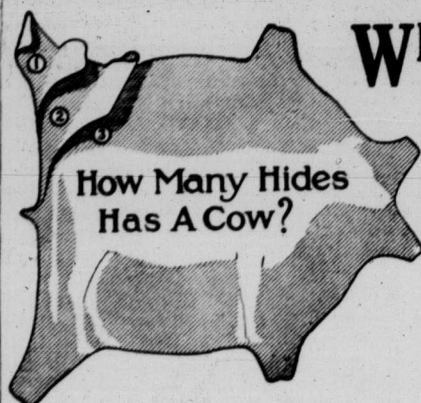




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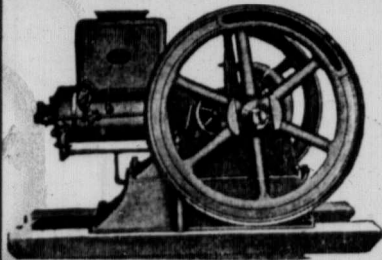
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New York

The Third Party

A Paper read by W. W. Arnall at a meeting of Ladstock local of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association

The question to be discussed is, whether it is more advisable to go on supporting the old established parties, Liberal or Conservative, with all their known imperfections, or to institute a new party whose object shall be to secure the farmers just and equitable legislation at Ottawa, which they at present do not receive. In this question I contend that a new party is both advisable and necessary, and will endeavor to give some arguments in support of my contention.

In the first place we will consider the old parties. Is either of them free from graft or from pandering to the moneyed interest to the prejudice of the farmer? Their records will supply the answer, "No!" Again consider their attitude toward the tariff. The farmers as a body know that a low duty on imports or even Free Trade is to their advantage, giving them cheaper commodities but leaving less profit to the Canadian manufacturer. Neither party favors such ideas. The Liberals when in power maintained a high tariff and the Conservatives when in power raised it higher still, and the farmer kicked in vain. His wants were not worth considering, having no real organization or power to back them up. We know the Liberals were thrown out thru supporting Reciprocity. They made a mistake that time in kicking against the powers that be, but Sir Wilfrid Laurier will think twice before he again puts forward such ideas, judging from his present attitude.

Influence Provincial

The Grain Growers' Association has done much to get legislation passed for the good of the farmer, but practically entirely thru the Saskatchewan government—which I place on a different plane to the Ottawa government—and in approaching the Ottawa government, either by petition, resolution or delegation, they have invariably failed to secure any real satisfaction whatever. You are all well aware that both the old parties are provided with election funds by the Manufacturers' Association. It is a case of he who pays the piper calls the tune. But the tune the Manufacturers' Association calls is discord in the ears of the farmer. He does not pay anything to the party funds, so the piper does not play for him.

Keeping Them Straight

With regard to a new party, you may say there is no guarantee that it would be any less corrupt than the old parties have proved to be. If it should become corrupt it would be entirely the farmers' fault. It is up to them to keep their parties and associations clean thru proper supervision and control and by taking a proper interest in all institutions organized for their welfare, both political and social. This at present is not done by the average farmer; his apathy is often magnificent. He is open to much criticism on this point. He will say, "Let well alone." He will also say, "Let ill alone, lest worse befall." It is not on such philosophy that progress and improvement are brought about. It is such philosophy that says "Do not attempt this third party idea." The majority of the third party antagonists agree the old parties are unsatisfactory. Their remedy is to cleanse them of all their unrighteousness. Such a process might be possible, but would be about as easy as making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. An ordinary individual or business firm having an unsatisfactory servant usually discharges such servant and engages another who again may prove faulty if his employer has been careless about enquiring into his past character. This simile applies to the third party if instituted; the character and ideals of its members must be up to standard. Only by seeking out first class men, men who surely can be found, can a third party be of any service to the farming community.

Now, as to the power a third party would have in the house, considering it would be small in number on initiation. To illustrate the point, say there are ten third partyites, fifty-five Conservative and 46 Liberals, now the third party can suit itself, and by voting on the

side that agrees to its proposals can place that party in office. Should their number be insufficient to place a majority wherever they want it, they still are able to voice the farmers' requirements and have considerable direct influence on legislation. This has been proved in practice innumerable times. As an instance, take the Irish party in the old country. While the Home Rule debate was on Mr. Redmond was often spoken of as the real prime minister, in that he was able to practically dictate to Mr. Asquith by reason of the votes he controlled, which cast on either side would constitute a majority for that side and place the government in its hands. A party representing us as farmers might easily in all reason aspire to such a position of power, only requiring the organized effort of the farmers themselves, everyone assisting the cause collectively and individually and taking a real interest and so justifying their enfranchisement. We have men right here who will not go and vote at the Dominion elections, because they realize, whether it be a Liberal or a Conservative government that is in power at Ottawa, it does not matter a "tinker's cuss" to the farmer, and they are almost justified in their attitude.

The Association's Position

A few remarks on the position of the Grain Growers' Association toward this innovation. The Grain Growers' Association both at the convention of February, 1914, and by Mr. Musselman's letter in The Guide, are against having anything to do with such an idea, contending it would be outside its province to meddle in politics and cause disruptions in the association between hard and fast adherents of the old parties. Such may or may not be the case. The unanimous opinion of members of the association does not coincide with the opinion of its directorate on this subject. However, taking their attitude as the right one, it is no argument against the initiation of a third party entirely free and separate from the Grain Growers' Association, free to stand or fall by its own strength or weakness, whichever the farmers see fit to endow it with. Contrary to the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, the Manitoba Grain Growers are nominating Mr. Henders, their president, to stand at the coming Dominion election. So the attitude of the directors of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association does not entirely put the idea out of countenance. No, the farmers have let others do their thinking too long for them, and it is now a fact that a very considerable section of the Saskatchewan farmers are fully impressed with the necessity of some such action as I have tried to interest you in. Before closing I will bring one established fact to your notice and that is, that a country invariably has the kind of government it desires to have—good or bad. If you consider the Ottawa government an unsatisfactory one, it is most certainly a reflection upon yourselves as voters and individuals. You cannot deny this argument, so you and your fellowmen thruout the west are to blame personally for the present faulty government you enjoy, and the removal of the stigma lies entirely in your own hands. I submit that it can be done thru the medium of a third party, and maintain it is a practical remedy. I leave the matter at that for your consideration.

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