

# The Canadian Council of Agriculture

Farmers Organizations Prepare a Platform—Provincial Organizations Will be Asked to Pass Upon It—Important Decisions Reached at the Recent Winnipeg Conference

**C**HIEF interest in the recent conference of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, held in Winnipeg, centred around the drafting of an actual policy for the farmers' organization of Canada. This platform was prepared by a sub-committee, discussed later, clause by clause, by the full council, and adopted unanimously with the understanding that it would be submitted to the various organizations for their ratification, as well as to many of the local units and districts, as well as to the national policy of all the organizations. Should any of the provincial organizations recommend changes in it, these will be considered at the next meeting of the Council of Agriculture.

In preparing the platform, the members of the Council had in mind the tariff laws, as they now prevail in Canada, bear with undue hardship on the farmer, and that there is great danger that following the war, on account of the need which will then exist for increased taxation, an effort will be made to still further increase the tariff and in ways that will further burden the farmer. In a later issue we hope to give the platform in full. In brief, it set forth that agricultural conditions in Canada have reached a point where it has become difficult for farmers to make a profit from their farm operations. The great success of Great Britain in financing not only her own needs but the needs of many of her allies in the great war was attributed to her free trade policy, which has enabled her to buy in the cheapest markets of the world and thus to undersell her competitors. The platform urged a reduction in the duty on goods imported from Great Britain to half the rates charged under the general tariff, and further reductions in the remaining tariff such as will ensure free trade between Great Britain and Canada within five years.

It also urged that the reciprocity agreement with the United States, by the Parliament of Canada, should be accepted, and that all food stuffs not included in the reciprocity agreement of 1911 should be placed on the free list, thus helping to reduce the high cost of living. It was further urged that agricultural implements, farm machinery, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list.

A request was made that the tariff be materially reduced on all the necessities of life, and that all tariff concessions granted to other countries should be extended to Great Britain.

The members of the council recommended that the government would find it necessary to raise increased revenue, as well as to make good revenue that might be lost through reducing the tariff as recommended. In order to provide this revenue, they recommended the placing of a direct tax on unimproved land values, including all natural resources; a tax on all incomes over \$4,000; a heavy graduated inheritance tax on large estates; and a tax on the profits over 10 per cent. of all corporations.

Other important recommendations made included the nationalization of all railway and express companies; that natural resources still remaining in the hands of the government should not be sold, but let out on short-term leases; the publicity of all campaign funds before and after election; the abolition of the patronage system; full provincial autonomy in liquor legislation, including its manufacture, export and import; and direct legisla-

tion, including the initiative, referendum and the right of recall.

## Business Conferences.

Several important conferences were held with representative business men of the West, but as the subjects dealt with were related practically with Western matters, the Ontario delegates did not take much part in them. It was noticeable that the farmers were thoroughly capable of holding their own on all business subjects discussed.

The Council of Agriculture decided to affiliate with the Social Service Congress, representing the leading Protestant churches of Canada, and appointed representatives to act on the council of the conference.

It was decided to press for legislation that will give farmers better chances for redress in the case of live stock killed on the railroad.

In next week's issue we hope to publish a fuller report of the important move made by the Manitoba and Alberta farmers' companies when they decided recently to unite. This amalgamation may have an important influence before long on the farmers' movements of Ontario.

## U. S. Laws Against Margarine Coloring

**T**HE United States law against the coloring of margarine states that any person who sells, vendors or furnishes oleomargarine for the use and consumption of others, except to his own family table without compensation, who shall add to or mix with such oleomargarine any artificial coloration that causes it to look like butter of any shade of yellow, shall be held to be a manufacturer of oleomargarine within the meaning of the act. The act then goes on to specify that the manufacturer of oleomargarine must pay a Federal tax of one-fourth of a cent a pound if his product is colored and ten cents a pound if it contains color.

There is no mistaking margarine when sold in the uncolored condition. The consumer is protected, for the uncolored product generally sells at from 10 to 15 cents a pound lower than the colored material. By paying 10 cents a pound, the manufacturer simply buys the right to make his product look like dairy butter, and there is not such a large discrepancy between these two articles.

An interesting question has sprung up by which it is sought to evade the Federal tax. This is for the consumer to color the margarine after it has been purchased. Certain margarine manufacturers and dealers furnish free coloring matter in capsules, when selling the uncolored product, the coloring being added to the margarine after being purchased. A strict interpretation of the law has shown that this is permissible when the margarine is for private use, but that it is an infringement of the law against coloration when manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, vendors and keepers of places where meals are served for pay resort to it.

Some of the State laws are out and out opposed to coloration, since it is stated that the white margarine is the purer it is. By allowing coloration, all sorts of impurities may be added and covered up. One authority sums up the situation by saying: "I can see but two reasons why some dealers and manufacturers want a law giving them a right to color their product in imitation of butter: one is to charge more for their product, and the other is to give them a monopoly of the butter market."



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