

# The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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## WHO'LL RUN THE H. B. R.?

Replies to the delegations that waited upon Sir Wilfrid in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, leave no room to doubt that it is the intention of the government to build the Hudson Bay Railroad without any great delay, and that its operation within a reasonable time may be regarded as an assured fact. This assurance as to the construction of the road is eminently satisfactory to the Grain Growers, but the statements of the premier and his minister of railways, as to the method the government intend to adopt in the operation of the road after it is built, is causing alarm in the minds of the Western farmers.

The impression made by the replies of the minister of railways to the different delegations of Grain Growers, is gradually becoming a settled conviction that the government's present intention, is to pass the Hudson Bay railroad over to some one of the existing railway corporations, presumably the C. N. R., to be operated by them as part of their system. It is very doubtful if the people of the Prairie Provinces would regard the building of the Hudson Bay railroad, under such circumstances, with complacency, and it may be regarded as an open question if they would not prefer not having the road built at all at the present time, than have it operated by the C. N. R. when built.

For many years the people of the West have looked forward with fond anticipation to the time when the Hudson Bay railroad would be built and operated as a public utility, to relieve them of the excessive tolls that the railway corporations take out of the proceeds of their toil in the way of freight charges. If the government have the Hudson Bay railroad built and operated by a private corporation it closes the only outlet left to escape the excessive rates charged by corporation roads. The minister speaks of the control of rates and the control of railway companies by the railway commission. The government control of railway rates in the West, has not been a success, in fact has been a delusion. The railway commission can do some good but cannot control rates. Experience in both the United States and Canada, has taught the people that corporations cannot be controlled by commissions or legislatures, or both. The experience of the Grain Growers as to the control of the railway commission over the railways is not happy nor reassuring. At their instigation the railway commission passed orders directing the railways to protect stock from getting on their track to keep them from being destroyed. The railways disregard their orders and continue to ruthlessly destroy the farmers' stock

with impunity and absolutely refuse to give any compensation. The Grain Growers appeared before the railway commission for an order to have the storage charged on grain in the terminal elevators, which is (compared with the charges made for storage east of the lakes) exorbitant, reduced to a moderate charge. The railway commission gave judgment against the Grain Growers on the ground they (the Grain Growers) could not show that the railway was earning excessive interest on the investments made on their terminal project. The same would apply to freight rates. The public cannot possibly under any circumstances show to the railway commission that the rates charged are excessive, because the railway companies can by over capitalization and a modern system of accounting, always prove that they are not making undue profits on their investments.

## MINISTER'S ARGUMENT IS WEAK

The Grain Growers at Brandon, in their memorial to Sir Wilfrid Laurier on the chilled meat project, pointed out that while the government had in the past contributed bonuses to encourage new industries and aid manufacturers, they had, in no case, contributed towards encouraging any branch of the farming industry. And that under existing methods of marketing farm products experience has taught farmers that they cannot successfully raise stock, and until such time as the proper market facilities are provided the less stock they raise the better off they are.

The Hon. Mr. Graham, minister of railways, undertook to reply to the criticisms of the Grain Growers at the evening meeting in Brandon by pointing out that an enormous amount of money had been expended by the government in providing transportation facilities for farm produce. He said that many millions of acres and many millions of dollars had been expended towards constructing railways in the West and that hundreds of millions of dollars had been expended in building canals.

The Hon. minister would fain make his hearers believe that all this was done in the interest of the farmer and in his interest only. This is a common and plausible form of argument put up by politicians and representatives of special privilege, when the farmers seek relief from the oppression of railways and other transportation companies. The minister seems to forget that these very industries to which the government was granting bonuses to encourage and assist, receive relatively as much benefit from the expenditure of public money on transportation facilities as do the farmers. The fishermen of the Maritime Provinces to whom the government of Canada has paid in bonuses \$4,265,815 uses these same railways the minister said were built for the farmers for securing a market for their products among the farmers of the West. The iron and steel manufacturers not only use the same railway facilities for shipping their produce to every corner of Canada but also find a large market for their produce in supplying the railway lines paid for by the government with steel rails and other necessary equipment to say nothing of the large amount of the products of those iron manufacturers which find a market in the towns and cities which have sprung up in Western Canada.

The farmers on our Western Prairies find themselves face to face with the condition, that they are dissipating the fertility of their farms through the continuous raising of grain and that there is no incentive to raise stock to aid the fertility of their land while the price which they secure for their stock will not pay for the labor necessary to take care of them. They request that the government should do with them as they have done with other industries, namely, grant aid to the development of the cattle trade not by a cash gift to farmers as in the case of manufacturers but by providing the necessary equipment to establish a chilled meat trade. It is a weak

argument against their requests for representatives of the government to point out that they consider the government had already contributed to this end by building railways and canals and that nothing further by way of aid should be expected of them. We, however, think that the Western farmers have come to realize that they are more entitled to bonuses to aid in the development of this branch of agriculture than the iron and steel industry was entitled to the large bounty which it received. Not only the producers of farm products, but the consumers as well throughout Canada are convinced that it is absolutely necessary that some different method of marketing should be provided. It seems a very reasonable proposition that the government should set aside a portion of the revenue of the province towards providing the necessary equipment for the handling of stock.

## DO REPRESENTATIVES REPRESENT?

The executive of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association in presenting their demand for a reduction in the tariff to Sir Wilfrid Laurier at Regina on August 2nd said:

"We are in a position to assure you that there is a strong and growing feeling in favor of an all round reduction in the existing protection tariff. We believe that the time has come when the men in this country should be expected to get along without protection—protection which is afforded at the expense of the consumer, who in common fairness should be considered.

"You should be aware of this feeling, sir, through the people's representatives in the house, but we are afraid that they have not all done their duty in this matter."

Is the fear of the Executive of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers well founded? Do the people's representatives in parliament and legislatures, represent the views of the people when they go into the halls of the legislature? We think not always. At the same conference with Sir Wilfrid, the Grain Growers of Saskatchewan presented a very strong demand for the government ownership of the terminal elevators at Fort William and Port Arthur, pointing out that nothing short of government ownership and operation would meet the case. At the public meeting that evening, Mr. W. M. Martin, M.P., standing on the same platform with Sir Wilfrid, is reported by the Regina Leader to have expressed the following views:

"As to terminal elevators the speaker reminded the audience that Sir Wilfrid has promised that legislation will be given with respect to them. They all recognized that the farmer had a grievance with reference to the handling of grain at the terminal elevators and while his own view was against the owning of them by the government, his desire was to see them government controlled. It would take a sum of nearly ten million dollars to obtain the proprietorship of the elevators and he felt that the proper step was being taken by the introduction of legislation as promised."

Was Mr. Martin expressing the views of his constituency in Saskatchewan in making the above statement, or was he simply voicing the views of Mr. Martin or some other interest? Mr. Martin must know that at the present time the terminals at Fort William are as much under government control and supervision as it is possible to make them. Government inspectors and supervisors are supposed to see that every car of grain is weighed, cleaned and binned under the direction of government officials. Can it be possible for government officials to do more unless they have the operation of the terminals as well under their control. Yet in the face of all that, investigations by the government officials, clearly indicate that manipulation of grain exists in those terminals. We think that it will be a very difficult matter for Mr. Martin to get a corporal's guard amongst the farmers of Saskatchewan or the business men either, who are not beneficiaries of the present elevator system to take his views as to what is required to remedy the admitted grievances at the