

The Mail Bag

INTERIOR STORAGE QUESTION

Editor, Guide:—It was with regret that I learned at the Moose Jaw Convention and from your correspondent "Western Farmer," in your issue of February 11, that the contracts have actually been let for the interior terminals at Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. In the same issue I note that R. R. Tigait disagrees with my opposition to this interior terminal scheme, but I fail to see that he has disproved my arguments.

After an experience of 31 years in the West on the farm and living for 19 of those years from 17 to 25 miles distant from a railway, I am not likely to minimize the losses from a blockade or the possibility of a recurrence, but I do say that with the increase in the number of "spouts" and the double-tracking of one of them, and a long one at that, together with the increased size of locomotives and cars and the approaching completion of the Hudson Bay Railway and the eventual (for it is bound to come) access to the United States market, that it is very improbable that we will see in the future anything approaching the troubles from car shortage that we have experienced in the past, and in consequence these houses will be but little used under ordinary conditions. But under extraordinary conditions, such as with shipments of excessively dirty grain, where it would be cheaper to pay the charges for switching, cleaning, etc., than to pay the freight on dirt to the lakes, or in the event of a car shortage and an embargo being declared on shipments to the lake front, these buildings may be used, but I cannot conceive how, under normal conditions any reasonable individual, upon the allotment to him of a car would ever ship to one of these houses and pay the attendant additional charges. Much more might be said along these lines, but I will conclude by saying that while the farmers' organizations have so vastly improved western conditions, yet in my opinion they have made grave mistakes in advocating without proper investigation: (a) Government ownership of initial elevators, (b) the sample market, and (c) the construction of these interior terminals, and I much fear that these last, unless immediate steps are taken to cancel the contracts, will prove the most expensive "white elephant" of the lot.

F. J. COLLYER

Welwyn, Sask.

SALE OF MACHINERY LAWS

Editor, Guide:—The Saskatchewan House has adjourned and has done nothing on the lines of the Alberta act, nor in any way attempted to protect the farmer as against the implement company who push their sales and their collections and whose notes or other binding legal documents are entirely in their own favor and against the farmer. The Alberta act is really a good one, and if it restricts the sale of expensive machinery to farmers who cannot well afford the same, it is alike beneficial to the farmer and the implement firm, but especially the farmer. It ought not to be possible for a threshing outfit to be loaded on to a man who has

CO-OPERATIVE ACTS

Many enquiries come to The Guide office for copies of the Co-operative Acts of the three provinces. These acts are kept for free distribution in each province, and will be sent to anyone by request. The addresses to which inquiries should be sent are as follows:

Alberta—Department of Agriculture, Edmonton, Alberta.

Saskatchewan—Director Co-operative Organization, Department of Agriculture, Regina, Sask., or to J. B. Musseman, secretary Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Moose Jaw, Sask.

Manitoba—King's Printer, Legislative Buildings, Winnipeg.

but a homestead, and especially if same is not proved up. Within a year two homesteaders, not one and a half miles from me, have lost their land and homes entirely by this means. The opposition leader introduced a bill to enforce the terms of the contract strictly. This was good too. A man buys a threshing outfit said to thresh 2,000 bushels a day, but under the best conditions he never gets anywhere near that figure. The company ought to take the rig in hand and before the rig is signed for and saddled on a man they should be compelled to prove to Mr. Farmer that it will actually thresh the amount of wheat it is sold to do. The same is also true of defects that may disclose themselves in the rig. It is at present very difficult to do anything to obtain redress in any way.

The Scott government introduced a bill to prevent a traveller going around the farmers and by "scientific salesman-ship" selling on time all kinds of machinery to farmers, who had not thought otherwise of buying but for the traveller



CUTLER BROS., OF ROULEAU, SASK.
Winners of Championship for Wheat at Saskatchewan Provincial Seed Fair and Brandon Winter Fair

making various kinds of verbal undertakings, such as, "The firm will be lenient if you get a setback in your crop," etc. We farmers find these assurances are worthless; we are bound down to the notes we sign and precious little consideration is shown whatever our difficulties that arise unforeseen. This bill, tho a small thing, would have done good. But the government, not knowing what to do and apparently bewildered, did nothing but say they would make enquiries. Now it is up to the central office at Moose Jaw to give Parliament definite ideas of what kind of implement act farmers are in need of. A committee of some kind should be appointed to thresh out the case and present it.

A SUFFERER.

COMMISSION ON OATS

Editor, Guide:—Allow me to call attention thru the columns of The Guide to a great injustice under which the grower of oats labors. I refer to the unjust charge commission men collect for selling oats. One cent a bushel commission gives the commission man between nineteen and twenty dollars for selling a car of oats, while he gets between ten and eleven dollars for selling a car of wheat. The farmer, who grows the oats, gets from \$500 to \$700 for his oats, while the wheat farmer gets from \$700 to \$1,000 for a car of wheat. The oat grower thus pays three or four per cent. commission for selling his oats, while the wheat grower pays about one per cent. The commission men acknowledged some years ago that the commission charged for selling oats was somewhat unfair, but were content to act the unfair part still. Is it not time the farmer had some control of the charges made on his produce? One per cent. commission would give the commission man a fair share, to say the least, and the oat grower would get from \$13 to \$15 more on each car of oats.

OAT GROWER

MR. KENNEDY IN SASKATCHEWAN

Editor, Guide:—We were very fortunate to have John Kennedy, vice-president of The Grain Growers' Grain Company, visit this district last week. Arrangements were made for meetings at Carnduff, Elmore, Oxbow, Alameda and Frobisher, all of which were well attended, considering the season of the year and condition of the roads. The local associations sent me a special invitation to attend the meetings and, as the district director, I spent a little extra effort and accompanied Mr. Kennedy. I was pleased with the reception given us, also with the interest taken in Mr. Kennedy's address. Everybody seemed to be hungry for the information he was able to give. The subject of his address was, "The Grain Growers' Association, The Grain Growers' Grain Company and The Guide," and he so ably showed how necessary it was to co-operate to keep the three activities in operation that there was no trouble to sell stock in The Grain Growers' Grain Company and get new members into the Grain Growers' Association at the close of each meeting. We will be pleased to have Mr. Kennedy visit us again in the near future and address the Grain Growers at some of the other points he was unable to reach at this time.

I am sure that if the farmers all understood what The Grain Growers' Grain Company means to them that the stock would soon be doubled, so they could take on the other branches of activities and at last relieve the Western people from bondage.

Yours truly,

NELSON SPENCER,
District Director, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Assn.
Carnduff, Sask.

HUDSON BAY ROUTE

Editor, Guide:—The enterprise exhibited and the well-earned success attending The Grain Growers' Grain Co. lead me to raise the question of future development in regard to transportation. If the suggestion has already appeared in your paper, I apologize for oversight, but I have not seen any correspondence on the subject.

There is reasonable hope that the Hudson Bay route to markets will be open for actual service at no distant date. There are also reasonable grounds for fear that the "big interests" in navigation may grasp the opportunity with a strong hand, and make transportation even by this shorter direct route needlessly expensive. Is it not possible that The Grain Growers' Grain Co., or a fraternal organization created for the purpose, should provide for this hostile contingency by arranging for a fleet of steamers under their own control?

Until the marketing of grain from start to finish is controlled apart from abnormally aggressive interests there is little hope of the producer getting a fair return for his labor. Tho we have had a bountiful crop this year in our district, the farmer has realized nothing beyond his wages.

BENJAMIN RALPH, Sec.,
Carlton District Agricultural Soc.
Chellwood, Sask.

RAISING THE PRICE OF WHEAT

Editor, Guide:—A great deal has been said and written about the high cost of living, cheap money, tariff reform and many other of the problems confronting the farmers, but in my opinion the greatest of all problems for the farmer has not been spoken of to any great degree, and which I think is of primary importance. It is the price of wheat. We farmers are at the mercy of the powers that be in everything we sell and in everything we buy. The farmer is the only manufacturer who has no say in the selling price of his produce, be it a bushel of wheat, a dozen of eggs or a pound of butter.

All businesslike manufacturers figure the cost of what they produce and then

put on a price, which does not only include the cost, but also a profit required—legitimate or otherwise.

The farmer manufactures wheat and the dealer tells him what he has to sell it for and the farmer has to take it, no matter whether the price is above or below cost.

When the farmer has wheat to sell it is usually below cost, and after his grain is all sold the price soars to a figure at which he could make a living. This does not do the farmer much good. What the farmers should do is to unite and fix a price at which he would have a reasonable profit, taking into consideration interest on money invested, labor, depreciation, hauling and all other legitimate expenses attached. This would mean that he would have to sell at about 95 cents to \$1 per bushel at Winnipeg. The price of wheat varies only a few pence in Liverpool markets thruout the year, but here it varies from 20 to 30 cents, depending on rain or drought in the Argentine, rumors of war or some other trivial cause.

It does not depend on the law of supply and demand, for people only use the products of wheat and flour is not reduced in price when wheat drops.

With the other 20 cents extra per bushel what could the farmer do? He could first of all pay for the machinery he requires and the implement man would have a much better chance to receive his portion than when the farmer has to sell his staple crop at or below cost. The farmer also would be able to pay cash, thereby reducing the cost of collecting and hence of machinery. The merchant would fare likewise. The sheriff would not be so busy. The consumers would not have to pay any more for their flour than at present if only a reasonable profit were allowed for the manufacture of flour. A bushel of wheat contains about 40 lbs. flour and 20 lbs. bran and shorts. Flour bought at \$3 per cwt. and bran and shorts at \$1.25 per cwt. makes the cost of a bushel of grain \$1.45 to the consumer and allowing 15 cents per bushel for milling leaves \$1.30, for which the farmer was paid 65 cents, leaving a margin to somebody of 65 cents. Of course freights have to be deducted, but you may draw your own inference, as Canadian flour made in the West can be bought cheaper in England than in the prairie provinces, where it is grown and manufactured.

We hear about cheap money for the farmer. Is that the greatest want? How long will it take a farmer to pay off a loan either cheap or current rate when he has to sell his staple product below cost?

What we need is union and demand a reasonable profit, and then we may come up to the ideal of the railway magnate, the philosopher and the hotel bum, who all proclaim, "Mixed farming is what we must have." We need mixed farming very true. But how are we to get it without money to pay for stables, fences or shelter for our stock? When a farmer gets a few head of cattle ahead, what happens? He usually has to sell them to make up for the deficiency in the price of wheat to meet obligations. What we farmers should do is to stick together, in spite of sheriffs, and hold our wheat until the price is where it should be. But this is a strike! Well what if it is? Where have the producing class ever accomplished anything without drastic measures in the last twenty years? Can we do it? Ask the cotton growers of the South. Ask Denmark.

Now raising the price of wheat is only a business proposition at which nobody should take offense. Who takes offense when the price of flour, sugar, tea or machinery goes up? We are used to it. Let us co-operate in this as well.

GLEN EAGLE.

Harris, Sask.

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NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

This Department of The Guide is maintained especially for the purpose of providing a discussion ground for the readers where they may freely exchange views and derive from each other the benefits of experience and helpful suggestions. Every letter must be signed by the name of the writer, tho not necessarily for publication. The view of our correspondents are not of necessity those of The Guide.