

The Grain Grower's Guide

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Official Minutes of U. F. A. Convention

The following is the Report of the Secretary, E. J. Fream, as
Taken at the Sessions of the Convention

THE annual convention of the United Farmers of Alberta was held in the Mechanics Hall, Edmonton, on Wednesday, January 19, 1910, at 10.30 a.m., with the president, Mr. Jas. Bower, in the chair. The president called Premier Rutherford, the Hon. Duncan Marshall, Acting Mayor Armstrong, Geo. Harcourt, J. R. Boyle, M.P.P., E. Michener, M.P.P., C. Stuart, M.P.P., W. F. Stevens, T. A. Crezar and G. F. Chipman to the platform.

In calling the convention to order, the president stated he was pleased to be able to greet such a large delegation, but it was not his intention to deliver his address at that time, but would first call upon Acting Mayor Armstrong to address the convention.

Acting Mayor Armstrong assured the delegates that he was pleased to welcome them to the city and on behalf of the council formally tendered the freedom of the city on all delegates during the time they would spend in the city. He also extended a cordial invitation to the delegates to attend a banquet at the Separate School Hall on Thursday evening, January 20th.

Hon. Premier Rutherford said he appreciated the kindness of the executive in inviting him to make a few remarks to the delegates assembled. There were many topics on which he might speak, all of which were of importance to the farmers, but first he wished to express his congratulations on the progress the association has made. He understood a membership of over 5,000 was now claimed, and the organizers will have great work in keeping up with the work and getting the farmers inside the ranks. The association is only at the commencement of its work, some things have been accomplished, but others have to be accomplished, and he wished the association every success in its splendid work, stating that as long as he was the head of the government the organized farmers will have his sympathy and support.

The matter of education was one that was of interest to the people of the province and it will be interesting to know that 234 new school districts were organized in the province last year and that between five and six thousand children are enrolled in the schools of the province each year. When we started as a province there was an enrolment of twenty-three children; it reached forty thousand in 1908, and while the reports are not yet available for last year, it is expected that the enrolment will reach forty-six or forty-seven thousand.

A great deal was now being heard about government ownership or municipal ownership of public utilities. The province of Alberta owns more utilities than any other province in Canada. The farmers appreciate the telephone of the province and the government is making a success of the system. The government is endeavoring to run the telephones on a business basis, entirely independent of politics.

In regard to the hail insurance, there has been a deficit each year since the business was started and last year it was hoped that by raising the fees this would be wiped out. Although a larger business was done the deficit is larger than ever. The premier said he was quite opposed to the government discontinuing the hail insurance business and it would be a great mistake to give up the business. He hoped the convention would discuss this important matter.

Another topic that was engrossing the attention of the people of the province was that of better railway facilities, and at present a large number of farmers found it difficult to market their grain on account of the lack of these facilities; on this account the government decided to guarantee the bonds of some of the railways, and although they did not do as much work as was expected, it is hoped that all the lines which were graded will be put in operation and considerably more besides.

Another topic was that of agricultural education in the province and no doubt it was expected that he would clear away some of the misconceptions in regard to the agricultural college. Some criticisms have been made, but if all the facts were known it was doubtful whether all would have been made. The premier said: "I may as well tell you in the first place that we have been conducting in conjunction with the Dominion Department of Agriculture, a line of agricultural education consisting of institute work. In 1907 the legislature of the province voted a sufficient amount for the purchase of a university site, including an agricultural college, and in pursuance of same there was no objection offered by any member of the legislature. The government then purchased the site for the university and agricultural college in the city of Strathcona. To the shoulders of the government and the old legislature belongs the blame. It will, however, be a great mistake for all the agricultural education to be given within the walls of the college, for if we established a college with a four years' course we would have very few students. Short time courses ought to be given and should be continued. It is proposed to strengthen the agricultural instruction in the public schools, some rural schools are improving their grounds by making gardens, flower beds, etc., and these should be encouraged. It is also proposed that agricultural high schools should be established in the province. It is the intention of the ministers of education for the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta to visit some of the States and the eastern provinces this year in order to study details in connection with advanced agricultural education.

The Dominion government has done something in regard to agricultural instruction by establishing two experimental farms in the province, and the government of this province has established a farm to be conducted under dry farming conditions.

With regard to instruction in the irrigated area, the C.P.R. has taken up the matter of demonstration in irrigation farming in the lands owned by them east of Calgary.

The chief arguments for having the agricultural college in connection with the university are efficiency and economy and the chief arguments for separation are in the nature of political expediency. The advice of the leading Canadians and Americans connected with agricultural education was in favor of combining the two institutions.

It was regrettable that owing to the serious illness of the late minister of agriculture it had been impossible to make more progress in the matter of the pork packing proposition. All will regret the serious illness of Mr. Finlay, who, during the past year,

had not been able to oversee the work of his department with his usual vigor. The new minister has taken hold of the matter and the promise made will be carried out. It was the intention of the government to keep faith in this matter.

It was expected that this year the suit for deciding whether the C.P.R. will have to pay taxes to the local improvement and school districts will be definitely decided; also whether the irrigation companies will have to erect bridges over the irrigation ditches at their own expense.

In regard to elevators, the premiers of Saskatchewan and Alberta have requested the Grain Growers to put into business shape what they think the government should do. The premier requested the convention to appoint a committee to formulate and place before the government a good business-like scheme.

In regard to the western shipment, it will be the fault of the farmers if we do not get the grain business on a proper basis as far as western shipments are concerned at least.

Last year the convention appointed a committee to investigate the matter of western shipments. This committee could be continued and at least a part of the committee with some members of the government, should investigate all conditions, and even go as far as the Isthmus of Panama and the Tehuantepec Railway, and in connection



FIRST PRIZE EXHIBIT, STRATHCONA, ALTA.
At the Opening of the New Market building in Strathcona, Alberta, the premier honors were awarded to Mr. Rice Sheppard. His exhibit consisted of over sixty varieties of garden and farm Produce all grown on his own farm

with the work of the committee the government ought to bear the expense of same, and no doubt if the association asks for it the government will do so.

Hon. Duncan Marshall

The Hon. Duncan Marshall was then called upon and in his opening remarks described his experience with farmers' organizations, and stated there was no part of his education which has more fitted him for the position he now holds than the few years he spent in the work of the different farmers' organizations. He further stated that he will at all times be pleased to receive suggestions from the association, and while there are all kinds of views expressed, from the most extreme to the most conservative, he will endeavor to meet the wishes of the farmers of the country. He felt more responsibility now than he did when a free lance and as a member of a farmers' organization, but would endeavor to give satisfaction.

In the matter of the pork packing plant, this had been delayed some, but Premier Rutherford had given the reason for the delay. The government gave a definite pledge in regard to this matter, and the government never breaks a pledge. In regard to the conditions under which the plant would be erected, Mr. Stevens, the Live Stock Commissioner, will present to the convention the draft prepared and if accepted, he will devote the rest of the winter to securing signatures.

There is something more than a pork packing plant needed and the meat business will not be on a proper basis until we can get a large chilled meat industry, possibly along co-operative lines and under the control of the government. Mr. Marshall stated that he had taken this matter up with the Dominion government and hoped the association would also take up this work.

It was the intention of the government to have the pork packing plant run by a commission to be formed by the association and the government.

In regard to the coal market, there was also something radically wrong, and it was his intention to make investigations of the freight charges on different lines in the States with the result that a case will be prepared and presented to the Railway Commission.