

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, February 7th, 1912

## RAILWAYS HAVE GIVEN WAY

Farmers with barley and flax to ship will be glad to learn that on March 7 the Fort William and Port Arthur rates will apply to Minneapolis and Duluth on all lines in the West, including the Great Northern, from all three provinces. This announcement was made this week by the C.N.R. and C.P.R. These tariffs have already been filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission and will come into effect upon the statutory notice of thirty days. The C.P.R. have also filed a through tariff on wheat and oats from all three provinces over all lines, to become effective on the same date. Their present through tariff applies only to Saskatchewan points. Barley and flax shipped after March 7 to Minneapolis will have no restrictions imposed upon it. Premier Borden is now in communication with the Interstate Commerce Commission to have these tariffs come into effect at once to save the Western grain, so that further announcements may be expected at any time. It would be well to watch the daily papers. In addition to the above information, the C.N.R. announces that its new through rate on flax and barley in bond to Duluth will be effective on February 13. The C.P.R. is now negotiating on this matter. Both railways state that all foreign cars may be used for shipments to the south and that if there are not enough foreign cars, local cars may be used. The railways have finally done what they can to open up the southern market. The duty must still be paid. Only Parliament can change that. Those who can hold their flax and barley should do so till March 7 in order to take advantage of the Minneapolis market.

## THE BATTLE IS NOT YET WON

Judging by the correspondence and by the resolutions that we have received from the farmers during the past week, the country is thoroughly alive to the latest attempt now being made by the elevator interests to win back the special privileges they enjoyed a few years ago. There is no doubt but that the elevator and allied interests were the instigators of the action of the Credit Men's association in sending out the petitions for the suspension of the car distribution clauses of the Grain Act. No doubt many of the business men behind the move were innocently led into the action, but the bankers and the elevator interests in Winnipeg were certainly wise. They knew that if the car distribution clauses were placed in the hands of the Railway Commission it would be but the thin end of the wedge to get back to the old days. No farmer who has been in the West for a decade will forget the short weights, low grade, heavy dockage and wide spread between street and track prices by which the elevators bled the grain growers most shamefully. The present system, which gives the farmers and the elevators equal rights in respect to cars, is simply a square deal. The present blockade is not due at all to the result of this car distribution. It is due to the almost criminal neglect on the part of the railways to provide transportation facilities. These railway companies were powerful factors in keeping the southern market closed, and now they are helpless in the face of the demand for cars. Yet the farmers have no redress against the railways. The farmer gets twenty-four hours in which to load his car and pays \$1.00 per day for further delay. The railways leave loaded cars on the tracks for weeks and pay nothing. Reciprocal demurrage would encourage the Canadian railways to bring in foreign cars and to exert themselves to

handle the traffic that is offered them. But we find that C.P.R. officials are now encouraging the Dominion government to change the present car distribution system and are claiming that it is the cause of the blockade. This is merely a dodge to quiet the outraged people of Western Canada who have been penned into a corner where there is no escape and are being robbed of the result of their year's labor. If the railways were properly equipped there would have been no blockade. The farmers will do well to resist any change in the car distribution provisions. The warehouse commissioner has the power under the Grain Act to suspend the car distribution clauses and provide cars to the elevators out of their turn where it is necessary to save grain that is out of condition. This discretionary power in the hands of the warehouse commissioner might be widened to allow farmers with tough grain in danger of spoiling to secure cars immediately. But such privileges should only be granted upon the receipt of a sworn declaration that grain is in absolute danger of spoiling. The present car distribution system should not be altered as it has proven the farmers' safeguard against the extortion of the elevator interests. The experience of the West with the Railway Commission in regard to the express rate decision was decidedly unsatisfactory. Until the Railway Commission recants and utterly repudiates the ruling that the West must pay 66-2-3 higher express rates than the East, the Western people will have little confidence in that body. All the batteries of the elevator combine and allied interests are now playing upon the government at Ottawa to break down the car distribution clauses of the Grain Act. The farmers of the West must be active if they would save themselves from a humiliating defeat. Personal letters and resolutions from local branches should be sent to the local member at Ottawa and also to Hon. George E. Foster, minister of trade and commerce, or to Premier Borden, demanding that the request of the elevator interests be not granted. The officers of the Western farmers' associations are now in Ottawa fighting for the protection of the Western farmers, but they will need help to save the day. The struggle will be sharp but brief, and the Western farmers must not be caught napping. The farmers' representatives at Ottawa are also pressing the government to take over all the elevators at the lake front and thus put an end forever to the graft that has cost the grain growers so much in past years. All the help that can be sent to support them will be needed. Personal letters from farmers to their own member and to the minister of trade and commerce are the best means of showing the feeling of the farmers on these most vital questions.

## MAY IT PROVE TRUE

Rumors are in circulation that the Dominion government is negotiating with the United States government for reciprocity in a more restricted form than that which came before the people on September 21. The government has issued a denial, but even if the rumor were true the denial would be expected. The people of Western Canada will hope that there is some truth in the rumor. The great majority of the common people who opposed reciprocity in September did so because they wanted to upset the late government. Aside from the reciprocity question, the record of the late government was certainly not democratic, so that mourning over the change of government is confined largely to those who were enjoying

political plums. But now that the election is past and the new government is in power, the welfare of the farmers of Canada should be considered on a business basis. This year with a crop of 165,000,000 bushels of wheat in the West, the transportation facilities are completely demoralized, and as a result, business is almost at a standstill. Farmers cannot pay their bills because they cannot sell their grain. The consequence is that every line of business is suffering. Nearly every business depends upon the farmers. Farmers are hauling their grain from five to twenty-five miles to town to find the elevators full, no cars available and no one to offer them a cent for it. Wheat, which is gold on the world's markets, is utterly worthless because of the helplessness of the railways. And the weather this year has been exceptionally bad. What would have happened with a good crop? What will the future be? Under anything like favorable circumstances there will be 300,000,000 bushels of wheat in the West in 1914—only two years hence. The present Canadian railways will not be able to handle it and even if they could, the terminal elevators will be inadequate and the railways to the east will be as congested as at present. The Hudson Bay railway cannot be completed within four years, even under ordinary circumstances; and if it has to do duty for one or two more election campaigns, it will be at least ten years before this route is opened to the European markets. The Western route will help considerably if any power can be found to force the C.P.R. to lower their extortionate rates to the Pacific coast. But with all this the conditions of the present time are bound to be repeated. A crop of 300,000,000 bushels of wheat in 1914, with favorable conditions, will mean nearly 400,000,000 bushels in 1915. What is to become of it? Who will answer? To the south of us is a market that will absorb immense quantities of our wheat, but it is closed. In two years there will be 100,000,000 people just across the line to whom we could dispose of a large portion of our wheat. But our manufacturers, financiers, railway magnates and the barons of Special Privilege say "No!" They point to the British market. But 200,000,000 bushels of wheat practically supplies the demand of the British market, and even for that we have to compete with the Argentine, where the crop is increasing even more rapidly than in Canada. Russia and Australia are also pouring their wheat into the British market. The British market will not take more than 50,000,000 of Canadian wheat. Now, while there are no political orators touring the country to confuse the people, is the time to face this most serious question. It is a mighty problem. Immigrants are pouring into the West at an enormous rate. With the advent of the traction engine and the gang plow, the growing of wheat will increase more rapidly than ever before in the world's history. We cannot stop it. What is to be done with the grain? Those who have experienced the days of thirty-cent wheat will see it again in Western Canada before another five years unless we find wider markets than we have now. Are the farmers who live in the West to be driven into a corner and bled of the product of their labor because of the greed of a handful of men who have controlled this country for the last generation? The government of Canada must answer that question. It is not a party question. It is as far above party as right is above wrong. The people of the West need relief today, and they will need it more in years to come. They want justice. They care not whether it comes from a Conservative government or a Liberal