

The Grain Growers' Guide

ADDRESSED TO THE FARMERS OF



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THE MANUFACTURERS' CHALLENGE

Last week, in the magnificent cafe of the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg, there was held a banquet, which in brilliancy outshone that of most other similar functions that have been held in Western Canada. It was the annual banquet of the Manitoba branch of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. There were a number of speakers present who responded to toasts to the City of Winnipeg, the railways, the producers and the consumers. The most amazing statement made at that festive gathering was that voiced by G. M. Murray, secretary. He spoke as follows: "The re-organized Canadian Manufacturers' Association is like a young giant, ignorant of its own power. By the exercise of these powers, it could, if it chose, bring several millions of people to the verge of starvation, or paralyze the industry of the whole Dominion. From the half-hearted 132 who comprised the total membership of the association in 1899, (the year of re-organization), it has grown with such strides that now, in 1910, the members number more than 2,500." Perhaps his statement contains the most astounding challenge that has been hurled at the public in many years. The contemplation of such a situation may well, in the words of Paul Kruger, "stagger humanity." To think that 2,500 men in Canada, claim that they are able to make the grass grow in the streets of this whole great country, is something for every sane man to consider. And yet, the more we consider it, the more we consider how true that statement is. The manufacturers realized that without organization, governments would pay little heed to them. It is worthy of notice that the organized manufacturers have no political leanings. Whatever party is in power is the one they go after. In addition to their great strength, the manufacturers control vast wealth. Whether the accusation be true or not, it has become an accepted principle in Canada that wealth has considerable influence in securing legislation. We wish that every one of the 800,000 farmers in Canada could have this statement, made by the secretary of the Manufacturers' Association, to consider. It will be well to have it printed in flaming letters and hung in every farm house in Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It would be an interesting thing for the farmer and his family to read whenever they purchased a binder, or a plow or a carriage or other manufactured articles, the price of which was enhanced by a high tariff. Then the farmer would consider what keeps the tariff up and who benefits by the tariff. The tariff on these manufac-

tured articles which the farmer is compelled to buy, is kept there mainly by the influence of, and for the benefit of, these 2,500 men represented by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. It would be still more interesting matter for the farmers when they learned that these articles for which they paid high prices, undoubtedly enhanced through the influence of the manufacturer, were being sold in foreign countries at much lower prices than in Canada. At the last annual convention of the Canadian Manufacturers', in Hamilton, Ont., it was stated that there were still 500 manufacturers outside the association. Therefore the total number of manufacturers in Canada, is approximately 3,000. But yet, these 2,500 men, in full confidence of their own strength, sit up in public, and announce to the laboring millions of Canada, that they can paralyze this great Dominion.

Let us, for a moment, look at the other side. We all know that the manufacturers of Canada are doing a most necessary work for the development and progress of this country. They are needed and should be encouraged. But they are not needed any more than are the other interests, and not so much as the farmer. We could buy our manufactured goods in other countries, but we could not buy all the agricultural products that we need, if there were no farmers in Canada. Manufacturers are all right as long as they are kept in their place. But when they acquire such strength that they swing legislatures, and governments to do their bidding, it is time to call a halt.

The manufacturers represent a small percentage of Canada's population. With all their wealth and power they are doing little to improve the situation for their thousands of employees and still less to improve the situation for the great farming element of Canada. If they were satisfied with a fair profit, and were prepared to enter into competition with other manufacturers, we would then be in a position to judge as to the legitimacy of their present stand. A hopeful note at the same banquet, where the proud vaunt of the manufacturers was voiced, was sounded by D. W. McCuaig, President of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association. Mr. McCuaig pointed out that the Manufacturers' Association had been a great help to the Grain Growers in encouraging them to organize for the accomplishment of their purposes. If the Grain Growers will keep before them the Manufacturers' organization, and strive to imitate in it that respect, they will shortly bring to an end the grievances under which they at present labor.

MORE STRENGTH NEEDED

Today there is only one reason that can be advanced, to explain why the organized farmers of the west cannot get satisfactory results in respect to their demands upon the various governments. That reason is lack of strength. Never before has this been more apparent than during the representations recently made to the Ottawa government requesting the federal authorities to take over the terminal elevators at the lake front. The delegation that went to Ottawa had the backing of the three western provincial farmers' associations as well as the Dominion Grange and the Dominion Millers' Association, and a number of the members of the House of Commons from Western Canada took an interest in the requests of the delegates and discussed the subject with the delegates informally. Very frequently the point was made that the Dominion Government would not be warranted in complying with the requests of a delegation representing so small a majority of the farmers. In fact one M.P. said, "Your delegation is assuming too much in view of the small body of farmers that have yet joined the associations. The same applies to the demands of the Grain Growers in making their representations to the local governments in the west."

There was a certain amount of truth in this statement it must be admitted, but on the other hand, the twenty-five thousand farmers in Western Canada who are a unit upon these great questions, are the leaders in their communities all over the west, and are the men who are looked up to by the farmers of Western Canada. The movement is young yet. The twenty-five thousand farmers in the organization do not by any means represent the strength of the organized farmers movement. The entire farming element in Western Canada is in sympathy. This fact is being manifest more and more every day. The combined membership, which is now twenty-five thousand will shortly be doubled and trebled. The most significant feature of the various statements made at Ottawa in reference to the demands of such a small body of farmers, was the tacit admission that an increased membership of the farmers' association, would result in acceptance of their demands. There can be no doubt on this subject. Twenty-five thousand farmers, standing shoulder to shoulder, and firm in their demands will secure a certain hearing from any government in Canada. Fifty thousand farmers, speaking through their delegates will secure a better hearing. Seventy-five thousand farmers, in Western Canada today, would be able to secure any legislation which they unanimously demanded. This is something that must be kept to the front and always borne in mind by every loyal farmer in the west. The farmers are the controlling element in Canada and if they can be brought into an organization similar to that of other interests, they will be able to secure equal rights in all legislation.

It has been the custom in the past, to smile at farmers' organizations, and there have been very few farmers' organizations in Canada that have not been the subject of derision in certain quarters. It is a great tribute to the farmers' organizations of the three western provinces, that they have passed beyond the stage of derision. There is nobody now smiling at the farmers' organization. When the farmers speak unitedly, those individuals, or authorities, or corporations to whom their remarks are addressed, give them the most careful consideration. This deference on the part of governments, railway companies and manufacturers will increase as the farmers' organization increases in strength. Day by day, it is becoming more apparent that the right attitude of the farmer is to drop party politics and work for his own organization. Party politics have never done the farmer any good and he can well afford to leave them alone. Their own organization, in the few years that it has been in existence, has accomplished a great deal. When this organization becomes Dominion wide, and embraces the farmers from British Columbia to the Maritime Provinces, its voice will command the utmost respect wherever it is heard. The farmers of Canada today have an opportunity of which history records no parallel. Judging by the progress which the farmers' organization has made, during the past few years, and by the impetus given during the past two months, there are greater things in store. Canada possesses opportunities and resources in advance of any country in the civilized world. Her farmers are intelligent and up-to-date. Her manufacturers, her railway companies, her banks, corporations and all her other large enterprises are active and energetic. All these other organizations have been busy securing legislation for their benefit. Now it is the turn of the farmers. If the present rate of progress, by the farmers of Canada, is maintained for another decade, Canada will be far in the lead among nations, in advanced legislation. When the farmers have a fair and equal hearing in the making of Canadian laws, they will make their country the pride of Canadians and the envy of all other peoples.