

Manitoba

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by R. C. Henderson, President, 404 Chambers of Commerce, Winnipeg, to whom all communications for this page should be sent.

GRAIN GROWERS AND THE NATION

The position of the Grain Growers in regard to national questions and, the national duty in connection with the war is one about which there need be no question. Since the opening of the war they have made their position unmistakably clear both by action and by statement.

As regards actual service it may be said without attempting any invidious distinction that the rural districts and the farming industry have contributed unstintingly both of men and of substance throughout the course of the conflict. No many men have left the land that agriculture today is feeling the drain at least as much as any other industry in the country, and in some parts of the West farmers are looking in vain for men to adequately handle the present crop. Over all the West—and doubtless also in Eastern Canada—many a farm is being worked by one man, which three years ago gave employment to three or four men, and the assistance of women and young boys has been requisitioned to an extent heretofore unknown in Canada.

In their various organizations the Grain Growers have from the earliest days consistently advocated the support of the Empire's cause. And as the conflict deepened and the magnitude of the task became more clearly recognized the Grain Growers were among the first to take the position which they have consistently maintained, that it demands a national government which shall eliminate partizanship, profiteering and special privilege, and shall install in the various executive positions men of practical ability who have the confidence of the populace at large and under whose leadership the whole of the nation's resources of material as well as of men may be mobilized for the mighty enterprise.

The following expressions issued through Grain Growers' organizations during the past three years will be read with interest. In January, 1915, the first provincial convention after the outbreak of the war was held in Brandon, and the president's address of that year characterized the war in these terms: "It is not a war between Teuton and Slav, nor Germany against England, nor even German culture against the world, but it is a force which has been steadily forcing its way to the forefront in human thought and action for the greater part of the last century, it is whether any one shall dictate the policy by which a nation shall be governed. It is the spirit of democracy at war with the spirit of autocracy."

The same address gave expression to the Grain Growers' attitude and purpose in the following language: "We desire in this, the first farmers' parliament assembled since the outbreak of the war, to assure our government and the government of Great Britain, that the agriculturists of the Empire will be found in their wonted places, and will be prepared to contribute their full share of men and money in order that the results of this war shall be a triumph of the principles which we so very highly prize. Our great anxiety today is that the results of this awful struggle will be great enough to warrant the awful price which the nations are being called upon to pay—and that the end of this war may be the end of all war."

A year later in the convention of 1916 the president's address contained among other paragraphs dealing with the war the following: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is no time for hyper-criticism. When men—the flower of the nation—are coming forward and placing themselves on the altar of service to do and to die if needs be in the defense of principles, which we deem more precious than life, when fathers and mothers, daughters and wives are saying to sons, brothers and husbands: Go, go, and God bless you—saying it though their very hearts are breaking—shall we, through any indifference or selfish motive, fail to measure up to the responsibility that rests

upon us? No, no; there shall be no holding back on our part, nothing shall be left undone until that false system of militarism, built upon that false foundation of 'Might is Right,' shall have been put down and the principles of true democracy shall have been established.

"I, therefore, desire that there shall be mapped out by this Convention a scheme commensurate with the needs of the hour, that words may be spoken that will send each delegate home to his respective local association fired with a zeal that will not be satisfied until every farmer in the province shall have at least had an opportunity afforded him to make his contribution, be it large or small, in support of our national honor; yes, I verily believe our national life."

During these two years such expressions as those quoted were adequately seconded by the practical work done in all localities—through women's committees, local branches and special efforts. It is sufficient to mention that the amount handled for the Patriotic Fund, and the various special relief funds up to January, 1917, totalled over twenty-six thousand dollars.

At the last provincial convention held in January of the current year a pronouncement even more definite and comprehensive than any preceding one was carried by a unanimous vote. It was as follows: "Whereas the British Empire and her Allies are engaged in a life and death struggle in which we believe the interests of civilization are at stake;

"And, whereas, the Canadian government in order that Canada might render more effective service in the prosecution of the war, has undertaken to make a census of the man-power of the Dominion, with the expressed view of organizing it to the highest point of efficiency.

"Therefore, be it resolved, that this convention endorse the action of the government in this regard; but while endorsing it desire to urge in the strongest possible terms our abhorrence of private profiteering on the part of those engaged in the manufacture or furnishing of war supplies of any kind; and also urge that a census of the wealth of Canada should be immediately taken with a view to imposing upon it the full share of the burden it should bear in this time of national sacrifice, and further that these resources can only be organized to their full efficiency by a National Government in which the interest of political parties will be made entirely subservient to the interests of the State."

By these expressions and by their own fundamental principles often enunciated and recently given concise expression in the National Platform the Grain Growers still stand. They are utterly loyal to the Empire and to the nation in the struggle for freedom, but they are none the less aware of the tragic fact that partizanship and profiteering have crippled the efforts of the nation so far, and that the privileged interests and the politicians who back them are to the present hour conspiring to get a firmer grip upon the reins of power, to disintegrate and scatter the power of progressive citizenship, and to fasten the bonds of protection and privilege upon the nation for another generation. They insist that it is madness to expect national unity under a government which continues to be manifestly dominated by the privileged interests, and that the nation will never rally and do its part until a government is installed which is utterly free of such control. They would not delay by an hour the doing of the nation's duty in furnishing men. They would give no issue preference to that, but in their view the conscription of material resources must be undertaken simultaneously; and for both the absolutely essential primary requirement is the unifying of the nation under a government that is free and independent, the only kind of government which the nation will trust, the only kind of gov-

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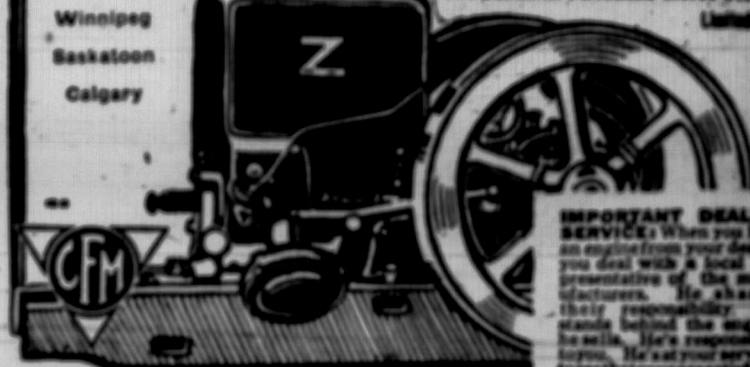
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