

Optimism, Advice and Encouragement

President Bower of United Farmers of Alberta sounds a Clarion Call at Edmonton Convention. Must be no Relaxation of efforts; Work must be conducted along broad independent lines

To the officers and members of the U.F.A.: In meeting together as the United Farmers of Alberta at this, our second annual convention, we have every reason to feel a sense of deep gratitude and thankfulness to a kind Providence for the bountiful returns to our labors as tillers of the soil.

We may well be thankful that from a point of production our beloved province of Alberta is in no way behind any of our sister provinces in this fruitful Dominion, so that in this respect at least we can well say that the lines are fallen in pleasant places and ours is a goodly heritage.

As to the work of the association, we can have a sense of gratification that many useful things have been accomplished and that many new avenues of increased usefulness and influence are opening up before us and we would be unwise indeed if we do not take a retrospect of the past and then enter into these new avenues with a greater spirit of hopefulness, knowing that we have a broader and truer knowledge of the conditions that prevail and of the obstacles that are in our path to prosperity.

To be forewarned is forearmed, and in this will be our strength, together with the consciousness that our cause is just, and added to this the knowledge that others recognize in us a power that they cannot ignore, but must reckon with.

It seems to me that we do not half recognize in ourselves the power we have or what we are capable of, we do not even recognize the magnitude of what we are doing. Conditions are improving, but so gradually that we are apt to take it as a matter of course and lose sight of the cause of these changed conditions. There can be no nobler ambition in the mind and heart of any man than to work with unflinching effort to secure for the laborer a just recompense for his toil, nor can there be any more ignoble desire on the part of any man than to align himself either privately or with any corporation to scheme and plot, so that what by right belongs to the producer should be filched from him.

Worked Along Broad Lines

But about the work of the association during the past year: It has been so vast and varied in its scope that I think I may be pardoned if this report does not seem to enter as deeply into the details as each act would seem to warrant. At our last convention many resolutions were passed and work outlined which was referred to standing and special committees, and the reports of these will come before you in due course.

Immediately after the convention our board of directors met in council. We were then informed by our government that they had in view the calling together in conference all the varied interests which would be affected by the opening up of a grain route westward. The offer was made to us of appointing delegates to that conference to represent the farmers of this province. This was done by us, but you know we are not so well organized in the large wheat growing districts of the south as we are in the mixed farming districts, consequently we were somewhat in the dark as to who would best represent the wheat growers, though I believe those appointed voiced the sentiments of their people generally. Some adverse criticism has been indulged in about the outcome of that conference which I do not think is entirely justified by facts. I feel satisfied that that convention has proved to be a very important factor in bringing the farming interests of the province before the different interests of B.C. and paved the way for a larger inter-provincial trade with that province where lies our natural market.

At that first meeting of the board your president was appointed fraternal delegate to the Grain Growers' convention in Saskatoon, of which appointment I gladly availed myself as I was anxious to study from an impartial standpoint the attitude and arguments of those members of that association who hold different opinions on the elevator and other questions, as these questions have both a direct and indirect bearing on

the welfare of our associations and province.

A call was issued from the president of the Inter-Provincial Council of which your executive are members for the members to be present at the close of the Weyburn convention to which call your president and vice-president responded. A report of that meeting will be given to you later for your consideration.

Recognition by Premier

You will remember that at our last convention the premier of our province recognizing the importance of the work done by our association, kindly suggested that we appoint a special transportation committee to take up the question of transportation and extension of markets for the farm products of our province. This committee was accordingly appointed. Their report will also come before you and for this report I would ask your special consideration for next to the pork packing scheme I believe it to be of more vital interest to us than anything else, unless, perhaps, the elevator question, which question I believe should be merged into the larger one and transportation facilities for our general farm products.

Apportioning Work of Directors

You will also remember that at our last convention we elected our directors one for each federal constituency, the delegates from these constituencies voting only in the election of their own directors.

I point this out, not by any means as a criticism of what has been done, for I hope that all who have joined our ranks are men good and true, but simply as a grave danger to be guarded against.

A Stiff Proposition

Following up along general lines we might refer you to the pork packing scheme, but for the present I will confine myself to giving you a brief account of what has been done. From the first we appear to have been up against a stiff proposition somewhere. Knowing this, and knowing the danger of delay, and knowing also that before the government would do anything the farmers would have to give a reasonable assurance that they would supply a certain number of hogs, a voluntary form of agreement was sent out from the secretary's office with my consent. Accompanying this form was a distinct statement that we had no means of knowing just what form of agreement the government would demand, but that we believed that a spontaneous offer of this kind coming from our members would facilitate matters very much, showing to the government that we were in earnest in the matter and that the hogs would be forthcoming. This agreement was being signed for large numbers of hogs when we were informed by the powers that be that they would not accept an agreement of that kind. A draft agreement was then presented to us for our suggestions. This form we strongly objected to on the ground that conscientious men would not sign it as we believed that there were obligations in it beyond the power of man to live up to. This one was accordingly withdrawn. We offered further sugges-

One of the most far-reaching and important questions before us during the year was brought before us by the invitation given by the Dominion Grange that we send a delegate to their convention at Toronto to take part in the inauguration of the Canadian Council of Agriculture. This was something which I was looking forward to with the greatest interest, but we were under the impression that the convention was to take place in January, so when the notice came in November that the convention was to be held on the 24th or 25th, we were reluctantly compelled to decline to send a delegate as it was not possible to do so on such short notice.

Must Be No Relaxation

As you know, the action of the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan on the elevator question has given it a somewhat new aspect and there is now a prospect of a happy ending to the work of the Grain Growers towards government ownership; yet as everlasting vigilance is the price of success it would not be wisdom on the part of the Grain Growers and United Farmers to relax too much in their efforts until government-owned elevators are an accomplished fact.

I am glad to know that our government has not considered favorably the proposition of bonusing privately-owned elevators at the Pacific coast. This would be no benefit to us unless the government retained such complete control over them that the warehousing of the grain would be completely taken out of the hands of interested parties. Another proposition broadly hinted at, that of the association taking shares in a privately-owned elevator at the coast would also, I believe, be fraught with grave danger to our best interests and may be but one of the many schemes evolved to draw us away from the stand which we have heretofore taken.

The development of the varied resources of our province brings constantly before us new and important problems with which we must be prepared to cope, and in no way can we better prepare than by the interchange of ideas at our branch meetings throughout the year and then coming together at these annual conventions to formulate these ideas and demands in such a way that they can be presented to the government, the railway companies or other bodies in a concrete and reasonable form.

Must be No Narrowness

Being located as we are in a province of such great extent and of such varied natural resources, we will need to remember that we are not all engaged in producing the same things. We should, therefore, not allow our sectional interests to interfere with our best judgment as to what is of chief interest to the whole province. There will be placed before you at this time many questions of a somewhat complex character which will need to be approached with tact, caution and deliberation. That we have come prepared to deal with these questions I am sure, and I hope that this convention will prove that the United Farmers of Alberta have a potent influence for good and that they are the strongest champions of true success and improvement in the province.

I thank you, gentlemen, for the sympathy you have displayed and for the hearty co-operation of all during the year and I bespeak for my successor in office the same forbearance and assistance that you have given me.

HON. DUNCAN MARSHALL INTRODUCED

Addressed Convention of United Farmers of Alberta on Some Vital Questions.

Hon. Duncan Marshall, the new Minister of Agriculture was given a great ovation as he rose to address the United Farmers of Alberta for the first time. He laughed at once into the question of the government pork packing plant. He said that his department was pledged to do certain things under certain conditions. These conditions were that the men who want a pork packing plant be ready to supply the hogs. Packing plants already established had not half the hogs they wanted. In response to cries that the farmers would raise the hogs if they could get the price, Mr. Marshall said that the Live Stock Commissioner would present a sample contract for the farmers to sign. This contract would be a guarantee that they would support the plant and not have it standing idle, merely as a menace to the private concerns in keeping up the price.

Mr. Marshall also spoke favorably of the co-operative chilled meat proposition. He had frequently discussed the question and hoped that the Dominion government would soon do something in the matter as the conditions under which cattle were exported was most unsatisfactory.

In conclusion, the minister of agriculture drew on his experience in the province of Ontario particularly in the matter of approaching governments for legislative measures. He had learned that a government was an institution that did things, not so much for a farmer, as with a farmer, that governments had responsibilities and could not move as fast as irresponsible parties would like to see them. Governments represented the whole people and were willing to do things, having in view the idea of "the greatest good to the greatest number."

There was some little difficulty in carrying out this plan in the constituencies where we are not numerically strong, but I believe we should try to perfect this or some other plan of like nature because although it has been said a prophet has no honor in his own country, yet it is always best to have men on the board who are favorably received in their own neighborhood.

It was decided by the board that each director should have charge of the organization work in his own constituency, this plan while theoretically good, was found to have its own disadvantages too, because as it is not always possible for the director to give his own time and attention to the work it becomes possible for those who apply for the position of organizers to have too free a hand in this work and in their own peculiar announcement of the principles of our association. I earnestly hope that you will be able at this convention to work out some plan of organization work which will be more effective and consistent with the aims and objects of our association. If it were possible for our directors to do the work then well, but as it is not then we must have organizers who have the confidence of the whole association. We know very well that an organizer will gather around him men of his own stripe, we want good, level-headed men and if an organizer is of that kind, he will attract men of like calibre, but if he is not he will repel them.

tions to the government which they took into consideration. Another draft was made out and we are told sent forward for the decision of the cabinet, but owing to the illness of Mr. Fielding action was not taken.

Beef Chilling

Another scheme of much larger proportions and consequently much harder to grapple with has been prominently before us during the year. That is the beef chilling proposition. We are yet very much at sea as to what that proposition entails. The Dominion government have, I believe, been for years investigating this matter and it appears have not yet arrived at any definite conclusion. It would not seem that this apparent indecision in the matter was caused by any opposition of interested parties, which as we might well believe may be the case in our pork packing scheme, because the present barbarous system of shipping live cattle can be, and is entered into by men of comparatively limited means, and there seems to be a general outcry on the part of all for something better, so that it seems to me that we should by all means in our power continue to post ourselves in this matter and in the meantime do as the Strathcona and other branches have done, request the Dominion government to take the matter up more vigorously and carry it along as soon as some sound and safe business proposition that will adequately safeguard the producers' interests is placed before them.

Imperial Hotel

Headquarters for Grain Growers in Brandon

E. W. HANNA - - Proprietor
BRANDON - Manitoba
Long Distance Telephone 234

—BUY—
Dartmouth Twine
AND GET THE BEST
The Harmer Implement Co. Winnipeg