

The first session of the new Parliament passed without anything being done towards taking over the Elevators in Manitoba, the members apparently not being quite sure whether the farmers really knew that they wanted the elevators to be owned and operated by the Government.

During the winter of 1908 the Grain Growers' Association in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and the Farmers' Association in Alberta at their annual Conventions declared for Provincial ownership and operation, and instructed their several executives to take steps to lay their demands before the various Governments.

There was also at this time a new inter-provincial body created styled the Inter-provincial Council of Grain Growers' and Farmers' Associations. This body passed the following resolutions:

"Whereas the Farmers' Association of Alberta and the Grain Growers' Association of Manitoba and Saskatchewan at their annual Conventions each passed a resolution urging their respective Provincial Governments to acquire, own and operate a system of elevators for receiving, storing and shipping grain; and

"Whereas, the best results in the interests of the producer can be obtained only by each Government concerned establishing a system in its own province;

"Therefore, be it resolved that this Conference urge the respective executives to take such steps as they deem best to cause the respective Governments to pass the necessary legislation to give effect to the above stated resolutions."

Then the several executives waited upon their respective Governments.

Nothing definite was promised but acting on a suggestion from Hon. Mr. Roblin, a conference of the three Western Premiers was arranged for through the Secretary of the Inter-provincial Council. It was hoped by the Grain Growers' that this Conference might lead to the three Governments passing exactly similar legislation, introducing Government ownership and requesting jointly of the Dominion Government such legislation as would supplement their efforts and render their system more effective.

What the Premiers thought would come out of it we will probably never know.

The Premiers met at Regina on May 4th. It was intimated through the press that they were greatly surprised that no Grain Growers' were there to meet them, although Mr. Roblin himself had suggested that at the first Conference the Premiers alone should be present.

The Premiers talked the matter over among themselves and finally sent for Mr. George Langley, M.P.P., member of the Board of Directors of Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, who was in the city. After conferring with him he was chosen to act as ambassador for them in their negotiations with the representatives of the Grain Growers'.

Just at this point it may be proper to state what shape the demands of Grain Growers' in the various Provinces had taken in putting them before the local Governments.

The Manitoba Government and the Saskatchewan one as well had been furnished with copies of a widely circulated pamphlet entitled: "Provincial Ownership and Operation of a System of Line Elevators." This pamphlet was published in the Report of Proceedings of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Annual Convention, 1908.

In addition to this Mr. Langley had put in a statement to the Honorable Mr. Scott, and Mr. Woolford had put in one to the Honorable Mr. Rutherford, both of which are given further down.

Those matters are made clear as we wish the public to know that the various Governments had ample opportunity of knowing what the demands of the Grain Growers' were and also that the demands were practically the same in the three Provinces.

RE GOVERNMENT OWNED AND OPERATED ELEVATORS

What is proposed is that the Provincial Government shall provide at each railway where any considerable quantity of wheat is marketed, an elevator with up-to-date equipment for cleaning, weighing and loading the grain into the railway cars; that they should be constructed for the most part in bins holding 1000 bushels; that while the end aimed at is the storing at these internal points of a goodly part, say one-third of the crop, this large outlay need not at the very onset be incurred, but the structures may be so arranged as to admit easily of addition and extension, and that they shall be operated by Government employees.

The Farmers' Convention asked that this should be placed before you.

The purpose is to place the Storing, Cleaning, Weighing and Loading on the cars for transportation of the wheat, the staple product of the West, in charge of an authority having no interest financially in the commodity.

The advantages would, we contend, be:—

(a) Giving to the Grain Growers' the full value—less fair cost of transport of the grain.

(b) The preservation of the quality of the wheat as it leaves the farmer—abolishing the present practice of lowering the sample to mere grade requirements and could not fail to enhance the price of Canadian grown wheat upon the ultimate market.

(c) Would by preserving in car load bins the identity of the wheat as delivered by the farmer make possible the establishment of a sample market at a centre place where the particular defects, which to-day often lower the grade of wheat though its milling qualities are not affected, would be correctly understood and accounted for.

5. It would also do away with the difficulty often met with to-day of financing on the wheat without marketing it outright often under unfavorable conditions, for the reason that the grain being in the custody of the Government the security of the advances would be absolute.

6. It would approximate towards the desirable end of putting the wheat upon the market not in a foolish rush, but in a steady and continuous flow, a condition that would give our wheat the value it should have as a hard wheat blending with softer wheats in the making of flour.

7. It is not suggested that the Provincial Government should incur any expense that is not charged against the commodity itself.

8. The great saving in the matter of correct weight, fair dockage and return of cleanings would go a long way towards paying the farmer for whatever rent or toll the Government might charge.

9. Making it possible that by securing the use of a bin in the Government elevator independent parties might buy wheat delivered in small parcels so approaching a condition of Free Trade in Marketing grain.

It is understood this paper is entirely for your private use by,

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

GEO. LANGLEY.

To the Hon. A. C. Rutherford,
Edmonton, Alta.

Dear Sir:—

We are in receipt of a letter bearing date of March 16th, 1908, from Mr. Joshua Fletcher, President of the Alberta Farmers' Association, stating that a Conference will be held in the near future between the Premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba for the special consideration of the subject of Provincial elevators, and asking that we present to you and through you the sentiments of the extreme southern portion of this Province in the premises. The time for a thorough canvass of our people and a full and careful formulation of the arguments in support of this proposition is brief and we can barely hope to give in part the reasons assigned by our people why the Provincial Government should engage in the undertaking.