

The Mail Bag

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ALBERTA ELEVATOR PLANS

Editor, Guide:—The U.F.A. executive have unanimously agreed to a proposal that the Grain Growers' Grain company be empowered and aided by means of a provincial guarantee of bonds, to establish and operate a line of grain elevators in Alberta.

If the Grain Growers' Grain company were a truly co-operative concern, paying a fixed and moderate rate of interest on its paid up capital, and returning the remainder of its profit towards payment of shares to its patrons, in proportion to the amount of their respective transactions, until a fixed minimum for each shareholder were reached, the proposal of the U.F.A. executive should receive unanimous endorsement at the forthcoming annual convention. But the Grain Growers' Grain company, though a good and honest democratic enterprise, has not even made an attempt to adopt sound co-operative methods. No doubt the majority of its shareholders are at present imbued with noble motives and its directors are beyond reproach; yet there is no constitutional guarantee that it will not develop into a purely profit mongering concern, carried on for the sole benefit of its shareholders as such. Indeed, there is a clear indication that the Grain Growers' Grain company has already begun to drift along the capitalistic trend, and if a constitutional change is not made soon, we shall be faced with the prospect of having to support hundreds, if not thousands, of Saskatchewan and Manitoba shareholders in comparative comfort and idleness, and that, perhaps, largely from the profits of the Alberta elevator system.

There are many farmers in the West today who could realize from \$5,000 to \$7,000 on the whole or part of their holdings, invest in Grain Growers' Grain company stock \$1,000 each for husband, wife and children, and reap therefrom a larger net profit than ever they could out of farming. Many, with that object in view, others with their object attained, may vote for conditions favorable to such manipulation, and taking advantage of the ignorance or apathy of a great number, our future dwarf capitalists may obtain control of the Company.

If the U.F.A. is not misled it will either endorse the Saskatchewan Co-operative plan with such modifications as Alberta conditions require (Delegates to the convention should read the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Act) or it will insist on the Grain Growers' Grain company applying co-operative methods to their operations in Alberta in such a manner that the benefit will come right back to the producer and the consumer.

Elevator patrons should each be required to take a minimum of, say, four \$25 shares, 10 per cent. to be paid on application, the balance to accrue from apportionment of dividends on a basis of the turnover.

Alberta farmers have already grasped the co-operative idea. They should not allow their ideals to be swamped in the maelstrom of capitalism just because old Manitoba found that the line of least resistance. We should rather be guided by the experience of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevators, which promises to be one of the most successful enterprises ever undertaken in Canada. We cannot build a good structure on a false foundation; but if we now lay a true foundation, future difficulties will be few and trivial.

If we must join the Grain Growers' Grain company, let our position be subsidiary and autonomous till such time as the shareholders in Saskatchewan and Manitoba are prepared to organize on a co-operative basis.

JOHN CAMPBELL

Lloydminster, Alta.

Note.—Mr. Campbell wisely warns against the prevailing tendency of giving first regard to property instead of people. In regard to the true co-operative plan of distributing profits, the Grain Growers' Grain company and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator company are both in the same position. Each of these companies have provisions in their charters for co-operative profit distribution. Neither of the companies have as yet, however, adopted the co-operative principle, and it only remains for the shareholders at any annual meeting to authorize

this system to be followed. There must be a great deal of educational work done along co-operative lines before the true co-operative principle is well understood and followed.—Editor.

A REAL PROGRESSIVE

Editor, Guide:—I am enclosing Referendum ballots. I feel that nothing short of a "yes" to all the questions will ever bring to the people of Canada any relief from our present position politically. I am sure that any serious-minded person cannot feel other than alarmed at what is apparently mapped out at Ottawa at present. A few more turns of the thumb screws that are annually applied to the people of Canada by the legislators of our country must sooner or later bring the people to their senses, although I feel myself growing old waiting for the time to arrive when equal justice to all will be the motto of the men whom we elect to represent us in our Parliaments. I must say that I am proud of our Guide. I hope that you will continue the good work of educating the farmers to a true sense of their duty, not only to themselves but to all others who are willing to do honest toil to get an honest livelihood. I do not think that these few thoughts are very well arranged, but I feel that you know the writer and how he feels in regard to the almost unbearable state of affairs now existing in Canada and especially in Manitoba.

R. M. WILSON.

Marrinhurst, Man.

WANTS FROST INSURANCE

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of Dec. 4 last, J. B. Musselman, of Cupar, is giving an explanation of the Saskatchewan hail insurance act, from the tone of which it is evident that he is in favor of the same. It is very well for the farmers of the province, because the act is the baby of the organized farmers, which the Scott government has dressed in the form of passing through the Legislative Assembly, but, sir, there is something wrong in this matter. The Grain Growers are preaching for "equal rights," but by trying to protect those parts of the country which are subject to hail and having us vote on that, every year, to see if our municipalities are in favor of the act or not, why did not the "equal rights" preachers insert in the act, frost as well as hail? This part of the province is subject to frost but not to hail and the delegates to the conventions from our branches are telling the audience year by year the damage we have by frost. Why is there no ear to hear their voice? Is it because there are not so many branches of the Grain Growers in this part of the country or the officials are settled where they have hail but no frost? The annual convention will take place sometime during the winter and why not have the act amended and insert frost in it? The government will be as much in favor as the convention, because it will protect all parts of the province and will do away with the voting on the hail insurance in the municipalities every year. I am almost sure every farmer will be in favor of a hail and frost insurance act, and it will do away with the antipathy toward the Grain Growers' association officials, who are trying to protect only themselves, with the compulsory payments of poor settlers.

Hoping you will give space in your issue, which will be read by delegates to next convention and M.P.'s and might result in a benefit to our part of the country.

L. VICKAR.

Edenbridge, Sask.

NO CAR YET

Editor, Guide:—In your issue of Dec. 18, I note you request farmers to report shortage of cars. I would like to call your attention to the conditions at Mildred, Sask., on the C.P.R. Early in October, about one month before I was threshed out, I placed my name on the car book for a car, being 194 on the book. There are now in the neighborhood of 400 names on this book. I have not yet received my car as only 160 cars have been supplied to present date.

W. M. THRASHER.
Mosten, Sask., Dec. 23.

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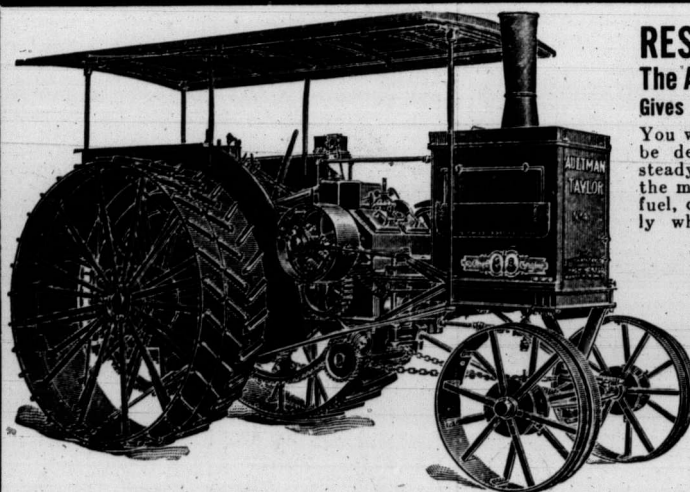
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