

ADDRESS OF MR. E. A. PARTRIDGE AT ANNUAL MEETING OF GRAIN GROWERS' GRAIN CO.

Gentlemen;—

I am sorry that I do not feel physically fit to talk to you this afternoon in the way that I should like; it just happens to be one of my off days.

I did not expect to be called on at this time, which gives me an additional excuse for not doing very well. However, I enjoy very much meeting with you, especially so from the fact that the results of the Company's business have been so satisfactory from a financial point of view. I am proud of the manner in which the Officers of the Company have conducted the work during the past year. Some of you thought we were making a mistake in selecting so young a man to preside over the affairs of the Company.

I said at the time it was wise to choose a young man, one full of hope, ambition and the courage of youth, and who, when trained and experienced would have long years of vigorous manhood in which to serve the institution which had placed him at its head. I think the progress our friend has made in one year gives an earnest of what we may expect in the future.

The Vice-President in calling upon me to speak, stated that I might say something about the banking proposition which is to be considered to-day. In the course of my remarks, I may touch on the matter though only incidentally.

Turning now to the broad facts in connection with the Company I want to remind those present, that despite the fact that we have made a financial success of our Company during the past two years we have made little appreciable progress towards the solution of the problem which the organizers of the Company set out to solve, or towards the attainment of the ideal which they had in mind, and which was the source of their enthusiasm.

Their aim was, and is, to free the channels of trade from commercial pirates, to replace competition by co-operation, so that the business of exchange may be performed at cost, and to make it possible for the producer to enjoy to the full the product of his labor. Their ideal was the establishment of the reign of Equity, the multiplication to the fullest extent of the number of happy homes, the broadening of the lives of our people by leisure, material comforts, the meaps of education and culture, and the fostering of proper conceptions of the moral sources of human happiness, namely, such as underlie the teachings of the Nazarene.

Of course, I know in a world where commercial ideals have dominated us so long, we must appeal to our public on that plane. The meanest as well as the most unselfish will be attracted by financial success in the form of profits.

Hence the first consideration was, to create a trading concern which not alone promised to bring about improvements in the conditions surrounding the participants, but which would yield an immediate and tangible return for effort and capital invested.

This, we have succeeded in doing. But we have done more. We have created a self-supporting institution, which while making generous profits for its shareholders, is helping to organize and discipline our people and at the same time carry on a great educational campaign that will ultimately result in the possession of higher conceptions of life by the whole people, and the moulding of our political and economic institutions in accordance therewith.

I know the immediate incentive to the bulk of our shareholders is to secure through the Company, a more

economical handling of our grain and a better price therefor. We all want th's.

But that is not enough to stimulate those present to the enthusiasm and energy which many of you have displayed. It is not a matter of getting a few more cents per bushel. It is something higher and worthier than this that you aim at. You are here because you recognize your duty as guardians of the home. Not to make a few paltry dollars, not to make conditions more tolerable to your individual selves in the way of leisure or luxury, but to enlarge and brighten the lives of those dependent on you, of your household, of your community, of your nation, not confining your thoughts to your own generation even, but looking forward to a fuller and grander life for your descendants than we of this generation enjoy.

Ruskin has said in his treatise on Political Economy—"The only wealth is life." More life, more love, more joy in the world is the only practical proof that we are gaining in knowledge and wisdom as a people, that is to say, are becoming more civilized.

But we have got to prepare conditions so that we and other creators of wealth may enjoy the full fruits of our labors before our lives can be expanded in the right direction and to the fullest possible extent. Furthermore if we are robbed of the fruits of our toil, we cannot make conditions satisfactory for those who are dependent upon us.

Underlying the social problem is always the economic problem. The Company was conceived, rudely fashioned, and is being shaped and perfected as an implement for the solution of this economic problem. We here are making history and aiding in the bringing in of the Kingdom—building perhaps better than we know.

Under present economic conditions those who produce material wealth do not enjoy it. The laborer everywhere is exploited. Commercialism is based on the exploitation of the laborer, and so is industrialism, which is but an elaboration of commercialism.

Industrialism seeks to make as great a margin of profit as is possible on the labor of as many individuals as it is found possible to employ.

Commercialism seeks to buy as much of a commodity as it is possible to find profitable sale for, to give as little for it as necessity will force the acceptance of, and to sell it at a price as high as the ignorance or necessity of the purchaser makes possible.

Prices paid and received are artificial in the extreme. Trusts, combines, monopolies of the natural resources and machinery of production, transportation and exchange; inherited wealth and privilege, vicious legislation and bribery of private or public officials are the means employed in the exploitation of the producers.

The question of equity, of the giving of an equivalent to the producer for what his labor has created, or the regarding even of his extreme need when bargaining for his labor, is never taken into consideration in modern business.

If the swinishness of commercialism is inseparable from it under the competitive system, it is surely God's work to try and replace competition by co-operation.

We seek an equitable distribution of the fruits of labor and the thing which will bring that about is the replacement of competition by co-operation.

This is the great lesson, which we as a people have yet to learn. We have also to learn that no man can profit to the smallest extent by any act which injures another. This is the law of solidarity.

Let us look at the practical method whereby we are going to attain the object we set out to accomplish.