

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, December 27th, 1911

## ANOTHER CALL

Last week we asked our readers to lend us a hand in increasing our subscription list. Though we have not had time to see what returns they will make, we feel assured of their hearty sympathy and co-operation. The information which The Guide is securing and publishing upon all the vital matters of the day should be read by all farmers. We cannot begin to reach all the people who would be glad to have The Guide come to them every week. We are doing the best we can and our agents are giving their best efforts. But still we do not cover the field. If our readers—our friends—those who believe in the justice of the demands of the organized farmers—will take hold also, we can accomplish much more. Just for one month make it a point to do what you can for us. If every reader gets one new subscriber we will have reached the very first place in the field of Western journalism. Is it worth while to help us? If so, it will be appreciated.

## PERMANENT CAR SHORTAGE REMEDY

Very shortly there will be a decision handed down by the federal supreme court of the United States which will have a far reaching effect in the matter of railway service. This is upon the constitutionality of the reciprocal demurrage law of the state of Minnesota. As shown on page 8 of this issue, the Minnesota law places the public upon an equality with the railway. It compels both the railway and the shipper to transact business in a prompt and business-like way, and imposes equal penalties in cases of default. There is no doubt but that such a law in Canada would effectually prevent any repetition of the present traffic congestion in the West. The railways can provide equipment if compelled to, but it is no doubt far cheaper not to do so, especially when they know that the farmers must await the pleasure of the railways whether grain be moved promptly or not. Would it be unjust to compel the railways to pay reciprocal demurrage? Apparently the people of Minnesota think not. The farmers of Western Canada have expressed themselves in favor of reciprocal demurrage in the past and the business interests of the West have done likewise. At the present time the railways get all the benefits and the shippers all the penalties. Reciprocal demurrage would remove this gross inequality and would certainly give the railways some inducement to provide a better service to the public. The railways have been treated with great generosity by the people of Canada, and they have a just claim to receive adequate service, which they are not receiving now. If the Minnesota law is upheld it will aid in securing a similar law in Canada.

## WHERE ALL CAN UNITE

The organized farmers can well afford to support the Winnipeg board of trade in the demand for equitable freight rates throughout the West. There have been new and important developments in the matter of freight rates during the past few months, and there are better prospects for improvement than ever before. As will be seen on page 7 of this issue, the chairman of the railway commission claims for the board full jurisdiction in the matter of unjust freight rates. This being the case, the decision of the railway commission in the matter of express charges East and West is not such as to inspire confidence in that body. The

chairman of the commission authorized the express companies to charge sixty-six and two-thirds per cent. higher rates in the Prairie Provinces than in Eastern Canada. Upon what information or what principle this authorization was based has not been divulged. Presumably it was thought that the cost of living or the cost of railway operation must be higher in the West than in the East. But this contention is shown to be in error by the statements made before the railway commission recently by the C.P.R. In this case the C.P.R. was ordered to give the actual average cost of hauling one thousand tons of freight one mile over the various divisions of its line. This statement (exclusive of interest or fixed charges) is as follows:

Eastern Division.—Montreal to Chalk River, Ont., and branches.....	\$5.45
Lake Superior Division.—Chalk River to Port Arthur.....	3.70
Central Division.—Port Arthur to Swift Current, and branches.....	3.73
Western Division.—Swift Current to Field, B.C., and branches.....	4.71
Pacific Division.—Field to Vancouver, and branches.....	7.12

These are figures furnished by the C.P.R. It is amazing to see that the cost of operation in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and as far east as the lake front, is lower than that of any settled portion of Canada. The cost of operation in Eastern Canada is forty-six per cent. higher than in Western Canada, yet freight rates in the Prairie Provinces average more than seventy-eight per cent. higher in the West. According to the figures of the C.P.R., the freight rates on the prairie section of that road should be lower than in Eastern Canada. Yet the Western people have been paying extortionate freight charges to this great corporation for many years. It has all come out of the pockets of the consumers. The Winnipeg board of trade has demanded redress at the hands of the government, as the railway commission has not afforded the relief due to the West. The board of trade has taken up the fight and will not back down. Every Western board of trade and every farmers' association could not do better than the board of trade in this action. Resolutions dealing with this matter should be sent to Hon. Frank Cochrane, minister of railways, Ottawa.

## THE DAY OF CENTRALIZATION

An amalgamation of the Eastern Townships bank and the Canadian Bank of Commerce has just been announced. The new merger thus becomes one of the very strongest banks in Canada and covers the largest field. No doubt the union will be advantageous to both banks and should reduce managerial and operating expenses. From the public standpoint the result of the merger will probably not be beneficial. The new bank, despite the financial advantage of the merger, is not liable to extend to the public the benefits thereof. The rate of discount will remain the same and there will be no better banking facilities offered to the common people. This merger at once brings to the front the tendency of the present Canadian banking system. Its stability is unquestioned. But in that very stability there is a menace. This is the age of centralization, and the banking institu-

tions of Canada are already centralized. The smaller banks are being absorbed and the large ones growing larger. The branch system is diametrically opposed to community development, but it is peculiarly adapted to the growth of great cities and huge centralized industries. It has largely been due to the powerful and centralized influence of Canadian banks that our great industrial mergers have been made possible. Year by year the financial interests of the country are being brought under the control of a smaller number of men. The banking system is practically a monopoly, and is the heart of the great octopus which is gathering in the reins of Canadian control. It is said today that less than one hundred men in Eastern Canada control the entire country. This number is rapidly being reduced and in a few years half a dozen men will dictate. When a few men control the financial, transportation and industrial interests, they will have little difficulty in controlling the government. Free trade, Direct Legislation, Single Tax and public ownership of public utilities are all corrections of the present danger-laden system.

## A DESIRABLE INVESTIGATION

The Dominion government has appointed a commission to conduct a departmental investigation with a view to recommending an improvement and extension of the civil service system. This is an investigation that is certainly needed. Judge Cassels did splendid work three years ago in uncovering corruption, but he was not allowed to go far enough. There was a general feeling at the time that Judge Cassels should have been authorized to investigate at least every spending department. But governments are never favorable to an investigation of their own business, no matter how much they may favor investigating all other businesses. From what was discovered in the Cassels investigation, there can be no doubt that the patronage evil has been prevalent at Ottawa for many years. The present investigation should be thorough and should be public. Publicity is the best method of reforming abuses in public life. Following this investigation, Mr. Borden will have all necessary information to place the civil service beyond the reach of over-zealous partizan officials. An extension of the civil service is desirable from every standpoint. It will give a feeling of security to government employees, and will also give them a standing which political preferment cannot give. Under an adequate civil service system, a government employee will not be generally regarded as a party hack. Again, this much-needed reform will give the public greater confidence in the administration of public affairs, and will relieve cabinet ministers of justifiable suspicion of supporting the "spoils system." No investigation of the public departments can be too complete for the public welfare. If it could be extended to the provincial realm also, there would be further good accomplished. But if the federal civil service is once properly established, provincial action may follow later. There is only one weakness in the proposed investigation, and that is the personnel of the commission. Defeated candidates may allow their partizan feelings to over-rule their judgement. A high court judge would have been the best investigator, but the government evidently thought otherwise. But by all means let the investigation proceed and let it be in broad daylight.