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EDITORIAL

James Gordon, M. P. P., otherwise "Jim" Gordon, of Gordon, Ironside & Fares, has agreed to attend the winter fair at Brandon and discuss with farmers the production of cattle for the trade. A man from the J. Y. Griffin Co. will also be in attendance and will make a few observations on the raising of hogs. This is as it should be. The interests of producers and packers should be mutual, so far as keeping up the supply of stock is concerned, and conferences, such as are proposed for the winter fair, are essential to mutual co-operation.

A Legislature's Duty to Agriculture

Members of the Manitoba Legislature will be confronted with a bill which they discarded last season. The object of this bill is to amend the Agricultural Societies Act so that it will be in every way legal for societies to receive financial assistance from the Department of Agriculture for the purpose of extending their usefulness in the direction of holding field grain competitions and other means of agricultural grace. The passing of the bill will mean that several thousand dollars annually will be added to the available funds for agricultural work. The proposal is in the direction of larger expenditures, and for this reason, it was given its quietus at the last session.

But a reference to the expenditures upon agriculture by the province, as compared with its revenues, and as compared with the expenditures of other provinces upon agriculture, shows that there is a sad lack of proportion between the total revenues and the appropriations for agriculture. Manitoba, as a business concern, has a revenue of over \$1,000,000, and her expenditures upon agriculture are less than one-tenth of that amount. The question is, should not the great basic industry—the industry upon which the province solely depends for its existence, be more generally fostered from common funds?

In the legislature, the agricultural representation is dominant, and for once, at least, the party line should be ignored. With most

industries, class interests stands before party interests, and rightly so, for provincial and national prosperity must be attained through the prosperity of each individual.

Agriculture in Manitoba is handicapped by many circumstances that need not be mentioned here, but relief from many of those untoward conditions can be had, if only the legislature is fully alive to its responsibilities and opportunities.

The Findings of the Pork Commission

Although conceived with the best of intentions, it is hardly possible that the recommendations of Alberta's pork commission will effect much improvement in the trade. The commission unintentionally showed how prices could be improved, and incidentally pointed out a remedy when it said there must be a large and steady supply of hogs, and that farmers must be responsible for that supply. Under such a condition it would be no trouble to get capital to invest in a packing plant, and conversely it is because capital has had no positive assurance that a supply would be forthcoming that there has not been in the past more competition for hogs. With large supplies, there is little danger but that buyers will be plentiful, although the difference of opinion as to how much the packer should make on handling hogs will still exist.

The commission practically asks the people to bind themselves to supply hogs, irrespective of market conditions and prices, or, in other words, recommends the Government to loan a certain number of farmers money to build a packing plant, taking as security the building, together with agreements from farmers to provide hogs for the plant, both parties assuming that the raising of hogs will always be profitable in that district. If the industry proves profitable, well and good; if for a season or two it is not, farmers will either be forced to keep on at an unprofitable branch of farming, or put up the money that the Government would have invested in the plant.

Unsatisfactory as conditions in the hog-raising industry have been, or are yet, they are not so bad as to require such heroic treatment recommended by the commission. As we have said before, the people as a mass, or through the governments, do not need to go to the trouble of building competitive plants to regulate the trade in any particular industry, they can remove evils by a more direct method, and one more in accord with the natural forces in trade; nor do they need to be reminded how.

Government Hail Insurance

Figures laid before the legislatures of Alberta and Saskatchewan, showing the revenue and expenditures of the governments of these two provinces under the heading of hail insurance,

do not indicate that insurance by the government against damage to crop by hail is likely to prove satisfactory to these provinces as a whole. In both there is a rather serious deficit, the premiums paid on crops falling short of meeting the claims for damages done.

Hail insurance is a problem of some magnitude. There is no question but that facilities should be provided that would enable a farmer to insure his crop and be reimbursed, to some extent, in case he suffered loss. It is in the providing of facilities that a difference of opinion may very properly exist. Certain districts in all three provinces seem more liable to hail than others, and, naturally, it is in these districts that one finds the largest number of advocates of government hail insurance. Certain other districts may never be hailed at all, but seem liable to early summer frosts, and in these districts it is pretty hard to find men favoring a public system of hail insurance, in which they would be required to help to pay the claims of farmers in another part of the country, whose crops are hailed out, and, at the same time, receive nothing for damage that might be done by another of the natural elements to their own. That is the greatest objection to government hail insurance as sometimes advocated. When one reviews the situation as a whole, it is evident that there are reasons against government insurance, quite as important as those that may be urged in its favor. If it is right to tax a whole province for the benefit of those whose property may be destroyed by one form of natural destruction, it is quite consistent that those whose property is damaged by other forms should demand similar treatment, i. e., the farmer in a frosted district for the damage done to his crop by frost, and the rancher for anything unforeseen and unprovided for, that may strike his herds or flocks. In fact, it is difficult to determine the line where public protection should cease, and beyond which the individual should be deemed responsible for any loss that might occur.

In Manitoba the Union of Municipalities has taken up the question of hail insurance, and hopes shortly to submit to the government some scheme of mutual hail insurance, whereby practically every dollar paid in the form of premiums will be returned to the people who paid it. The estimated charge is 3 cents an acre on 56,000 acres under crop in 33 municipalities in the southwestern part of the province, which rate is considered sufficient to provide \$3.00 per acre for all crops destroyed by hail. This scheme provides for municipally-conducted insurance, and while it has not yet been definitely outlined, seems to meet most of the requirements of a public system of hail insurance without introducing the objectionable features of a system in which all parts of the province would be required to contribute.

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