

INSPECTED EVERY TWO YEARS AND MUST KEEP DOWN EXPENDITURES

At the annual convention of the U.F.A. a resolution dealing with the lack of facilities for inspecting weights and measures was adopted, and according to instructions a copy of same was forwarded to the Hon. the Minister of Inland Revenue.

Under date of February 19, the following letter has been received from the Hon. Wm. Templeman, Minister of Inland Revenue, dealing with this subject:

"I am in receipt of your communication of the 31st ult., forwarding a copy of a resolution adopted at the annual convention of the United Farmers of Alberta, to the effect 'That in the opinion of this convention the improvement granted by the Dominion government in the administration of the Weights and Measures Act is insufficient and that we empower the executive to again take the matter up with the government.'

"In reply I may state that the department is at present arranging for the appointment of another assistant inspector at Lethbridge. It fully recognizes the fact that the west is rapidly growing, but as the inspection of weights and measures is only imperative every two years it is manifest that the employment of an undue number of officials would result in their not being constantly employed and greatly increase the burden upon the country generally.

"The service is, as you are doubtless aware, not self-sustaining, and, while the department's desire is to safeguard all interests to the extent permitted by the Weights and Measures Act, it is naturally held responsible, in doing so, for the keeping of expenditure within reasonable limits.

"I may also add that any injustice arising from the improper use of a weighing machine is not always due to the apparatus being, in itself, incorrect, but in many cases arises from incorrect results given out by the person using the scale. Be the inspection ever so frequent, it cannot overcome these conditions.

"In conclusion I may say that the representations of your convention will receive every consideration."

STRATHCONA UNION

A Big Discussion on the Pork Packing Proposition

The last meeting of Strathcona Union was well attended. The principal subject for discussion being the pork packing proposition. In Mr. Fred. Herbert the draft agreement on the lines of the pork commission's report had its first champion and he was ably assisted in outlining the necessity of co-operation with the government, by President G. R. Ball, who occupied the chair at the meeting. Several citizens were present to hear the discussion and some of the city packers were interested listeners.

Mr. Herbert in moving that a resolution of support be given the Lloyd-Harris co-operation bill now before the House of Commons, said that the value of the amalgamation of the farmers' interests is now becoming recognized the world over. He thought it imperative that co-operative organizations be established on a national scale. This motion passed without dissent.

Mr. Herbert was the first speaker on the packing plant proposition and upon a vote it was decided to grant him the time he required and then limit the following speakers to ten minutes' effort. Since the report of the pork commission was made public, Mr. Herbert said he has been in favor of a packing plant on the lines suggested. During the last month he has given the matter some hard study and was now enthusiastic over the possibilities of a government plant that later would become the property of the patrons. He felt sure that within one year after the opening of operations in the proposed establishment the farmers would be tumbling over one another to extend their support. He explained that the present situation is the result of along agitation upon the part of the hog raisers, and the pork commission was, for this reason, appointed to make enquiries and recommendations, the beef commission finding that the question demanded special investigation.

The expert report of the commissioners placed the proposition squarely before the government and people and insured the opening of a plant on a sound basis,

eliminating the causes that worked for the downfall of similar organizations in other places on the continent.

The guarantee to which some objected he considered the main strength of the institution. Upon this plan the government creameries are attaining their present success. Denmark, in which country the pork packing co-operative plant has reached the highest standard of perfection has an absolute guarantee which the patrons consider upon their honor. Without this guarantee the Ontario plants failed. He would not care to enter the concern unless the guarantee was given by the patrons. The withholding of one-third of the price per pound paid upon delivery, for covering running expenses, together with the quarter cent per pound discount that would be paid into the business as shares for the patron, Mr. Herbert considered it a reasonable stipulation. Like the creameries, the balance of the payments would be made after the produce was turned on the market and all the profit went to the patron. The investment of the discount insured the patron an interest in the business which in total would provide for the plant being owned by the shareholders in five years.

The capacity of the proposed plant would not be immediately over loaded as many suggested. He understood that the plant would be able to handle 150,000 hogs each year and this exceeded by 20,000 the entire production of the 45,000 farmers of the province last year. Only about 5,000 members of the U.F.A. might be expected to sign the agreement at first and this would form about the only supply for the plant at the outset. The proposed plant would equal the Griffin plant in all respects after the latter plant is improved this spring.

Farmers would not be lulled into a feeling of security by the present high prices for pork. The price of meat is a national question and the vital feature lies in the vast difference between the live weight prices and the cured meat figures. The good market for local farmers perhaps makes them less anxious to enter a binding agreement than would be patrons who are denied those facilities.

Mr. Sheppard spoke in reply over half an hour, and while not allowing that he was opposed to the packing plant being established, he thought some of the provisions of the draft agreement were unfair. He advanced firm arguments against the advisability of entering into a contract so unreasonable. A guarantee of a certain number of hogs was sufficient, he thought, without binding the patron to deliver his entire production under penalty. He doubted that the fine could be collected by law. Patrons should not be asked to leave one-third of the delivery price tied up by the concern for perhaps an indefinite length of time. The cost of operation was acknowledged to be only about one-tenth and this should be sufficient to withhold from the farmer. Also the quarter cent retained for shares was too large. It was not necessary to buy the plant in five years. Instead of the charge of an average of 50 cents per hog for this purpose, 25c. would be enough and thus pay off indebtedness in ten years. An average of \$5.00 per year grant would be enough for each patron. The retention for uncertain periods of time of approximately \$166,000 (amount of one-third withholding, etc.) would work a hardship on trade, this money lying for part of the time without drawing any interest in the banks while farmers and their creditors were forced to borrow with interest to meet liabilities. Mr. Sheppard thought it folly to enter an agreement so binding, without dealing carefully with the matter. The government was at present finding difficulty from so doing.

President Ball in some brief but convincing remarks thought perhaps the commission reports should have been issued before they were. However, he thought that the argument was satisfactory and he was prepared to sign it. Many appeared to lose sight of the fact that the plant would eventually revert to the patrons and as the directorate would be composed of patrons any of the really objectionable features could be eliminated. He wanted to point out that the question is not the result of any government coercion but the result of the demand from the farmers. The government would, perhaps, be only

too glad to drop the matter for a time, but this must not be allowed by the farmers. The little matters of technicalities could be cleared up later.

Mr. Jackman, of East-Clover-Bar, brought up the question as to whether the local unions had any moral right to bring up discussions about the acceptance of the agreement after the convention of the U.F.A. formally decided that the terms were agreeable.

To this Mr. Sheppard answered with the rather surprising statement that in a sense the convention was not thoroughly representative. Any delegate that spoke favorably upon the proposal was granted his own time to air his views, but the one inclined to be critical was enjoined to be brief in his remarks. This statement was, in a measure, endorsed by Mr. Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher, however, announced his intention of signing the agreement and daring the government to do the rest.

Several other members present spoke briefly and asked numerous questions, but the matter will be more fully gone into at the official meeting here, possibly on March 9.

Mr. J. H. McDonald speaking for the consumers' side of the question, said he thought the time opportune to hand off the advance of the meat trust which had already gained a foothold, and which has our gained such an unassailable position in the United States. He ventured the opinion that in a government packing plant there lies the only salvation for the comparatively small packer in Alberta after the Swift Company have gained the control for which they are assuredly working.

James Gordon confessed some curiosity as to how the government expects to collect the \$2.00 per head on hogs sold by a patron to other concerns. Mr. Hiebert thought that it lay within the power of the provincial officials to enact legislation for the purpose if the present laws make no provision for this.

VALLEY DISTRICT UNION

The second meeting of Valley District Union, in spite of bad weather, was well attended, four new members being secured and three subscriptions to the Guide taken. Arrangements have been made with the local papers to print full reports of the meetings of the union and thereby stimulate greater interest in the work of the association. A committee was appointed to ascertain the number of probable subscribers for rural telephones and if possible map out a route. The members of the union are co-operating to buy formaldehyde at wholesale rates. A social and concert will be held on March 24, in Valley district school-house, and the members are showing a great keenness and appreciation in the work of the association.

HALKIRK UNION

Still the farmers are organizing themselves, and the latest union is at Halkirk, where early in March a meeting of farmers was held, the result being Halkirk Union, with Edgar Merrett as secretary-treasurer.

CONJURING CREEK UNION

In making his first report for 1910, Secretary J. W. Howard, of Conjuring Creek Union, says that they have organized another successful union four miles north, and as several of their members are living nearer there than to their old union, they are being transferred, and therefore while the old local will, for a short time seem to lose, the U.F.A. as a whole will gain as the new union will get some to join who were too far away from Conjuring Creek.

The different hail insurance resolutions were discussed at the last meeting, but none of them were found to be just suitable although No. 4 was the nearest, but were opposed to the exemptions as called for there, believing the plan would be useless if so much land was exempted.

Resolutions were brought up dealing with coal and timber limits, also appropriations to build and operate saw mills and coal mines.

The members expressed themselves as being unfavorable to life membership, as it seemed to the majority that if carried out to any great extent in a very few years the local unions would be bankrupt and nothing coming in to pay bills.

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UNION AT SUMMERSVIEW

Word has been received from Mr. G. A. Dixon, of Spring Ridge, that it is his intention to organize a union of the U.F.A. at Summersview at an early date. A short time ago Mr. Thos. Woodford, of Cardston, addressed a meeting at Pincher Creek, with the result that the farmers in the Summersview district, several of whom were present, requested that a union be formed in their district.

PLEASANT VALLEY UNION

At the last meeting of Pleasant Valley Union seventeen members were present, also a number of friends and ladies. It was resolved to request Mr. W. F. Stevens, Live Stock Commissioner, to address a meeting of this union on the government pork packing plant at his convenience. Plan No. 1 of the hail insurance resolutions was adopted.

The resolutions of Mr. W. R. Ball, on government-owned and operated coal mines, timber limits and mills were endorsed.

It was decided to communicate with nearby local unions and arrange for a mass meeting of members to be held in a central place some time during the summer.

The central association was notified that local unions are needed at Islay and at a point south of Islay.

The central association was asked to assist some members of this union in the matter of losses sustained by fire caused by the C.N.R.

The C.N.R. will be asked to enlarge the present loading platform at Islay to a four-car platform, also to erect suitable stockyards at this point. The government pork packing plant was discussed; also rural telephones.

Refreshments were served by the ladies and an impromptu concert ended a most enjoyable and interesting evening.

A man born to great wealth is not necessarily a great financier; neither is one born on a farm always by nature a farmer. Environment makes opportunity, but study and individual effort must precede any kind of success.

"I will tell you a plan for gaining wealth. Better than banking, trading or leases;

Take a bank note and fold it up, And you'll find your wealth increases.

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Keeps the cash in your hands and nothing to trouble it, And every time that you fold it across, 'Tis plain as the day that you double it."

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