

United Farmers of Alberta

Convention Subjects

THE Central board of the directors recently held a four-days' session, at which the general program of the convention was tentatively outlined.

The convention will open on the Tuesday morning, January 21, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the provincial premier, and the mayor of Edmonton, extending a welcome to the delegates, following which President Wood will deliver his annual address and probably the president of the United Farm Women of Alberta will also do likewise.

Upwards of 60 resolutions have been received from local associations, and these are still coming in, indicating that the convention will have a most busy time. Some of the most important questions to be taken up will be those of rural credits and banking facilities. On this subject a committee has been working. J. W. Leedy, who was largely responsible for the working out of a system of farmers' banks in Kansas, will suggest amendments to the Canadian banking act. Vere Brown, superintendent of the western branches of the Bank of Commerce, has accepted the invitation to address the convention on the same subject.

A prominent place on the program will be given to the problems of the returned soldiers, and notice has been given that the question of farmer candidates at elections will be introduced.

Pointed Paragraphs

By the Directors

H. E. Spencer, Battle River

How long have the western farmers asked for the lowering or abolition of the Tariff? And with what result? These results have been brought about by the slackness of men and women in not giving their support to their only protective organization. I mention women also, because having the franchise and not joining in the common cause with the men they will be counted as indifferent or against the movement by the "powers that be."

With the past harvest, a failure through the effects of hail, drought and frost, thousands of farmers have gone behind in their finances through no fault of their own. How many of you realize more than ever who was in a position to dictate, whether the stores were to demand cash or the banks to carry the country?

It is about time we agitated for government control of the medical profession. Why should not the government be responsible for the public health as well as for public education? It is easier for a man to pay for keeping well than meet his doctor's bill after being ill. The ravages of Spanish influenza have taught us many things.

How many of you examined how the "Supplementary Revenue" has been placed? In rural districts it is from two cents to four cents on an acre, and in urban districts one mill on the dollar. How does this work out? Let us take the middle figure, of three cents, for rural districts and a quarter section worth \$2,000; the tax would be \$4.80. The same amount of money invested in urban property at one mill on the dollar would pay \$2.00. Let each farmer work out his penalty for living in the country.

F. W. Smith, Victoria

Our organization is of great value to us today. Just imagine what would be the position of the farmer without it; he would be helpless in combat with the great combinations and corporations with which he is obliged to deal. By keeping alive his local he becomes a great power, which can compel even the government to listen to him.

I think you will agree with me when I say that the co-operative part of our order has justified its existence. The old days of the line companies are at an end, and we can get a square deal. The great war is now over and the work of reconstruction is being considered.

The great interests, the mergers, the great corporations are already at work to secure for themselves a safe position for the future, and have arrayed themselves with one object in view, to make

Conducted Officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by the Secretary

H. Higginbotham, Calgary, Alta.

the farmer pay more than his share of the debt incurred in carrying the war to a successful issue. What we need is a new economic system that will ensure to the farmer his proper share of the wealth which he creates, sufficient to enable him to maintain a proper standard of life for himself and his wife and family. This can be done if every farmer is true to himself and his neighbor, and the U.F.A. local to which he belongs.

Let no personal feelings obscure the view, don't think your local can get on without your attendance. Your organization expects that every man this day will do his duty.

S. S. Sears, Macleod.

Now that the war is over there are certain great questions to be settled, questions that for the past four years have had to be pushed aside that we might concentrate our tremendous energy and vast resources for the winning of the war. This seeming lack of insistence that our just demands be met by the governments, has in some measure caused a restlessness among a few of our farmers that is entirely unjustified at this time.

Would it not be possible for you to

spend a day or so in getting some of your members together to assist in collecting the balance of your dues. The time is short and immediate action must be taken if we are to show up at the convention with our membership roll as high as last year.

Convention Resolutions

Tariff Reduction

Whereas there is no hope of tariff reduction by the present government or by any government composed of either of the two leading political parties in Canada, and as manufacturers are given a rebate of 99 per cent. on all material which they import and which is used by them to manufacture goods for export, and,

Whereas, the bulk of farm production is exported and the export price governs the domestic price.

Resolved, that a demand be made upon the government for a rebate to farmers of 99 per cent. of the duty they pay on all goods purchased for the operation of their farms and that should this demand not be put into force within a reasonable time members of the U.F.A. hereby pledge themselves to purchase as much as possible dutiable goods made outside of Canada, thereby

enriching the public treasury.—De Winton local, De Winton, Alberta.

That we instruct and authorize our executive to enter into negotiations with all the different farmers' organizations of the various provinces with the view of taking joint action to finance and carry on a strong educative campaign, re the high protective tariff, and its effect.—Valhalla local, Valhalla, Alberta.

Natural Resources

To petition the government to make an annual record of the value of all privately-owned natural resources in Canada, including railroad rights-of-way, water powers, mines, timber limits, etc., for the next five years in order that the amount of the accruing increment may be determined with a view to appropriating this increased value for public purposes.—De Winton local, De Winton, Alberta.

Prohibition

Whereas a straight vote on prohibition might result in throwing the country back into the vicious conditions which existed with the open bar,

Resolved that the Dominion government be advised to pass a sane and considerate law to control the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages.—De Winton local, De Winton, Alberta.

Land Tax

Whereas, the revenue of this province is supplemented by a tax, levied exclusively upon land; and whereas the act imposing such tax discriminates against rural land,

Therefore, we, the United Farmers of Alberta, in convention assembled, strongly protest against the unjust discrimination of placing a special burden on a special class; and further, apart from the injustice we question the wisdom of a fiscal policy that imposes its main burden on land, used almost exclusively for the production of food.—McCafferty local, Edgerton.

Automobile Tax Money

That the administration of the license fees imposed on automobiles and motor cycles be placed in the hands of the local improvement districts, in which the owner of the licensed automobile or motor cycle resides and that the said license fees be decided on the following basis: two-thirds to be retained for the local improvement district or municipality for road construction, and one-third to go to the department of public works to assist in the building of bridges and "upkeep" of trunk roads. This shall apply also to towns and villages.—De Winton local, De Winton.

General Election

Asking that a general election be held throughout Canada immediately peace is signed.—De Winton local, De Winton.

Asking for the repeal of the War Times' Election Act.—Millet.

Resolved that the time is now ripe for appointing farmer candidates for the different constituencies of Alberta, and that definite steps be taken to this end. All farmer candidates must be pledged to the farmers' platform as adopted by the Canadian Council of Agriculture.—Rodney local, Crossfield.

That the provincial government be requested to adopt a policy of developing publicly-owned hydro-electric power.—De Winton local, De Winton, Alta.

Protection of Crops

Asking the convention to instruct the legislative committee to take up with the provincial government the advisability of enacting and putting into force an act providing for provincial insurance against damages to crops by hail, drought and frost, the amounts to be paid on account of losses by either of the three elements might be limited to cost of seed, and that the convention to go on record as favoring such an act for our province.—Valhalla local, Valhalla.

Resolutions continued in next week's issue.



H. W. WOOD.

"Still He Wants More"

By the President

"And I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils."

I have just read in the Financial Times of December 7 a tirade against the Canadian farmers, which, for low malevolence, false malediction and the baring of a soul in which is displayed, in another form, the worst elements of what we have learned to know as "German Kultur," certainly reaches down to the very depths.

If any man believes that the war which has just ended is more than the prelude to the real fight for democracy in Canada, let him read carefully this article from the recognized organ of the Canadian plutocracy. This editorial is entitled "Still he wants more":—

"The farmer's political platform embraces everything but grace before meals. As usual, each plank of his platform contains the grinded remains of a section of business enterprise not engaged in agricultural operations. The farmer has put over 75 per cent. of the world's war profits into his jeans—pardon, into the pockets of his dress pants; he spends his winters abroad; he lets the other fellows pay the war taxes, pensions, Red Cross and Patriotic Funds, etc., etc.; he enjoys a guaranteed minimum for his wheat; treats his farm hands in a way which would not be tolerated in commercial or industrial circles; wants government ownership of railways so that the tax-payer will provide lower freight rates for crop moving; wants everything he consumes, internally and externally, put on the free list; wants soldiers settled on the land "with the aid," as he specifically states, "of public funds," and a whole lot of other things too numerous to mention.

"The farmer is the most prosperous individual on the face of the Dominion. He was prosperous before the war, if we ignore his wild gamble in 'central' real estate, but today his prosperity, his well-being, stands head and shoulders above that of any other industry in the whole list of Canadian enterprise. The huge profits derived directly through Europe's war has put the farmer in exceptionally happy circumstances, from an operating point of view. He has been enabled to pay off his original machinery debts, also to purchase new machinery; he has been able to extend the quantity of land under cultivation, sometimes to the extent of two or three fold; he has a lot of money in the bank, and a few Victory Bonds—in fact he has everything needed to make him the most contented individual in Canada, with the added assurance of another two years' highly favorable market conditions.

"But he is not satisfied. Successful as he undoubtedly has been, and as he undoubtedly will continue to be, he still wants more—he wants the other 25 per cent. of the world's goods which slipped by him when orders were placed for munitions. The farmer will get little sympathy from the other members of this national community. If circumstances were adverse to the farmer's interests, one could appreciate the endeavors towards 'reform.' The farmer merely exposes himself to a charge of being money-mad—his political platform being devised essentially with the object (so he declares) of still further adding to the distended condition of his pocket book. When the farmer's condition is not a happy one; when it is not fortified by large cash equities, it will be time enough to try and disturb the economic safeguard of a nation that has just begun to find itself capable of producing the finished article from a great reservoir of raw material, and thus give employment to our present population and perhaps absorb millions of newcomers from abroad. Canada cannot live by farming alone, but she can grow to be a great nation if industrial possibilities are cultivated alongside the natural development of the farm areas."

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