

EAST AND WEST; LAND AND INDUSTRY

A Speech delivered by Sir John Willison, before the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg on October 1, 1918.

A month ago I made a speech at Winnipeg which has been the subject of criticism, favorable and unfavorable. For that which was favorable I am grateful. By that which was unfavorable I will try to profit. But I think there is unnecessary suspicion and misunderstanding. A few years ago, as I understand, the organized grain growers and the commercial, financial and industrial interests of Western Canada established a Council of Agriculture and Commerce. This council has held periodical conferences to abolish grievances, adjust differences and ensure co-operation for common objects. It seems to be universally agreed that through these conferences much misunderstanding has been removed and far more satisfactory relations established between the agricultural and business interests of Western Canada. The Western grain growers are perhaps the most powerful agrarian organization that ever has been created in any country. It has been developed with much wisdom and foresight. All its affairs are managed with signal efficiency. No farmers' organization in the United States has had such permanence or such genius for co-operation. No greater successes have been achieved by the agrarian party of Germany. Strongly entrenched in the West, the grain growers are now extending their organization to older Canada. Ontario has a council of agriculture, and organization has begun in Quebec and the Atlantic

provinces. Over all there is a national council, exercising executive control, stimulating and unifying the provincial associations and combining all the forces for a common national object.

Not only are the farmers organizing a great national co-operative movement but they are also developing a common political programme. In the West their political strength is formidable. In the East it is not inconsiderable and will increase as organization is extended. All this is legitimate enough. The facts are stated only in order that the situation may be understood, and not with any thought of censure or attack. But if a national organization of farmers is desirable a national organization of the business interests is not less desirable or less legitimate. If the Western Provinces are benefited by conferences between farmers and the representatives of other interests, there should be at least equal advantage in national conferences between the leaders of the organized farmers and representatives of organized labor and of the commercial, financial and industrial elements.

It is as important to consider common interests as to reconcile differences. There are differences to be reconciled between sections of the country and elements of the population. There are great common interests to be developed and strengthened. If the chief and deliberate objects of two such national