

Farmers Determined in Their Opposition

(Continued from page 6.)

apparently by a majority of the residents of the towns and cities throughout Canada, who for the most part, are people utterly unaware of how disastrously the provisions of the order-in-council are working out in the country districts. In addition the Government claims to have received letters from many farmers commending it for its action. Under these conditions it is very difficult for the farmers to receive the consideration from the Government that they otherwise might. For the same reason also it will be almost impossible for the department that has been sent to Ottawa to receive favorable action at any early date by the Government, especially in view of the fact that the Premier and several members of the Cabinet, including Hon. Mr. Rowell, are in England. Other members of the Cabinet also are away from the Capital and as the House of Commons is not sitting it will be impossible for the committee to lay their views before the members of the House. Nevertheless, it is hoped that by interviewing the acting Premier, Sir George E. Foster, and possibly other members of the Cabinet, beneficial results may follow.

A Representative Meeting.

The meeting was a most representative one. Possibly it was the largest meeting of farmers that has ever been held in Toronto. Interest in the proceedings was considerably increased by the presence of several farmers and speakers from the Province of Quebec, including J. W. Levesque, M.L.A. representing the Gardeners' Association of Quebec, and Jean Masson, of the Comptoir Cooperative of Montreal. There were present also President H. W. Wood, of the United Farmers of Alberta, Roderick McKenzie, secretary of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and T. Ross, of Prince Edward Island. The latter expressed the strong opposition of the farmers of his province.

The opening meeting was held in the Convention Hall of the Labor Temple on Church Street, where the annual convention of the U.F.O. was held last December. It was soon apparent, however, that this hall would be too small and it was decided to engage Massey Hall, although it was understood that the expense would be about \$150. The afternoon meeting opened in Massey Hall, where the attendance was so large that it filled the lower floor and almost filled the second gallery. It would seem safe to estimate that the attendance was from 2,000 to 2,500. It included farmers from all parts of the province. An unfortunate incident connected with the convention was the death of two of the delegates, William Lackey and Richard Goggins, said to be from Hastings County, who were asphyxiated Friday night in their room at the Kirby House on Queen Street.

Purpose of the Meeting.

After opening the Friday morning session President Halbert called on Mr. C. W. Gurney, of Paris, the chairman of the committee that was left in Ottawa to continue negotiations with the Government, to explain what had been accomplished by the committee. Mr. Gurney stated that five members of the Government, when the committee first went to Ottawa had heard their views. Sir Robert Borden and General McWren gave them a cold reception. Hon. Mr. Rowell and Hon. Mr. Crerar were more sympathetic. The committee was given assurance that the question would be re-opened. Sir George Foster, Hon. Mr. Crerar and Hon. Mr. Rowell were favorable to such action. General McWren, however, said he would not consider exemptions under any circumstances and that he would have nothing to do with any changes proposed in the Act. It was the

strong stand taken by him apparently that finally led the Government not to change its stand. While a good deal had been said about conscripting city labor and sending it to the farms Mr. Gurney said there appeared to be reason to believe that there was an agreement between the labor men, the manufacturers and the Government to interfere with city labor as little as possible and to make the main drive for men against the farmers of Quebec and Ontario. Mr. Gurney was of the opinion that the fight should be continued earnestly and that the Government should not be given any respite until it had revoked its order.

President Halbert appointed a resolutions committee composed of George Brodie, of Newmarket; A. A. Powers of Orillia; B. Cowan, of Farm and Dairy; Rev. W. F. Carpenter, of Horning's Mills, and Peter Porter, of Burford. This committee presented its report at the afternoon session.

Secretary Morrison reported that the memorial prepared by the farmers for submission to the Government had been printed in Hansard, in the records of the Senate, in many papers and was being reprinted by the U. F. O. in a neat form so that copies might be preserved by farmers to show how they had not hesitated to call the Government itself to time when it overstepped its powers as it had done in many ways since the outbreak of the war.

Friday Afternoon Session.

On the opening of the Friday afternoon session in Massey Hall a considerable number of ladies who were present were invited to accept seats on the platform which they did amid applause. Great interest was manifested when it was announced that President Wood of the United Farmers of Alberta, was present and would make a statement in reference to the famous telegram sent by four members of the executive of that association to the Government. Mr. Wood said that he felt himself to be in a peculiar and embarrassing position. He had not intended to reach the Government just when it did, or they would not have sent it at that time.

Mr. Wood explained that he had been in the United States and arrived in Winnipeg the night the executive committee was meeting in Calgary. Having been out of Canada for some time he was not fully posted on what had taken place but telegraphed the committee asking them what they were planning to do. He told them that he considered the situation as critical, that he believed the action of the Government would have a serious effect on production and that while it might not be wise to take an extreme stand against the Government, he believed that the Government should be made to take full responsibility for its action. Later the committee telegraphed him what it was proposed to telegraph the Government. Telegram was not clearly worded, and while he felt he could endorse the idea he thought they were trying to express, he had not felt altogether sure about the wording. Later, when the telegram was published, it was not worded the way he had expected. Mr. Wood said that Alberta's feeling the effects of the Government's action even more serious was that in a scenario that strong opposition to the order-in-council has been expressed throughout Alberta, that there was a feeling that a mistake had been made in the sending of the telegram, the effects of which Alberta farmers were most anxious to remove, especially as they felt that the mistake had been their. "Our interests and yours," said Mr.

(Continued on page 19.)

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