

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE AND HOME MAGAZINE.

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AND N.-W. T.

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By the Way.

With continued prosperity, we are going to have in Western Canada that which is known to no other country in the world except England—an agricultural aristocracy.—T. C. NORRIS, Griswold, Man., M.P.P.

There is no reason why a boy should not be in position to advise his father regarding a weed or an insect, just as at present he is supposed to be able to help him in arithmetical problems of the farm.—ALEX. MCINTYRE, Vice-Principal Normal School, Winnipeg.

Last fall we picked 22 barrels of ordinary apples and 23 of crabs from our orchard. One tree, a Transcendent, yielded five barrels.—A. P. STEVENSON, Nelson, Man.

The Agricultural College should be located in a district where crop failures are practically unknown, and that is Portage la Prairie.—F. W. BROWN.

When well conducted, plowing matches do more to increase the interest in good cultivation in the district in which they are held than any other factor.—D. R. NOBLE, Blyth.

We never could get large, vigorous, spring litters from our sows until they were compelled to spend the winter around the straw stack, and allowed plenty of exercise.—S. A. BEDFORD, Brandon.

A good stock bull, if carefully handled, should remain a sure-getter and be useful in a herd for several years.—JNO. E. SMITH, Brandon.

Has not the Government power to regulate and control and tax elevators as well as transient traders, hotels, etc? If one-half of the crop in the Northwest is still in the farmers' granaries and elevators, a tax of one cent a bushel would realize sufficient to erect fifteen standard elevators next summer. Shall not a start be made, and cement ordered for the foundations, and lumber, nails and the necessary machinery for at least ten elevators? Increased railway equipment and ex-

tension is assured; and also immense increased areas to be broken up and put under cultivation, and the thirty-six million bushels of to-day will be a hundred million bushels in three or, at most, in five years from now, if a gracious overruling Providence will grant us propitious seasons. It will be a paying business. The increased elevator capacity will be necessary and required. Will not the Government and our M.L.A.'s rise to the occasion and come to the rescue? Time is essence.—WM. WATSON, in Moose Jaw Times.

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The farmer uses his expensive machinery not more than two or three of the twelve months of the year, and it is hardly to be expected that he will tolerate much longer the action of a railway company that has received from the people nearly, if not quite, in lands and cash twice the cost of the road.—T. J. COLLYER, Welwyn District, Assa.

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Our rural schools cost us a good deal, and compared with towns and cities are miserable failures. They need an entire change of system.—H. NICHOL, Brandon.

Railway Regulation and the Farmer.

(Written for the "Farmer's Advocate.")

The general movement for improved railway regulation, which has led to the organization of the Railway Commission in England, and to the various commissions to be found in the United States, has not, in its outcome, by any means, accomplished all that was anticipated. But while the commissions have not solved all the difficulties which called them into existence, any careful investigation of the evidence will substantiate the conclusion that they have done much to better the conditions. The central question in all matters of regulative policy turns on the matter of railway rates. No hard and fast criterion of the reasonableness of a rate can be referred to. Rate systems based entirely upon the distance principle, or upon the cost principle, fail because they do not take into consideration other essential factors. A rate is essentially a compromise. In dealing with the regulation of the arrangements arising out of such compromises, it is but natural that difficulties should have arisen. Then again, in the work of the commissions, certain difficulties have arisen because of weaknesses and defects in the laws from which they obtained their origin; the question has been further complicated by the lack of any clear line of demarcation in regard to the relationships between the commissions and the judicial bodies which, in the last resort, have to pass upon their decisions. The detail concerned with these matters may be found in my reports to the Department of Railways and Canals. Reference is made to these matters here simply to indicate that some of the admitted defects in the commission system and its working have been attributable to difficulties in the problem itself; others to lack of clear statements in the enacting laws themselves.

The transportation problem is the problem of most urgent interest in Canada to-day. To state this should be but a truism, which should be part of the ready change of current Canadian thought. The transportation problem has its general and its particular aspects. Canada is at present in its empire-building stage. The development desired depends upon a harmonious organization of the transportation system. As trade stands in Canada to-day, only one-half of the total value of exports is attributable to products connected with the farm. The prices of Canada's agricultural products are determined in the world market, and it has to face there the competition of other countries. To put the matter in the shape of a concrete example, much attention is being devoted to the expansion of wheat production in the Northwest; and for years the settlement of the Northwest will be bound up with the exploitation of its grain-producing powers. One of the competitors Canada has to face is the Argentine Republic. The wheat production of that country, while it is not great as compared with that of the United States, shows such signs of increase as warrant the statement it will have a steadily increasing effect upon the world value of wheat. In point of railway transportation, Argentina is

well supplied—much better supplied, proportionately, than Canada. With one-third of the land area of Canada, it has sixty per cent. of the railway mileage of Canada. Although the ocean carriage from Argentina to Europe is long, at the same time the greater part of the wheat-producing area is situated not more than 150 miles from tide water. In consequence, the wheat has the advantage of a short rail haul, and at the same time, while it has the disadvantage of a longer ocean journey than Canadian wheat, it goes forward at low ocean rates.

The discussion with reference to railway regulation in Canada has been occupying the public attention for nearly thirty years. In the period succeeding Confederation, the earliest project for the more effective control of railways is contained in the bill introduced in 1873 by a representative of agricultural interests, Mr. Oliver, of Oxford County, Ontario. This bill provided for equal mileage rates. Its aim was to afford better regulation of traffic on railways. Like the contemporary legislation which Mr. Reagan, the father of the Texas Commission, was urging in the United States, this provided for no special tribunal to enforce the provisions of the proposed law. The subsequent history of the movement toward expansion of regulative policy in Canada; the discussion under the leadership of Mr. Dalton McCarthy, in the period 1880-86; the hosts of petitions which poured in from the counties of Ontario in favor of the law, which he modelled upon the English Railway Commission legislation; the report of the Royal Commission; the increasing of the regulative powers of the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, and the more recent movements for more effective regulation, are a part of the history of the regulative movement with which all should be acquainted.

The investigation which, under the direction of the Department of Railways and Canals, was conducted during the summer of 1901, found that the leading grievances existing were concerned with, (1) classification, (2) distributive rates, (3) car lot and less than car lot shipments, (4) excessive rates and discriminations, (5) competitive versus non-competitive rates, (6) American rates and Canadian rates, (7) minimum weights. Of the matters under these headings, that concerned with the relation existing between American rates and Canadian rates is especially complained of by the farmer. The situation of certain portions of Canada is such that nature makes the Canadian railway system an integral portion of the American railway system in regard to the movement of through traffic. Any policy which would deprive the Canadian railway of the right to participate in this traffic would not be to the general interests of Canada. At the same time there should be taken into consideration, as an essential factor in the export rate for the Canadian farmer, the geographical advantage he possesses as compared with his competitor in the Western States.

The argument for a more specialized method of regulation gathers cogency from the fact that the rate question is a compromise and that railway transportation occupies a position different from that of other enterprises. It is the basic industry on which the expansion of industry and the enhancement of values of the products of all industries depend. In its nature it is much more monopolistic than other businesses. Parliament has recognized the futility of endeavoring to regulate the railways through general regulations. It has given up its witless dependence upon the clause of the earlier years of the railway act which gave it power to regulate rates when dividends exceeding fifteen per cent. were earned. It has contented itself with assisting railway enterprise. The movements which transferred the work of regulation to the smaller body, the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, recognized the necessity of having a small body to deal with the matter of regulation. But although the useless body that some discussion would claim, and although it, and its presiding officer, has been especially active in connection with matters of regulation during the past six years, at the same time the political tenure of its members, and the quality of function possessed by them, places obstacles in the way of their dealing successfully with the matter of regulation. The arguments for regulation are so well established that there