

Proposed Constitutional Amendments by the United Farmers

TWO years ago, when the United Farmers' Association of Ontario was organized and its constitution drafted, the officers were lacking somewhat in experience. In the meanwhile good work has been accomplished. Approximately 100 local associations are affiliated with it, with several thousand members. Experience now indicates that the constitution of the central or provincial associations might be amended with advantage. Notices of proposed amendments have been given by members. These will be discussed at the annual convention of the association which will be held in Toronto, February 2nd and 3rd. In the meantime they should be carefully considered by the local associations.

Notice of Reports
Notice has been given by Secretary J. J. Morrison that he intends to move that the constitution be amended so as to lessen the time requirements for submitting reports to Branch Associations as set forth in section 6, sub-section (a) of the constitution, so as to admit of holding the annual convention at an earlier date.

The constitution requires that all reports shall be mailed to the branch associations not later than one month prior to the opening of the convention and shall show a detailed statement of the receipts and expenditures, assets and liabilities. It has been found practically impossible to carry this out owing to the fact that the books of the association are closed on the 31st of December. It requires time to get the books in shape to be audited and more time still for them to be audited. If this rule is to be carried out it will make the annual meeting so late in the year that it will be inconvenient both to the association and to the locals identified with it. One way out of the difficulty might be to close the books of the association earlier. Another is to require only two weeks notice instead of a month. These are points that will have to be discussed.

Date of Convention
Notice is given by Mr. W. C. Good that he will move that section 8 of the constitution be amended. Section 8 requires that the annual convention of the central association shall be held at such a place and on such a date between December 1st and March 1st as shall be fixed by the Board of Directors. Mr. Good will move that April 1st be substituted for March 1st. This will give the officers of the association greater freedom in arranging the date for the convention. While it is desirable that the convention shall always be held as early in the winter as possible it may sometimes happen that the date set for the conventions of the western farmers' association or delegates coming from the western association to Ontario may make it desirable to hold the Ontario convention a little later to it in with the arrangements of the western organizations. Such an amendment as this would give the directors of the association an opportunity to arrange the date of the convention accordingly, although it is probable that the convention would almost invariably be held early in the winter. This amendment will need to be considered carefully, however, as it adds strength to the association when the members know that the annual convention will always be held on or about a certain date, as it enables the locals to plan their arrangements accordingly. The directors are aware of this fact and all the convention will have to decide whether or not it will be safe to trust the directors with this additional power.

Mr. Good intends to move that the

following be added to sub-section (b) of section 6. This section relates to the election of officers and auditors for the coming year and read in the constitution as follows:

"The business of the annual convention shall be to elect by ballot from duly accredited delegates present at the convention the officers and auditors for the ensuing year."
"Mr. Good proposes to add the following to the foregoing clause: the election shall take place by the ballots, first, a nominating ballot, and secondly, two electing ballots."
"The secretary shall have all the ballots printed in advance."
"After the nomination ballots have been distributed to all duly accredited delegates they shall be instructed to fill in one, only one, name for nomination in each species. After the ballots have been collected the scrutineers shall record the votes for the various prospective candidates on a separate tally sheet and select as nominee for further balloting the following number of those standing highest in the lists: Three for president, two for first vice-president, two for second vice-president, seven for directors, and three for auditors."
"These candidates shall be announced and opportunity given for withdrawals. Any withdrawals shall be made good by the addition of the required number standing next in the lists on the tally sheet, and definite announcement made of the above mentioned number of candidates for election."
"These names shall be written plainly on a blackboard or otherwise so as to be visible to all the assembly."
"Ballots for the election of president and vice-president shall then be distributed and the delegates shall be instructed to fill in one and only one name of those nominated, in each space. Those three receiving the highest votes in their respective classes shall be declared elected president and first and second vice-presidents respectively. Defeated candidates for the position of president and first and second vice-president shall then be included as candidates for the position of director, and a third ballot taken (schedule C) on which delegates shall record two, and only two, names in each of the spaces on the ballot. Those five receiving highest votes as directors shall be declared elected as directors, and those two receiving the highest votes as auditors shall be declared elected auditors. Other business may be taken up between the balloting in order to give the scrutineers time to count the ballots and report the results."

This is an important amendment. Nothing takes up so much time and is so hard to conduct satisfactorily as the election of officers. The amendment proposed, while it may seem cumbersome at first, will overcome some of the difficulties experienced in the past. It will be explained more fully at the convention.

Election by Ballot
Mr. W. C. Good also intends to move that section 7 shall be amended by striking out the words "or standing vote". This amendment is in harmony with the previous amendment. At present the constitution provides that "the president, vice-president, directors and auditors shall be nominated and elected by ballot or standing vote of the whole assembly". The striking out of the words "or standing vote" means that it will be necessary to elect all by ballot. This, of course, is only in the event of the proposed new system for the election of officers being adopted.

Mr. A. J. Reynolds, auditor of the company, will move that section 4 of the constitution be amended so as



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to restrict the number of delegates that can be sent to the convention by the locals. Section 4 of the constitution at present provides as follows:

"The central association shall be governed by the annual convention, composed of delegates from each branch not in arrears to the association, elected thus: One delegate for each branch, and an additional delegate for every twenty, or major portion of twenty, over the first twenty members. All delegates shall be appointed annually."

Mr. Reynolds feels that there is a danger that the expense of bringing so many delegates to the central convention, especially should there be many locals formed at points distant from Toronto, might be so great as to far more than offset the returns to the association from membership fees and thus put the central association heavily in debt. At present, locals, whether they are near or far from Toronto, pay the central fifty cents a member and the central pays (Continued on page 16.)