

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 14th, 1913

BANKERS ARE HAPPY

After many weeks of serious discussion and after hearing witnesses brought from all over Canada and the United States, and even Europe, at considerable expense, the Banking Committee of the House of Commons has finished its work and reported the Bank Bill to the House. We judge that the Bankers' Association will be extremely well pleased with the work done by the Banking Committee, because the bill still stands just as the Bankers' Association wanted it and nothing has been done to curb the power of the bankers in any way. They may still charge 10, 12 or 20 per cent. interest if they want to, and the only remedy is to refuse to pay it, which, of course, means that nobody will get any money. The bankers can still lend all the Canadian money they like to Canadian and foreign capitalists for the development of enterprises in Mexico and South America, or any part of the world, while it is badly needed in Canada. Nothing has been done to prevent Canadian banks from loaning millions upon millions of money to stock gamblers in New York. The Banking Committee refused to compel banks to mark on the face of every note the rate of interest charged, and yet this very simple provision would be a great protection to farmers unfamiliar with figures or not acquainted with the English language. Now, however, such a man is at the mercy of the banker. Every move made in the Banking Committee to compel the banks to give more information in their monthly statements was voted down. Nothing was done to prevent the bankers from lending out their money to their own directors at 5 per cent. interest, when they are charging the Western farmers 10 and 12 per cent. There were several members of the Banking Committee who endeavored to have some restriction placed upon the banks in return for the immense privileges they enjoy, and for which they pay not one red cent into the public treasury. But all to no avail. The Bankers' Association had its representatives right on hand all the time and could always secure a majority vote. These representatives of the Bankers' Association comprise not only the President of the Association, but several of the other big bankers and a number of the ablest lawyers in Canada who are paid high salaries for just such work.

In the government report from banks for March we notice that the bankers have loaned out \$109,227,927 in "call and short loans" outside of Canada. Most of this money is used for stock gambling in New York at three and four per cent. Then we notice again that \$70,731,030 is loaned out on "call and short loans on stocks and bonds in Canada." A good portion of this is loaned for stock gambling purposes in Toronto and Montreal. Other loans outside of Canada amount to \$38,277,672. What security this is loaned upon we have no means of knowing. The report shows that there is \$11,014,009 loaned to directors of banks or firms in which they are partners, and it is a safe bet that the rate of interest is very low. Yet we find that every time any criticism is made there is always some banker ready to explain things very fully, but that does not get away from the fact that the bankers are discriminating against the Western farmers to a very serious degree, and that they are assisting to concentrate the money power of Canada into the hands of a very few people who are thus enabled to prey upon the public. And now the Bank Act is safe for another ten years and by that time the Bankers' Association

will hope to be strong enough to dominate the government of that time.

CO-OPERATIVE BUYING

We would be glad at any time to have a contribution from any local secretary giving a report of their co-operative buying, that has not already been published. We would also like to have reports sent in of all efforts made to incorporate a co-operative association in any of the provinces. It is essential that this information should be given as much publicity as possible for the benefit of others who may be engaged at similar work. Up to the present time more local associations have got together in the buying of flour than other commodities, because, perhaps, it is a vital need to every single member of the association, and there is a wide margin of saving by buying together. Flour is one of the commodities that the Grain Growers certainly should be able to buy at very nearly cost, and it is the natural problem for the Grain Growers to attack next after the marketing of their grain. Within the next few years the organized Grain Growers should be grinding their flour in their own mills from their own wheat, and pay no profit to any middleman. The profit in the wheat business belongs to the farmers who grow the wheat, and if they have the enterprise they will see that no one else gets it. Every local association that is alive and means business should get its flour and feed by the carload and save from 50 cents to \$1.00 per sack. The flour manufacturers are quite prepared to quote on car-lots and it would pay to get competitive prices before placing orders. Another article that is being handled more and more by the carload is wire fencing. The fencing business is just beginning in this country and will assume enormous proportions very shortly. It is estimated that if the farmers last year had purchased their fence requirements by the carload they would have saved at least \$60,000. It is an easy matter to get prices and descriptions of fences and quotations on car lots. By purchasing fencing in carloads there is a saving of from 15 per cent. to 25 per cent. in the price. Binder twine has advanced in price this year by 2½ cents per pound, but that will not lessen the demand for it throughout the West. By purchasing it in carlots the farmer can save half a cent or more and this is quite an item to every farmer. These are just a few of the things that the farmers can profit upon by buying together. It is claimed that the Anglo-Saxon people cannot co-operate successfully because they do not possess the characteristics of the Germans, Danes, French and other European races and are too independent minded as well as too much inclined to be suspicious. There is probably a certain amount of truth in this, but the organized farmers of the Prairie Provinces have made a splendid start in getting together. The more they co-operate the better it will be for themselves financially, the richer will be the social life in their community, and the better equipped they will be to perform their duties as citizens of Canada.

SLANDERING THE GRAIN GROWER

The suspicions awakened when the magnates behind the "Canadian Countryman" were announced — suspicions which The Guide frankly expressed at the time — have found all too swift fulfilment. Grain Growers could not repress a smile at the idea of a set of Toronto capitalists, who are forever trying to build up their special privileges into a sacred imperialism, who trot out the

dear old flag whenever any of their diversified methods of exploitation is in danger — that these gentlemen should start a new journal and publish it at a considerable loss week after week purely on account of the love they bore the farmer. The president of the Canadian Countryman Publishing Co. is Z. A. Lash, whose patriotic fervor as president of the Anti-Reciprocity League was one of the features of that eventful campaign. He knows the jingo fireworks game from Z to A, and what with high patriotism, high finance, high tariff, high freights and high bank profits, his economics seem as badly twisted as his initials. The other heavyweight backing the Canadian Countryman is Sir Edmund Walker, president of the Bank of Commerce, of which, moreover, Z. A. Lash is vice-president, as well as director of the Canadian Northern Railway and a score of other big corporations. Many farmers were rude enough to suggest that if these two capitalists were really anxious to help the Western farmer, as the Canadian Countryman and its mysterious circulars so volubly profess, they did not need to organize a new company to do so, but might start right away proving their benevolence by having the Bank of Commerce and the Canadian Northern Railway give the farmers a square deal. A very different way has been chosen, however, and the latest proof of the Canadian Countryman's love for the prairie farmer appears in recent articles on "The Grain Grower and the Farmer," by Stanley Morrison. An alleged grain grower is taken as the text of a thundering denunciation. His devoted head is treated to a veritable shower bath of vitriolic outpourings. For sordidness and cussedness, the world, the flesh and the devil have nothing on the grain grower, according to this write-up. Here is the description of this despicable character, so that our readers may judge whether he is a typical grain grower. He wears a silver fox fur coat and carries a "suit-case all tattooed with the labels of foreign hotels." He always "lights out" as soon as he gets his grain in the elevator. Last winter he toured Europe. This time he is on his way to New York and the West Indies. People look on him as a "modern Midas, whose touch turns everything to gold." (Do our readers recognize themselves? Who said money was scarce?) But that is not the worst nor most damaging misrepresentation. The grain grower is as poor in virtues as he is rich in worldly goods:

"The grain grower is the Arab of the prairies, the nomad who takes his toll of the golden grain and then flies to the tropics on the wings of wealth. . . . In every bushel of prairie wheat there is at least half a bushel of bumptiousness. The grain grower is as devoid of all the poetry of the country as the hard-hearted Scrooge in Dickens' Christmas Carol was of the sweet spirit of Yule-tide. He has been initiated into only the elementary mysteries of sowing and ploughing and reaping. He has never milked a cow. He has never grafted trees. . . . He keeps no fowls. He drinks condensed milk and eats storage eggs, and consequently there flows in his veins the thin blood of the suburbanite who hangs on the straps of street cars. He has never dug potatoes. . . . He never sees a colt frisking by its dam in the meadow; he never hears a young lamb bleat; he has not even a friendly dog to thrust its cold muzzle into his hand and give him a feeling of man's brotherhood with the animals. In short, he never sees or feels anything that a true farmer sees and feels. He is a mere calculating machine sent West to count wheat. . . . He is a human pen stuck behind the ear of