

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, February 21st, 1912

## LIVING—AND QUITE ACTIVE

Those people who have deluded themselves with the idea that the organized farmers of the West have been losing ground during the past few months and that their organization is on the down grade, would have had an eye-opener had they been present at the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' association held in Regina last week. Nearly eight hundred farmers were present at that meeting, and every one of them was filled with a determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with his brother farmers in the great struggle in which the organized farmers are now engaged. The defeat of reciprocity, rather than working an injury to the organization as the prophets of evil have been declaring in such loud accents, has put new life into the farmers. They realize today more clearly than ever just how great was the loss to them when the door to the southern market, which for a time seemed likely to open, was so firmly closed on September 21. There were farmers in that great gathering who have not yet shipped a bushel of grain because the Canadian railways were not able to handle it. In spite of a year of hard labor they were unable to raise any money upon the result of their toil, with which to purchase the necessities of life. Many of them have their grain at home yet in a condition which, if it does not reach the market before the warm weather, means a heavy financial loss. Had the southern markets been opened on September 21, there would have been no shortage of cars and the grain which is now in danger of ruin would have reached market and consumption in time to return a good price to the grain growers. There were also a number of farmers present whose homes were close to the United States boundary line and who are able to haul their grain across the line and market it in the American elevators. After paying the duty they still have a good margin over the Canadian price. One man, who was offered 42 cents a bushel for his wheat on the Canadian side, hauled it to the American side and received 82 cents. Another man, who was offered 48 cents for his wheat in Canada, received 88 cents per bushel for the same wheat just across the boundary. A third man, who refused 32 cents per bushel for his wheat, hauled it across the line and got 84 cents. Thus, after paying the 25 cents duty, it was exceedingly profitable to take the grain to the American buyer. The experiences of these men were related to the convention. Is it any wonder that the men at that convention who were not able to take advantage of the American market could see very little in the loyalty cry which deprived them of a great part of their living on September 21, 1911? Is it any wonder that in the breasts of those farmers there was a feeling of resentment against those Big Interests in Eastern Canada who have spent their money to corner up the Western farmers where they could be plundered at leisure? If there are any loyal people in Canada, there are many hundreds of thousands on the prairies of the Western provinces. What further proof of this could be required than the fact that they have accepted the will of the majority and by so doing have suffered tremendous losses, and will suffer greater losses in the future? When the door to the southern market was closed on September 21 it meant a cash loss to the farmers of Western Canada of at least \$30,000,000, and Saskatchewan was the greatest loser. But the farmers of Saskatchewan, and also of the other Prairie Provinces, realize that in the face of this setback it is no time for them to be idle and to cease from their labors. They see greater need than ever

of carrying on their organization and strengthening it in every possible way. They are determined that they will not forever remain in a position of bondage in which they find themselves today. They will not always submit to the dictation of big financial and commercial interests who have nothing at heart except the desire for financial gain, covered by the cloak of false loyalty.

The Saskatchewan convention declared itself unanimously in favor of the Ottawa platform laid down by the farmers of Canada in the House of Commons on December 16, 1910. That platform declared for an immediate lowering of the customs duty with the ultimate aim of free trade with the mother land in ten years, and reciprocity in natural products and some other products with the United States. The question of purchasing their supplies and necessities of life as far as possible from foreign manufacturers came before the convention and was discussed. But it was decided to take no action at the present time, so the resolution was laid upon the table for one year for consideration.

But the Grain Growers of Saskatchewan did not by any means devote all their time to the question of the tariff. There were other vital problems that interested them deeply and upon which they took decisive action. No resolution received greater and more unanimous support than that one declaring in favor of Direct Legislation, and also in favor of taking immediate steps to make this new and popular system of government effective. The action of the sister provinces declaring for the extension of the franchise to women was also heartily endorsed at Regina. The farmers of the West are not demanding any special privileges, and for that reason they are willing to extend the right of the franchise to the women upon equal terms with men. In the matter of hail insurance there is already a statute on the books of Saskatchewan which promises at least a partial solution of this great problem, and which in the future can be improved as needed to meet the situation. This bill was enacted into law upon the request of the organized grain growers. The convention also declared itself in favor of the government working out a system by which the credit of the province could be used to secure cheaper loans upon agricultural land. At the present time farmers are paying seven, eight, nine, ten and in some cases twelve per cent. upon mortgages raised upon their land. By the assistance of the government such funds could be raised for the development of the agricultural land at a rate of interest not more than five per cent.

The question of the sample market aroused one of the best debates of the session. Practically every man of the convention was in favor of the principle of a sample market. Yet they realized that certain big interests were awaiting their approval of the sample market to use it for their own selfish purposes, in securing the consent of the government to practice the mixing of grain in the terminal elevators for their own personal advantage—and to the great disadvantage of the grain growers. For this reason the resolution favoring a sample market was laid over for one year to give the government time to implement its promise to take over the terminal elevators and place them in the hands of an independent commission, which would take them out of reach of the graft that has characterized their operation for many years. When the government has taken over the terminal elevators, then the grain growers will be ready to meet them and to assist in the working out of a sample

market that will give to the farmers the intrinsic value of the grain which they produce. The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' association has a good record behind it, but the future is bright with promise. The most promising feature of the work of the three organizations in the three Prairie Provinces is that they are working hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder. By such united action they will be able to make far greater progress and will have a much more powerful influence in the federal field than could possibly exist were they not working together and for a common purpose. As the campaign of education continues, the influence of the organized farmers will become greater. Business men in the Western cities are daily becoming more interested in the work of the organized farmers and are daily realizing that they can well afford to assist the farmers in the work they are carrying on. The business men realize that the prosperity of the agricultural workers means the prosperity of all the other business interests of the country. If the organized farmers, the organized workers and the business interests of the West will join hands they will make themselves into an invincible force for the building up of the most prosperous and contented country beneath the sun.

## DIVERSIFIED FARMING

Dr. Worst, president of the agricultural college of North Dakota, in addressing the Canadian Club of Winnipeg last week, made an eloquent plea for the adoption of diversified farming in the Canadian West. He pointed out the necessity of a rotation of crops and the keeping of live stock in order to retain the natural productivity of the soil, and showed how it was particularly necessary to replace the elements taken from the land by the crop in a country such as this, where the rainfall is limited. He also pointed out how the keeping of live stock enables the farmer to employ permanent help and to distribute his activities over the whole year instead of having a rush of work at seeding and harvest and a comparatively idle time during the winter months. With all of this we heartily agree, and we believe that no one knows better than the farmers of Western Canada themselves that for agricultural, economic and social reasons grain growing should be replaced by diversified farming—that they should stop growing grain crops exclusively and should devote a portion of their attention to stock raising, dairying, poultry keeping and the production of fruits and vegetables. The impossibility of marketing grain in many sections of the country during the present season, owing to the failure of the railway companies to keep pace with the increase in the production of grain, has brought this home forcibly to many of our farmers, and everyone will agree that the possibilities of Western Canada cannot be fully realized unless our farmers give up mining the land and develop a scientific system of agriculture. But our economic conditions must also be considered.

It is of little use for others to preach the gospel of diversified farming without doing something to bring about such conditions as would make its practice profitable and expedient. Under present conditions it is impossible for the great majority of the farmers of this country to engage in diversified farming and make a living. The natural conditions are favorable, but the artificial conditions, conditions which are due mainly to legislation and the privileges which certain favored interests enjoy under it, are unfavorable. The conditions are such that there is little inducement to farmers to engage in diversified farming. A man who desires