



ALBERTA SECTION

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by Edward J. Fream, Secretary, Calgary, Alta.

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MINIMUM CAR WEIGHTS

Some time ago, at the request of members of the U.F.A. interested in the question, the matter of the capacity of box cars was taken up with the board of railway commissioners, although no formal complaint was made on the question. It was pointed out that the size of the box cars was increasing and it was becoming a difficult matter for many farmers to ship their own grain on account of having to pay a minimum freight of 60,000 pounds.

An immediate answer was received that the commission was having considerable trouble from shippers all over Canada complaining about cars being too small; about them trying to get 60 and 80 thousand pound cars and being furnished with 40 thousand pound cars, and that it was quite unusual to have a complaint that the cars are too large.

This answer shows that the bulk of the correspondence and complaints in this matter have originated from either the manufacturers, wholesalers or middlemen. In fact it is known that some boards of trade have considered the advisability of having the minimum capacity of the cars increased. The need for this, on their behalf, is apparent, for if the cars are increased in size it is going to be considerably harder for the small man to deal independently and he will therefore be more and more at the mercy of the large interests.

The possibility of developing an inter-provincial trade, dealing directly between the producer in Alberta and the consumer in British Columbia is checked by reason of the shortage of 40,000 pound cars, and this business will be forced into the hands of the middlemen, allowing them to get a share of the spoils to the detriment of the interested parties. A report made by the chief traffic officer to the railway commission has now been received and it would appear from this, for the time being at least, that the chance of securing any relief is exceedingly slim. The big interests don't want it and the farmer is therefore not considered. He can get the relief he wants by paying for it, that is probably the thought which will arise on reading the report, which reads as follows:

"By direction of the chief commissioner I beg to report this application as follows:

"Applicants want a minimum carload weight of 40,000 pounds established for smaller individual shipments of grain from Alberta than the tariff minimum of 60,000 pounds fixed for the standard 60,000 pound car; or that the railway companies provide cars with two doors, and with sufficient bulkhead, to enable such shippers to load to the tariff minimum.

"The Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern do not appear to have any 40,000 pound cars, nor ever to have had any. The Canadian Pacific still has a number; but it appears to be the policy of that company to keep them in the East until worn out, as being unsuitable for the general requirements of the Western grain trade. Mr. Beatty also makes the statement that cars of this type will not stand haulage between the heavy classes of cars which make up the Western trains.

"The special tariffs of the companies for the carriage of grain to Port Arthur and Fort William require heavy grain to be loaded to the cars stencilled capacity—60,000 or 80,000 pounds, as the case may be, with the provision that the minimum for lighter cars is their stencilled capacity. If, however, these cars are not being used in the West the provision is valueless.

"The grain class in the Canadian Freight Classification is the 8th, which carries a carload minimum of 30,000 lbs. In practice, however, little grain is carried except at commodity rates lower than the 8th class tariff, and the Western grain rates to Lake Superior are much below 8th. It is a recognized principle that when a rate is reduced below the regular class tariff the carload minimum, in order to bring up the carload revenue, may be reasonably increased, though not above the commodity's loading ability. If these light shipments in the West were so frequent as to require a special or exclusive tariff (which I doubt), the companies

would probably, and I think reasonably, want a correspondingly higher rate per 100 pounds, so that the result would differ little from the present system. The applicants ask, also, that the companies be required to provide cars with two doors, so that by bulk-heading the car two farmers with less than 1,000 bushels each may co-operate in loading to the tariff minimum. As every car has two doors, what is evidently wanted is two doors on each side, so that loading on each side of the bulkhead might proceed simultaneously. I do not consider it just to expect the carrier to construct exceptional equipment for such intermittent traffic—the cars would probably prove structurally weak, and a danger to a train of modern heavy cars unless placed at the rear end, and the liability to leakage would be intensified.

"Applicants may say that when 40,000-pound cars are not available larger cars are furnished by the companies at the 40,000-pound minimum for the purpose of cleaning out elevators. This is true, except that the minimum is not so limited, and the concession was authorized by the Board by Order dated May 16, '05, from which I quote as follows:—

"It appearing to the board that the long standing practice of railways has been to give shippers the benefit of the carload rates on the actual weight on any less than carload remnants of grain that may be left in their country storehouses or elevators at the conclusion of the season's business; that this arrangement is in the public interest, and that it would be unreasonable to require the shipper to pay for the full carload minimum weight for each lot: 'The board doth order that the railway companies subject to the Act be, and they are hereby, authorized to apply the carload rates on the actual weight on any less than carload lots of grain that may remain in the shippers' storehouses or elevators at the cleaning up of the season's business, preparatory to the reception of the new crops.'

"Applicants' inference that this provision forces a farmer having less than 1,000 bushels to sell at his local elevator, rather than ship himself, is unfounded, as the elevator man can ship at less than the full minimum only the bag end of grain remaining in store at the end of the season.

"My conclusion is that the growers should find reasonable relief by co-partnership in loading to the tariff minimum, and by bulkheading, at the extra charge of 1 cent per 100 pounds to the carrier, and \$3 per car to the terminal elevator company, which charge the board refused to reduce by judgment dated February 3, '09, and expressed the opinion that 'during the movement of a very heavy crop the railway companies would be acting entirely in the interests of the public, as a whole, if they withdrew the privilege of bulkheading.'

"I have no doubt that the chief operating officer will concur in this report.

"Respectfully submitted.
(Sgd.) J. HARDWELL,
Chief Traffic Officer.
I concur.

A. J. NIXON,
Secretary.

WHAT THE UNIONS ARE DOING

Rose View Union has considered the subject of Municipal Organization and after a stirring debate the decision arrived at is that the members of this union are in favor of a municipality of sixteen townships, the organization of municipalities in the Saskatchewan plan and the system of levying taxes on the land valuation only. We are also in favor of the Central Association handling all the small products of the farm, believing that it will be a help to all the farmers, especially the members of the U. F. A.

L. B. HART, Sec'y,
Carbon, Alta.

There was a fair attendance at the last meeting of the Carlton Union, when several matters of importance were considered. Our U. F. A. hall is in course of erection and will be completed in a few

weeks, when we hope to arrange for the visit of a district organizer to our district. We are securing new members all the time and also getting subscribers to The Guide.

J. J. PRICE, Sec'y.

Ensligh, Alta.

At the last meeting of Stettler Union it was unanimously decided to endorse the proposed petition covering Direct Legislation. We regret having to report that our president, Mr. T. D. Adair, has resigned and is leaving the country. It is needless to say that his loss will be felt, as he is a zealous, indefatigable worker for the U. F. A.

H. A. STEELE, Sec'y.

Stettler, Alta.

At the last meeting of East Clover Bar Union a resolution was adopted to the effect that it is desirable that legislation should be passed making it compulsory for the owners to fence all muskegs and other such dangerous places, and it was decided to request the general secretary to bring this matter before all other unions by means of the circular letter. Much stock is lost annually through getting into these muskegs and the only effective safeguard appears to be to have them fenced, which should be done by the owners of the land.

W. J. JACKMAN, Sec'y,
East Clover Bar, Alta.

Strathmore Union again considered the cattle situation at the last meeting and the result was the passing of the following resolution:—"Not having had any reply to our resolution of recent date requesting the consideration of the question of allowing cattle to be imported free of duty, we take the opportunity of again bringing forward the question. We know you have been very busy but the case is urgent. We beg to request some acknowledgment from you that the matter will at least be considered and brought to the attention of the Cabinet and the House. While we at all times wish to support such government as the voting majority of the people have elected, we hope it will not be necessary to go to the opposition for support in the most urgent case that has come to the consideration of your cabinet for the welfare of the farmers. We urged before the necessity of haste in the matter to allow of shipment before winter, but rather than have the matter blocked we would urge that the necessity for importations will continue for an indefinite period until every farm is supplied with stock."

The secretary received instructions to forward a copy of the resolution to the Hon. R. L. Borden for his consideration. The annual farmers' banquet will be held on December 9 at six o'clock, when we hope to have some of the officers of the Central Association on hand to meet the farmers and to respond to the toast of our union.

M. EUGENE SLY, Sec'y,
Strathmore, Alta.

An important meeting of a special committee representing all the unions situated in the district immediately east of Calgary was held in the general secretary's office on Wednesday, November 22, twelve representatives being present. Matters requiring concerted action were up for consideration, and the result arrived at was one which, although the details cannot be made public at the present time, will result in a large amount of good work being done by the U. F. A. in the district and the material strengthening of the association as a result thereof.

HAIL INSURANCE

Word has been received that R. L. Shaw, M.L.A., of Stettler, will introduce at the forthcoming session of the legislature a compulsory Hail Insurance Act, and a request has been made through Stettler local union for the locals of the U. F. A., to support this. Mr. Shaw has been written to asking for a copy of his pro-

posed bill, and as soon as it comes to hand it will be made public. The subject of hail insurance is still in a chaotic state and it is hard to realize just how a vote on the subject would result; probably the grain growing portions of the province would give a majority in favor of compulsory insurance, while the mixed farming portions would be opposed.

All kinds of solutions are being offered and all are finding champions, one of the latest being that the matter be left entirely to the rural municipalities and for the rate-payers in these districts to decide whether they want insurance or not. Other suggestions have been received for the government to abandon the business and allow the private companies to enter the field, this emanating mostly from business interests, while another class is asking for no kind of insurance whatever. However, in regard to the latter class one correspondent, residing in a district which was formerly strongly opposed to compulsory hail insurance, stated that there was nothing like a hailstorm to convince people that compulsory hail insurance was the right thing and that in his district where a severe storm was experienced during the past summer, all were now strongly in favor of such a measure.

The latest hail insurance resolution to be received is from Gleichen Union, and it follows in the main the resolution adopted by Strathmore Union, and forwarded to the U. F. A. last winter. Gleichen's resolution reads:

"Whereas, droughts, excessive moisture, stock diseases and the like may be counteracted by irrigation, drainage and science, whilst hail storms are totally beyond all human control, and

"Whereas, farmers who grow grain, are the men who assume the risk of putting Alberta under cultivation, and are engaged in farming based upon alfalfa, etc., being impossible before the raising of grain has put the soil into proper shape for mixed farming, and

"Whereas, it has been fully demonstrated that sufficient funds cannot be raised to cover the loss by farmers only who make application for insurance on the present basis of risk, and

"Whereas, it has been fully proven to the farmers of the Gleichen district that no part of Alberta can be considered free from danger of hail storms, and that it is absolutely impossible for the average farmer to continue farming in Alberta without some kind of hail insurance, and

"Whereas, it is perfectly unjust that speculators, who are making idle money on the rise in values of lands due to work done by grain growers, should not participate in the risks of hail storms, and

"Whereas, parties who cannot pay a tax of from \$2.00 to \$5.00 per quarter section to provide against losses owing to hailstorms, are not qualified to own land in Alberta

"Therefore, be it resolved:

"That this Farmers' Union No. 96, U.F.A., respectfully call upon the government of Alberta to introduce an act at the next session providing for a tax on all taxable lands in Alberta, to cover damages to crops by hail, to the extent of \$8.00 per acre for total loss, the amount of such taxation to be determined yearly by the actual losses of the previous year, so as to cover any deficit that may have occurred the previous year, and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the government of Alberta and that a second copy be mailed to the secretary of the U. F. A. at Calgary with the request that he forward copies to the secretaries of all local unions of the U. F. A., requesting all unions to support this resolution and to notify the government and the secretary of the central union of the U. F. A.