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 Grain Growers' Association

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ADDRESS IN PART GIVEN BY F. W.
 GREEN AT THE MANITOBA
 GRAIN GROWERS' CONVEN-
 TION, BRANDON, JAN.
 9, 1913

Somewhere about thirteen years ago in a farmers' meeting, at Indian Head, there was brought forth a new democratic yeomanry. An institution engendered in adversity and developed by a dire necessity, it grew robust and strong; promulgating the declaration that a small grain dealing class should no longer be permitted to exploit the whole grain producing mass. This young institution soon developed great strength and impetuosity, and was quickly enveloped in a sort of economic war, testing to the full whether such a voluntary association had in it the qualities of an enduring nature.

Standing today on our eminent vantage ground, looking away to the East, we see our subsidiary offices at Winnipeg, where huge humming printing presses are turning out The Grain Growers' Guide, and down on the line to Fort William where our large terminal elevators are in operation, and then turning our eyes and looking immediately around us we see the long lines of Manitoba Government elevators handed over to us to operate, and then shading our eyes with our hand we look further westward

at the long line of Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company's houses, and then still further at the plans laid for a similar line in the Province of Alberta. Look at these Calgary and Regina elevator offices. I call these subsidiary institutions ours, for are they not of our blood, bone and sinew?

Then let me ask you. Picture in your minds the Central offices of our Association in Winnipeg, Moose Jaw and Calgary, and then the hundreds of local Associations thruout the three Provinces carrying on their educational propaganda with their sparks of thought being flashed from one to the other, and carried here today thru your delegations for construction into suggestive legislation which will sooner or later find its way on to the statute books of our Province and Dominion.

As I stand and look into your faces with these thoughts in my mind, thinking of what we have already wrought, I may be pardoned for saying there is tangible evidence that a farmers' organization can be made to endure. We have gathered here today representative men from every part of this great Western country, gathered for an annual consultation, gathered to consider ways and means for a further extension and application of our co-operative endeavors. Necessity demands that we should do

this, and do it on a very much broader and grander scale than anything we have heretofore attempted. We should do this not only because necessity presses us to it, not only because an opportunity is offered to us far above anything ever offered to our forefathers, but because there rests upon our shoulders a sacred obligation to do it, much different to that of the duty of our fathers. What will rising generations say of present day Western Canadians if history only records a split in our organization at this period, and we continue to stand apart as isolated individuals and allow our whole class and industry to become the hired servants of city dwelling corporate organizations?

As our children look down the historic line of their ancestry and note the recorded struggle of our fathers in the cause of freedom, and the bondage from which they wrought out deliverance, secured the franchise, freedom of press and speech, secured and delivered to us this great land absolutely free and clean, parcelled it out amongst us and gave us a fair start in a free land with a personal freedom they themselves never possessed; what, Mr. Chairman, will our children say of us if our historic records show that we in our day and generation not only failed to complete the work but allowed ourselves and our industry, our land and children to become again entangled in the yoke of bondage? Does not duty rather demand of us that we should hand to our children a wider, grander and cleaner franchise, and citizenship; a more lucrative industry, a better balanced rural life than was handed to us, with a broader, sounder ground work for our national structure?

There should be a stirring in the tops of the mulberry trees here today; the result of a force that will sway us all in one direction, even as the trees are moved with the wind. There should be a careful stock taking, a thoughtful retrospect, a close examination of our position and condition; a drawing together and tightening of the cord that binds us, the development of a genuine farmers' esprit de corps. Rivals will care little of any high sounding words we may utter here today, but any steps likely to result in united action will be most critically scanned. The foundations of the structure we have already erected will be closely examined. Never was there greater necessity for carefulness on our own part. Never were more subtle forces in operation to keep us from becoming one. Be sure, anything calculated to keep us apart meets with the approval of our foes. Everything calculated to unite us will be opposed by every other combination who benefits by our being kept apart.

We should, here today, determine that work already done, together with our mistakes and failures, which none altogether evade, shall serve as stepping stones to much larger accomplishment. A stronger resolve should take possession of us. We should here determine that no power on earth shall be permitted to divide us or separate us from the high purpose we have in view. It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, that we should here today afresh resolutely address ourselves to the unfinished task carried on so successfully thus far. We should determine to give our movement a more permanent foundation, and a more universal application of the principle of co-operation; an application so wide and far reaching that will not rest until it encircles all our members in its beneficent embrace, and until each member is actuated by its spirit.

Those of us who have gone thru the experimental stage and experienced the struggles of pioneer life in testing the agricultural capacity of this great country, know from practical experience

what our competitive system in this mechanical corporate age has in store for the isolated individual. We know well the necessity for sacrifice in the erection of a permanent organic structure which aims to give protection, economic education, and practical deliverance to the people from the extortionate extractions of organized corporate classes. We should here today agree to yoke ourselves afresh to the task of uniting all our subsidiary institutions, together with our Associations, into one solid compact working union. (In spirit if not in conduct.) We should here determine that our buying, selling and suggested legislation shall all be a part of one great co-operative endeavor, training all tillers of the soil to work in unison for the accomplishment of one purpose, made more urgently necessary by the environment of our time.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, there really is, in my opinion, no reason why soil tillers' necessities and products should not be more largely distributed by one great farmers' co-operative institution, co-operating to avoid losses, excessive costs and preserve to each the result of his individual labor rather than the result of cunningness. Further, there is no reason why the farmers should not endeavor to utilize their organizations for the purpose of effecting practical application of their legislative suggestions which they make from time to time. It does amaze one how stupid we are in this respect. In productive emulation, in exchange of commodities, in political co-operative oneness. One great co-operative union of farmers by farmers for farmers, is the present day necessity.

I know in the minds of many this would be a crime, but every class is looking for cheap living, better living, and we certainly now have class organization. Experimental nostrums are being advocated by nostrum pedlars the world over, and we must not stand passively by and allow the cheap living to be secured for some by making serfs of those who produce the food for all. I trust our vision will be mightily enlarged. I hope we shall be able to get high enough up to see all interests; that our discussions will be tempered with judgment and dignity, that our action shall be controlled by far-sightedness, marked by a general sympathetic brotherhood spirit, and that all we do will strengthen our mutual respect for all other necessary industries. But particularly our own agricultural fellow-workers, the thousands of men and women left behind who would like to be with us today, and whom we are representing here. These, I say, are those whose efforts are making Canadian entity great amongst the nations or the earth.

I say "Our Canada." Our love and respect for her should be enlarged, and our duty towards her more fully comprehended. That our grand empire structure, with all its mighty potentialities, duties and obligations for us may be by us more clearly discerned, and that this old bit of bunting which I notice prominently placed in these halls, that this old storm-battered flag may continue to wave above us in its calm, silent dignity and may become vividly nixed (yes, vividly fixed) as the silent emblem which represents the guarantee we have each given to each and every other that freedom in thought and in expression for good shall be the right of every individual finding shelter beneath its fluttering folds.

I leave this message with you, trusting that the outcome will be education, organization, co-operation, emancipation. An establishment of the thing that ought to be—an agreement to which all men will willingly subscribe.

Talk No. 6

ON THE . . .

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