



The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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NOW COMES THE TEST

The struggle is over. The famous elevator bill has now become law, and the Grain Growers did not get the independent commission which they deemed one of the most important provisions of the elevator bill. The Elevator Committee presented their case to the best of their ability and we consider that they did credit to the farmers of the province whom they represented. That there will not be an independent commission is not the fault of the Elevator Committee. They stood for a principle which they believed to be right. The government could not see its way clear to grant their requests and hence the commission will be responsible to the government. The only important alteration made in the bill as first presented by the government is that the expropriation clause has been dropped. A trifling amendment was made in the 60 per cent. petition clause, but it did not amount to anything. The other provisions of the act are mainly in accord with the requests of the Grain Growers' Elevator Committee. The act itself prepares the way for a public grain storage system for which the Grain Growers have stood. It also provides for the creation of a sample market, which is one of the great necessities in the grain trade of today. The fact that there will be no independent commission forms the chief weakness of the act. Another great obstacle in the way of making the system a success is, that 60 per cent. of the farmers in the vicinity contributory to an elevator point must petition the government to provide an elevator at that point before securing an elevator. In the case of any new elevator to be erected, farmers must also pledge their support to that elevator. This latter, of course, is a trifling matter. The main obstacle is to the 60 per cent. petition. We understood that it was the intention of the agricultural committee of the legislature to drop the application of the entire 60 per cent. petition clause, except in the case of new elevators to be erected, but evidently our understanding was wrong.

However, the bill has become law and the government has voted \$50,000 for initial expenses and \$2,000,000 for acquiring elevators. The elevator committee have been asked by the government, to submit a number of names of men whom they regard as suitable for commissioners. This seems rather strange in view of the fact that the bill is not what the Grain Growers asked for, and, therefore, they cannot be responsible for it. Nevertheless, the bill has been passed and we believe that

the Elevator Committee will be doing its duty in the interest of farmers to see that the best men possible are named as commissioners. Before doing so we hope they will not forget to reaffirm their stand in favor of an independent commission, as it is the principle upon which they have stood and cannot recede from. Following that, we think they would be helping the farmers of the province by naming three commissioners and no more, and presenting these names to the government. We do not believe in the policy of naming more than three commissioners from which the government may choose. The Grain Growers should submit the names of three men in whom they have confidence. If the government can explain why any of the three should not be appointed, then it is a matter for further consideration by the elevator committee.

If this course is followed by the elevator committee, and accepted by the government, there will be an able commission appointed. The commissioners will, of course, be subject to government control, but with the moral support of the Grain Growers of Manitoba behind them, we doubt if any government will find it expedient to hamper them. The sixty per cent. petition clause will still continue to be a source of nuisance to the commissioners. In view of all the facts which have been taken up and with the Manitoba Grain Elevators Act before us, we think that it can be administered so that it will afford considerable relief from the oppression which has been felt in years past. If the new act will do this, the government will deserve the thanks of the farmers of the province. They might easily have been deserving of more thanks. However, the Grain Growers have accomplished a great deal. If, as we anticipate, in spite of all they are able to do, the elevator system does not work out satisfactorily, the government will then see more clearly the necessity of amendments embodying the requests of the Grain Growers. Both the government and the Grain Growers will then have had experience and there will be no theory to be discussed.

STAND ON THE SAME PRINCIPLE

The Hon. Robert Rogers in speaking on the elevator bill in the legislature last week, pointed out that the Grain Growers had not asked the Dominion government for an independent commission to be in control of the terminal elevators. He quoted a letter written to Sir Richard Cartwright by the Grain Growers, in support of his statement. He held, therefore, that the present bill as it passed the legislature is substantially what the Grain Growers asked for. Mr. Rogers overlooked the fact that in the petition sent to Ottawa, was a request for an independent commission to have charge of the terminal elevators, the same as had been asked of the Manitoba government. The fact that in this letter to Sir Richard Cartwright an independent commission was not specifically mentioned, does not, as the Winnipeg Telegram would infer, show that the Grain Growers desired less of the Dominion government than of the Manitoba government. The question of confidence on the part of the Grain Growers in either of the governments was not considered. There was no political side to the issue. The Grain Growers are as anxious that the commission in charge of the terminal elevators should be independent as the Manitoba elevator commission should be independent. There are, however, conditions to be considered. In Manitoba the Grain Growers were alone in urging for government-owned elevators and, therefore, could put their request in more concrete form. In approaching the Dominion government, however, they were supported by the grain exporters as well as by the Ontario millers. The Grain Growers could not carry the same influence down to Ottawa as they possess in Manitoba, where they are the

wealth producing class of the province. At Ottawa the Grain Growers could not well insist on the details of control without consulting the other interests who are supporting their demands. The millers and the grain exporters might demand the naming of members of this commission, and also a share in whatever control of the commission might be delegated directly to the people. There is no difficulty in reconciling the action of the Grain Growers towards all governments. They stand on the principle of independent control, whether it be one government or another government that takes over public utilities. The Grain Growers have not at any time dealt with any subject politically. All the great issues on which they have taken a stand, have shown that they are acting on behalf of the people, irrespective of party. It will be unfortunate if any interests attempt to draw the actions of the Grain Growers into the realm of party politics. Such an attempt will be resented by the Grain Growers.

CO-OPERATION BILL KILLED

Newspaper reports state that the co-operation bill, introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Lloyd Harris, M.P., of Brantford, has been killed. It was sent to the banking and commerce committee on March 9, and within half an hour was thrown out by a vote of ten to eight. So far as the reports in the newspapers go, we do not know that a single western member gave the bill any support. The Retail Merchants' Association will consider that they have won an important victory, and from their view point they probably have. The wealth producers of Canada have been cast aside by the House of Commons for the benefit of comparatively few dealers, who wish to live upon unjust profits. This is but another example to prove the fact that representative government is a farce. The members in the House of Commons at Ottawa, as a rule, make no pretense of representing the people who elect them. Once they have been elected and sent to Ottawa they do as they like and the people have nothing to say. What is needed, and needed badly in this country, is a system which will insure that the members of parliament shall really represent the people of the country. This same bill was passed by the House of Commons last year, but was killed in the Senate. If the farmers and consumers remain firm and continue the agitation for fair play, the co-operation bill will pass the House of Commons next year.

SOUTH AFRICAN SCRIP

Hon. Frank Oliver has introduced a bill into the House of Commons to extend the time for settlement duties to begin on South African scrip until the end of 1911. This action is taken by Mr. Oliver despite the vigorous protests made by western farmers' associations. He knows that the scrip is now held by speculators and that his bill will simply be a means of robbing western farmers still further. It is hard to understand how Mr. Oliver, with his eyes wide open, can take the part of the land grabbers against the bona fide farmers of the west. It begins to look as though the interests of the people were regarded very lightly at Ottawa. At the rate things are going a farmer will have to contribute more largely than ever to the support of the wealthy and privileged classes. Mr. Oliver is minister of the interior and is supposed to be looking after the interests of the settlers in the west. Instead of that he seems to be promoting legislation in the interests of the land grabbers.

Government-owned elevators is a step towards ending the speculative system which depresses the price of Canadian wheat, on the Liverpool market, until after the farmers have disposed of their crop.