

The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, February 23rd, 1916

An extra number of copies of this issue of The Guide have been printed containing a complete report of the proceedings of the monster convention at Saskatoon last week and photographs of the officers. Those local associations who wish to bring more farmers into their organization should provide a copy for each of those farmers to read. We will mail a copy to any address as long as they last for five cents per copy. Local associations may remit the money together with the addresses and The Guides will be mailed direct from this office if they so desire.

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE.

THE SASKATOON CONVENTION

In point of numbers the fifteenth annual convention of Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association will rank as larger than that of any farmers' convention ever held in Western Canada. It must be evident to everyone that something more than enthusiasm and a desire for social entertainment is required to bring together nearly two thousand men and women from all over such a widespread area. Yet they came to Saskatoon in the severest winter that the West has seen for many years. Providence was kind, however, and smiled upon the convention with beautiful weather during the days of the meeting. On account of the deep snow and severe cold, which disorganized the train service in many parts of the province, there were many delegates unable to be present. But as it was, the largest auditorium in the city was taxed to its capacity by the delegates and visitors. The association now has a paid up membership of 27,000 and it is very natural to suppose that with steady growth the first favorable winter weather will see a gathering larger than can be accommodated with comfort and convenience in any auditorium in the province. This is one of the problems of the future.

Those men and women who came to Saskatoon were inspired by a deep set purpose. They were the spokesmen of their local associations by which bodies the problems of the people had been dealt with during the past year. They came to Saskatoon to compare opinions and to crystallize the result of their educational work and wherever possible to declare with one voice for improvements which would bring about better rural conditions. These conventions are wonderful educational institutions. As one delegate put it, "This is the first convention I have ever attended. I brought up a resolution unanimously adopted by our local association. It came before the convention and was discussed. All the delegates were not prepared to go as far as our local association and the resolution was modified. I have seen a new light. I have wider sympathies. I am going home a sadder but a wiser man." The spirit of compromise is the spirit by which our associations accomplish their great work. In a great convention there is bound on many questions to be a divergence of opinion. As the questions come up for discussion year by year, however, and are viewed from different angles, the policy of "the greatest good for the greatest number" unconsciously unifies the views and eventually the convention speaks with the unanimous voice which brings results. These conventions have become among the greatest of the educational institutions of our land and as long as the delegates are animated by a spirit of fairness such as has characterized the conventions in the past.

One of the important discussions at the convention was that of the lack of medical and hospital facilities in the sparsely settled parts of the province. It was pointed out that others were not receiving proper attendance

at childbirth which frequently resulted in further illness and that as a result the chief asset of the country was not being cared for as it should. The problem is becoming more acute because of the large number of medical men who have gone to the war. The government of the province is grappling with the problem, but it is a mighty one to solve. This is one of the many evils that have largely resulted from our system of land speculation and land settlement, and it would be well to consider the land question in working out the solution.

The trading activities of the association formed one of the large features of the discussion. Considerable progress has been made during the year and the work has been carried on at a profit. It was pointed out, however, by the secretary and the officers of the association that there was yet a tremendous amount of work to be done to get the trading activities fully systematized so that this department would give the best possible service to the members. It was also emphasized that it was not the intention that the trading activities should be allowed to hamper in any way the great educational and propaganda work of the association. It was suggested by some of the delegates that the commercial work should be carried on separately from the educational work and that the annual meeting of the trading department should be held separately from that of the educational department on the same lines as that of the co-operative elevator company. This problem will undoubtedly be given careful consideration by the board of directors and they can be depended upon to conduct the business of the association in the best interests of the delegates who elected them to office. The trading activities of the local associations are now a big feature in all three provinces, but the leading men of the associations are watching that the educational and propagandist work is not displaced.

The attendance at the convention was no doubt considerably reduced, as was the case in the other provinces, by the very large number of men from the farms who have joined the Canadian army for service in the foreign field. The farmers of the West are well represented on the battlefield and thousands more are in training. The result of this is bound to be a big shortage in farm help and a consequent reduction in the crop next year.

Among the other important matters discussed was that of the federation of all the farmers' business organizations in the West in order that they may give the most efficient service to the farmers of the whole country. Upon this question there was no difference of opinion.

FREE WHEAT STRONGLY DEMANDED

One big question upon which there was absolutely no difference of opinion at the Saskatoon convention was that the Federal Parliament should accept the offer of the United States for free interchange of wheat and wheat products. The demand was voiced in the following resolution:

"Be it resolved that we, the delegates of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association in convention assembled, representing 30,000 farmers of this province, demand that we be permitted to exercise our unquestionable right of marketing our wheat wherever it may be to our greatest advantage.

"And we further declare that in marketing the wheat which we have produced by our own labor and under the handicap of a heavy protective tariff upon all our raw material and machinery, it is only just and fair that our own interests should be considered before the

interests of those who profit from the product of our labor.

"And we further declare that the Parliament of Canada, by refusing to accept the United States offer for the free interchange of wheat and wheat products, is unjustly discriminating against the wheat growers of Western Canada, and is thereby causing the wheat growers to lose every year a large part of the financial return to which they are justly entitled.

"And we further declare that such discrimination is contrary to the true spirit of confederation, and is certain to develop antagonism between sections of our country which will not tend towards the best interests of the nation as a whole.

There was no debate on this resolution as the delegates were one and all fully informed on the question and were of one mind in demanding that they be given freedom to get the full advantage of the higher prices prevailing on the American market. The resolution was passed by a standing vote amid great enthusiasm and the secretary was at once instructed to forward it to Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier by wire. If the "powers that be" at Ottawa think that they are going to fence in the Western farmers for the benefit of the protected interests and at the same time refuse them permission to get the full market value of their wheat, they are reckoning without a full knowledge of the situation. By such discrimination seeds of discord are being sown, the fruitage of which will not tend to the development of a great and united nation.

THE NEW WAR TAXES

By the new war taxes which he announced in his budget speech last week, the Finance Minister has set a new precedent in federal taxation. In his tax on business profits Sir Thomas White has adopted direct taxation and thereby he has made a decided step in the right direction. The tax is by no means an ideal one; it is levied on a wrong principle, being based on ability to pay instead of upon the benefits conferred by government, and as Sir Thomas himself said there will be many anomalies in the assessment and collection of the tax. Under this tax all incorporated companies will be required to pay to the government 25 per cent. of their profits in excess of 7 per cent. upon their paid up capital, and all firms, partnerships and associations will be called upon to contribute 25 per cent. of all profits in excess of 10 per cent. upon the capital engaged in the business. Life insurance companies, farmers and stock-raisers and businesses employing less than \$50,000 of capital are exempted from the tax, except that firms engaged in the manufacture of munitions of war will be taxed no matter how small their capital may be. Life insurance companies, however, will be compelled to invest a certain portion of their funds in Canadian government war loans. The tax is retroactive and is payable on profits made in any accounting period ending since August 4, 1914, the day Great Britain entered the war. Many faults can be found with this tax. The retroactive feature, for instance, will work a great hardship and may cripple many companies which will be called upon to pay out considerable sums of money in respect of profits which have already been distributed to shareholders. Then no provision appears to have been made to meet the case of companies which have issued watered stock. In the case of many companies in Canada a dividend of 5 per cent. on the common stock represents interest at the rate of 50 per cent. on the capital actually invested, but such a company will not be liable to taxation, though another company honestly capitalized and