

Saskatchewan Grain Growers

Grading of Wheat

RECENTLY an article appeared from J. B. Musselman, general secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, in which an explanation was given in reply to complaints received from members of the association regarding the alleged discrimination in the grading of wheat.

In a further elucidation of the same matter, the following statement has been prepared by D. MacRae, district superintendent of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co., which is intended as a follow-up to Mr. Musselman's article referred to above.

Increase in Membership

"From your recent comments in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' pages of the Saskatchewan daily papers, one would infer that there are more complaints made this year by farmers in regard to the grading of wheat than ever before. Complaints of this nature are prevalent every year, and in a season such as this one, when nature appeared to withhold from the crops at the most critical period of their development the very elements which were most necessary for their nourishment and steady growth, it is not at all surprising to find complaints more numerous.

"You must not overlook, however, the fact that as the membership of your association has been increased this year at a more rapid rate than ever before, you are bound to come in contact with a greater variety of opinion on all matters concerning the welfare of the farming population.

Should Investigate Complaints

"But whatever the comparative number of complaints may be, there is one thing incontrovertible, viz., that complaints of this kind are so numerous that the Grain Growers' Association should be justified in taking whatever steps are necessary to find out for itself where the trouble arises, and, if possible, prescribe a remedy. The complaints may be due to one or other of two causes; either the farmers as elevator agents are not competent to judge the market and milling value of wheat, or the government inspection department of Winnipeg is incompetent and inconsistent.

"Let us first enquire into the composition of the government inspection department and its relation to the complaints. The government inspection department consists of one chief inspector and 11 deputy inspectors, operating in Winnipeg. Besides these there are deputy inspectors operating at the head of the lakes and in the interior terminals, all of whom are under the direct supervision of the chief inspector. Each of the deputy inspectors has a certain amount of work to perform, and naturally the chief inspector cannot supervise all of their work. As these men are not working upon absolutely set standards, which govern all manner of samples submitted to them, they must exercise a certain amount of personal judgment, and naturally must occasionally differ in their judgment. They are all human, and therefore not infallible. But it is questionable if any improvement can be effected, for reasons which I will endeavor to show.

The Grain Standard Board

"The most critical time for the government inspectors is that period between the commencement of the movement of each new crop—say from the beginning of September until the grain standard board meets some time in October. This year the board had its first meeting on October 24. It will therefore be seen that a considerable portion of the year's crop goes forward, is inspected and purchased by the country elevator agents before the grain standard board meets. In the meantime the judgment of the inspectors is the ruling factor, and after the standards are set it is only reasonable to assume that the inspectors are obliged, in conforming to the standards, to change to a more or less extent, their previous judgment. This change may not be radical, and I believe that it is not at all conspicuous. But, nevertheless,

Conducted Officially for the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association by the Secretary

J. B. Musselman, Regina, Sask.

the very reason for setting the standards is an acknowledgment that such is necessary, and therefore a certain amount of realignment must take place. The consequence of this must be inevitable. If buyers of grain must insure against loss, they must buy on the safe side until such time as they are sure of their ground. But however much the elevator interests may desire to handle their business in this manner, it is very seldom that it is adhered to in practice. The reverse is too often the case, and the result is that a considerable quantity is bought in the country at the commencement of the season which will not hold grade. As soon as elevator interests are aware of this they take immediate action to stop losses, and it is then invariably that farmers begin to make complaint.

Workings of Inspection Department

"But first let us look further into the workings of the inspection department. Whatever accusation of incom-

petency may be made against this department, it cannot be reproached with favoritism or patronage. The inspectors undoubtedly grade the grain according to their best judgment and they cannot have any ulterior motive, because they can have no idea of whose grain they are judging, as this information is not available to them. The principal question involved then is whether or not proper samples have been drawn from cars for their inspection. There is room for differences of opinion, but the system adopted, to all appearances, is as perfect as is humanly possible, and if there were grave irregularities it seems reasonable that the interests involved would sooner or later make the discovery. Perhaps the greater factor in insuring regularity and consistency on the part of the inspectors is the knowledge that their work comes under the critical supervision of factions which are interested therein, from the standpoint of the seller as well as the buyer of the grain.

District and Provincial Conventions

By J. B. MUSSELMAN

Horizon local is one of the association's most active branches, having done good work in many directions. At a recent meeting it passed the following resolution giving notice of motion to amend the Constitution, namely: "Resolved that section 13, sub-section 3 of the constitution be amended by adding thereto the following: 'and that every local secretary be an ex-officio delegate to the district meeting without thereby decreasing the number of delegates the local would be entitled to send.'"

Mr. Fritz Fleischaker, who is the energetic and broad-minded secretary of this local, will be remembered by many of the delegates and friends who attended the last annual convention at Regina. He was one of the gentlemen, of foreign birth, who spoke so sanely and convincingly on the foreign language question, as related to our public schools, and received a very nice reception by the convention.

Hurtful Influences

Certainly Horizon local has the right idea back of this proposal to amend the constitution, the general idea being that so far as possible, every local secretary should attend the district meeting of his district. In spite of all the efforts which have been made from time to time, and are constantly being made to educate our people with regard to the true and ultimate purpose of the association and its multitudinous activities, it is fully evident that there is still amongst the bulk of our members, and even amongst many of our local secretaries themselves, a most lamentable lack of information. Also, time and again it has been proven beyond a doubt that by one means or another there has been spread amongst our people, amongst our locals and amongst the local secretaries an immense amount of mis-information, and this is more hurtful to our cause than even the lack of information above referred to.

When our members or local officers have some correct information and some incorrect or mis-information spread by those who are either openly our enemies or by those who profess to be our friends, but are, by virtue of their activities and subtle suggestive propaganda, really our enemies, the two are likely to counterbalance each other and to leave our people and our cause more or less impotent.

There is no better place to secure dependable information regarding the association's activities, its motives, its objects, and the many means which it employs for the attainment of them, than the district meeting, or the big general convention. But particularly is the district meeting the place for the dissemination of more detailed information. The gathering is not so large and is vastly better fitted for the detailed discussion of the various subjects which come before it.

Know How to Relate Facts

It is not enough that our people should know the facts. They must know also how to relate facts to facts. Knowledge is not a matter of naming or memorizing of facts, but consists rather in knowing how properly to relate facts to other facts in such manner as to arrive at correct and effective conclusions.

There are too many farmers, even in Saskatchewan, who do not know the difference between the Grain Growers' Association and the various commercial companies which have grown up out of this movement. So also there are thousands, even of our own members, who do not know the distinctive policy of the association, the especial manner in which it is working for the establishment of truly democratic ideals and practice amongst our people, and the fact that it is the only farmers' organization in the west engaged in trading activities which distributes its profits on the truly co-operative basis, which has been the very back-bone of the success of the greatest co-operative institutions which the world has known, namely those in Great Britain.

Truly every local secretary ought to attend the district meeting, lend the meeting the inspiration of his presence, get all the information of a dependable character which he can absorb, and take full part in the deliberations of the gathering. There is nothing, however, now which prevents every local secretary and every other member from attending these meetings, and it has been the universal practice of the district meetings to permit visiting members the privileges of the floor of the convention; though, of course, only official delegates may be permitted to vote in the election of a nominee for district director.

"As is well known, almost all elevator companies employ experts, whose duty is to watch the grading of their own grain, as well as grain consigned to them by individual farmers. These men have the privilege of inspecting all samples, and if they find any irregularity they are not slow in bringing the matter to the attention of the chief inspector. It must not be forgotten, however, that the buyers of the grain have also the same privileges, and between these two factions it seems hardly conceivable that the inspection department can go very far astray.

Responsive to World's Markets

"There is one important factor in connection with the government inspector's grading of grain which farmers are very prone to overlook, viz., that the inspection department is responsible to the markets of the world for insuring that the quality of the various grades of western wheat is always kept up to standard. If that standard is for any reason lowered, at least during normal times, the ultimate value received by the western farmer must also depreciate. Consequently it is very much in the farmer's own interest that a consistently high grade of quality should be maintained.

"If then there are no grounds for undue criticism of the inspection department, why all the complaints made by the farmers in the country? The reasons for these complaints are numerous and divergent that it is not possible to deal with them all at present. The principal factors, however, are:—

"1. Competition in buying grain at country points.

"2. The fact that owing to varying climatic conditions we seldom have in this country, two years in succession, identical qualities of grain.

"3. That every year a certain percentage of the grain is inspected before the authorities are able to get samples from all sections of the west, which enables the grain standards board to set fair standards of grain.

"4. That farmers, instead of asserting for themselves direct from the inspection department the proper grade of their grain, invariably accept as the proper standard that of the individual buyer at their country station who gives them the highest grade for their grain.

"5. Failure on the part of farmers to make use of the machinery at their disposal in the Canada Grain Act to remedy difficulties that they may be up against in their dealings with elevator buyers.

"6. The exorbitant profits of milling companies on their flour enables them, where they have elevators at country points, to disregard accuracy of grading of purchased grain, and thereby set local standards of grading which elevator companies cannot compete with.

Difficulties Explained

"With regard to No. 1 it is scarcely necessary to say that prior to the advent of the farmers' companies into the grain business, competition was nonexistent. Since then, however, competition is very keen at all points where farmers' elevators are located. This is more especially the case in a short-crop year like this. Notwithstanding all efforts of employers to the contrary, some grain buyers are of opinion that in order to hold down their jobs they must handle a certain number of bushels of grain. They make the attainment of this their only objective, regardless of proper grading, and before it is possible to get them in line they set a standard of grading which must be receded from and which thereby causes innumerable complaints and dissatisfaction.

"In explanation of the second reason it might be stated that, while some years the amount of frost in the grain is the determining factor, other seasons it is the percentage of immature green grains, caused by uneven germination in the spring. Others maybe it is rust, or other causes, or maybe a combination of all such defects. Consequently, although experience in grading grain is desirable, even those who have had the longest experience begin every new season

Continued on Page 32

RI
Ho
B

We
amou
those
plan
We
the
You

10
YOU
FACE
Here

\$

No

Clip
Bonds

Vio
your

your
Name

Add

TH

"They"

Wi
Canada

Rig
ible. N

HEI

WH

Your m
in ship

Ma

Campa