

# U. F. A. Convention Reports

Following is the report of the Board of Directors as rendered at the Calgary convention:

The past year has been a busy one in the history of the association, and several questions of moment to the farmers of Alberta in particular, as well as the farmers of Canada in general, have been under the consideration of your Board of Directors and by the executive committee appointed by your directors.

Immediately after the last annual convention, in accordance with the instructions given at that time, your directors took up the subject of the agricultural college which had been referred to them by the convention. After fully considering the matter your directors met the members of the government and submitted a proposition that there should be established in connection with the college in various parts of the province agricultural schools with practical demonstration farms attached thereto, and requested further that the farmers be given fair and equitable representation on the governing board of the college.

## Losses Caused by Railroads

Your directors also took up the question of the loss experienced by many of the settlers to the south of Vegreville, and secured a promise from the government that the prosecution of this case would be undertaken by the government against the railway company as a test case, so that the liability of the company could be fully established. Unfortunately, however, before this promise could be carried out, chaos broke out in the government ranks, the members interested resigned and the result is that the case is still unsettled.

Your directors assisted in the organization of the Canadian Council of Agriculture at the meeting held at Prince Albert, and through this council have taken up several questions of interest. Your president was appointed chairman of the railway committee by the council and a large amount of work has been done by this committee in trying to get the vexatious question of the liability of railway companies for stock killed upon the track settled once for all. Your directors expressed the view that serious losses ruinous to settlers were being incurred by reason of stock being killed upon the railways because of inefficient cattle guards, the absence of cattle guards, poor fences or the absence of fences altogether, and that the railways evade payment of claims by reason that the present law does not properly safeguard the interests of the stock owners, and suggested as a remedy that the railway companies be made liable for all stock killed, unless such stock were killed upon the railway crossings by reason of the negligence of the owners, the onus of proof of such negligence to be borne by the railway companies.

## Re Wire Fence

Following some correspondence with parties in Alberta your directors authorized the secretary to enter into a contract with a woven wire fence company which enabled the members of the U.F.A. to secure this wire at a reduced price. It was late in the year before this contract was entered into, but several members took advantage of the offer and secured their wire through the association. In connection with this matter it might be stated that complaints have been received by the association that there was discrimination in the freight rates in favor of barbed wire, as compared with woven wire. This was investigated and it was found that the rates were identical for both kinds of wire. Your directors also took up with the Dominion government the matter of the duty on wire and asked to have all kinds of wire placed on the free list as many farmers prefer to weave their own fences, but so far the duty has not been removed, at least your directors have not been informed to this effect.

## Stock Killed on Track

Your directors have taken up several cases in regard to stock being killed

## The Annual Convention of the United Farmers of Alberta was held at Calgary, January 17, 18 and 19. The Reports reproduced in this issue show the work accomplished by the Association during 1910

upon the railway track, and it was decided to find out just what could be done in the matter. Every effort has been made to be of assistance to the farmers interested in these cases. It is felt, however, that nothing can be done to materially relieve these parties until



JAMES BOWER, of Red Deer, re-elected President of the United Farmers of Alberta

the law is amended, and it would therefore not be advisable to start a test case in connection with same. Several complaints were taken to the Railway Commission, but the answer received was that the commission had not jurisdiction in the matter and the complainants must take their case to a civil court. With the vexatious delays and appeals which are there experienced, not much chance for relief will be forthcoming until the act is properly amended.

## Machinery Disputes

Another matter which your directors enquired into was that of a dispute relating to a machinery deal between a machine company and a farmer. This case was carried through all the courts of Alberta, and the farmer secured a verdict in every instance. The company then announced their intention of appealing the case to Ottawa, and the assistance of the U.F.A. was invoked. The matter was discussed and the evidence relating to the case was read carefully; besides this, several interviews were arranged with the machine company and at last an offer was made which your directors considered very fair. After fully studying the offer your directors advised the acceptance, as it seemed from reading the evidence that the case was a very technical one and that if it was taken to Ottawa where the trial judges would not be acquainted with the Western conditions that the verdict must necessarily go to the company. Taking this into consideration, together with the compromise offer made, your directors thought nothing could be gained by suggesting a further fight. The compromise was refused, however, by the party who had applied for assistance from the association, and seeing that nothing further could be gained, your directors then withdrew from further consideration of the case. The appeal was carried to Ottawa and at this court the former verdicts were reversed and the company received a verdict for their claim. This whole case, it might be stated, hinged to a large

extent on the matter of a guarantee which goes with machinery.

## Pork Packing Agreements

Your directors forwarded a strong recommendation to the members recommending that the proposed pork packing agreements should be signed, but the response to this appeal has not been very great and the number of hogs guaranteed fall far short of the quantity desired. This is a matter which should have attention and possibly some means should be devised whereby the association will undertake the work of carrying on the canvass necessary to secure the signatures to the contracts.

## Sir Wilfrid's Tour

Early in the year word was received that Sir Wilfrid Laurier would make a tour of the West, and your directors prepared a case for presentation to him. It was decided to meet him at Red Deer, and on the occasion of his visit there your directors had the privilege of placing before him the views of the association on several matters which were of interest to the West. The presentation took the form of resolutions, and papers were also read by different members of your board endorsing and emphasizing the views expressed in the resolutions. Your directors received material assistance from local unions in various parts of the province which were situated near a place where the premier made a stop, for in almost every instance he was met by deputations of members from these unions who pointed out that they were thoroughly in sympathy with the resolutions of the association and that the wishes expressed therein were a fair



W. J. TREGILLUS, of Calgary, re-elected Vice-President of the United Farmers of Alberta

indication of the feeling throughout the whole province. At Lethbridge your directors assisted the local unions in the south to present their case. The subjects presented and dealt with in the various resolutions and papers were as follows:

1. The Chilled Meat question.
2. Terminal Elevators.
3. The Railway question.
4. The Tariff case.
5. The Hudson's Bay Railway.
6. Co-operative legislation.

The result of these interviews is known to all so that it is not necessary to further dwell upon same in this report.

## The Western Route

Following up the report of the transportation committee and the remarks of the Hon. A. C. Rutherford, late premier of Alberta, as given to the last convention, the matter of the development of the Western route and the need of securing closer trade relations between the two Western provinces—Alberta and British Columbia—has not been forgotten. In August last a conference was held in Vancouver to fully consider this matter. The business interests of British Columbia were well represented at this conference, while your directors had the assistance of the deputy minister of agriculture and the dairy commissioner for Alberta, who were representing the government. This conference has, your directors believe, resulted in much good and will tend to draw the two provinces closer together, as during the three days of the conference it was found that the people of British Columbia were desirous of working closer together with Alberta and that they would assist the association as far as it was possible for them to do so. A series of resolutions were passed which have been submitted to the governments of the two provinces for consideration and action. One of the main questions up for discussion at this convention was, of course that of the Western grain route and the need for storage facilities on the Pacific coast. The delegates from Alberta listened to some arguments presented by parties interested in some projected private enterprise, but stuck steadfast to the principle which has been laid down—that of government ownership of all terminal elevator facilities at the Pacific coast—and a resolution was passed to this effect. Another question of interest which came up for considerable discussion consisted of the need of a proper system of hay inspection and for a standard of quality to be established. The result of the discussion was that a strong resolution was unanimously adopted recommending that the provisions of the Inspection and Sale act should be extended to Western Canada and that standards for hay suitable to the needs of the West should be established.

## Meat Inspection

Another important subject dealt with was that of meat inspection. It was shown that the present system of inspection is all in favor of the big dealer or shipper of dressed or cured meats, and that the small independent dealers were unable to ship out of the province in great trouble and inconvenience. It was felt that this was unjust and a resolution was adopted recommending the two provincial governments to investigate the subject and if possible bring in legislation providing for the establishment of provincial or municipal abattoir systems which would be under government inspection and which would therefore answer all the requirements of the Meat Inspection act.

It was further decided to request that legislation be passed making it compulsory for all commission merchants handling any description of farm produce to be licensed and bonded after the plan set forth in the Manitoba Grain act.

It was decided also that the U.F.A. should assist the Vancouver Board of Trade in the presentation of their case charging discriminatory rates on goods transported from Vancouver to points eastward, on grain and other produce shipped from Alberta points westward, and on passenger rates as compared with other portions of Canada. The first hearing of this case was at Vancouver, and the U.F.A. was represented by the president, who gave evidence which was of material assistance to the case. A signal victory was gained at this hearing when the C.P.R. admitted the discrimination, and undertook to show that same was justifiable. The