



ALBERTA SECTION

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by Edward J. Fream, Secretary, Inisfail, Alta.

IS THE GUIDE READ?

Some time ago a few persons entered into a discussion on the value of special departments and the opinion was expressed that as far as the other provinces were concerned the provincial departments were useless. The writer took the opposite view and stated that the provincial sections of THE GUIDE were read all over the country and that under no consideration should these be dropped. As this was only "talk," nothing further was thought of the matter, but a striking proof has been received lately that the Alberta section is read in other places besides Alberta. The writer had occasion to ask for information regarding the co-operative plan as in operation in Denmark and Switzerland. Replies were received from readers of THE GUIDE in Ontario. Mention was also made that information had been received relating to a flour mill suitable for small millers and for farmers and the offer was made to supply the information to any person interested. Several enquiries have been received and nearly all of them from outside the province of Alberta, mostly from Saskatchewan. Both these articles appeared among the ordinary news of the Alberta section and were not displayed in any way. Is this not a striking proof that THE GUIDE is read?

E. J. FREAM.

THE CATTLE INDUSTRY

Under date of April 15, the Hon. Frank Oliver, minister of the interior, wrote the following, which is of interest to the Alberta farmers especially as the chilled meat proposition is being brought to the front again:

"With reference to the resolution on the chilled meat industry, I would say that while there is no doubt that if the production of live stock in the west were such that a regular and plentiful supply could be guaranteed, the establishment of a chilled meat industry on business lines would probably be of great value to the country, the conditions at present are scarcely such as to warrant the government in taking active steps on the subject.

"Judging from the experience of other communities similarly situated, it is likely that a period of from ten to twenty years will elapse before the Grain Growers of the new provinces will begin to fully realize the necessity of keeping stock. The growing of grain is a much easier proposition and so long as the present prices of cereals are maintained the western farmers will be very slow to go in for other lines of husbandry. If the people refuse to furnish the raw material there is no use blinking the fact that it will be useless to establish a large plant, only to have it be idle during at least a great part of the year. Our eastern packing houses are at present being conducted under great difficulty owing to shortage of material, and the same condition of affairs is likely to prevail very soon in the west, unless the farmers as a body decide to raise more stock than they are now doing.

"Under these circumstances the department of agriculture does not feel justified in recommending that the government furnish the somewhat extensive guarantee involved in either of the schemes which were submitted to the minister of agriculture last year, by the promoters who came here from Edmonton."

Yours faithfully,
FRANK OLIVER."

It is true this letter was addressed to the secretary of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, and while the conditions as mentioned might exist in the eastern provinces, it is not so in Alberta. Here we have been meat raisers for so long that the meat industry has always seemed the important one, and it is only during the last few years that grain growing has become prominent. It is not so very long ago since the impression was abroad that a large portion of Alberta was unfit for anything except cattle grazing purposes. This impression is now gone forever for the cattle plains have been turned into wheat fields, and it is rumored that

ere long cattle will be almost as great a rarity as buffalo upon these plains. To the north, however, we have the great mixed farming districts, and here cattle are still plentiful, as it is found that the man who is prospering is he who is feeding his grain on the farm and turning off the finished product in the shape of butter, beef and hogs.

Unfortunately, however, conditions are to some extent changing even in the mixed farming district, and too many calves, young heifers and cows have gone to the slaughter house in the last few years. This can be traced to the lack of markets. At the present time the beef industry of Alberta is practically in the hands of three firms, and they decide upon the price which shall be paid for the finished article, in most cases paying no attention to the market conditions. This price is generally as near to four cents, live weight, with the inevitable five per cent. shrinkage, as it is possible to purchase the animals, and is more often under the four cent mark than over. Then, again, there is no discrimination between the grain fed beef and the hay fed beef. One farmer will keep his beef steers in a warm stable and give them every attention, while another will let his bunch run out at the straw stack. When the buyer comes around he offers both farmers the same price and when the first man complains, he is told that he will make it up on the increased weight of his cattle. There is

effect that nothing but government inspected meat was for sale in the shop. The small man is not able to display this card and is therefore placed at a disadvantage at once. This has thrown the whole export business in the hands of a few firms and the result is chaos. The farmers are not getting the prices they should and are going out of the business.

No complaint is made against the Inspection Act; the trouble is with the system it has created, and the point arises, if it is necessary for all meat exported out of the province to be inspected why should not the meat intended for consumption in the province be inspected? Surely we are as good as our neighbors and if they were in danger before getting inspected meat we are equally in danger at the present time and are entitled to every bit as much consideration. How can this be remedied? The answer seems to be by a system of municipal abattoirs, where all the meat intended for consumption could be slaughtered. This is one of the questions which will be discussed at the western convention, and we should give the matter a little thought in the meantime. At the present every small butcher has his own slaughter house which is generally not an up-to-date one, and the number of these houses corresponds with the number of butchers in the town. There is no chance for saving and the possibilities are more for an extravagant and

AN INVITATION TO VANCOUVER

Matters in connection with the proposed convention are progressing apace and it is hoped that the definite date will be announced within the next two weeks. From all over the two provinces messages of appreciation and sympathy with the movement have been received and it is anticipated that when the convention is held it will be a very representative one, probably the best ever held in western Canada.

Vancouver, of course, is strongly interested, and the following letter has been received from the secretary of the Vancouver Exhibition Association:

"I have to inform you that your circular letter dated March 24th was read at the meeting of the executive council of the Vancouver Exhibition Association on Friday last, when the following resolution was passed unanimously:—

"That this association is in hearty sympathy with the objects of the United Farmers of Alberta, as expressed in their circular letter dated March 24th, and that they be invited to hold their conference in Vancouver, during the exhibition week, commencing Monday, August 15th, and that the president of the Vancouver Exhibition Association represent our association at such conference."

great need for some competitive market, which will bring to the farmer who looks after his cattle the price his stock is worth.

Again, a few years ago there were, in almost every town in Alberta, one or two small butchers or merchants who had gone to the trouble of working up a trade at some inland points in British Columbia, with the result that they were shipping out a few carcasses of beef and pork weekly to hotels, small butchers, lumber camps, and others. Then the government in its wisdom decided that meat should be inspected and the Meat Inspection Act was passed. No doubt this was a necessary act and it is only right that consumers should know that the meat they are eating is fit for human consumption, but it was not fair to the producer that he should be placed at the mercy of a few firms at practically only a moment's notice. These small men lost all their customers in British Columbia at one time, as they were unable to comply with the conditions of the Inspection Act, which state that the meat must be stamped by an inspector who was present when the animal was killed. As the inspectors are appointed by the government and they must be qualified veterinarians, only the large packing houses are in a position to have the inspectors and this works a hardship, not only on the small local men, who were formerly exporting meat, but also on the small independent men trying to do business in opposition to these large firms. Take a look in the butcher shops of the big firms in the larger cities and you will find a placard to the

wasteful system of slaughtering.

When this idea was broached a short time ago the question was raised that the expense would be too great, and that men who are qualified to act as inspectors are too few. If the work now done in from two to six small buildings can be done in one, surely this will eliminate expense to some extent, and as for the inspectors there will be no need to have one in every town. It would be an easy matter to arrange for regular slaughtering days and for one inspector to have charge of the slaughter houses or abattoirs in several towns. This would ensure the appointment of good men and would keep them busy after they are appointed. This is the condition of affairs in Alberta and there must be a remedy at an early date or the prophecy of Pat Burns that in a few years beef will have to be imported into Alberta will be fulfilled.

This, of course, applies mainly to the dead meat trade to the west. There still remains the solving of the problem of the export business eastward. At present the beef is shipped on the hoof and a large amount of freight is paid on roughage which should remain on this side, and be worked here into valuable by-products. To protect our export business we need a thorough meat chilling system, and this system must be forthcoming from the government. We care not for the schemes submitted last year; they provided for the guaranteeing of bonds of a private company. We would just as soon see this a government enterprise from start to finish and when the Dominion depart-

UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA

PRESIDENT:
JAMES BOWER - - Red Deer

VICE-PRESIDENT:
W. J. TREGILLUS - - Calgary

SECRETARY-TREASURER:
E. J. FREAM - - Inisfail

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ment of agriculture refuse to move on account of the request for an extensive guarantee the officers are merely grabbing hold of a pretext in order to shelve the problem for the time being.

The cattle business of Alberta is a in a very unstable condition at the present time and to revive it prompt and decisive measures must be taken. These measures call for the establishment of a local system which will put the small man on an equal footing with the combine, a complete chilled meat system, no matter if it is only a small one at the start so that the present wasteful system of shipping on the hoof can be eliminated, and last, but decidedly not least, the establishment of a competitive market where the farmer can get value for the goods he has to dispose of. Probably the last will be provided by the establishment of the first.

E. J. FREAM.

THE VALUE OF CO-OPERATION

The report of the bacon commission is an interesting one, and for a long time to come it will be possible to refer to same for data. Not the least interesting is the statistics given, showing the average price per cut received for the years named and the seven months ending July 31, 1909, with the balance always very much in favor of the Danish farmer:

	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909
Denmark	\$7.00	6.19	7.41	8.05	7.41	6.85	7.24
Canada	5.81	4.98	6.00	6.65	6.50	5.90	7.20

C.N.R. PAYS FIRE DAMAGES

Judgment was given in the Supreme Court at Edmonton, at the last sittings, in favor of two Vermillion farmers, H. O. Woods and A. W. Roseborough, who brought action against the Canadian Northern Railway to recover damages for the destruction of property on their farms by a fire which started from the C.N.R. tracks on September 25, 1909. Each brought action against the railway company for \$1,000 damages. The railway company denied that the fire had been started through the negligence of its servants and endeavored to prove that they could not be held liable as all statutory regulations, such as fireguards, etc., had been complied with. On the conclusion of the arguments in the first cases, Chief Justice Sifton gave judgment for the plaintiff, Roseborough, for \$721.50 and costs, and for the plaintiff, Woods, for \$771.50 and costs.

RELATING TO PRE-EMPTIONS

The executive of Rose View Union met on April 23 and the following resolutions were adopted after lengthy discussions concerning the different subjects.

"We, the Rose View Union, do strongly endorse the resolution of Edmonton Union in regard to consolidated schools as we believe that every district should have the power to handle its own affairs in this direction."

"Resolved, that this union endorse the proposition of Lakeford Union in regard to the erection of a large capacity, first class, flour mill to be owned and operated by members of the U.F.A. only, and would suggest that a most suitable place for same would be found in the Carbon district, which grows the best spring wheat in the northwest, and having all necessary natural resources to run same, viz., coal and water.

"Resolved, that seeing the unjust way in which the pre-emptions have been distributed in the districts where same