

Manitoba Farmers' Parliament

Manitoba Grain Growers in Annual Convention Discuss many Vital Problems

On January 10 the fourteenth annual meeting of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association opened with a very large attendance for the first session. In view of the conditions on Manitoba farms this season the attendance was more than satisfactory. Perhaps never before has the president's annual address reflected so clearly and truly the underlying thought and sentiments which seemed to pervade the whole convention. It was a sentiment of greater action on the part of Canada in the war; better distribution of our natural ability to maintain agricultural activity at its proper efficiency and an unqualified stand on the attitude of the association to the severe economic handicaps under which farmers and the mass of Canadian citizens are now laboring.

The meeting was opened with the singing of the National Anthem and prayer.

The delegates were welcomed by Mayor Cater who strongly emphasized the need of the greatest self-sacrifice and the most supreme efforts to do our very utmost in this war. His welcome was given in the spirit of a broad and deep patriotism. He thought greater production and less waste were essential features of grain growers' work. He deprecated grain speculation and war profiteering. In reply, Director Peter Wright of Myrtle made an appeal for the co-operation of the mayor and citizens of Brandon as well as other cities in securing better economic conditions. An important feature was the better arrangement of the program this year to enable delegates to retain notes of their impressions of the convention to help them in reporting to their locals.

Farmers' Patriotic Contributions

C. H. Burnell, Oakville, was appointed recording secretary. Mr. Burnell gave some valuable suggestions for facilitating the business of the convention. He drew attention to the fact that \$30,000 had been contributed to patriotic purposes by the Association last year. He believed the work of the Association was also a great patriotic movement in the interest of Canada and should receive the most earnest support of every member. Mr. Burnell made a humorous and very fitting reference to an exhibit of wool displayed along the front of the platform by the Dominion Department of Agriculture. He thought if this represented the amount that had been taken from the farmers' eyes during the past year, it wasn't bad seeing that politicians had spent the last thirty years putting wool over the farmers' eyes.

The president, in welcoming the press drew attention to the fact that this year the press of other provinces, notably the east, were present to catch the spirit of the western farmers as well as the teachings of the grain growers.

National Service Discussion

The earnestness of the convention regarding the vital question of mobilizing the full strength of Canada's resources toward the successful and speedy prosecution of the war was very evident when it was brought up for discussion in an interim early in the first day. A resolution on this question which was heatedly debated for a time was re-drafted in order to make it more truly national in character. While a large number endorsed the sentiments contained in it, it was felt that it did not sufficiently emphasize the importance of demanding equal sacrifices from capital and labor and in demanding co-operation in national government. Mr. R. Fork of Pipestone thought that we had not reached the point where real sacrifices were demanded of us. Geo. F. Chipman thought if the grain growers were going to endorse any policy that might ultimately result in conscription it should demand the greatest sacrifices from capital first. A number were ready

to endorse conscription. E. R. Sutherland, an old soldier, struck a responsive point when he emphasized the need of the government nationalizing some of the factories and making use of some of the present large government shops for manufacturing munitions. A. E. Hill thought the cow of war profiteering should be driven up into the corner and milked dry by the people. T. A. Crerar, Winnipeg, was in hearty accord with the principle of the resolution and thought the government should take a census of the man power but something else should be asked for. The present fight for freedom being waged is not the only fight for freedom. For years the farmers of the west have been waging a very real war for rights vital to a true democracy. If we had to use conscription to defeat Germany, use it, but let us do it on some basis of equality. Mr. Crerar emphasized the case of the huge railway shops which the government has persistently refused to put to work as they might be utilized. Following the discussion which also strongly emphasized the need of co-op-

eration in national government at this time the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

The Resolution

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 possible point of efficiency; therefore be it resolved that this convention endorse the action of the government in this regard; but while endorsing it, it desires 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 urges that a census of the wealth of Canada should be immediately taken with the 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 interests of political parties shall be made entirely subservient to the interests of the state.

Lieutenant-Governor Speaks

The convention was honored on the first afternoon with a stirring address from Sir James Aikens, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. Sir James dealt with German ideals and their terrible results. He laid great emphasis on mobilizing our greatest possible resources toward winning the war. He said farming was the great fundamental industry of the whole country and a serious duty devolved on the rest of the community to see that farming is made so profitable an occupation as to not only keep those at it now farming but to induce others to go into it. He deprecated the growth of urban population at the expense of the rural. No

Reynolds on Production

President Reynolds of the Agricultural College addressed the convention on "Social and Economic Factors in Production." If the principle of co-operation prevailed in its true state the farmer could devote all his time to production, but with the social body possessed by the devils of profit and competition he is forced to engage in business. The acceptance of the principle of profit in business is all too

prevalent. Dividends and not service to the public has been the great consideration. The Christian principle of service has not been accepted and the farmer has been forced into business to defend himself.

Referring to the business of education Prof. Reynolds mentioned the work the college is doing outside of the college itself and particularly in connection with the boys' and girls' clubs. By this means and other avenues of extension work the college is enabled to extend its sphere of influence over a very large area and among communities that it could not otherwise touch at present. There are 8,000 members now in the boys' and girls' clubs.

Seed Grain Rates

An important matter discussed the opening day was the freight rates on seed grain. Previously it has been the distinct understanding of the executive and apparently of most of the local secretaries that the half rates on seed grain were in reality regular rates cut in two or a rebate of half the regular rate. John Alison, of Deloraine, who had been appointed by the locals of his district to go to Saskatchewan to buy seed grain for next spring discovered this was not true and that the rate from New Bridgen district, where he purchased some good seed, to Deloraine was really two-thirds the regular rate. The rate paid was based on the distance and he found that seed grain might come under different classifications.

J. Dougall of the C. P. Railway stated the rate had been a straight rate for seed grain based on the mileage like any other rate. The freight tariff was clear on that and there was no rebate. It usually worked out to half and sometimes less but also sometimes more. A Shoal Lake delegate wanted to know why the rate should be 18 cents per hundred pounds from Saskatoon, a little over 300 miles, and only 22 cents per hundred to Fort William, a distance of about 800 miles.

R. J. Avison, Gilbert Plains, thought this was another case where the farmers

were getting humbugged. It should be investigated. It was left for the executive to take up in detail with the railways at a conference about February 1.

Secretaries Should Meet

Following the presentation of the secretary's report published in full on another page a discussion as to the difficulty of maintaining interest among the local secretaries followed. The president, who had been acting secretary since the resignation of Mr. McKenzie, found this a vital and difficult problem. The proposal was made that the secretaries of the locals meet together in convention when they could thresh out many of their problems and learn methods by mutual acquaintance. This idea was endorsed by a member. J. Alison believed, as secretary of the local association he was doing a greater work for general good than he was able to accomplish in any of his activities in the church, because he was helping men to meet and help one another, was improving economic conditions and was making it possible to secure a little greater measure of happiness in the farm homes of his district. He believes there is a missing link between the central and the locals. The many varied activities of the central executive have made it impossible for these men to keep in such close touch with the locals. The local secretaries found it difficult to keep up-to-date information on hand for addressing their own or other locals. They were not kept closely informed of the late progress of the association, of new activities, etc. He believed the work of the central should be distributed in pamphlet form. The president explained that this year the programs had paid for themselves by the advertising they carried and the hope was to publish the full proceedings of this convention in somewhat the same manner so it could be distributed free. Whether this is feasible or not remains to be seen but he believed it would be.

Women's Interests

The peculiar interests and enterprises of women came to the fore in the Thursday afternoon session of the convention and were given the respectful attention of an audience made up largely of men.

Mrs. A. V. Thomas set forth clearly and concisely the nature of the changes in the laws respecting women and children which it is proposed to ask the Manitoba Legislature to enact at the coming session. She pointed out that it is not the present intention to ask for a dower law, which gives the wife a third interest in husband's property during her lifetime. Instead of this a Homestead Act is being brought in which makes it impossible for the homestead to be sold without the consent of the wife.

A proposed change in the Intestacy Act is to make it so that if a man dies his wife gets all of his estate up to twenty-five hundred dollars, and a third of the balance. The object of this legislation is to give the wife a working capital where her children are young, instead of having everything tied up until the youngest child comes of age.

The making of parents equal under the inheritance act, equal guardianship of children, the right to hold municipal office and the right of the illegitimate mother to inherit from her child were other changes briefly touched upon.

Mrs. Barrett, in a paper on "Ways and Means of a Separate Income for Farm Women," laid the financial dependence of the farm woman largely at the door of hard times. Very often the reason a woman didn't have money of her own was because there wasn't any money to have, but it was a little due also to carelessness and bad management, to the fact that women have

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