and announcements, reports indicate that appeal tribunals are still refusing exemption to bona fide farmers in considerable numbers. Figures are not available but the reports indicate that the situation in many cases is serious. We believe that the statement of the Government was made in good faith and it is not the intention to take bona fide farmers away

from food production when food is so vitally necessary. Farmers as men are no more entitled to exemption than any other men but the Government realizes that their best efforts for the Empire can be made by producing food. It is quite clear that many of the tribunals do not appreciate thoroughly the necessity for food. It should be understood that the Government has no authority to take action until the last appeal court has rendered its decision. Bona fide farmers who are refused exemption should have no hesitation in making an appeal and need not consider themselves slackers nor disloyal in so doing. It is unfortunate that it will take several weeks before the cases are settled. A farmer or farmer's son who has been refused exemption finds it difficult to lay his plans for carrying on his farm work until his case is finally settled. For this reason it is urgent that these cases be disposed of as early as possible in order to ensure the highest possible food production this year.

Railway Rates Problem

The recent increases in freight and passenger rates on Canadian railroads allowed by the railway commission have been suspended for further hearing by the board. It is well that this has been done now because the action of the railway commission was only a halfway measure and no real solution of the difficulties facing the transportation organizations of Canada. Action in regard to our railroads ought to be considered in the light of the exigencies of the war situation and the fact that peace is not here yet and may not be for a long time. Temporary expedients that need revising every few months and which may carry with them constant disturbance of the normal flow of internal trade are not worthy features of a strong war organization. The recent decision of the railway commission falls in this class. The commission has only power to deal with rates but the present problem goes much beyond the rate question. An increase in rates is an unjust and decidedly inefficient method of dealing with this peculiar Canadian problem which must be considered not as a transportation problem alone but as a part of the nation's whole war economy.

There are two distinct phases to the rate increase benefit. One is its relation to the C.P.R., the other to the remaining railway systems of the Dominion. Neither the railway commission nor any one else in any public statement has justified any addition to the revenues of the C.P.R. at this time. It is true the expenses of that road are increasing and the net income is decreasing. But it paid its usual 10 per cent. dividend of \$26,000,000 last year and had \$17,152,000 surplus. The C.P.R. also had net earnings of \$37,376,000 in the first 10 months of 1917. That is enough to pay its fixed charges and its huge dividends and have \$1,000,000 left with two months still to run in 1917. It is expected that the record of the C.P.R. for 1917 will compare very favorably indeed with 1916 when its final report is published.

In regard to the other railroads it must have occurred to any one who has studied the statements of the railway commission that with growing costs of operations the proposed increase of rates would not solve the difficulty, at least for any length of time. It might for the Grand Trunk but not for the C.N.R. or Grand Trunk Pacific. The C.N.R. now belongs to the people of Canada and it will be operated by the government in a few weeks. Trackage in Canada under public control then will be almost 14,000 miles or considerably more than one-third of

the total railway mileage of this country. Since the public has to make good the deficiency of this road there is no reason why it should give the C.P.R. a handout in the process. Surely the people of Canada have had enough of this everlasting and indiscriminate handing out of money to individuals and corporations at the expense of production in this country.

One way to deal with this situation is by the operation of all our roads as one national enterprise under the central control of one executive of expert railroad men, and without any increase of rates. During the war the Government might become responsible to the stockholders of privately-owned roads for a fair profit based on pre-war profits and the deficiencies of defunct roads could be made good by the people through direct grants of money. It is just as essential that the railway systems of this country should be co-ordinated and reorganized so as to secure greater economy in operation, avoid unnecessary construction, save coal and motive power, and secure the widest, most reasonable and most effective use of existing transportation facilities as it is that such should be done in practically every other nation at war. It is necessary that railroad service be maintained at a high standard in Canada, but it is equally necessary that other phases of national activity such as food production should be maintained at just as high a standard. The world's safety, the insurance of the Empire, Canada and democracy depends on the greatest possible production next season. Such a rate increase as that proposed would only lay altogether too great a burden on production

Regulating Produce Trade

The failure of the Farmers and Gardeners Produce Exchange in Winnipeg is simply another argument for the absolute necessity of regulation in the produce trade. Within a comparatively few years a number of produce dealers in Winnipeg have gone out of business, with the result that many farmers and farmer's wives throughout the country have lost the shipments they have sent in. In many cases the loss has caused extreme hardship. At the present time there is no regulation whatever and the result is discouraging the production of high class farm produce throughout the prairie provinces. The Grain Growers' Guide has been most rigid in accepting advertising from produce dealers and has declined to accept it in many cases. Every possible effort has been made to ensure that shippers will receive prompt and satisfactory payment for all shipments made. Yet despite this, failures will occur. The Dominion Government has regulated the grain trade until it is safe. Either the Dominion Government or the Provincial Government could easily do the same thing for the produce trade. It has been done in a large number of the states to the south of us and it should be done here. The Provincial and Dominion Governments have done nothing up to the present time except throw the responsibility onto each other. It is time they got down to business.

Dr. Bland

The action of the board of Wesley College in dismissing Dr. Bland and his associate, Dr. Irwin, has been condemned by the Methodist Court of Appeal. The finding of this, the highest authority in the Methodist church in Canada, is that the summary dismissal of the professors at the time at which it was done was not in harmony with the usage and law of the church. The court also finds that the