The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF

ALBERTA SASKATCHEWAN & MANITOBA

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THE ELEVATOR BILLS

The elevator committee appointed by the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association at the Brandon convention has been actively at work. Several conferences have been held with the ministers of the Manitoba government, and a memorandum was placed before the government by the Grain Growers. Each party then drafted a bill. Both of these bills are published elsewhere in this issue of THE GUIDE. We also publish on the same page with them a resolution passed by the Grain Growers' elevator committee stating that they cannot accept the bill which was prepared by the government. This bill is signed by the entire membership of the elevator committee. This resolution, together with a copy of bill prepared by the Grain Growers, was sent to THE GUIDE by the elevator committee. The copy of the government bill which was published is from the Manitoba Free Press, as it was not officially given out for publication, though the copy is a correct one. The bill which was presented to the government by the Grain Growers was prepared with infinite care and with the aid of the best legal talent available. The Grain Growers exercised every precaution that their bill should place the government elevator system in impartial hands, though full financial control should be in the hands of the government. The commissioners would not be able to expend any monies without the consent of the government and without presenting to the government a statement showing the purpose for which the money was to be expended. This would give the government a complete check on everything that the commission did, and would empower the government to stop the work of the commission at any time it was deemed advisable by stopping the supplies. On the other hand, the government would not be enabled to dominate the commissioners nor to dictate a policy for them. The Grain Growers in framing their bill were not animated by any motives of a self-seeking nature. Lest this charge might be made, it was provided for distinctly in the bill. No member of the directorate of the association can be appointed to the commission unless after being a year out of office. This is a wise provision, because it answers once and for all any claims advanced by critics that the directors of the Grain Growers were merely endeavoring to create lucrative positions for their own benefit. The Grain Growers' Bill provided for the creation, either by purchase or construction of a complete system of elevators wherever they are needed throughout the province of Manitoba. This system, as outlined by the Grain Growers' Bill, provides that the farmers shall be protected on every side from any monopolistic influences, such as exist at the present time. No provision, however, is made that the farmer shall have special privileges. All the grain dealers that wish to handle grain are, by the bill, given a free and equal right to do so. The elevators are for the use of the farmers and equally for the use of the grain buyer.

One provision of the Grain Growers' Bill which stands next in importance to the provision for an independent commission, is that which provides for a sample market. The sample market which would be provided by the Grain Growers' Bill is something that the farmers of Manitoba and the west generally have wanted for some time. Every farmer who sells wheat on the sample market knows that he is getting pay for the identical grain which he produces. The control of the government elevator system by an independent commission and the creation of an efficient sample market, are the two outstanding provisions of the bill submitted by the Grain Growers to the government. They are the two chief points upon which rests the success or failure of the system. The Grain Growers of Manitoba, in demanding a government system of elevators, made no demand upon the government to pay for that system. The grain passing through the elevators will be taxed sufficiently to pay for the system when the bonds mature, forty years hence; thus there will be no tax upon the people of the province who do not directly make use of the elevator system. A careful consideration of the bill prepared by the Grain Growers convinces one that it is eminently fair. All that is intended in it, is to protect and encourage the chief agricultural industry of the province. In asking this, the elevator committee of the Grain Growers, who are merely performing their duty as laid for them by the Brandon convention, were not authorized to accept anything else.

A careful perusal of the bill prepared by the government and published in this issue of THE GUIDE, will show at once why the Grain Growers could not accept it. The government bill provides that the commission shall be absolutely under the control of the government in every way. Neither does it include the various other provisions which the Grain Growers deem absolutely necessary to the successful operation of the government system of elevators as laid down in their memorandum. We understand that the government notified the Grain Growers, when negotiations were broken off last Saturday, that they would introduce a bill in the legislature containing all the provisions which the Grain Growers asked for, with the exception of that relating to the commission. In fact, the control of the commission was the rock upon which the Grain Growers and the government split. It is understood that the government is willing to grant everything else, but does not deem it wise that the control of the commission should go out of their hands. The Grain Growers, however, consider an independent commission beyond reach of any outside influence, as of paramount importance. In this belief they are supported by the unanimous resolution passed at the Brandon convention and by nearly 100 resolutions since passed by branch associations throughout the province representing several thousand farmers. The elevator committee of the Grain Growers was therefore justified in not accepting the bill as prepared by the government. In this way they were casting no reflection upon the integrity of the government. It was a principle for which they were standing. This principle is the foundation stone upon which, and upon nothing else, the farmers of Manitoba believe can be erected any satisfactory system of government owned elevators. Negotiations have now been broken off. The elevator committee of the Grain Growers have performed their duty to the best of their knowledge and ability and with all sincerity of purpose. We confess that we believe that they have done what is right and for the best interest of the farmers of the province, who entrusted to them a most important duty. They placed the matter before the government in what they believed to be the right light. The government cannot see eye to eye with them, therefore matters are at a standstill.

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CONSIDER THE TRUSTS

We hear it frequently remarked that at the rate Canada is travelling, the trusts and combines will soon have a grip upon this Dominion equal to that which they have on the United States. A careful consideration of conditions in Canada leads us to believe that this situation has already been reached. We have trusts and combines that reach from the Atlantic to the Pacific and control practically everything in Canada that is worth controlling. It is stated by men who have studied the matter, that last year the trusts and combines of Canada took from the pockets of the producers and consumers, $161,000,000. This sum represents what the producers and consumers have paid for the privilege of supporting in luxury 2,500 gentlemen, whose names comprise the membership roll of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. These are the gentlemen who get together, and by a gentlemen's agreement arrange the price which consumers are to pay for nearly every article that is manufactured in Canada. The trust and combine business has been reduced to a science in Canada. The manufacturers realized long ago that if Canada was to be for them what they desired, they must begin while the country was young. For the past two decades we have seen small factories united with other small factories, and this process has been kept up and elaborated until all small industries have been brought under a common head. In working out these mergers, it has always been announced to the public that it was done entirely for the purpose of economy. It was claimed that a merger reduced the administration expenses and enabled the manufacturers to produce articles at a lower cost. This was during the formation period, but immediately the combine was formed, the original design faded away, and the price of the product began to soar. We have seen it occur in scores of cases and each year adds more and more to the burdens of consumers in Canada. There is every reason to believe that this burden will be added to still more as the years go by. It is all due to the unreasonable protection afforded by tariff to those industries. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association has reached a position where it dominates the tariff and practically arranges the tariff schedule to the satisfaction of the manufacturers of the Dominion. This statement does not refer to one party in the House of Commons more than to another, for both parties are equally committed to the policy of affording every possible protection to the manufacturers. The tariff has ceased to be a political question. It was long ago seen that there was no difference of opinion in Ottawa upon this great subject which was of such vital importance to the producers and consumers of Canada. It is a spectacle which is certainly not the most pleasing to contemplate. We see several millions of people in Canada, year by year, paying, through their household bills and other necessities, an exorbitant toll to the treasury of the protected manufacturers. The interests of the millions are sacrificed for the interests of a few hundred manufacturers, most of whom reside in large centres of Eastern Canada. The burden rests more heavily upon Western Canada than probably upon any other part of the Dominion. If there is a benefit accruing from the location of manufactories in the middle of a community then Ontario and Eastern Canada get this blessing while Western Canada gets nothing practically, except the privilege of paying high prices. However, we do not believe that the farmers of Ontario regard the proximity of manufactories as of any great advantage to them under present conditions. How much longer will the protected manufacturers of Canada be allowed to sit