

# Irrigation Convention at Penticton

Vital Papers Read and Discussions Held on Subjects of Irrigation and Farming—Canada, Called the Granary of the Empire, Still Imports Food in This Province.

The general verdict of those who attended the eighth annual convention of the Western Canada Irrigation Association at Penticton last week was that no more valuable or interesting assembly had ever been held in the history of the society. Particular praise was extended by all the delegates to the people of Penticton for their splendid hospitality, and for the fine manner in which the visitors were entertained during their sojourn in the enterprising town so beautifully situated at the foot of the lake.

Picking out some of the important contributions made to the convention, we present a brief resume:

The speech of Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Superintendent of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry for the C. P. R., with headquarters at Calgary, was an effort aimed to improve economic and industrial conditions in all parts of the west. In a direct speech, that was brimful of practical suggestions, and loaded dangerously against the speculator, which the speaker characterized as the greatest enemy of the Western Canada farmer, Dr. Rutherford used the conditions that make farm and city inter-dependant as an illustration for his forceful arguments.

He stated that the country had in the past been laboring under a great illusion, the illusion that it was possible to live without development of the agricultural resources. This was a great mistake, because the prosperity of the entire world was directly founded on the farm, and supported by the farmer. If it were not for the agriculturist there would be no banks, no industrial, financial or commercial enterprises worth the name. War was a factor that would in all probability awaken the country to a more complete realization of things in this connection, and bring home the fact that the people of Western Canada had been enjoying a fictitious manner of living, and a wealth that was artificially created, and not actually founded on something of worth.

At the present time, the Doctor continued, there was too much tendency on the part of the general public to belittle the farmer and his efforts. As a matter of fact, the occupation was the most honorable in the world.

"Canada," said the speaker, "is fond of boasting of its great potential wealth in regard to agriculture, but in reality we were great importers. The colony was hailed as the granary of the Empire, and still in British Columbia the Minister of Agriculture had admitted that last year twenty millions of money had been spent outside the Province for foodstuffs that should originally have been produced in the Province, directing that enormous amount of money into the pockets of people actually resident among us. It would be easy to conceive the great impetus which money thus obtained would give to home interests. It was not farming, he pointed out, to specialize in grain, in fruit and other things, and to neglect those essential things which every

farmer should produce for the benefit of his own private living. In this regard in Alberta he had seen men raising thousands of acres of wheat, and drinking condensed milk out of a can, buying potatoes, and other vegetables, selling their beef cattle for 3½ cents a pound, and buying it back from the butcher at 15 cents per pound.

The lure of the city was fascinating the farmers' boys and girls and taking them away from the land, where they belonged. Canada, as a consequence of the few men and women who at the present time were operating her agricultural industries, was buying mutton from Australia, butter from New Zealand, meat from South America, and eggs from China.

In the great uncultivated districts of Canada there were millions of acres of land, which was covered with grass capable of sustaining tremendous herds of stock. Year after year this grass grew up and died down, and still we were importing meat. Canada last year had about two million sheep. The United States, with less available sheep land, had about fifty-two million. The little isle of Great Britain alone supported thirty-four million of sheep, which were utilized for the home market. Australia, the source of Canada's supply, had about ten million.

This was a most highly discreditable state of affairs, for instead of developing her great natural resources during the past few years, Western Canada had been concerned only in building up great urban communities, with the help of the real estate agent.

The sooner the towns began co-operating with the farming interests, the sooner would they prosper. It was a matter for the consideration of every public body. If the towns were depending upon the farmers' money to carry on their enterprises, it was only the fair thing that the home products of the soil should be given preference in local markets.

Dr. Frank Shutt, of the Dominion Government Experimental Farm at Ottawa, spoke of the good work accomplished by the Experimental Farm in the development of agriculture.

Hon. George Harcourt, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Alberta, spoke on the importance of fodder crops and feeding in irrigated districts.

Mr. S. G. Porter, of the Department of the Interior at Calgary, spoke on the practice and operation of irrigation work. The loss and waste which occurs in bringing the water from the source of supply to the land was one of the most important factors emphasized by Mr. Porter during the discussion. In this regard, he stated that in the average eight per cent. of the water taken in at the head gates was actually used in nourishing the plant life. Of the balance, twenty-five per cent. was lost in the main canal from leakage and other causes. Twenty-eight per cent. comprised the field losses, including evaporation, deep percolation, and run-off, while 19 per cent. was lost in laterals. The proper time to irrigate for the various crops, and the importance of studying conditions in every locality with respect to time