



# FARM AND DAIRY

## & RURAL HOME



We Welcome Practical Progressive Ideas.

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.—Lord Chatham.

The Recognized Expert in Farming in Canada.

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## How the Farmers Met the Business Interests

What the Business Men Proposed and What the Farmers Did—A Full Report of the Recent Conference in Winnipeg.

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IN last week's issue of Farm and Dairy I gave a brief outline of the meeting which was held in Winnipeg on November 10th between men representing the leading business interests of the west and farmers representing the four provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Fuller particulars of this meeting should prove interesting to the farmers of Ontario and the east who now are beginning to play an important part in national affairs through their connection with The United Farmers of Ontario, and through it again with the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

As stated in last week's issue, the farmers had the best of the conference. This was because they understood the situation better than did the business men and because they knew what they wanted and intended to get it. They felt also, that they were not asking for anything unreasonable and, therefore, pressed their case with all the more confidence.

The business men made the mistake of underestimating the farmers. For the most part they represented banks, loan and mortgage associations, trust companies, implement dealers and similar organizations that are in the habit of loaning money to farmers. Thus they have naturally come to the conclusion, at least many of them, that farmers as a class are hard up and constantly in need of assistance from the business interests. They appeared to fail to recognize that there are thousands of well-to-do farmers in the four provinces mentioned who are not dependent upon anybody but themselves. Furthermore, these farmers, during the past few years, have launched and developed extensive business enterprises of their own which already are becoming to be recognized as being amongst the largest business undertakings in the country. Last year, for instance, the Grain Growers' Grain Co., of Winnipeg, through its own operations and the operations of a subsidiary company, the Grain Growers' Export Company handled millions of dollars worth of goods and showed profits of over \$800,000, while The Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company showed profits of \$133,745. These enterprises have developed, in such men as T. A. Crerar, of The Grain Growers' Grain Co.; C. A. Dunning, of The Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company and J. J. Musselman, of The Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, men who are capable of holding their own with the best business men of the country. Other leaders produced by the farmers include such men as Hon. George Langley, of Saskatchewan, a farmer who is now one of the leading members of the Saskatchewan Provincial Cabinet; James Speakman, the President

of The United Farmers of Alberta, who has a wide knowledge of public matters in Europe as well as in this country; J. A. Maharg, of Moose Jaw, Sask.; R. C. Henders, of Culroff, Man.; R. McKenzie, secretary of The Manitoba Grain Growers' Association; J. J. Morrison, secretary of The United Farmers of Ontario and others whose long experience in public matters have qualified them admirably to lead the farmers' movement which is now taking such deep root in this country.

### Discoveries by the Farmers

Since the farmers of the west, and now in Ontario as well, have commenced to buy and sell their own supplies to the extent, in the aggregate, of millions of dollars a year, they have begun to make some important discoveries. They have found for instance, the heavy burdens that are laid on farmers by means of protective tariffs. This they have discovered through having to pay the tariff duties on goods they have imported. They have found also what it costs to handle and ship their grain, and therefore have learned something of the profits the milling interests and the transportation interests have been making out of the handling of their products and supplies. Thus a free trade tendency has sprung up in the west among the farmers, who are now demanding many reforms which the business interests view with more or less alarm.

### A Conference Desired.

The change that thus has been brought about in conditions in the west is beginning to be felt, even if not fully recognized, by the business interests. Of late a growing desire has been evident on their part to get in closer touch with the farmers. Not understanding this new type of farmer and being familiar for the most part only with that class of farmers who come to them seeking for financial assistance, it has been natural for them to conclude that the best way for them to get in touch with the farmer was by offering to help him in such ways as might lie within their power.

Several months ago the business men of Winnipeg and the west, largely under the leadership of Mr. Vere C. Brown, inspector in western Canada for the Canadian Bank of Commerce, which conducts the banking operations of the Canadian Northern Railway, began to hold meetings to discuss what was to be done to assist the farming interests in the west. Growing out of these meetings a long memorandum was prepared, suggesting ways in which they thought the business and farming interests might cooperate for the advancement of agriculture. Considering that they did not understand the class of men

they were dealing with, the business men were really very tactful and sincere in all their proposals. Feeling sure that they could not agree on tariff matters, transportation problems and similar issues, they suggested that all such questions should be held in abeyance. They proposed, however, that a committee of one hundred should be formed, to be composed half of business men and half of farmers, and empowered to deal with other matters which they considered of importance.

### What the Business Interests Proposed

Among the matters which the business men proposed should be discussed were, first, subjects relating to increased production and the marketing of the farmers' products and second, interest and freight rates and the cost of the goods and services which the farmer has to buy. It was suggested that as these latter matters were likely to be controversial in character, it was probable that they could not be discussed with advantage at such a conference. In other words, while it was not so stated, it was intimated that as many of the goods the farmer has to buy are protected by high tariff walls, thereby increasing their cost to the farmer, and as the business interests do not want to see the tariff walls interfered with, it would be just as well if the farmers would agree not to discuss such matters in order that it would be possible for those present to agree on other matters. In the same way it was intimated that because the milling interests in Canada want to have the right to grind the grain of the western farmers without having to meet the competition of the milling interests of the States, therefore the advisability of opening the American markets to Canadian wheat (which the farmers of the west estimate would mean \$10,000,000 this year alone to them), could not be discussed. For the same reason because the railway companies of Canada want to carry the grain and other products and supplies of the western farmers without competition from the railways of the States freight rates and such matters should be deferred from consideration.

### Suggested Reforms

The subjects which it was suggested might be discussed were the following:

1st. That implement concerns and country retailers should be discouraged from extending "excessive and indiscriminate credit" to farmers and instead induced to offer greater inducements for cash payments. It was further suggested that the banks might be induced to arrange with the farmers to give them whatever credit they might

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