

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, December 31st, 1913

A GOOD YEAR'S WORK

As the present year comes to its close those who are interested in the cause of democracy, and especially in the work of the organized farmers, will naturally say to themselves, "What have we accomplished?" A careful consideration of the work done by the organized farmers during the past twelve months, gives good ground for satisfaction. The cause has progressed steadily and the ranks of the organized farmers have been very much increased in strength. Many thousands of farmers this year have studied the big problems which their organizations are endeavoring to solve, and have come to realize that successful farming means something more than producing a large crop. Every intelligent farmer who is converted to the cause of democracy becomes a missionary. It is not possible for a farmer to see and realize clearly the unjust burden upon the agricultural industry without making it a subject of conversation with his fellow farmers. It is almost entirely due to the work of the organized farmers that there is now no talk of increasing the protective tariff, and that the feeling prevalent is in favor of a reduction. There will be a reduction in the tariff in the near future simply because the farmers have demanded it. The co-operative movement is gaining tremendous headway and there are probably 30,000 farmers who have joined with their brother farmers during the past year in purchasing many of their necessities, and by so doing secured much better prices than could have been secured individually.

The cause of Direct Legislation is also gaining headway very rapidly, despite the fact that the Alberta and Saskatchewan legislatures have enacted legislation tending to shelve the question. Direct Legislation cannot be downed in the Prairie Provinces and will have to be given its proper place, as it becomes better understood. The freight rate question has been forced to an issue before the Railway Commission and a decision will be given in the course of a few months. The financial question is agitating the public mind now as never before, and it is being realized that the agricultural industry must have cheaper money, if it is to come to its own. These are but some of the outstanding indications of the work that has been done, whereas the more important work is that which has been quietly done in each local community, building up better relations between men, and giving a wider outlook upon life. On the material side the farmers' commercial organizations have been very successful having marketed more than 40,000,000 bushels of grain through their own agencies with a profit saved to their farmer shareholders of \$325,000.

"But grand as are these victories,
Whose monuments we see,
They are but as the dawn, which speaks
Of noontide yet to be."

CHRISTMAS CHARITY

Ten thousand poor people, who were unable to provide themselves with luxuries appropriate to the festive season, were given free dinners, through the charity of the people of Winnipeg, on Christmas day. The people who were dependent on charity for their Christmas dinner were of many nationalities and of all ages and with every kind of previous experience. Some have always been accustomed to expect charity, others were the victims of misfortune, while some were dependent on others for the first time in their lives, and were obviously embarrassed and uncomfortable. And in other cities and

towns throughout Canada, and, indeed, the civilized world, agencies of many kinds were at work bringing Christmas cheer to the unfortunate and the destitute. What does all this charity mean? In many of our churches on Christmas morning the charity which was being dispensed was referred to as an indication of the working of the spirit of Christianity. This no doubt is true, but there is another side which, to be honest with ourselves, we must also look at. Does not the necessity for all this charity indicate that there is something radically wrong with our modern system of civilization? While these poor creatures were forced to accept charity on Christmas day, others who had done not one whit more to deserve it, were riding from church in their automobiles to beautiful homes, where they would enjoy all the luxuries of life, not only on that day but every day. Why are some so rich and others so poor? Civilization is producing millionaires and paupers, financial kings and industrial slaves. Many of the poor people who ate free Christmas dinners last week had done more real work, had produced more wealth, for the use of mankind, than those whose charity relieved their hunger. It is not because of industry and idleness that some are vastly rich and others miserably poor. The millionaire who has acquired his wealth by his own hard work, his own careful saving, or his own abstinence from luxury, does not exist. No man ever really earned a million dollars. The millionaires are those who have been enabled by some special privilege to appropriate for themselves the results of the labor of other men and other women. It is by the hard work and the plain living of others that millionaires are being made. High rents and dear food mean riches for idle landlords and beef barons, and they mean poverty for industrious widows and working men. Is our Christmas charity really genuine? How will those poor people who received free dinners on Christmas day live for the rest of the year? If we really have the love for others which is true charity, shall we not each one of us do our little best to bring about conditions by which no man who is willing to work need look in vain for employment and no widow or orphan be dependent upon charity for the means of subsistence. The people, thanks to the spread of education and the cheapness of good books, are becoming more enlightened, and more intelligence and earnestness are every year being brought to the study of the social and economic problems which are pressing for solution. When the people see more clearly they will realize that Special Privilege in many forms must be dethroned and monopoly must be abolished. Laws must be altered and customs changed. Then, where will the charitable be found? Will they show their charity by helping to make free dinners unnecessary, or will they resist the removal of the Special Privileges which have enabled them to take with one hand a hundred times as much as they give with the other?

THE OTTAWA DELEGATION

There was something more than a mere coincidence in the fact that the day upon which the Canadian Council of Agriculture presented their case to Premier Borden and his Government, Dec. 16, was just three years after the day when 800 farmers, representing the agricultural industry of Canada, met Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the Commons Chamber and presented their case to him in the presence of the members of his government and the members of the House. The case presented on this occasion to the Conservative

Government was very much the same as that presented to the late Liberal Government. The delegation on this occasion consisted only of the chief officers of the four independent farmers' organizations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario. These delegates, however, had the backing of a very much larger body of organized farmers than those who waited upon the government three years ago. The educational work since that time has been carried on steadily and the membership in the organizations has nearly doubled. Steadily during the past three years, conditions in rural Canada have grown more acute, and day by day farmers and many other thinking men as well are realizing that there must come a change.

It was pointed out clearly to the Government by members of the delegation that present economic conditions are not by any means due to immediate legislation or lack of legislation. The customs tariff has remained practically the same for the last two decades, and the present situation is the cumulative effect of the heavy burden which has continuously been carried by the agricultural industry. The movement from the farms to the cities and towns is draining rural Ontario at an alarming rate, and scores of deserted farm houses may be seen in traveling through almost any part of the province. But in Western Canada, where the farmer has been supposed to be always in clover, the deserted farm is also appearing and the movement from the land to the town is growing at a tremendous rate. This movement away from the farm all over Canada is becoming so very serious and is increasing so rapidly that it is the chief problem of the time. It cannot be checked immediately. Even if the customs tariff were abolished completely tomorrow, railroad freight rates cut in half, bank interest reduced to 5 per cent., mortgage interest to 5 per cent., and everything possible done to make farming profitable, it would be some years before the movement away from the farm would cease, to say nothing of the movement "back to the land." Times are mighty hard at present throughout Canada, and nowhere are they harder than among the farmers of the Prairie Provinces and Ontario. These facts are being borne in upon the minds of the members of the Government as well as upon the big business interests of Canada generally. They are at last beginning to see that the lack of prosperity among the farmers is beginning to affect all lines of business. They are beginning to see that a large immigration, insane land speculation, and a large crop of grain does not by any means spell prosperity to the farmers. The Government today is thinking more about the organized farmers and the conditions of agriculture than ever in the past. There is a general feeling in business circles in the Eastern cities that it is time to pay some attention to the demands of the organized farmers, and to give them at least a little measure of relief from the burden they are carrying.

Many of our readers, no doubt, were disappointed that Premier Borden, in replying to the delegation, did not make any definite promise of relief. But this was not to be expected. It is not the way the Governments act, and in the matter of the tariff, at any rate, it would be impossible to make a definite announcement except in the House of Commons. It is a well-known fact there that the Government is devoting special attention to the question of placing wheat and flour on the free list, and thus opening the American market to Canadian wheat and flour. Some members of the cabinet are said to be favorable and a considerable number of the members on the Government side of the House