

The Farmer and The Grain Exchange.

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The Only Safe Organization.

If farmers are to organize they must do so on a large scale, and in such a way that there is no possibility of failure. A little surplus resulting from a one-cent commission will not be enough. The company must be large and thoroughly organized. And above all it must be directed in all its movements by trusted experts. There are such men to be found—men who know the grain business from start to finish, who are thoroughly reliable. There are today some such men in connection with the agricultural colleges. But unfortunately it is too true that many farmers do not believe in expert advice. They would rather go to a meeting and be bamboozled by a loud-mouthed orator of their own into passing a resolution which they will be glad to disown two years later. We are not arguing that farmers should organize for the purpose of shipping their grain. It should not be necessary for them to go into the business at all. A community has its life best ordered when each man attends to his own particular duties. It is a dangerous policy for a man to attempt to be producer, exporter and manufacturer all in one.

Yet perhaps the farmers are driven to this course by the exactions of the grain buyers. If so, we say that they must go into the business in a large way and under the direction of men who know the business as thoroughly as the most experienced. And these men must be thoroughly reliable in every way.

The Evil and the Remedy.

For the present unfortunate situation we must blame the Grain Exchange first of all. The rider to the one-cent clause was unendurable and the rates all round were most excessive. In the second place the Grain Growers' Grain Co. entered the field with a half-digested policy, and now they are between the devil and the deep sea, with chances in favor of the former. If they insist on a one-cent rate, the farmers will ship through other channels; if they charge a quarter-cent rate they cannot develop the company.

The ultimate solution of the grain question—for all that has been recommended so far is largely of the nature of temporary expediency—will be set forth in another issue. Every good citizen wants the producer to get the very last cent for his pains, and will therefore join in denouncing vampires and ringsters wherever they may be found. But the only danger is not the grain exchange. Dishonesty and exorbitant rates may result in a diminution of profit, but a mistaken policy on the part of the farmers may lead to disaster.

The Final Issue.

Lest there should be unnecessary confusion in this matter, let it be understood that the quarrel that claims public attention just now is that between the Grain Growers' Grain Co. and that section of the Grain Exchange which is composed of the great elevator owners. The elevator owners are endeavoring to get the trade by carrying the grain for a nominal sum; but they have a history, and some of them have methods which are said not to be exactly in harmony with Canadian practices and Ideals. On the other hand, the Grain Growers' Grain Co. are endeavoring to get the trade by posing as the farmers' company, although, as they represent but the smallest fraction of the farmers, there is nothing to prevent them from becoming just as rapacious as it is claimed the great elevator owners have been. The farmer is going to let the fight go on, using his best judgment as to which agency he will employ to handle his grain. In the meantime he is going to quietly examine the problem as between himself and the shipper, whoever the shipper may be. And this is the very problem some of the shippers do not wish to have raised. In the final reckoning not only the Grain Exchange, in its two recognized sections, but the Grain Growers' Grain Co. will be up before the bar of justice. And in some things the farmer will be compelled to say that he has been most generously used and in other things may have reason to say that he was wounded in the house of his friends.

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