

Mr. Scallion's Address

The following Address was delivered at the Annual Convention of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by
Mr. J. W. Scallion of Virden, Honorary President

Mr. President and Gentlemen:—I am greatly pleased to see such a large number of farmers from all parts of the province gathered here at this convention. It augurs well for the success of the farmers' movement, a movement for the purpose of trying to improve the social and economic conditions of farm life and industry. The organized farmers of Western Canada have accomplished a great deal by way of improving conditions which restricted and monopolized the grain trade of this Western country, and in other matters of importance to agricultural interests and the general welfare of the people. They have given agriculture an organized voice on public questions and in public affairs which it never had before in this country. They have impressed public men, governments and parliaments with the national importance of the questions they have pressed for solution. Their ideal is a square deal all round and Canada for the common people. But there is a great deal of earnest hard work ahead of them before they can reach that ideal, and the only means by which it can be attained is the entire unity of agricultural interests. There never was a time in this country when united action was so absolutely necessary to protect farmers from exploitation by predatory corporations and the beneficiaries of Special Privilege as at the present.

The New Feudalism

Recent events have disclosed the power and strength of the interests, which are determined to hold their grip upon the farmers and have shown how well they have succeeded. Our great transportation companies, our manufacturing companies, milling companies, banking and other financial institutions, all the interests by a system of interlocking of their directorates have created a community of interests and a power to influence for a common purpose that is nothing short of a menace to the rights and welfare of the common people. They are creating industrial and capitalistic feudalism which should not be tolerated in a democratic country. These corporations and capitalistic overloads have free play for their own business operations in the country to the south of us, but they have decreed that the Canadian farmers cannot have free access to the markets of that country for the sale of their produce and that for the purpose of holding their grip upon the farmer and keeping the products of his toil a preserve for their exploitation. The effects of this decree are plainly evident in the distress and financial loss of thousands of farmers in the West this winter. These facts cannot be disputed. They are plain to every Westerner; and in view of the rapid development of Western agriculture, these conditions will be greatly aggravated from year to year if market and transportation restrictions are continued.

An Audacious Proposal

If any additional proof was required to show the tendency and purpose of the restrictionist, it is furnished in the proposal of Mr. Thompson, vice-president of the Ogilvie Milling company, that an export duty should be placed on milling wheat. Mr. Thompson's proposition, if carried out, would lessen the price to the farmers by the amount of the duty, and also lessen the price to the Canadian miller to the same amount, and would create a completely closed preserve for exploitation by our milling companies of the higher grades of Western wheat. This cool proposition of Mr. Thompson's may appear ridiculous and absurd, but is it not a logical rounding out of the present policy of trade restrictions? And does it not show to what limits corporate greed is prepared to go in order to get a complete strangle hold upon the farmer? It is not likely Mr. Thompson's proposal will be put in operation, but if one of our political parties adopted it and made a political issue of it at a general election, I am not sure it would not be supported by some of our farmers in the interests of their dear old party and patriotism and loyalty. Now that is just where

the weakness of the farmers' organization is shown. One of the greatest obstacles to the success of the farmers' struggle for a square deal is the political party divisions in the ranks of themselves upon questions affecting their mutual interests.

Curse of the Country

Partisan politics are the curse of this country, and there is no class of the people so injured by it as the farmers. All other classes can unite for their common benefit; farmers alone are divided and conquered by the predatory interests and their political tools, and just as long as farmers are more concerned for the success of a political party than for their own common good, present economic conditions will continue. There is no

burdened by tariff exactions and trade restrictions as agriculture, which receives no benefit from such a policy, but is greatly injured and retarded by it and this is especially true of Western agricultural operations.

The Only Hope

The only hope of bettering conditions and entirely removing these burdens and restrictions, lies in the unity of action and sturdy independence of the farmers of Western Canada, supported as they are today by the Western press, which, with one or two notable exceptions on the part of what are evidently pocket organs of the interests employed to divide the farmers and destroy their influence, are strongly advocating the farmers' demands on economic justice and fair play. This

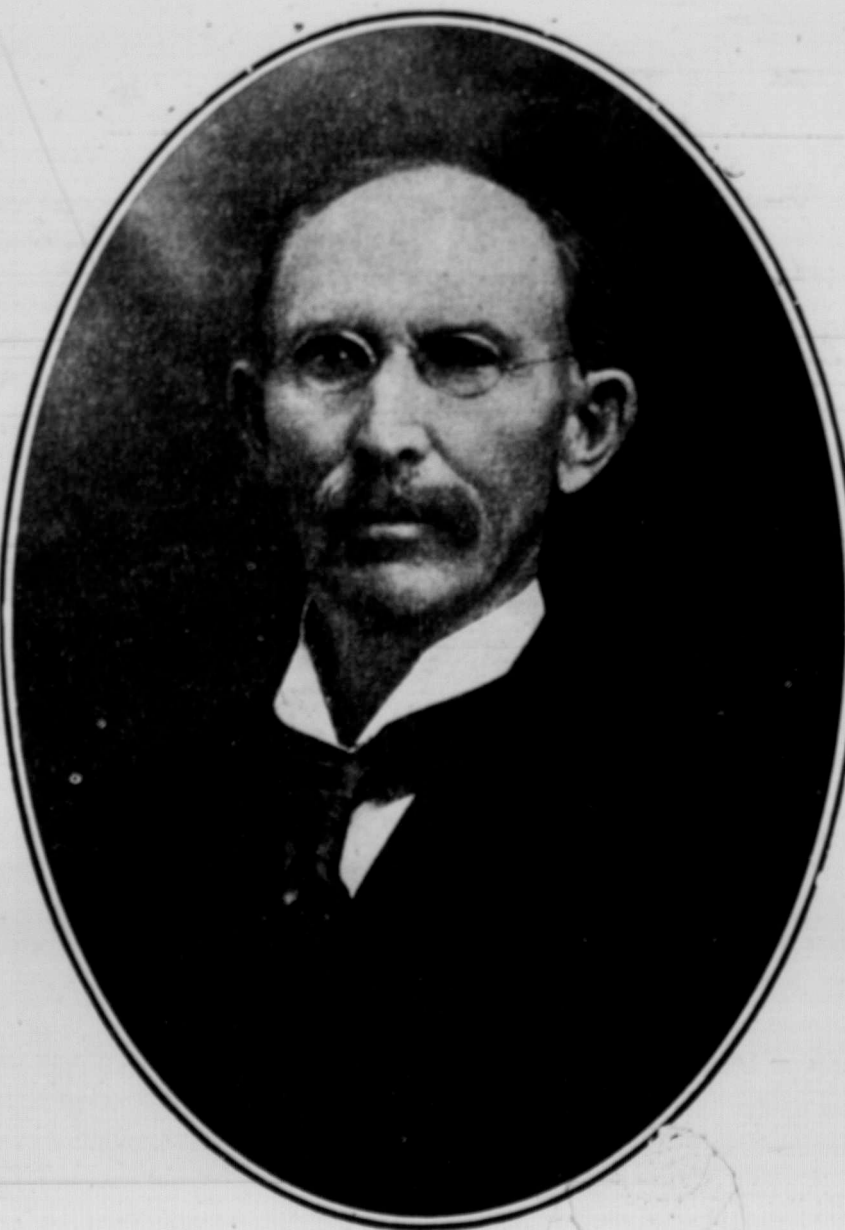
of an incompetent and wholly corrupt government, as they say, to take action or exercise proper supervision for the welfare of the people, and how quickly, if returned to power, they would change such conditions. But when returned to power they discover great difficulties in the way of bringing about the promised changes. Commissions must be appointed to secure information and facts regarding conditions which were so clearly in evidence before. Is that not a device to deceive the people as to the actual state of affairs? That is, the interests which controlled the government while in power control the opposition when they become the government. And so the political game goes on, and the people—honest partisans—divide on their prejudices regarding the merits or demerits of the two great parties. And so the conflict of prejudices proceeds while the interests get away with the spoils. John Stuart Mill, in his Principles of Political Economy, says: "All privileged and powerful classes as such use the power and influence in the interest of their own selfishness, and indulge their self-importance by despising the opinions and interests of those who are under the necessity of working for their benefit." Mill's statement was doubtless true of the social and economic conditions existing in his time. It is true of the social and economic conditions which have existed in every age and in every country in some form or other. It is the old, old struggle of the classes against the masses, of power and privilege against the advocates of human rights and liberty. In former times power and privilege were the results of conquest and inheritance, in our time, the result of laws made in our legislatures and Parliament by men elected by the people to represent them and guard their rights and interests. But have they done so? Present conditions are the answer to that question, and these conditions will continue until the people unite for a common purpose, equal rights to all and special favors to none. They must get closer to their government. They must control their governments and representatives in Parliament, by Direct Legislation if possible, but in the meantime they must unite as one man in insisting that every measure in the Bill of Rights presented to political leaders, governments and parliaments must be carried out no matter what political party opposes or supports it. When they can take that stand no government in this country can continue to refuse them justice.

FARMERS AND CO-OPERATIVE TRADING

At a mass meeting of five hundred farmers, representing different rural communities in North Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin, held in the Assembly hall at Fargo, N.D., on January 20, steps were taken for the formation of an organization of the states represented, which will handle farm produce of all kinds, and get it direct to the consumer, cutting out the middlemen.

The movement is backed by the Society of Equity in North Dakota, and by delegations in the city from three other states. A committee was appointed which will at once call a meeting of the "co-operators' congress," to be held in St. Paul, February 29 and March 1. At this meeting, it is stated, a definite organization will be effected which will provide means for the handling of farm produce throughout the villages, towns and cities. All operations will be directed from a central office, probably in St. Paul or Minneapolis. Thomas Raleigh headed the delegation here from St. Paul.

THE GUIDE "SEED GRAIN FOR SALE AND WANTED" columns furnish prompt and economical means by which the farmer who has seed to sell can get in touch with the man who needs it, and vice versa.



J. W. SCALLION, Honorary President
Manitoba Grain Growers' Association

division in the ranks of the interests. Politics with them are a purely business affair. They will support any party or government they can use as a business asset, and defeat any government they cannot so use. The truth of this statement is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to state it. For over 30 years the fiscal policy of Canada has been framed by the interests for their own special benefit, and the results of that policy are evident today in the formation and operation of trusts and combines, created, fed and promoted by that system and the opportunities afforded under its operations. They tell us that agriculture is the basic industry of this country, that upon its success depends the welfare and prosperity of all other enterprises. Yet there is no other industry in Canada so

patriotic action on the part of the press is the more worthy of praise when considered in the light of the tremendous influence brought to bear on these organs of public opinion by capitalistic methods and exploiting corporations and the beneficiaries of Special Privilege. Farmers should support a press that stands for economic fair play to all and special favors to none.

Government and Opposition

It is interesting to note that where any one of our political parties is in opposition how plainly they can see the injuries inflicted on the people by the operations of trusts, combines, predatory corporations, and grafters of all kinds, who are free to indulge in their exploitations owing to the unwillingness or neglect