



The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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POWER TO OUR ARM

On another page of this issue of THE GUIDE will be seen a resolution passed unanimously by the executive of the Manitoba Grain Growers Association repudiating the charges of partisanship made against THE GUIDE. We are glad to publish this resolution, though we knew before that the executive was composed of fair-minded men who would support a fearless and independent paper such as THE GUIDE has always been. Of course, we knew that our opponents, who are the opponents of the farmers interests, would endeavor in every way to discredit THE GUIDE. But we will continue upon our course, and backed by the independent farmers of the west we do not fear any efforts that may be made by their enemies to discredit both the farmers and THE GUIDE. Independent we have been and will continue to be.

KILL THE RETAILERS' TRUST

It is up to the members of the House of Commons to keep their eyes upon the bill which has just passed the senate to incorporate the Retail Merchants' Association. This bill will be before the House of Commons at once and the merchants are lobbying in earnest to have it become law. Once they have it passed they will be able to put the screws upon the producers and consumers harder than ever. It was owing to the lobbying of the Retail Merchants that the co-operation bill was killed. They saw that the co-operation bill, if it became law, would give the consumers an opportunity to do their own business if the merchants did not give them a square deal. Now, after having the consumers turned down they want to form a trust that will levy still heavier toll from the men who support them. The consumers keep the merchants alive and have no objection to paying them a legitimate profit on their business, but they do object to placing themselves at the mercy of any merchants. In the United States the Retail Merchants have got such a grip on the consumers that they are now one of the strongest combines in the Republic—a land of great combines. Are we to have the same thing in Canada? We certainly will if the members of the House of Commons betray their constituents and give the merchants the power to form a combine. We hope the members will do their duty and relegate the retail merchants' bill to the waste paper basket under the committee table.

TO REGULATE THE COMBINES

There is a bill now before the House of Commons which provides machinery whereby combines, trusts and mergers which unduly enhance the price of any commodity may be brought to terms. The bill is fathered by Hon. MacKenzie King and is backed by the government. The bill aims at regulating the combines through moral influence by means of publicity, but it provides for criminal proceedings and heavy penalties in case other means fail. Under the provisions of this bill the people of Canada can have a combine investigated without bearing all the cost themselves as is the case under the present farcical law in force. Under the new bill, when any producers believe there is a combine they can go before a judge of high court and make out a prima facie case, and after that the government will assume the cost and the investigation. This puts the machinery of the law within reach of the farmers. Take the case of the cement merger. A few farmers can go before a judge and show that the prices of that commodity have been jumped beyond all reason since the formation of the trust. The government will then step in and order an investigation. This investigation will be conducted by a board of three. The complainants will name one member, the trust or merger will name one member, and these two will choose the chairman. If they fail to agree the government will name the chairman, who must be a judge of high court. This board will have all the powers of a court and will summon witnesses and investigate the matter thoroughly. Care will be taken that full publicity is given to all the facts and it is hoped that the publicity will have a good effect upon the trusts. In case the board finds that a combine does really exist and that the price of cement is unduly enhanced the combine will be given a certain time in which to reduce the price to the figure named by the board. If this is not done the government will then proceed against the men who control the trust and they can be severely punished. The bill also gives the government power to reduce the tariff, if necessary, upon any commodity, in order to bring the price down to the proper level.

There can be no doubt but that this new law will assist in the work of regulating the trusts and securing a square deal for the people of Canada. It is legislation along the right line. It is time that something was done to protect the farmers of Canada from the rapacity of the corporations.

There is something which the government is overlooking in this matter. When there is grievance to be remedied the ordinary common sense way of proceeding is to remove the cause. The cause of the combines is the protection afforded to them by the tariff. If the government wanted to settle the question as to whether there was a combine the quickest way to find out would be to reduce the tariff on cement. If the tariff was taken off of cement the price would come down at once. However, the government has to be careful in handling their friends, the corporations, so it is useless to expect too much at once. The Canadian Council of Agriculture will be among the first to invoke the aid of the new law. They will soon set the government to work to see if there is not a combine in control of the wire fence, cement and cotton industries. We only hope the government will not be forced by the corporations to give up the idea of passing this bill. Let the good work proceed, but we maintain that to reduce the tariff would be the quickest and surest method of handling the combines.

WAITING FOR THE COMMISSION

We have been waiting for the appointment of the Manitoba elevator commission. If the new act is to aid the farmers towards securing relief from the exactions of the Elevator Combine during the coming grain season, there will have to be a lot of work done first.

The Grain Growers' Elevator Committee have submitted four names to the government and we believe they named three men as a first choice who can make the Elevator Bill the most successful possible under the circumstances. We do not want to urge undue haste upon the government of Manitoba, but we think they have had plenty of time to appoint the elevator commission. As soon as the commission is named, if it is composed of men suitable to the Grain Growers, and we have the assurance of the government that it will be, the farmers will be anxious to see Manitoba government elevators all over the province. Under the competent, impartial commission which the government will appoint, the farmers will have the assurance that the full powers of the new law will be put into motion at once to have the elevator system in Manitoba made over in the interest of the farmers of the province. We hope before another issue of THE GUIDE goes to the country that we shall have the pleasure of announcing the names of a satisfactory elevator commission that will take hold of the new act and give to the farmers the best it will provide.

SOMETHING TO THINK OVER

The season of the year has now arrived when the farmers will be too busy in the fields to give much time and attention to the work of the local branch associations of which they are members. However, working in the field does not require generally that the mind shall be actively engaged on the same work that is being done by the hands. As the farmers are driving over their fields, putting them into crop and later harvesting them, their minds will be free to take up a great many subjects of interest. Among the subjects that should receive most careful attention, is that of the function of the local branch associations. The three western provinces are now organized into local branches on a scale which has never before been approached in Canada. Each one of these branches should be the centre of thought, intelligence, activity and progress for its community. Though it may be called by any name, the name does not limit the scope for activity. Through their local branch associations the farmers of Western Canada have an opportunity to revolutionize the civilization of the west. If the local branches do their duty the next ten years will see such changes in the three western provinces as would not have been deemed possible five years ago, even by the most advanced thinkers. During the summer is the time to outline schemes for fulfilment during the winter. It will be but a few months before harvest is done and leisure time will come again. Plans should be made which will insure the permanency of each local branch association. If the organization is to be of value to the farmers of the community it must be permanent. The work of the association should be such that the youngest members could look ahead to the future and have some incentive to put their shoulders to the wheel. The educational work that could be done in the local branches is without limit. It should be a training school to fit the farmer and his son, and his wife and his daughters, to play their parts in the rearing of a high standard of civilization. It would be well to have some definite course outlined for study and discussion during the winter months. Haphazard methods seldom produce satisfactory results.

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IGNORED

The true principles of democracy are not sufficiently understood, nor are they as clearly adhered to in Canada, as they should be under a real democratic government. In Canada, we are inclined to boast at times that we have the most democratic form of government in the world. We elect our representatives in our various houses of parliament, and from these representatives the government, or cabi-