

The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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ALBERTA STOCK RAISERS NEED HELP

The letter from Mr. James Bower, President of the United Farmers of Alberta, published in the correspondence columns of this issue, is of exceeding interest to every western farmer. It throws the lime-light of publicity upon barriers in the way of progress for the farmers of Alberta. Alberta is a vast province of unlimited resources and is today, the leader in stock raising in Western Canada. The very fact that its agricultural activities are varied gives definite promise of a golden future. But a number of obstacles, and serious ones, must be removed before the Alberta farmer has a fair show. The live stock market of the three prairie provinces, either to the east or to the west is now practically controlled by two large firms. These monopolies take such a heavy toll that the live stock raisers have no encouragement to branch out in that industry. The British Columbia and Yukon market is a good one, and undoubtedly will grow better year by year. But with this market in the control of a monopoly, the future has little to offer. As Mr. Bower shows very plainly, the eastern market is little more inviting. The small shipper and the individual farmer stands no chance between the monopolies that grind them mercilessly down. The fact which Mr. Bower outlines in his letter, that nearly 90 per cent. of all cured meat used in Alberta and British Columbia, comes from outside shows something seriously wrong. Alberta is equipped to produce all the fresh and cured meat required in both provinces and could do so easily if proper remuneration were assured to the stock raiser for his work. The railways have offered very little inducement to the Alberta stock raisers to improve their condition. Naturally, they seek most to facilitate the business of their largest patrons.

The government of Alberta is well aware of the condition that exists. Time and again the farmers have demanded the erection of a Government Pork Packing Plant which would enable the Alberta farmers to supply their own province and British Columbia instead of importing cured meat. The Government of Alberta has payed fast and loose with the farmers of that province on this vital question. It is evident that the Government of Alberta will not make a move until the farmers of Alberta are organized in sufficient strength to back up their demands in no unmistakable way. This time is coming. The Alberta farmers are awake to their needs and through the United Farmers' Association they have

an opportunity of opening up a highway of progress for every farmer in the province. The scheme which Mr. Bower mentioned for securing stock yards and abattoirs would, no doubt, relieve much of the present disability from which the farmers suffer. When it comes before the United Farmers' Convention and is thoroughly threshed out there will undoubtedly be a workable system arrived at. It would reduce the cost of placing the meat upon the market, and, as Mr. Bower says, would do away with disputes by means of a uniform inspection and charge for killing. Further, it would be a splendid move towards taking the industry out of the hands of monopolists and placing it where every farmer would get a square deal. For a prime article, every stock raiser should be enabled to secure the top price.

There is only one way to cure the existing evil in the system of marketing the live stock produce in Alberta. That way is the one which will be worked out by the organized farmers of Alberta. Just as in all other Canadian provinces, governments will not move until there is considerable pressure brought to bear upon them. This pressure is too often brought to bear by capitalists, monopolists and combines and legislation thus secured in the interests of the few, to the detriment of the many. The United Farmers of Alberta is a strong organization. It truly represents the agricultural interests of the province. Its objects and aims are to benefit the producers of the province and this cannot be done without, as a result, improving the prosperity of the province as a whole. The farmers in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba are also interested in the live stock market system and they have also grievances against it. Alberta undoubtedly has the greatest burden to bear in the live stock situation, as the other two provinces have in the marketing of grain. Each province must do its share to lift its own burden, but by each lending a hand to the other, the result will be acquired more quickly.

The United Farmers of Alberta, in their annual convention, this month, will undoubtedly place themselves on record on the live stock and grain situation. Then by determined efforts they can secure legislative remedies that will remove the burdens which oppress them. Mr. Bower was appointed special representative for Alberta to investigate transportation and marketing conditions in British Columbia and spent some time there last autumn. His report on these investigations will be submitted to the U.F.A. convention in Edmonton next week. Mr. Bower has devoted a great deal of time and study to the subject before him and he will certainly bring a great deal of valuable information and important recommendations before the convention. The U.F.A. will probably deem it wise to concentrate their energies upon this vitally important matter. The consumers of British Columbia are ready to co-operate with the Alberta producers in any plan which will secure the needed reforms in the live stock trade and also in the transportation system. There is no other way by which the Alberta producers will secure a remunerative market. By united action with the consumers of the Pacific province, the desired result can be accomplished. The time to strike is when the iron is hot.

DEALING WITH THE CROWN

It is of interest to every farmer in Manitoba and also of the great west that men in all walks of political and commercial life are considering the elevator proposition recently placed before the government. It is also interesting to note that there is practically a unanimity of feeling among the members of the legislature with regard to the subject. The Grain Growers are determined that it will not be a matter of party politics. They are keeping away from party politics and are deal-

ing with the question upon its merits. In coming before the government, they have not met the cabinet ministers as ministers of a Conservative government, but as advisors of The Crown. The fact that a Conservative government is at present in power does not affect the question. The grain growers expect the support, sympathy and assistance of every member of the legislature, no matter on which side of the house he may sit. The question of government ownership of interior elevators is today the most important one before the government of Manitoba and it is too serious a one to be made a political foot-ball. The government has met the Grain Growers in a spirit of fairness, and the requests of the Grain Growers have been presented. They are now being considered by the government, and there will be further developments later.

Dealing with this matter editorially, the Winnipeg Telegram says:—

"It must be evident to every one that nothing can be done toward the erection of a system of publicly-owned elevators in the province of Manitoba without the most cordial co-operation and sympathy between the grain growers and the government and between the government and the general public."

This is the spirit of the Grain Growers and it is the spirit in which they are dealing with the question which they have now before them.

The Winnipeg Free Press, in dealing with the same subject speaks as follows:—

"The memorial presented to the government by the committee charged by the Grain Growers of the province with the duty of formulating a complete and workable policy of public owned elevators, bears in every line, the evidence of sincerity and confidence. It is apparent from this document that the Grain Growers are prepared to accept in the fullest degree the responsibility of establishing and operating a system of public elevators involving an outlay of not less than \$3,000,000 with complete confidence in their ability to make the policy a success not only in removing those causes of dissatisfaction which have existed in the past, but in making such a system self-supporting and profitable to the province. They are prepared to take this responsibility upon one condition which is set forth explicitly in the memorial, and which lies behind the whole proposition. They are prepared to take the responsibility, if they are given the power, which, in their judgment should accompany such responsibility."

This also is the feeling of the Grain Growers. It is encouraging to think that both these papers, representing both political parties, are in favor of the principle for which the Grain Growers stand.

In asking the government that the commission to be appointed, should be nominated by the Grain Growers, it is not done with a feeling of distrust for the government. The Grain Growers are acting in a business way, the same as a man who takes a receipt or money paid. The Grain Growers represent the farmers of the province who market their grain through the elevators, and the government represents the crown. Thus the two most important bodies in the province are brought together to deal with this matter. The Grain Growers must shoulder a large share of the responsibility and relieve the government of as much responsibility as possible. The appointment of an independent commission will take a great load of responsibility from the advisors of the Crown, which, under any other circumstances, they would have to carry.

Judging by interviews with various elevator men, the line elevator companies are willing to sell out to a publicly owned system. With that in view, the great matter for consideration is that of the purchase. The price paid for these elevators must not be greater than their value. If the initial cost of purchasing a public system is too high, it will militate against the successful operation of the system. This is a matter which of course will have to come into the hands of the commission that will be in charge of the elevator system.

DON'T BE NARROW

One of the chief dangers which face the farmers in western Canada today, is due to