

Regina Convention Papers

The following address was rendered at the Regina convention by F. M. Gates, of Fillmore, president of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association:

The occasion of the tenth annual meeting of our association finds it in an increasingly flourishing condition; stronger, more united and more determined to achieve those things which will benefit ourselves, our homes and our country.

The season of 1910 may be classed as good, though, as is to be expected in a province embracing so large an area as ours, the yield varied according to the rainfall; the price obtaining for the leading grains makes it a remunerative year and sustains our trade in the country of our adoption.

One feature, which the experience of the past year emphasizes, is the futility of haphazard methods of cultivation and the necessity, and following success, of thorough farming. The financial situation shows easier conditions and there exists a spirit of healthy confidence which spells progress in all industries and a firmness untainted by undue speculation or boom.

We were all sorry to learn of the serious illness of our Honorary President, E. N. Hopkins, and we rejoice that he is now convalescent, though absent in a warmer clime.

The Elevator Commission

At the time of our last convention the government had arranged for an elevator commission and had undertaken to give our association ample representation thereon. They appointed Messrs. Langley and Green, and your directors, on being called together, passed a resolution endorsing the appointment of those two members, who have already on previous occasions represented our association at Ottawa and Regina. That commission has completed its work and the report is in your hands. Owing to the delay in issuing this report your executive decided to leave a pronouncement upon it to this convention when the subject can be discussed thoroughly, and any action decided upon be authoritative and unquestionable.

This course is the more desirable, in as much as the proposals, laid before the commission by your executive in a lengthy and carefully prepared memorandum, are declared to be impracticable, and other proposals, of an entirely different nature, are put forward as a remedy for the evils complained of. These other proposals are embodied in a bill which is now before the legislature of the province and this is your opportunity to declare in favor of or against it, or to make such recommendations in respect of it as you may deem wise and desirable.

Advantage was taken of the opportunity afforded by the visit of the Dominion premier to impress upon him the views of our members in regard to those public questions which peculiarly affect us as grain growers. The manner in which this was done was particularly effective and the results were seen in the increased interest taken in our association by the world at large and by our own members.

Canadian Council

The formation of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, which was consummated at Prince Albert and in which our association readily joined, has been amply justified by the notable results achieved in unifying the delegation to Ottawa, which proved that the farmers of this Dominion are broad-minded enough to take common ground for the general good. Without question it was heavy shot that was broad-sided into the ship of state at Ottawa and not without effect. But you must remember the first shot does not mean the end of the struggle; the guns must be re-loaded and re-fired, you must make sure that your ammunition is sound.

I congratulate you upon the influence which the representations made to the Dominion government evidently exerted in directing the trend of negotiations with the United States. The statement made by Mr. Fielding, while

The Tenth Annual Convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was held at Regina, February 7, 8 and 9

President's Address

disappointing in that the reduction of duty on agricultural implements is trivial, cannot but be regarded favorably by the agriculturalists of this province. It is distinctly a step forward and at least establishes that changes are both necessary and possible. You may be trusted not to forget that there are other questions still open, and not to relax effort to accomplish a satisfactory settlement of them.

The resolutions you passed at Prince Albert were submitted to the government concerned. In the case of those referring to provincial matters Mr. Hawkes had a personal interview with the premier, a report of which will be made to you later by Mr. Hawkes.

Motions to Be Considered

Motions will be submitted to you having for their object the facilitating the business of conventions and the creation

advantage, the need is for men of vigor, men of broad mind and men who are in a position to devote a considerable amount of time to the association. Such men exist among us and it is your task to discover them.

Under Mr. Green's able direction organization work has made steady progress, as will be shown in his report. An experiment was made in holding district meetings in the fall, preceded by a conference of directors at over thirty points throughout the province, which proved fairly successful and if put upon a permanent basis may be expected to develop even better attendance and interest. The life membership is steadily growing and cannot be too forcibly urged on those of our members who are in a position to take it up.

As our finances warrant, organization needs to be pushed with greater vigor



Home of G. Cole, Elkhorn, Man.

of district councils, as with the growth of the association it will shortly become impossible to obtain a satisfactory expression of views from the large assemblage which would result from the present basis of representation, namely, 1 delegate for every 10 members.

I commend to your careful consideration the task of selecting officers for the ensuing year. Personally I have served on your executive for five years and feel that the introduction of some fresh blood might be beneficial. At the present stage, when the spirit of progress is active and the disposition is strongly developed to sink political affinities and co-operate for the general

than ever. There is more and more and more necessity, when our program is so ambitious to have the support of all farmers, and I appeal to our members, whether officers of an association or not, to make every effort to enlist those of their neighbors who are still out of the ranks.

In conclusion I desire to thank the men who have actively helped our cause during the past year and especially those members who have been associated with me on the executive and from whom I have received the greatest help and kindness. May this year prove to you all a year of prosperity and real progress.

Secretary's Report

The following report of the secretary-treasurer and organizer of the S. G. G. A. was presented to the Regina convention by F. W. Green:

As I endeavor to present to you my second annual report, after serving you for nearly two years as organizer and one and one-half as secretary-treasurer pro

tem. I say, "pro tem" because I have already held these positions very much longer than I anticipated when taking the office, and as this is most likely the last time I shall address you, at least in this capacity, I crave your indulgence in what may seem a somewhat lengthy and wandering report in order that it

may clearly appear what I, at least, have been aiming at.

This office, as you are aware, carries as per the Constitution, section No. 41, the office and power of managing director, throwing more power in the hands of, and responsibility on the shoulders of, this, possibly, than any other official. You will doubtless agree with me that it is getting to be a more increasingly difficult office to fill as the association grows in numbers and importance and the questions it is engaged in become more numerous and intricate; requiring more time, patience and wisdom on the part of the person holding the office. In fact, practically all my time has been given to it since I was appointed.

The work on the Elevator commission this year, which your directors thought I should take on also, and on which I did my best, made the whole office extremely difficult and arduous. I mention this because many new delegates may be here to-day who perhaps do not fully realize what this particular official has to perform.

Growth of Association

I should like first to give you a few facts as to our growth. At the second annual meeting of this association the paid-up membership was eight hundred and fifty-two. At the fourth held in Regina, Dec. 1904, we had nine hundred and forty-two members. At the fifth held in Moose Jaw we had fourteen hundred and thirty-four members. At the sixth held in Regina, 1907, we had one thousand nine hundred and sixty-one. At the seventh held in Saskatoon, 1908, we had one thousand nine hundred and sixty-two. At the eighth held in Weyburn, Feb. 1909, the membership had risen to three thousand one hundred and thirty-six. Shortly after this I was appointed as organizer. I knew nothing of such work, but started as best I might. I was immediately notified by the secretary that there were no funds available for the work. In August of the same year the secretary resigned because of ill health and pressure of private business, and I was appointed to fill his place as secretary-treasurer. The books came to me without a cent of cash in the treasury, and between three and five hundred dollars of outstanding accounts. At the end of that year, 1909, we had gained in membership until we had nearly six thousand, had paid off the debts, and had a cash balance in the treasury of \$125.15. This year we have added to these some four thousand new members, this being more than the number ever attained in all the eight years of previous operations, and we had a cash balance in our treasury, Dec. 31st, 1910, of over \$4,000. Also close to \$7000 in the trust fund. Add to this our office equipment, and we are to-day worth in cash close to \$13,000 with a paid-up membership of over ten thousand. For all this I think I may be pardoned for taking this opportunity of thanking the many large-hearted men; yes, and women too, for I believe many of them have helped; and especially the officers of the central and different local associations, and others who have worked faithfully as members, and to whom the present splendid status of this association is largely due.

I am quite well aware, however, that this is a small showing in the eyes of manufacturers, boards of trade, lumber dealers, and licensed victuallers' associations, who have much more money and larger membership fees, but they should remember that we, the pioneers, settling up the land started in many instances with nothing but a bare homestead, having the land to break up, stable to build, wells to dig. Plodding alone, the only partner being the elements, and years of waiting for success. Meantime these different institutions, headed by cunning, trained business men, with plenty of capital, were selling goods; it may be lumber, groceries, shoes, clothes, implements, and in some few cases, tobacco from behind a high protective tariff wall; while during this same period of struggling, testing, experimenting and waiting, our members were selling their product in an open competitive market, and often having hardly enough left to pay for a membership in our association.

Need Permanent Organization

These and other things fully convinced me that we farmers need, and the country

Direct Legislation: or The Initiative and Referendum

What It Is and Why We Need It

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