

# Markets and Transportation

The following report of the Committee on Markets and Transportation was presented to the U.F.A. Convention

By Jas. Speakman, Chairman

We have to report on matters that have engaged the attention of the U.F.A. for some years and also on resolutions passed by the last convention and referred by the directors to this committee.

Some of the resolutions involved new legislation and we have found neither the Dominion nor the Provincial Government willing to take up new legislation on account of the war.

The convention called for a reduction in the selling commission and the handling charges on oats. This matter was also taken up by the Grain Growers' Associations in the other provinces and after a hard fight we are glad to be able to report that the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, the body of grain dealers who determine the various charges to be levied, finally decided, after the matter had been debated before the board of Grain Commissioners, to meet the representatives of the farmers, at which meetings the commission for selling oats was reduced to 5-8 of a cent per bushel, the new rate to take effect on September 1, 1915. This is undoubtedly a very important victory and will mean the saving of a considerable sum of money annually to the farmers of Western Canada.

A reduction on the handling charges on oats and barley in terminal elevators has been urged several times before the Grain Commission in Winnipeg and Calgary and the question is not yet settled. The grain growers all want the reduction, and if the elevator men continue to withhold their consent, it is probable that the Grain Commission will recommend a change in the Grain Act, fixing the handling charges at one cent for wheat, three-fourths cent for barley, and one-half cent for oats.

On the question of reciprocal demurrage on the railways, we have been in corres-

pondence with the chairman of the Railway Commission, who referred the matter to the Chief Traffic Officer, Mr. J. Nardwell. Mr. Nardwell replied on September 23: "This matter is now the subject of an investigation by the board." We have written again, asking to be informed as soon as the investigation is concluded.

On the subject of allowing longer time for loading grain, especially for farmers living at a distance, we have also corresponded with the Railway Commission. The reply was that the Commission has no jurisdiction in this matter, as the time for loading is fixed by the Canada Grain Act. It will be probably the best way to try to get this amendment in the Act thru our National Council.

## Stock on Railroad Crossings

The resolution endorsing the action of our National Council concerning cattle guards and the responsibility of railway companies for the killing of stock on their line, has had close attention, and some amendments to secure our object were accepted by the government and introduced into the "Act to consolidate and amend the Railway Act," which was read the first time in the Senate on the 20th of March, 1914. The first amendment is in section 280. In the present Act the section makes it unlawful for any stock to be at large on a highway within a half mile of a railway crossing "unless they are in charge of some competent person or persons, to prevent their loitering or stopping on such highway at such intersection or straying upon the railway." Under this section it was the duty of stock owners to keep their stock from straying on the line thru the crossing. Our contention was, that it was the duty of the railway to put in such cattle guards

as would make it impossible for stock to get on the line thru crossings. The section is amended by dropping the last words, "or straying upon the railway." After this amendment it is the duty of the railway to keep stock from straying upon the railway by proper fences and cattle guards. You will understand that it still remains unlawful for any stock to be at large on any highway within half a mile from its intersection with a level railway crossing without some person to herd them, and the railway is not responsible for the killing on the crossing itself of any stock that has been running at large contrary to this law. But if the stock has got on the line on either side of the crossing, the railway is liable for damage, unless the company can prove that the fences and cattle guards were efficient. The onus of proof now lies with the railway.

The company under the amended Act will be liable for damage for any stock hurt or killed anywhere on the line, except where gates were wilfully and negligently opened or left open, or when stock has been driven on to the line, or within railway enclosures, by any person not an employee or official of the railway company. In every case the proof that any such things were done, must be brought by the railway company. So far as we can judge, the proposed amendments would be a considerable improvement on the present Act. Unfortunately this long, complicated bill had not got thru all its stages in parliament when the war began, and was then left in suspense with much other legislation. But as this is a government bill, we may surely expect that the government will push it thru at the first opportunity. We have been unfortunate in this matter. In 1910, after much labor, we had got

amendments drafted for us by the late chairman of the Railway Commission, Judge Mabey, accepted by the government. But the opposition held up this legislation, and in the political turn-over on the Reciprocity question, it was lost. Now again we had got fairly reasonable amendments accepted by the government and the war is holding them up. We recommend that your executive should give special attention to this proposed new Railway Bill. It proposes amendments in many other directions that interest us, namely, relating to the construction of new railways, right of way, fencing along the lines of construction, and other matters.

## Freight Rates Reduced

Last year's report referred to the long struggle, going on for years to get fairer railway freight rates for Western Canada. We started the fight in 1909, and this year the Railway Commission at last issued its judgment, a large typewritten volume of 196 pages. It is difficult to give you the substance of it in a few words. The request made to the Railway Commission was, that railway rates in Eastern and Western Canada should be equal, excepting so far as it could be shown that working expenses were higher in the West than in the East. The Railway Commission admits that "the Canadian Pacific charges rates, as a whole, materially higher in the West than in the East," but decides that the company has a right to do so, because the law does not forbid discrimination, but only undue or unjust discrimination. But altho the main object of the long fight before the Railway Commission was defeated, a great many freight rate reductions were made in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Al-

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# Report on Pork Packing

The following report of the Pork Packing Committee was presented to the U.F.A. Convention

By E. Carswell, Chairman

In presenting our report we would first call your attention to the instructions received from you at our last convention in Lethbridge, which are found in our last year's report, and the adoption of the recommendation, that as far as possible, the system adopted by the Red Deer co-operative should be adopted by our local unions, that is, our members to list with the local secretary or some other responsible person the number of hogs they have for sale each month, or as often as required, and as soon as a car lot or more is listed, get a bid from our provincial or other buyers, and if satisfactory, order the hogs to be brought in for shipment on a certain date.

We also considered, that at points where the co-operative elevators were in operation, arrangements could be made for the man in charge to keep a list of all who wished to do business along these lines, and attend to the shipping, and seeing that it is impossible to get help from the government in the shape of pork packing plants this season, we recommend that the minister of agriculture be asked to render assistance if called upon, to help forward the shipping scheme, that should we not be able to get fair and proper bids from our provincial buyers, we proceed to ship if possible, in train lots, to the outside markets, and the department be asked to have the livestock commissioner take charge of shipments and see them put thru in the quickest possible time.

We recommend that the matter of the packing plant be taken up again on a proper basis at the next convention (1915), the present plan being considered in-operative.

Several questions were asked by Messrs. Warner and Speakman and replied to by Mr. Sheppard. Mr. Speakman ob-

jected to the statement contained in the last line and moved that the words "the present plan is considered in-operative" be struck out, and on the committee agreeing to leave this out, it was moved and seconded that the report be accepted and adopted.

## Difficulties Experienced

This plan had proved very successful at Red Deer, where there was a strong sentiment among the farmers in favor of co-operation and where the co-operative plan of dealing had been in force for some time. It had resulted in building up a very successful company and maintained prices of hogs at the top notch. In putting this method of buying in operation thruout the province, however, we found public sentiment decidedly against the co-operative plan. It was competition our farmers were looking for, and we were received, not as a company of their own creation, to be supported and built up by their patronage, but as another buyer for their hogs, competing with the local buyer and sometimes with the hog raiser's sympathies decidedly in favor of the local man.

Arrangements were made with the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company to take up this work, using their agents as buyers, as outlined in the report. It was well into March before we could arrange to get started, and our first car of hogs came from Granum and was bought on the co-operative plan, paying the farmers as high a price as possible, less 5 per cent., any excess profits after paying cost of operation to be returned to the farmer who supplied the hogs in stock in the packing plant.

On the sale of this car we lost four

dollars and some cents. I believe that the farmers who furnished the hogs for this car were well satisfied with the returns they received, but I also believe that other farmers, particularly those belonging to the Association, considered that we were simply robbing the farmers who sold us hogs of the 5 per cent. retained in this case, and asked us to quote them a net price, the same as the other buyers were doing, without taking into consideration a future refund, either in stock in the company or otherwise. This appeared to be the feeling in practically every point where we were doing business, and about the middle of May it was necessary, if we were to accomplish anything, to discontinue doing business on the 5 per cent. basis and offer a net price that we could pay. Up to this time we had handled 48 cars, or about 3,300 hogs, and had operated at a small loss.

## Successful Change

As soon as we changed our method of buying we made great progress, handling up to June 30, when the elevator year closed and stock was taken, a total of 141 cars or about 11,000 hogs. During July we seemed to have got into our stride and did remarkably well, handling 66 cars or 3,819 hogs. August started out well also, but the war breaking out caused the banks to restrict credit and raise the rate of exchange, which with some railway difficulties caused the American buyers to withdraw from our market, which resulted in a glut and the price dropped accordingly. September showed no improvement. At this time we placed a man on the market to watch grades and weights, and in October, to try and help out the situation, we sent a shipment East, trying Winnipeg,

Toronto and Montreal. Outside of somewhat relieving the pressure on the Calgary yards, it was not successful. We did no better than if we had sold at Calgary. There was a widespread impression abroad that losing the American buyers from our market was the main cause of the drop in prices, and one of the reasons put forth for their withdrawal was that the railway would not furnish decked cars. We took this matter up and our late president, Mr. Tregillus, was instructed to wait on Mr. Bury at Winnipeg and place the matter before him from our standpoint. I am glad to inform you that he was successful and decked cars are now furnished by the C.P.R. at Calgary. This was the last work he was able to do for us. We were now being approached by farmers who were bringing in individual cars of their own and asked us to place their stock on the market for them. We decided on December 1 to do so and opened an office and now are doing a regular commission business on the stockyards at Calgary, as well as looking after our own stuff. We also have a man at Edmonton and we hope to develop there as well.

During December we handled 72 cars, 6,300 hogs, which brought the total for the 9 months, during which we have been operating, to 466 cars or 32,706 hogs, or an average of 900 hogs per week. Up to the end of August it looked as tho we would make an average of 1,000 hogs a week, but the slump in September and October, when our receipts dropped to 500 hogs a week, killed any prospect of reaching the required number. Besides the hogs, we have handled 22 cars of cattle, 459 head, and 6 cars of sheep, 1,078 head. On one car of sheep we got stuck, the market dropping on us 1/2c.

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