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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31st, 1910

No. 4

Western Provinces Join

THAT the conference of business interests of Alberta and British Columbia, organized by the United Farmers of Alberta, and held at Vancouver on August 17, 18 and 19 will have a great influence on the future trade relations of the two provinces no one will doubt. The questions up for discussion were many and varied, and all were of moment for the closer interprovincial trade relations.

Although the conference was not largely attended, the number of delegates at the various sessions probably being about sixty, yet all the interests were represented and the various questions were discussed with an earnestness which convinced all present that the people of the two Western provinces are keenly alive to the need of getting together if they are to reap to the fullest extent the advantages which are theirs, in the way that each province is too dependent on the other for the everyday necessities of life.

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Seeing that the organization of the conference was undertaken by the U. F. A. it is only natural that the delegates present from Alberta should take a leading part in the discussions and in the solving of these many problems, and this was further emphasised by the appointment of Jas. Bower, president of the U. F. A., as chairman of the conference.

Promptly at ten o'clock on August 17, the delegates met in the convention rooms on the exhibition grounds, and were greeted by Mr. Roy, secretary and manager of the exhibition, who extended to the delegates the heartiest welcome possible and assured them that the exhibition association would do all in its power to assist in carrying out the work.

Mr. Bower then briefly explained the object of the conference, pointing out the work which had already been done, and outlining the work undertaken by the transportation committee of last year, reading the annual report of that committee to show what has lead up to this conference. Mr. Bower also sketched out the subjects which it was proposed to discuss, outlining the present difficulty of cementing trade relations between the two provinces, first by the excessive and discriminating freight rates, then by the systems now in vogue for the marketing of Alberta meat in British Columbia, the need of a standard of quality in hay and a system of inspection, and the value of having all commission men licensed and honded.

Mr. W. J. MeMillan, of Vancouver, after extending executions on behalf of the

bonded.

Mr. W. J. McMillan, of Vancouver, after extending greetings on behalf of the Vancouver Board of Trade, said that as far—as British Columbia, Vancouver especially, was concerned, the question of discriminating freight rates was an old one, and much time and money had been spent in trying to bring this question to an issue. Heviewing the action which had already been taken, he said it was thought in the first place that Vancouver should be placed on an equal footing with Winnipeg and that the rates from Vancouver esattward and from Winnipeg westward should meet at Calgary. They secured Mr. Joseph Martin, K.C. to take the case up before the commission at Winnipeg, Vancouver and Ottawa, and it was found out that the commission had no power in this particular case, and could do nothing except where the lines complained of would parallel one another. Therefore as far as getting better-rates are concerned it seemed almost impossible. During the last provincial campaign they had tried to get a clause inserted in W. J. McMillan, of Vanco

The Meeting at Vancouver of Delegates from Alberta and British Columbia looking toward the strengthening of trade relations between the two provinces was a decided success. and should Result in the Betterment of Conditions

By E. J. FREAM

the proposed agreement with the C. N. R. that the province would control freight rates down to a certain percentage, but they did not succeed in the entirety, however, a clause being inserted which is considered a little indefinite. The people of British Columbia are at one with Alberta inbringing about a successful issue on this momentous question, and Mr. McMillan offered the suggestion that a later meeting be held when a fair discussion can be had of the whole question. The proposition was a hard one now, but The proposition was a hard one now, but if left alone would only become harder as there was no doubt that the combines are getting a hard and fast hold on the country, and we must act at once if we are to stand any chance of being successful.

Freight Rates Committee

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Mr. Stone, of the Vancouver Board of
Trade outlined the work already done
by this board and stated that the freight
rates committee had realized that the
more the question was considered the
bigger, broader and more difficult it
became. They have found out that
before they can hope to successfully
handle the question they must secure
certain information in regard to the cost
of operation of the road, together with
other necessary details of this kind.
The information asked for was not yet
forthcoming, they having met with considerable opposition from the C. P. R.
on this question.

The Railway Commission meets at

aiderable opposition from the C. P. R. on this question.

The Railway Commission meets at Vancouver on September 5th, and the Board of Trade will then present their case and will have to show that they are justified in asking for this information. Mr. McDonald, K.C. of Vancouver, has been engaged to conduct the case and was now doing all he possibly could to get the necessary information, also to get before the commission certain rates showing that the shippers are being discriminated against. At the present time it was almost impossible to get information and it was the intention of the Vancouver Board of Trade to form a Transportation Bureau, placing in charge thereof a transportation e-pert who will work out these different watters. This expert will also be at the disposal of all

who are interested in the work. Mr. Stone also stated that the case now being presented asked for a reduction in the freight rates from Alberta and Saskatchewan points to the Pacific Coast. Mr. MacDonald. K.C. said that unless the people of Alberta are able to send their produce to Vancouver at reasonable rates it will be impossible for them to secure the benefits of the seaboard so close at their doors. The present rates make it practically impossible for the Alberta farmers to ship their grain by this natural market and they are compelled to ship castward.

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According to the C. P. R. charter it is impossible to interfere with their rates unless they are first carning a certain dividend for the shareholders, and therefore those making a complaint must be prepared to show that they are discriminating in their rates before there is any hope of redress. The complainants must be prepared to go before the railway commission with this proof and they have to go to greater expense and trouble in preparing their case than the railway companies do in defending. The railways asy they want the long haul and do not want to take the goods through the short haul to the Pacific Coast. They are desirous of carrying goods from the east into Alberta, and take Alberta's products castward instead of to the west. Years ago the freight rates were fought out in Manitoba and they won out in the end, Vancouver is at the point to-day where Manitoba was some years ago, and the fight must be carried on right from the first. The first fight which the people of Vancouver and in that fight there was some gain to Vancouver, although not as much as they were entitled to.

The companies claim that the cost of operation in the West is so high that the rates on other portions of the line should not be taken into consideration, while the people of Vancouver claim that as a seaport they are entitled to reach as far east as the eastern ports reach west, and that the west is losing the great advantage of this natural port on account of the discriminating freight rates, and in sub-

stantation of this Mr. MacDonald pointed stantation of this Mr. MacDonald pointed out that at present certain commodities can be landed in Fernie, B. C., cheaper from Montreal than from Vancouver. He said his advice was that we must be reasonable, and not make wild statements, but work along the lines of reasonable applications and views until success is brought about.

Competition Necessary

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It was possible that in the ordinary course of events the results asked for could be brought about by the competition of other railways, but this was not entirely suitable and we must let it be known that the producers and consumers are one in demanding a fair deal in this instance. The first point had been to convince the board that the application was a reasonable one, and the decision given by them was that the case now being presented is a new one and was therefore open to us to show the unjustness of the present rates.

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Captain Worsnop spoke of the annual convention of the U. F. A. held in Edmonton last January, stating that it had wakened up the people it was intended to. They had felt the pin pricks and if carried on must result in good to the producers and consumers. Mr. D. W. Warner said that the present clashing of interests was as much in our way as rates, and we must get together before we can get down to business. We must be prepared to sink our selfish interests if we wish to win out. To show the need of getting together Mr. Warner stated that he had ascertained that only 15 pet cent. of the fruit used in Alberta came from our natural producers in British Columbia, the cause of this being the system in vogue as much as the high freight rates. Mr. MacDonald stated that should an adverse verdict be given by the railway commission in the present fight it will be all the harder to fight afterwards as besides the ordinary difficulties we should then have to show a changed condition of affairs before it could again be considered. After some further discussion the convention then adjourned till Thursday morning at ten o'clock.

Re Freight Rates

Re Freight Rates

On reconvening on Thursday morning, in the committee rooms of the Lumbermen's Association, Mr. Jas. Bower was elected permanent chairman and stated it would possibly be better to follow out the proposed programme, the first question being how the discriminating freight rates affect the different interests of the two provinces. Mr. Collins said that he had been instructed by the Island farmers to extend greetings to the delegates and to assure them of the co-operation of the Island farmers in these questions. Mr. Stone said that the farmers of Alberta would naturally have some questions that do not affect the Vancouver Board of Trade. It might be well to carry out what was foreshadowed at the meeting yesterday, that is appoint a representative to act with the Board of trade in presenting the case to the commission. It would be to the point if the U. F. A. would appoint some one to represent them here and be in touch with the Board.

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Mr. Speakman said it was agreed that it would be well for the Alberta farmers to discuss with the board of trade these different views and if it was found that it would be a benefit no doubt the delegate would be appointed as requested. Mr. McMillan said this was a most important question and every support that can be

