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superior to the Parliamentary debates. I had the pleasure last February of being present at the discussion of the elevator question at Regina. The discussion occupied a whole day and was divided into three sittings. I have never listened to a more intelligent, more earnest, more illuminating debate in my life, and the result of that debate is proving to be the correct solution of the difficulty. Some of the speeches given out on that occasion were of an exceedingly high order and would compare favorably with some of the speeches of prominent statesmen. Then why, having such competent men in our midst, do we not replace the present so-called representatives now occupying the positions, with our own men who would really do what we want? Who can better represent the farming community than farmers? Therefore let us have farmer representatives. This is our only way to freedom. Hitherto we have been afraid, as an organization, to tackle the political situation, and possibly we have been wise, as we were not ripe for action, but the time has come when we must break away from the influences brought to bear upon us in every way possible by the protected interests and professional politicians, and strike out for the middle of the road. We cannot climb the mountain with our faces to the valley. If we are to succeed, we must be among those whose faces are set toward the sun, and refuse to be longer hypnotized by political moonshine. As out of our homes must come the highest type of manhood and womanhood, we must make conditions favorable for this development, and to do this we must work from the root upwards, from the centre to the circumference.

The First Problem

Our first problem for solution is how to retain our just share of the wealth we create; we farmers have been likened to a horse in a treadmill—we work hard but have little to show beyond the fact that we are making a living. The simile does not end here. Just as the horse threshes out grain which people take and use for their own

purposes, giving the horse only sufficient for his absolute need, so we, and the laboring classes in our cities, by our productive labors are creating millions of dollars of wealth yearly, which flow steadily but quickly into the pockets of the monopolist and privileged classes. Our first duty must be to solve this question and the methods for farm improvement and increasing the productiveness of our farms will follow. Then the cry of "Back to the land" will cease. Fortunately we have the power of remedying the existing evils in our own hands, by living up to our name and being the "United Farmers of Alberta." Forming one cohesive whole, all headed in the right direction, the solid vote of the farmers can overcome every obstacle.

The Leadership

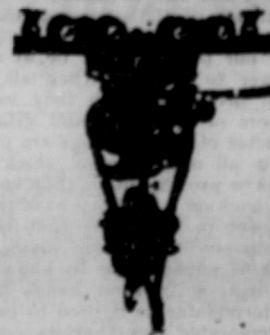
The question of leadership of this organization is a delicate matter for a member of the executive to touch on, but its extreme importance is my excuse. My advice to you is, hand pick every man you elect for office, get the very best, and we have the best among us. The resolution adopted last year requiring every candidate to pledge himself to Direct Legislation was a good one, and I hope to see a similar pledge required with regard to Single Tax and other reforms, but we want to be careful that the pledges are given in good faith. I am pressing this matter advisedly, and repeat, choose with the very greatest care, for your success depends on your choice. In referring to the leaders I am not unmindful of the members, for no organization can be greater than the individual members. It is necessary that every member should be a real live member, recognizing his responsibilities, feeling that the success of our efforts through this organization depends proportionately on him, and I sincerely trust that every member of the "United Farmers of Alberta" will live up to his opportunities. In selecting directors, a well balanced board should be our aim. We need the ardor, vigor and active virtues of youth with its optimistic enthusiasm, and we need also the ripeness of tone,

the mellowness of nature, the breadth of vision which are the fruits of the years that change the hardness of inexperienced judgment into a calmer, deeper and more charitable estimate of conditions, and this happy combination will doubtless be secured. The main questions claiming our attention at this convention will be hail insurance, elevators, public ownership of railroads, etc., and I should like to suggest the question of life insurance through the provincial government. This would be a safe undertaking and provide money for cheap loans and keep our money here, whereas it now goes to the companies in the East who loan again to people here in the West at heavy rates of interest.

A Noble Ideal

We, as a society, are truly pioneers; we are blazing the trail and removing the obstacles which hinder progress, and although tedious and uphill work, we should be right glad to be allowed to have a hand in it. John Webster, member for Brockville, speaking in the Dominion Parliament, said of Canada: "If the firmament of heaven were a blackboard and the Rocky Mountains chalk, it would be beyond the power of man to write what the future holds in store for this young country." Believing, as we do, that this province is the "sirlion of the Dominion," what greater privilege can we desire, what greater opportunity can we ask than that we, the "United Farmers of Alberta," bring to the citizens of Alberta the best known form of self government and the most scientific and equitable form of taxation the world has yet evolved, thereby eliminating all unnatural inequalities, all artificial obstructions, all deadly grinding toil, all involuntary poverty, all unfairly acquired wealth; and so usher in conditions which will make it possible, and even tempting, for every man, woman and child in this great province to reach the highest physical, mental and spiritual development they are capable of attaining. Gentlemen, I ask you, can we have a higher motive or a nobler ideal?

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