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THE EDMONTON CONVENTION

The second annual convention of the United Farmers of Alberta was successful even beyond expectations, and at once the agricultural interests of the province of Alberta were brought to the forefront. The farmers in attendance came from all parts of the province and were engaged in various lines of agricultural work. Realizing that only by combined effort could they secure their rights, the delegate who was a grain grower stood side by side with the delegate who was a stock raiser. Shoulder to shoulder the Alberta farmers are pushing forward the chariot of progress. One of the outstanding features of the convention was enthusiasm, which was, if possible, even greater than that exhibited at the Brandon convention. Co-operation is the keynote of the new agricultural enterprise in Alberta. This co-operation not only extends throughout the province among the farmers themselves, but also includes the government of the province. A most striking feature of the convention was the spirit of co-operation with which the government, in the person of the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, met with the farmers. At the outset the Premier announced his intention to render every aid to farmers, and before the convention was completed opportunity was opened to the Premier to fulfil his promise in a way which must have gladdened his heart. The farmers of Alberta took the Premier at his word and a large number of matters were resolved into shape to demand the attention of the government. The United Farmers of Alberta is a powerful and exceedingly independent organization of men. Taking a leaf from the book of the farmers of Denmark, they have decided to go ahead and lay truly and well the foundation of a new and progressive agricultural life. Now that the government of Alberta, in the person of the Premier, has expressed itself so favorably, and is anxious to co-operate with the farmers, it rests with the organized farmers to see that the progress of the work is what it should be. The local unions throughout the province must stand behind and support their provincial directors and officers in every way. There are at present upwards of 7,000 farmers associated with the organization. This number, during the next year, should be doubled at least, and every farmer who has the interest of his province, his community and his family at heart, should join hand in hand with his brother farmer to forward the good work.

The delegates at the convention represented considerable power, but all the local unions in the province working with cordial unanimity

would represent still greater power. The farmers of Alberta, once thoroughly aroused, and with a proper organization, will be the most potent influence for good in the province. They will be the main factor in moulding the future progress of Alberta; and, judging by the work done at the Edmonton convention, the future of the province is in good hands. The delegates at the convention represented young men in their twenties and old men who had passed the allotted span; there were scholars from the leading educational institutions of the Old Land and Canada; there were men who had been trained in various walks of life and there were men whose chief education had been derived from stern experience in the University of Hard Knocks. Such a gathering of men was able to deal with questions upon merit, and to analyze and examine a question so that it was fully understood before it was dealt with. It was brought home to every thinking man at the convention that the main need among the farmers of the country at the present time is education. Whenever a question came up before the convention, with which every delegate was conversant, it was dealt with summarily, and no time was wasted upon it. When questions came up upon which many of the delegates were not familiar, it was necessary to have explanations. The delegates represented the pick of the farmers of the province. They were mostly men who had received considerable advantage in the matter of experience and education. The result of the Edmonton Convention will be to give a great impetus to the work of the farmers' association during the next year. A program of work has been laid down, which, if completed in a satisfactory manner, will greatly improve the conditions under which the farmers of the province are working. Everything that the farmers have demanded will probably not be granted during the next twelve months, but they should see to it that it is brought before the proper authorities and that something is done towards a consummation.

It was very pleasing to all attendants at the convention to note the percentage of ladies which were present. To some it might be considered that there was little of an interesting character to the ladies; but the farmer who is endeavoring to carry on his work without the intelligent sympathy and support of his wife is under a terrible handicap. The farmer and his wife must work together and the character and tone of the meetings will be greatly improved through the attendance of the ladies. Their co-operation will greatly improve the social life of the farming community of the province. It will also assist in making the local unions the centres for mutual help, education, and culture. The farmers of Alberta are certainly alive to the importance of their province and to the possibilities of the great work which they are undertaking. Although in numbers the organization in the province of Alberta is not so strong as in the two sister provinces to the east, yet the enthusiasm, vim, and determination is there, and the two sister provinces must look to their laurels if their record is to be as good as that of Alberta.

THE PORK PACKING PLANT

The subject which excited probably the most interest at the Edmonton convention was that of the establishing of the government pork packing plant. The government has had the project under consideration for some time, and have not been making the progress which the United Farmers have considered the importance of the scheme demanded. The need of the plant is very great. In the nature of things the government was not exceedingly anxious to accept the responsibility that would follow the erection of a plant such as the United Farmers required. The hog industry in Alberta has been drooping, showing the most unfavorable system of mar-

keting which is in existence. The farmers were determined that a remedy must come, and put a proposition up to the government that was not accepted. The government in turn made another proposition which was not accepted; but at the convention last week a new proposal brought forward by the government was accepted. This new draft proposal is that the farmers agree to supply all the hogs that they raised for the market to the government pork packing plant. A penalty is to be imposed for selling any hogs to any other concern. This scheme was not looked upon with unanimous favor by the convention at the outset. However, it was ascertained that in Denmark, where the pork packing industry has been brought to the highest state of efficiency, that even a heavier penalty was placed upon the farmers who did not support their own plant. The matter was viewed then in a different light. It was realized that if the government would do its part, the live stock commissioner would be well able to ascertain the feeling of the farmers towards the new scheme, when he visits the local unions during the remainder of the winter. The government now has an opportunity to show the depth of its good intentions towards the farmers. There is no mistrust on the part of the farmers towards the government on the pork packing question. It is a foregone conclusion that the pork packing plant of Alberta will be underway very shortly. The hog industry of Alberta, when marketing conditions are made right, will assume considerable proportions. The conditions are such in Alberta that hogs can probably be raised more cheaply than in any other part of the west. There is a good market for cured meat in Alberta and British Columbia. The impetus given to this industry will make a noticeable difference in the income of many farmers who devote attention to the raising of hogs.

CHILLED MEAT PLANTS NEEDED

An outline scheme for the establishment of a system of chilled meat plants for Alberta was discussed to considerable length at the Edmonton convention. The farmers in attendance at the convention were of one accord in their desire to have the live stock industry placed upon a remunerative basis through the establishment of chilled meat plants. A scheme for a privately-owned system of chilling plants was brought forward before the convention but was not regarded with favor, and after considerable discussion the convention decided to ask the Dominion government to take up the matter and act as soon as possible. The provincial government was also asked to assist the project in every way possible. The farmers of Alberta are thus leading the way to one of the greatest projects that has ever been undertaken in the west. There is no reason why the live stock industry of Western Canada should not grow until it assumes the proportions of that of the western States. There is little encouragement to the farmers in Alberta today to invest more deeply their money, time and labor in an industry, the products of which are controlled by monopoly. To make this matter right, the farmers must be given another avenue through which to market their live stock. Different schemes have been mooted, but it seems hardly likely that any solution of the present problems will give the desired relief unless it is absolutely under the control and is operated by the Dominion government. Although Alberta is foremost in the live stock trade, yet Saskatchewan and Manitoba have also to be considered and a great deal of live stock will be marketed from these two provinces when conditions are made right. The Dominion government should take hold of the chilling proposition and erect plants capable of handling the live stock of the three provinces.

A refrigerator car system would also be necessary and if this were in the hands of