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PROPOSES GOPHER BOUNTY

Having regard to the fact that some measure of further relief for settlers stricken by the drought in Saskatchewan seems very necessary, and that several proposals have been put forward, notably the proposition of the federal government advancing \$4 per acre to farmers for every acre summer-fallowed in preparation for 1916 crop, I have thought of a way which, I believe, would meet the situation in a most eminently satisfactory way.

The proposition hereinbefore referred to has the drawback of getting the farmers further in debt, and possibly of encouraging unwise expenditure and the cultivation of more land than can be handled efficiently. It also provides for no measure of local or self help.

My idea is as follows: We are fully aware of the immense damage done each year thruout Saskatchewan by gophers. Also thousands of dollars and tens of thousands are spent yearly to kill them, and much time is lost in putting out poison. Still the damage done to crops must run to many thousands of dollars. Yet the gophers do not grow less, apparently. Indeed, they were worse last year in this district—south of Swift Current—than ever before in my recollection.

Five Cents a Gopher

I propose that rural municipalities thruout Saskatchewan give a bounty to residents of their municipality of five cents for each gopher killed, a declaration to be signed similar to the wolf bounty certificate, and half the expenditure of the municipality refunded by the provincial government in the same way that half of the \$1.00 wolf bounty is now refunded.

The liability of the provincial government for destruction of gophers is just as obvious as for destruction of wolves and, without considering the help for settlers' idea, the principle should be adopted. But besides the propriety of the provincial government helping, and besides the absolute necessity of undertaking some operation which will effectually exterminate the gopher pest for many years, if not—as it almost certainly would—for all time, there is the additional cause of helping the necessitous settler in a way which will cost next to nothing to administer, a contrast in this respect to the scheme of government road work, which, I might add, was a very good thing, which will especially help the man with a family, will not cause anyone to leave home, leaves every man his own boss and does not interfere with the ordinary farm work. Every farmer would have a special incentive, and the country generally would benefit enormously by the increased crop yield, which we are told is so particularly desirable just now.

Arrangements could probably be made to finance those rural municipalities unable to meet their share of the expenditure by the provincial government, the government to have the first right of taxes. Also it might be as well to only pay bounty on gophers killed before the last day of May. A man might also be limited in the amount he would receive in the same way as was the case in regard to road work.

WALTER GAMMAN, Sec.,
Spring Valley Ass'n

A Good Suggestion

The suggestion of Walter Gamman, secretary of Spring Valley Local, that a gopher bounty be paid for the extermination of this pest is a thoroughly good one, and is certainly most opportune. It may be that the bounty of five cents per gopher, as proposed by him, is too high to obtain thruout the season, but that a bounty would help greatly in exterminating this destructive rodent seems obvious. For years

a bounty has been paid for the destruction of coyotes, which in many parts of the West are rather an asset than a detriment to the farmer. In those parts of Saskatchewan where sheep are not kept, about the only harm done by the coyote is in an occasional onslaught upon the chicken house. He, however, destroys hundreds of gophers for every domestic chicken which he kills. The gopher, on the other hand, has no redeeming features whatever. While he has been of the utmost value during the past ages in helping to make the soil of this country what it is by his diligent digging, his time of usefulness has long since passed, and he ought to be exterminated.

In the early days of the territorial government an experiment with a gopher bounty was made. The bounty was paid on the number of gopher tails presented to the authorities by the claimant. It was found after a time that Indians, and possibly some who were not Indians, perpetrated a clever deception upon the authorities in that they did not kill the gophers taken, but merely cut off their tails and let them go, little the worse for their experience. This practice was not actuated by any tender emotions toward the gopher, but by a desire to perpetuate the species and so perpetuate also this source of income. Not that the Indian had an idea that the hardy gopher would grow another tail, as has been suggested by some wag, but a tailless gopher will produce progeny as well as one with a brush.

Graduated Bounty

An equitable and practicable plan would be to pay a bounty of five cents each for all gophers killed early in the season, say up to May 15; four cents each to June 31, three cents each during July, and two and a half cents each during the rest of the season. This would insure the greatest activity in gopher destruction at the beginning of the season, whereas should a uniform bounty be paid during the entire season the gophers would, in all probability, be permitted to multiply in peace during the spring and early summer, in order that greater earnings might be made in catching them late in the season, when they could be taken in large numbers.

This is a matter which the government should take in hand at once. Many millions of dollars damage is occasioned each year by this active and destructive parasite, and during a year such as the present, following a dry season in which gophers multiplied alarmingly, they are likely to be more destructive than usual, while at the same time the actual loss occasioned will be enormously enhanced by the abnormal prices which are likely to obtain for grain.

No farmer should fail to put forth his best effort to exterminate the gophers on his own land, but a bounty seems to be the only feasible solution for the gopher problem on vacant and unoccupied land.

Relief to Settlers

If the above suggestions were followed out by the provincial government thru the municipalities, this would afford a very welcome source of income to needy settlers, and would contain all the best elements of self help which are so frequently lacking when assistance has to be given to men who have suffered misfortune.

—J. B. M.

WANTS EMPLOYMENT

As a member and director of your Mayfield Local of the Grain Growers, I take the liberty of asking you if you can help me to secure employment for myself and wife on a farm or some such place where we could both go and take our two children, ages three and one years. We are in the drought stricken area and we will need to seek

employment this summer. I have hesitated about writing this letter for some time, and you always seem so willing to help the farmers that I thought that perhaps you would be able to help me in this matter. If you cannot help me will you kindly hand my application to one of the employment agencies. I am age thirty-two. Wife twenty-eight.

J. H. DICKEN.

Josephine, Sask., via Empress, Alta.
Note.—Anyone requiring help might write direct to Mr. Dicken.

WANT TOTAL PROHIBITION

The following resolution was passed by a substantial majority at a meeting of our local held Saturday, March 27, at Leask:—

"That we congratulate Hon. Walter Scott on the stand he has taken regarding the liquor question, but, we view with disfavor the proposal to continue a wholesale business under government superintendence.

"Believing that this will tend to introduce further evils, we hereby pledge ourselves in favor of total prohibition in the province of Saskatchewan."

E. J. P. ROBINSON,
Secretary-treasurer.

PRICE OF IMPLEMENTS

At a meeting of the Outram G.G.A. held on March 17, the following resolution was passed:—

"That the association thank the Cock-shutt Plow Co., for not raising their implements the amount of the tariff tax, and that we hereby pledge ourselves not to buy from such companies as have."

J. L. TEDFORD,
Secretary-treasurer.

Note:—There cannot have been any need for these people to advance prices for a mere trifle like 7½%, when they are accustomed to paying a heavy duty on their plows entering the U.S.A. and still selling for less money than they demand of Canadians. They must be "Made in Canada" boosters. —J.B.M.

EXAMINATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL SECRETARIES

In a recent speech at Saskatoon by the Hon. George Langley, the desirability of having secretary-treasurers of municipalities pass a certain examination was mentioned.

Now, as a grain grower who has passed thru every stage of the development of Saskatchewan rural institutions I think this matter is of the greatest importance, and I believe there is no one in a position to help this move along better than yourself. I trust you will take this matter up in the Guide and let us demand:—

1st. That secretary-treasurers pass an examination equal to junior matriculation or second class teachers exam., with language, bookkeeping and short course in law.

2nd. That they be not allowed to engage in real estate or any business other than municipal.

3rd. That they have regular published office hours as may be required by law.

4th. That the office wherein the secretary does the municipal business shall be leased or owned by the municipality, and shall be considered a municipal office and not a private real estate or other office.

5th. That the salary be regulated so as to make it impossible for a council to pay a secretary-treasurer more than a corresponding position of trust demands.

For instance, a bank manager of a branch in the average small town gets about \$1,200 a year. The manager of a lumber yard about \$1,000. We have teachers with B.A. degrees teaching school in some cases for less than \$1,000.

A secretary-treasurer of a municipality has not a large amount of busi-

DISTRICT DIRECTORS:	
Dist. No. 1—W. H. Beasley	Balbock
" 2—M. P. Roddy	Beulah
" 3—O. E. Noddy	Lampman
" 4—H. M. Johnston	Eastview
" 5—J. W. Easton	Moosemin
" 6—F. W. Redman	Greenfall
" 7—C. O. A. Travis	Govan
" 8—Thorn M. Eddy	Bethune
" 9—John F. Reid	Orcadia
" 10—J. L. Rooke	Togo
" 11—T. Sales	Langham
" 12—Andrew Knox	Prince Albert
" 13—W. H. Liwall	Wilkie
" 14—T. M. Morgan	Aqueduct
" 15—Frank Burton	Vanguard
" 16—W. T. Hall	Surbiton

ness to do. He earns his money easier than any of these other men I have mentioned. He should, however, be conversant with and pleasant to people of all nationalities and accurate in figures.

If the standard of education required is high, it will encourage education and shut out a lot of gally real estate sharks who have acquired a certain knowledge of law which they use to practise rascality and who are only a menace.

LIFE MEMBER

THE SECRETARY'S ANSWER

Life Member:—I have before me your interesting letter of the 21st ulto. I am not able for the moment to give your suggestions the amount of careful analytic thought to which they are entitled. I have never been quite sure in my own mind of the value to society of making all civil servants pass examinations such as we generally have, in fact I am not altogether sure that by our system of examinations in the schools and colleges we always get even a fair test of fitness. I am persuaded that mere ability to answer academic questions is no guarantee of the fitness of a man for a position where the power of initiative is in demand and where executive ability is required. I think that our whole system of academic schooling with all its tricky examination papers frequently fails to secure for society to hold various positions, those who are best fitted to fill them.

That the secretary of a municipality should have a fair education, all will admit. That he requires to be able to read Latin, calculate in algebraical terms or be able to prepare a thesis on some abstruse chemical process in order that he may fill his secretarial position with satisfaction, I doubt very much.

I fully agree with you that it is a dangerous practice for a municipal secretary to engage in real estate business, but I do not think that the municipal council should on the one hand be forced to hire a man of literary training and general outstanding ability, while on the other they should be restricted from paying the necessary salary to secure such a man.

Yours fraternally,

J. B. MUSSELMAN,
Central secretary.

NEW LOCALS IN THE NORTH

We have been into the northern country as far north as township 54, range 23, west of third meridian, holding Grain Growers' meetings, James Bryson, Pat McIntosh and myself. We organized four Grain Growers' Associations; no doubt you have heard from some of them by this time. The first one is at Tharlot. These people are mostly Germans and I told them to write you in their own language.

We were honored by the support of the Roman Catholic priest. The priest is working for the farmers' interests. He told us he had traveled a great portion of this world, but he said Canadian legislation was just legislation for the wealthy class, and imposing legislation on the masses, which keeps them in the classes with the slaves of the southern country. But I informed the priest we farmers were the backbone of the country and thru co-operation we were going to support the backbone.

We formed one Grain Growers' Association at Red Deer, one at Willie's Store and one at Paradise Hill, and I tell you we spoke on Free Trade and also the class of legislation we needed to have a free people. We found the people much dissatisfied with present conditions, and unless conditions are changed, I believe the parasites will have a chance to farm themselves on the lands in this northern country.

WM. TRACEY

Mervin, Sask.