

THE EDMONTON BULLETIN

SEMI-WEEKLY.

Published every Monday and Thursday by The Bulletin Company, Ltd., at the office, Bulletin Bldg., 315 Jasper Ave. East.

SUBSCRIPTION.

One year to Canadian or British Post Office address \$1.00. Six months to Canadian or British Post Office address \$0.60. One year U.S. Post Office address \$1.00. Six months U.S. Post Office address \$0.60. All subscriptions are payable in advance. Advertising rates on application. Classified advertising one cent per word for first insertion; for subsequent insertions for price of three, and for insertion for price of four. Notice of Retray Cattle four insertions \$1.00.

C. F. HAYES, Business Manager

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1938.

GOVERNMENT ELEVATORS.

A member of the Manitoba Government, Minister of the Grain Growers' Association, assembled in convention at Brandon that "The Government accepts the principle laid down by the Grain Growers' Association of establishing a line of inferior elevators as a public utility, owned and operated by the public, and is prepared to co-operate with your society in working out a plan to that end."

If this be correct, the Manitoba Government has withdrawn from the position taken at the conference of the three Premiers some time ago, that if the Government were to take the elevator business, all others must be put out of it and kept out. What is proposed in Manitoba is to establish a line of inferior elevators only, leaving private enterprise to operate those already in existence and to erect new ones wherever it is thought they are made to pay.

Obviously this project will not in itself do much to secure competition among the grain dealers. It may induce competition in the particular points in which the Government elevators are located, but it will not secure it, or do anything toward securing it, in the many times larger number of places in which they are not located. If the end be to secure competition and break up "rings," the present proposal must be only a step toward that end, to be followed by the extension of the Government system throughout the entire Province of Manitoba.

If this be the real object, then one of two things must result. Either the Government elevators must be operated at cost as a public utility, or they must be operated at a profit, the farmers will be forced to pay for the privilege of operating the elevators under competitive conditions. If they are operated at cost, then it seems quite likely that the elevator owners will all go out of the elevator business and go into grain buying exclusively. If the Government will provide elevators everywhere and run them at cost, why should a grain dealer keep a large amount of capital tied up in such a non-producing institution as an elevator? The elevator people are credit worthy, and they are credit worthy with shrewdness, sometimes with too much of it for the good of the province. If they are rightly credited, then there is more money in buying grain and handling it through Government elevators run at cost than in maintaining their own elevators, which must be run at cost too. If the project works out as the Government of Manitoba will find it, it will be a self-called upon to build not a line of elevators, but all the elevators needed in the Province of Manitoba, both now and in the future. The financial magnitude of such a proposition might well give alarm even to a Government which has not been conspicuous for careful handling of the public funds, or for a scrupulous regard for the public credit.

However, this scheme may work out in Manitoba, there are differences of opinion between that Province and Alberta which must be borne in mind in considering the advisability of following the same course here. Manitoba is a grain-growing Province, primarily and chiefly, almost exclusively. Alberta is a mixed farming country, necessarily, and must continue to be such if its farmers are to reap the best results from the resources of their situation, soil and climate. Grain growing is the business of the Manitoba farmer, but it is only a branch of the Alberta farmer's business, and not the preponderant, important, branch. It follows that Government assistance may be given in Manitoba to a grain grower, but in Alberta it would be a degree which in this Province would place a handicap on other activities of the farmer, and as important as that of producing marketable wheat.

Many persons find themselves affected with a persistent cough after an attack of influenza. At this rough season, promptly cured by the use of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, it should not be allowed to run on until it becomes troublesome. Sold by all dealers.

may require, the situation here certainly demands that whatever assistance be given to agriculture should be fairly distributed among its various branches; one important and being not only the best of our grain should go into the market as grain, the poorest qualities going as feed, pork, mutton, country and dairy products.

"SCHOOL MATTERS."

An annual report from the department of the Provincial Government may be approached with two questions:—

1—What are the proportions of the branch of the public business which the department looks after?

2—How much have those proportions increased during the year?

Each of the questions is certain to find an interesting answer, whatever the department in consideration. Usually the proportions of the business handled by it are far beyond one's expectations, while the year's growth is pretty certain to exceed his estimate. These rules hold with regard to the annual report of the Department of Education for the year 1938, which has now been issued.

There was at the close of the year more than \$2,500,000 invested in school buildings and grounds in Alberta. The number of school districts was 1070, of schools 138, and in these were 1139 departments. During the year 1408 teachers in all were employed, 1192 being employed at one time. Attending the schools during the year were 39,653 pupils, the average attendance being 18,923. The girls were in the majority of total attendants, numbering 20,137 against 19,578 boys. The pupils enrolled in rural schools were 19,599. Toward the maintenance of the schools, the Government gave grants \$228,678.45. The school departments authorized during the year amounted to \$663,925, and the debentures registered to \$787,300. The amount expended on school buildings was \$666,786.32. The sum paid in teachers' salaries was \$539,222.64. On debentures and notes there was paid \$847,333.89 while the expenditures for all other purposes totalled \$387,499.40.

The growth of the educational system during the year was remarkable. The Provincial University was opened with an attendance of 40 students. A pre-tertiary school was opened in connection with the Normal School in Calgary. An average of 14 new school districts were organized every month of the year; one of these being at Prairie River, three hundred miles northwest of Edmonton. All the districts created were public school districts. One hundred and fifty-seven new school districts were created in the year. The increase in departments was 194. The pupils enrolled were 3,315 more, and the average attendance 1,613.77 more. The grants for the year totalled \$68,592.50 more than for 1937. The debentures registered show an increase of \$302,735. The amount expended on buildings and grounds was \$111,618.44 greater and that for teachers' salaries \$84,476.89 greater. On debentures \$499,227 more was paid than in the previous year. Pupils attending town and village schools were 456 more than those attending rural schools. The largest increase during the year occurred in the rural schools, which were 1,650 behind at the beginning of the year.

Treasurers of 903 school districts had on hand at the close of the year \$243,745.49, their total receipts being \$2,896,824.85. Of the school buildings at year end, 506 frame, 43 brick, 4 stone and 2 of other material. The Deputy Minister comments that "The school buildings being erected in the rural districts are reported to be of better type than the majority of those formerly erected, while the towns and cities with one another in endeavoring to have the most up-to-date buildings possible. The report includes several cuts of buildings erected during the year which amply verify this statement.

There is no tendency in Alberta to depress teachers' salaries. On the contrary these have gone up substantially in recent years. Thus since 1935 the average salary of a male, first-class teacher, has increased from \$741.06 to \$973.35, and that of a first-class female teacher from \$615.63 to \$702. Second-class male teachers' salaries have been raised in the same time on the average from \$620.90 to \$700, while female second-class salaries have been increased from \$572.10 to \$641.10. Calgary schools led in enrollment in 1938, with 3,364. Edmonton being second with 2,964. We are as yet drawing heavily on the older Provinces for teachers, for hence 34 first-class and 139 second-class teachers during the year. Twenty of the former and 90 of the latter came from Ontario. At the same time first-class certificates were granted to 40 Alberta teachers and second-class certificates to 91.

The report thoroughly warrants the deep concern of the Deputy Minister, concerned in maintaining the reputation for Alberta wheat and the Department that "From a strictly educational standpoint, there would

appear ample justification for sharing in educational matters the optimism which is prevalent throughout the Canadian West."

Death has removed one of the men who played a conspicuous part in the early history of Edmonton and of this district, in the person of Dr. H. C. Wilson. Twenty-seven years ago he came to Edmonton. The place he secured in the opinion of his fellow pioneers was reflected in his election to the North-West Council, and later to the Legislative Assembly, of which body he was the first speaker, and elected for the positions. But that also in his choice as mayor of the then town of Edmonton. He leaves a multitude of acquaintances and friends, who will sincerely regret his departure and extend their sympathy to the bereaved ones.

Toronto Mail and Empire—"Our North-West yielded no less than 716,613,000 bushels of wheat during the past season. This is the country which one of the great Liberal leaders described as 'sterile.' According to the same authority a railway through it would not earn enough to buy grease for the wheels."

"It was in the face of such pessimism that development was pushed by the 'Conservative' leaders. Now we have a new empire added to the Dominion. There was little enough of Empire about the West but its size when said Conservative leaders were through pushing things, and for the size they may not have been altogether responsible. They overlooked the cardinal point that an Empire includes people as well as space. The Mail published no stories about 100 million bushel yields in those days."

The death of King Leopold of Belgium will call to the minds of newspaper readers in foreign lands the stories that have been published for years of outrages in the Congo. Rightly or wrongly the late King has been held to be personally involved in these affairs, if not personally responsible for them. In 1885 Leopold became sovereign of the Congo Free State, a title which seems to be somewhat misleading. The Free State is the successor to the Congo International Association, founded by Leopold in 1885. A Belgian subject, he presented to Parliament, assumed responsibility for the government of the territory, thus completing the work of 25 years in carving out for Belgium a province in the heart of Africa. The chief occupation of the Free State, or of so many of the residents of that region as are free, is the exploitation of the rubber industry. In the prosecution of this, the Belgian soldiers and officials are alleged to have reduced the negro population to slavery and subjected them to treatment as infamous as the most rabid Northern ever charged against the Negroes. For allowing this to be done Leopold has been somewhat severely criticised, perhaps more so than he deserved. An absolute ruler of a large Province situated in the heart of a distant continent, and equipped with the means of communication, populated chiefly by natives but rich in a resource which excites the cupidity of the whites, is likely to be held accountable for many things he never sanctioned and would gladly atone for if he could. Forcibly to rely upon others for his information, and again upon others for the execution of his orders, it would be strange if, deciding parties and corrupt officials did not conspire to make him the innocent tool of greed. When it is added that Leopold was an old man, the difficulties in his way of improving things in the heart of Africa may be somewhat understood. In any event, the continuance of the crimes during the past couple of years, if they are being continued, lies at the door of the Belgian authorities, since the state has assumed the responsibilities of the sovereign in respect of the Congo.

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

The notion that a public utilities commission, or several of them, would free us from all the ills to which we are liable under the present system of operation is very far fetched, though some such notion came to be pretty widely held and was quite freely expressed during the late campaign. There may be good reasons enough for appointing such commissions and for turning over to them as we must do if they are appointed, the absolute management of the utilities, but there is nothing to be gained from regarding the system as a specific for all the ills to which we are now declared to be liable. On the contrary, great harm would certainly be done sooner or later if public attention were thus drawn away from the essential fact that we must have the right men in charge of these concerns, and that if we have such men it won't make much difference what we call them.

There is no magic in the name "commissioner," and there is no virtue in the commissioner system to save

a city from the consequences of its own folly or neglect. If we keep the management of these enterprises in the hands of capable men and honest men, the results will be satisfactory. If we do not do so we will not be saved from the consequences by calling the mismanagers commissioners, nor by allowing them to operate as commissioners instead of as aldermen. The commissioner system assures only one thing, and it assures that only conditionally. It assures us of experienced and reliable men—if we named the commissioners, or let them named the commissioners, or let such men would be always chosen the system itself gives no assurance, and can give none. That rests and must rest with the people who own the utilities or with the representatives who speak for them.

The notion that the commissioner system would certainly prevent the enterprises being operated "politically" is wrong. It might do so or it might not. All would depend on the men who composed the commission, or the aldermen, or the commissioners, or both. And if the commissioners or the aldermen desired to operate the enterprises politically on condition without. If we are to have to fight Tammany methods in the management of these enterprises then we had better keep the managers where we can get at them directly and promptly with the ballot. Once such methods become established under a commission they would be so entrenched that years must elapse in any event before the public could get at the rascals. The very law that is supposed to save us from the evil would then become the shelter behind which the evil flourished in spite of us.

The city charter provides that such utility commissioners should be appointed by the city council if created at all. We need not expect aldermen to appoint better men than themselves to these positions. Then, if we have to suspect that some group of aldermen will sometime want to build-up a machine, we must suppose that they would prefer to do so with the assistance of commissioners rather than alone. A commission faithful to their interests would interpose a second body between them and the public wrath, a body on whom a part of the public fury might be able to expend itself uselessly, a body whom the public could not easily get at, and who could therefore continue the rascality much longer than men dependent directly on the returns from the polls.

On the other hand, even if the commissioners were elected, this would give us no guarantee of getting better men as commissioners than we will get as aldermen. It is unreasonable to suppose we would elect better men to the commissioners than to the city council. If we elected crooks to the council, we would likely elect their pals to the commissions. Then we would be no better off than under the council. We would be worse; for the commission idea carries with it the idea of permanency of position. The commissioners would have to be elected for a longer term of years than the aldermen, if we wished to get men of experience at the head of these concerns. The net result of the elective system would be to leave us just as liable to get crooked management as we would be liable to under the council. We would be worse; for the commission idea carries with it the idea of permanency of position. 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