

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, March 20th, 1912

IT RESTS WITH THE SENATE

Representatives of the three farmers' associations are now in Ottawa interviewing the Senate in regard to the Canada Grain Bill, which has passed the House of Commons and been sent up to the Senate for ratification. The representatives of the farmers will ask the Senators to eliminate the clause of the Act which places the car distribution in the hands of the commissioners and thus removes the protection which is now given by the car order book. In case the Senate does not feel inclined to eliminate this clause and send the Bill back to the House of Commons, it is to be hoped that they will throw out the entire Bill. The old Grain Act is much to be preferred to the one which has been passed by the House of Commons. The new Grain Bill delivers the farmers into the hands of the railway and the elevator companies while the old Act has the car distribution clauses for which the farmers fought for many years, and which proved such a tremendous protection to them in recent years. The new Bill is a distinct betrayal of the Grain Growers, and the Senate has now an opportunity to show its value to the common people.

HELP PREMIER SIFTON

The Board of Directors of the United Farmers of Alberta have placed before the government of that province the recommendation of the annual convention, to the effect that legislation should be enacted providing for the establishment of a co-operative elevator system in Alberta similar to that now in operation in Saskatchewan. Some slight alterations will no doubt be required in the legislation to make it entirely applicable to Alberta conditions, but this is something that can be easily arranged. The directors of the U.F.A. have not found Premier Sifton to be very favorable to their proposition. In fact, the leader of the government appears anxious not to make any move whatever in the line of acquiring or providing interior elevators at the present time. A splendid opportunity is now before Alberta in the elevator matter. The province is just beginning to develop as a grain growing district, and the future will see a tremendous amount of grain shipped both to the east and to the west. There is comparatively a small number of elevators in Alberta, and a great many will need to be built every year henceforth, so that it would be advisable to have the new system inaugurated as soon as possible, and thus avoid competition. If the Alberta Government can evolve a system of elevators that will be more satisfactory than the Saskatchewan system there is no doubt but that the farmers of Alberta would be glad to have it, provided that the control of the elevators was left in the hands of the farmers who use them and pay for them. The first annual report of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator System has not yet been made, as the year is not ended, but judging by the feeling of the shareholders of the Company, and of the farmers who have shipped grain through the elevators it is giving splendid satisfaction throughout the province, and certainly should command the careful consideration of the Alberta Government. The Manitoba system is not giving such general satisfaction, although there is no reason why publicly owned elevators in Manitoba should not be entirely satisfactory if their management was divorced from partisan politics. In order that public ownership of public utilities may be a complete success there must be also public ownership of governments. The farmers of Alberta who are anxious to support the directors of

the U.F.A. in their recommendation to the government, can do so very well by bringing the matter before Premier Sifton by letter. If the members of the U.F.A. of one accord would set forth their views on the elevator question in letters, and send them to Premier Sifton at once, it would have a good effect upon that gentleman and would indicate to him that the farmers of Alberta are interested in the question. The government of Alberta is supposed to serve the province in accordance with the views of the people. Now is the time to give the Government the views of the people.

MR. FOSTER'S NEW ROLE

Our readers will see in our Ottawa letter this week that Hon. George E. Foster has been handing out advice to the editor of The Guide. He says he reads The Guide carefully but doesn't always agree with it. That is a hopeful sign. If all the readers of The Guide agreed with all it says there would be little use for such a journal. Mr. Foster says if he were editor of The Guide he "would try to be more hopeful." He "would not paint the whole situation so black." This is exceedingly interesting, and we are very glad to have Mr. Foster's suggestions. He only omitted one important item, namely, that the Western farmers should go in for mixed farming. His scheme would then have been complete. We imagine that if Mr. Foster were editor of The Guide he would explain the economic injustices which burden the West in the same way that the immigration literature explains the 45 and 50 degree dips below zero in our climate, namely, that the air is so dry one does not feel the cold. We should like to see Mr. Foster on a homestead fifty miles from the railway, living in a one-roomed log shack, paying from 50 to 100 per cent. above the market value for what he buys and taking from 25 to 50 per cent. less than the market value for what he sells, cut off from social pleasures and rearing a family 25 miles from a doctor or a church or a school. We would like to see him buying his tools for labor on the instalment plan with interest at 10 and 12 per cent. and then being told that he was receiving a great favor. When his three years of residence was past and his patent secured we should like to see the look of joy in his face as he raised a loan on his farm at 10 per cent., and was refused any accommodation whatever at the bank and the implement companies and his other creditors demanded payment of their bills or took a chattel mortgage on everything but his wife in settlement. We should like to see his countenance when, on a beautiful day in August he smiled at his acres of waving wheat, only to see the whole in a few minutes laid flat by hail. Or we would like to see him haul his wagon load of frozen wheat to the elevator taking two or three days for the round trip and find no one to offer him a cent for the product of his year's toil, while at home his wife and family waited the homecoming of the father to bring them food and clothing, and this when the thermometer was hovering 40 degrees below zero. And then if when these trifles had failed to daunt his hopeful soul, he read in his newspaper that his government had decided that the farmers were so prosperous that they should contribute from their easily gotten wealth a free gift to the manufacturers, financiers and railway magnates; if, after he read this, and knew it to be true, his soul was still bounding with hope, we would then grade him No. 1 Hard, and he would be of the tried and tested timber of the Western pioneer. Mr. Foster's environment has been such that

he knows little or nothing of actual Western conditions. There is little need to legislate for the prosperous man; it is the man who is struggling against heavy odds who needs protection from selfish interests. It should be the aim of men in Mr. Foster's high position and possessed of his intellectual gifts to make life a little sweeter to the less fortunate, and to give them an equal opportunity with others in the battle of life. We try to be hopeful but we realize that the Western farmer in the battle for his rights is getting mighty little help from sources from which he has every right to expect help. The Western farmers have nothing but themselves to depend upon and when they fully realize that fact they will be on the high road to take a more hopeful view of the future.

THE WRONG MOVE

There is considerable feeling in evidence in the West in favor of secession from Eastern Canada and the establishment of a separate crown colony within the empire, west of the Great Lakes. The aim of such a move would be to free the West from the domination of Special Privilege in the East. We cannot see very much to be gained from this agitation for several reasons. In the first place the people of the West have at the present time little, if any, more control over their own provincial governments than they have over the federal government.

Then again, peaceable secession would be impossible without a favorable majority in the House of Commons, which there will never be. An appeal to arms is not considered by sane people. Furthermore, the Western people have no control over their own representatives in Parliament. It is no time to quit and talk secession when we happen to be getting a little the worst of it. Let us get control of our local and federal members through the Initiative, Referendum and Recall and we can put Special Privilege on the run. The common people in the East pay their tribute with no better grace than the Western people. Special Privilege is on the defensive. Let us strengthen our organization and continue our educational work and a few years will bring about wonderful reforms.

BOUNTIES NOT RENEWED

The renewal of the bounties on iron and steel, for which the manufacturers of those products are clamoring, has for the present at least been refused by the Dominion Government. This is good news, for if the bounties had been renewed it would have meant the gift of from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 a year to Special Privilege at the expense of the people as a whole. It is asserted by those who are in a position to know that up to a few weeks ago the Dominion Government had decided to grant a renewal of the bounties, but in the face of the storm of protest from members representing rural constituencies and from the Grangers of the East and the Grain Growers of the West, the Government has reconsidered its decision and the matter is now left over until the Tariff Commission has investigated the situation and made a report. A striking illustration of the point of view of those who are in favor of high protection and the bounty system was furnished by the speech of W. F. Cockshutt, M.P., who though a supporter of the Government, protested against its decision announced by Hon. W. T. White in his budget speech to make no tariff changes until after the Tariff Commission has made investigations. Two million dollars, Mr. Cockshutt said, would have paid the bounties