



MANITOBA SECTION

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by R. McKenzie, Secretary, Winnipeg, Man.

MANITOBA GRAIN GROWERS' ASSOCIATION

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Mixed Farming Solution

From letters published on this page of The Guide for the last three weeks we get a good idea of the situation as to mixed farming in Manitoba. Much has been written and many speeches made with the view of attempting to convince the farmer that it is to his advantage to vary his system of farming on the prairie. Railway men and business men have been proclaiming the losses sustained by the country and by the farmers themselves because the prairie farmers will not produce enough farm products to feed the towns and cities. If people who are concerned in the advancement of the farming interests (and there are many of them), would read these letters and give the writers credit for knowing what they are talking about, and credit for knowing their business, they would at once see why it is that the Manitoba farmer does not go into mixed farming and raise enough farm produce to supply the demands of Winnipeg. Just to quote a few statements from persons in different parts of the country:

"The reason why mixed farming is not practised more is on account of the small profits and lack of cheap labor."

"The producer of one or two cattle is at the mercy of the buyer who does not hesitate to take advantage of him."

"Mixed farming is not carried on extensively, the staple article being wheat. This may be accounted for from the fact that there is no steady market for the smaller articles of produce."

"If farmers were sure of a steady market at fair prices I am sure more of them would go into mixed farming, but as long as they have to depend on the local stores for a market, no advancement will be made."

"I have lots of pasture, but after ten years' trial for beef only, I quit it, as all I got out of it was their society."

"A few send cream to the creamery at Brandon. The profit is too small for the labor involved, and until market conditions are improved, mixed farming will not go ahead."

"Poultry raising and dairying is not carried on as a part of farming to any extent simply because it does not pay to go in for it on a large scale as the price of butter and eggs do not give adequate returns. Another reason why more cattle are not raised here is the uncertainty of price."

"The reason that most farmers do not go more into stock raising is because they can make more money out of raising grain with less labor."

"Many farmers in this district have gone out of the live stock business, devoting their entire energy to grain-growing. The market conditions, I think, are responsible for this condition. No person is going to raise beef cattle when he knows that a combine practically controls the live stock market."

These quotations clearly illustrate why farmers do not go into stock raising and mixed farming. With them it is a business proposition. No producer of any commodity will engage in a production that past experience has taught him to be unprofitable. The prairie farmer knows from experience that the market for farm produce is so uncertain that he cannot continue the business and make profits.

A statement made by J. W. Brong, of Ingelow, clearly points out what most usually happens: "A farmer starts to Brandon with, say, twenty or thirty fowls. Perhaps the paper gives the price at 17 cents. When he gets there they tell him they are stock-ed, and the price has dropped to 12 cents."

A farmer in the neighborhood of Lander gives his experience in the poultry business as follows: "Having become an enthusiastic poultry raiser I made arrangements last summer, and

raised 300 chickens. I sold the lot to a commission man in Winnipeg, and was so disgusted with the treatment I received that I gracefully retired from the poultry business for all time to come."

The same is true of potatoes and vegetables of all kinds, and milk, butter and eggs. In fact, everything raised on the farm, excepting grain. A comparatively few farmers get in touch with customers in the city, and in this way get the very best of satisfaction out of their produce business.

What is the solution? Clearly all that is needed is that conditions be created by which the growers will have a staple market that will give them a fair return for their toil. Not a market that is away up one day and just as soon as supplies are freely offered, the market gets stocked and prices are slumped.

But there is another feature to the question of mixed farming, and that is what the consumer has to pay for farm produce before he gets it on his table.

At the present time the farmer gets 5 cents per pound for his beef cattle, while the man in Winnipeg pays 25 cents per pound for his beefsteak. The farmer gets 6 cents for his hogs, while the laboring man pays 25 cents for ham and breakfast bacon. The farmer gets 15 cents for eggs and the laboring man pays 25 cents for his. And so on along the whole line. There is something very wrong when our farmer sells his hogs for 6 cents and pays 25 cents for his ham and bacon. Some places report as high as 30 cents. Farmers get 17½ cents per gallon for milk while the consumer pays at the rate of 35 and 40 cents. A system of distribution that gives the middleman more for handling farm produce than the farmer get for growing it, and that so controls the market that they can at any time reduce the price, when any quantity is offered, will, as long as it continues, have the effect of paralyzing production on the farm and reducing the standard of living among the laboring classes.

There is little use in our governments trying to educate our farmers to mixed farming, and wasting money on professors to lecture on the advantages of mixed farming, until such time as such a system of farming can be rendered profitable. There is no use in trying to convince a farmer on a half or a whole section of land that the manure made by a herd of steers is sufficient compensation for the labor of housing and feeding them during the winter.

Such arguments might appeal to a farmer on a fifty-acre farm, an Irish peasant, or a Scotch crofter, but it looks silly to a prairie grain grower.

Clearly the remedy is to change the system of distribution so that the establishing of a staple market that would give him some assurance that when his stuff was ready for market he could dispose of it at a fair profit.

It is to be noted that some of our farmers think that mixed farming would be considerably helped if we got reciprocity with the United States and a large market such as that would prove might be expected to give at least stability to the price of stock.

We invite correspondence as to the best solution of the problems confronting us. One writer suggests that the best method of handling all farm produce would be through a large co-operative company composed of farmers, with head quarters in Winnipeg and branches throughout the province. This work might be taken up by the Grain Growers' Grain Company, now that they have a Dominion charter, or they could act in conjunction with co-operative companies which would be formed at different points throughout the province. If some such scheme could be worked out, then the farmers would have full

control of the marketing of their produce. The importance of this question has reached a stage when the best thinkers among our farmers should devote some thought to it, and by an interchange of ideas through The Grain Growers' Guide a solution of the problem could reasonably be expected to be reached by those most concerned.

DISCUSS ELEVATOR SCHEME

The Grain Growers' Associations of Silverwood, Makaroff and Togo assembled for a day's outing at a union picnic held in a picturesque spot in the valley of Boggy Creek, about four miles southeast from Togo. Notwithstanding the threatening weather all forenoon, and an occasional shower of rain, the farmers of the district, with their families, gathered to the number of upwards of five hundred, to spend the day in social intercourse, and listen to addresses from prominent grain growers of the district, as well as R. McKenzie, the secretary of the provincial association. Many of the picnickers arrived in the forenoon, and partook of lunches in the usual picnic style, but the larger number did not reach the picnic grounds until the middle of the afternoon.

The speaking began about 3 o'clock, and continued for two and a half hours, when another hearty meal was partaken of, and the festivities of the day closed with a football match between two neighboring football clubs. Mr. J. McCush acted as chairman. The first speaker was John E. Root, president of the Togo association. He devoted much of his time, as did also R. J. M. Parker, of Togo, in explaining and laying before the meeting the Saskatchewan elevator scheme. Both speakers were very enthusiastic as to the future of the scheme, and the hearty manner in which the grain growers in the neighborhood of Togo are taking up the proposition of a co-operative elevator in Togo and the handling of not only the farmers' grain, but other produce, in a co-operative way. Mr. Root stated that the canvasser appointed to solicit stock for the co-operative elevator at Togo is meeting with good success, and next Saturday, when the canvas will be through, there will be sufficient stock subscribed to build a 30,000 bushel elevator at Togo, which they hope to have in operation for the handling of this year's crop. George R. Ross of Togo, in view of it being coronation day, grew eloquent on the loyalty and devotion of the western farmers to our king and mother country. A pleasing feature of the picnic was the part taken by the town people, they having joined with the farmers in helping to make the picnic a success. J. H. Abercrombie, druggist, of Togo, in a short, clever address, presented the following resolution, which was carried in great enthusiasm among the assembled picnickers:

"That this assembly, representing the Grain Growers' Associations of Silverwood, Makaroff and Togo, cordially welcome and pledge their support to the proposal of the president of the United States of America in favor of a general treaty of arbitration between that country and the British Empire, believing that such a treaty would serve the highest interests of the two nations, and tend to promote the peace of the world."

DIRECT LEGISLATION

On June 16 the Swan Lake Grain Growers held their monthly meeting. A very interesting and instructive address was given by F. J. Dixon, on "Direct Legislation." The members are becoming very much interested in this reform. Mr. Dixon's address was followed by a business meeting.

PICNIC AT NINETTE

A most enjoyable time was spent at the Ninette picnic renewing old acquaintances and making fresh ones. Mr. Wright and Mr. Wilson both gave in-

teresting addresses, which were followed by short speeches from local men. The Grain Growers around Dunrea are looking forward to having another picnic next year, which they promise will be even better than this one, as they have gained experience this time, which will be of assistance next year.

PROTECTION FROM LIGHTNING

The Manitoba Agricultural College has issued a bulletin dealing with the protection of farm buildings from lightning. This bulletin will be of much value to farmers who intend to install a system of lightning rods on their barns and houses.

COSTLY GAME OF NAVY BUILDING

The great naval review at Spithead on June 24 was as effective a lesson in the treasure expended in maintaining British supremacy of the sea as it was a spectacle for monarch and subjects of a world wide Empire. Our schoolboy memories go back to the Spanish Armada which made war on England in 1588. That fleet comprised 131 ships, wooden, small and cumbersome. Saturday's Armada comprised 167 British warships, with an aggregate tonnage of more than one million, and eighteen foreign vessels, representing seventeen nations. They were ranged in a parallelogram six miles in length and two miles broad. At Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee review in 1897 little more than a half million tonnage was represented.

Saturday's aggregation of British Dreadnoughts and smaller ships represented approximately the outlay of \$400,000,000, while if the value of the eighteen foreign warships were added there was moored in this historic roadstead of Spithead an international war fleet representing a total initial expenditure of \$500,000,000. The British naval budget is \$200,000,000 yearly, and that of Germany half that sum, and both steadily going up.

Canada feels sure of a year of prosperity when the Western wheat crop reaches \$100,000,000. The Globe.

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