

# THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE

No. 6

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VOL. 1

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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## THE FARMER IN POLITICS

The conference between the Premiers of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and representatives of the Grain Growers' Associations of the three provinces, held in Regina November 26th, marks an epoch in the political history of Canada. It has been an annual thing for representatives of the Associated Transportation Companies, Manufacturing Associations, Bankers' Associations, etc., to have public, private and semi-private conferences with government leaders. But never in the history of Canada have the Premiers of three provinces met to confer with representatives of the farming industry on proposals made in behalf of that industry by their representatives, for changes in the methods which obtain in marketing their grain product. This is a new departure.

That the farmers of the three provinces should get together and consult with the leaders of their governments respecting the business end of their industry, is a product of the 20th century. It will be looked upon as an innovation and regarded as an invasion of their rights by those men and interests who have usurped the exclusive privilege of trafficking in the country's chief commodity in its passage from producer to consumer.

Our Governments, both Dominion and Provincial, have been wrestling with more or less success for the last quarter of a century, with the problem of providing ways

and means to facilitate the marketing of the grain product of the Prairie Provinces in a way that would net the producer the best result. That they realize the important place the product of the farm occupies in relation to the trade conditions of the country and the well-being of the nation, and are concerned as far as they may be able to create conditions that will not only increase the volume of the output, but also enlarge the returns from agriculture, goes without saying. But unfortunately they were not always happy in their efforts to better conditions for rural communities. On the contrary, there is good ground to conclude that our legislative bodies were led to enact laws and make regulations that operate to the detriment of the agriculturalist, and as a consequence a bar to national progress.

The reason is easily explained. Farmers, as a class, are never represented in our legislative bodies. Too much is made of fostering manufacturing, developing mines, etc., to the neglect of our main artery of commerce—agriculture. Our representatives, practically all of whom belong to the professional and commercial class, instinctively and fundamentally on all questions social and economic, take the view-point of the business man. The business man's business ethics are: "The farmer is prosperous and can stand it."

Unfortunately the men we send to our legislative bodies devote more of their time to devising means to defeat the other side than to the study of trade questions. The party intrusted with the duty of carrying on the government is more occupied in devising ways and means to retain power than in studying economic questions and administering the laws. Our oppositions devote a large portion of their time and talents to getting the other fellows out and getting in themselves. When any question arises affecting trade, so-called experts in that particular line are consulted. If it is a question of bankers, the Bankers' Association is consulted. If a railroad, railroad men are asked for their opinion. If a question affecting the handling of grain, grain men are consulted. And so on. Is it any wonder these interests have been securing for themselves privileges and advantages at the expense of the producing class, whose interests were never represented and who until recently, through lack of organization, were not in a position to be consulted or make themselves articulate.

At the last session of the House of Commons, the Grain Act was to be amended, and the whole grain trade, as it affected Western production, was up for review. The minister at the head of the department having to do with Trade, invited representatives of the Growers of grain as well as Representatives of Trade and Transportation to a Conference, resulting in a changed attitude on the part of public men through "Seeing the other side."

A Cabinet Minister was credited with the statement that the railroad and grain men, through the Press, by interviews, and representations, had almost convinced the public, the government, and the members of parliament, that the operation of the Grain Act was oppressive and