

Work for the Future

The following is the presidential address of R. C. Henders, president of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, delivered at the Opening of the Annual Convention at Brandon on January 24

Following the precedent of former years, I avail myself of the present opportunity to present you with a statement of the impressions I have gathered in carrying on the general work of the association during the past year, coupled also with some suggestions of what I consider some of the most important work to be taken up at this convention and also during the incoming year. Not that I would give a detailed statement of the work accomplished by your executive and board of directors. That task has been assigned to another. Mr. Wood, your worthy vice-president, will submit for your consideration the directors' report, in which is embodied the official statement of the work done in the various meetings held by the above referred to bodies. I desire that you give to his report earnest and careful consideration.

Wisdom of the Past

In carrying on the work of the association during the year my attention has been called repeatedly to the wisdom of the findings of some of our former conventions, as characterized by the resolutions passed bearing on certain vital trade, transportation, economic and sociologic questions, which in a very important manner affect our interests both as agriculturists and as citizens. The study of these questions, both in our convention and in our local organizations, has tended to give to the agriculturalists of this province a broader vision, and a better understanding of citizenship. Most of us are broader men and better men because of the course of thinking and study through which we have been thus led.

Did time permit, it would be interesting and profitable for us to rehearse some of the important work that has been done and some of the victories that have been secured in connection with legislation we have sought for and obtained. You know what rights we have secured through the amendments obtained to the Grain and Inspection Acts, and you also know with what earnestness we have had to contend for the retention of those rights and liberties. My object in calling attention to this particular feature of our work is that I might sound a note of warning—"Eternal Vigilance is the price of Liberty." The men who opposed us in the securing of those rights have not all passed away. While they may not desire to repeat the experience of two years ago and marshal all their allied forces in open attack, nevertheless there are other and more insidious ways that they may resort to. There is such a thing as hiding behind such a harmless looking thing, as for instance, a "Board of Trade" that high sounding title, which title and what it represents is all well enough perhaps when kept in proper place, but when it opens its sympathetic ear to the interested and partial information of persons who are directly interested in giving a false coloring to their statements, and, at the most, only a one-sided statement, it would be well for such board of trade to play a fairer game. Before lending their influence to such a scheme they should make a proper study of all the facts of the case, or at least hear both sides of the question. In making their case before a board of commissioners, or any other constituted authority, they would appear in much better form if in the future they would follow the above suggestion.

Watch the Grain Act

My advice to the Grain Growers of this province is to keep your eye on the Grain and Inspection Acts. See that no changes are introduced without your having full knowledge of what is implied in such changes. 'Tis true that knowledge is gained by experience. Experience may have already revealed where changes could be profitably made in the above referred to act. Some of us think that it has. Let us be broad enough and candid enough to deal with any proposed changes on their merits, always keeping in mind the fact, that as producers of

the grain handled, it is our inalienable right to say how and through what channel we will direct it as it proceeds from us into the hands of the consumer.

The transportation problem seems as yet to be only very partially solved. Indeed, it seems to be at the present time in a very unsatisfactory condition. Not during the last ten years have we experienced so much difficulty in the handling and marketing of our grain. There may be mitigating circumstances which in some degree explain the lack of transportation facilities, but after making due allowance for all these it still remains an admitted fact that our transportation facilities are not at all commensurate with our existing needs. They do not keep pace with the progress of the country. The channel through which our trade has to be forced is entirely too narrow for



R. C. HENDERS, re-elected President
Manitoba Grain Growers' Association

the volume of business we are attempting to put through it. A blind short-sighted policy on the part of some, and an exceedingly selfish one on the part of others, has brought about a state of affairs, which at the present time is well nigh intolerable. Channels of trade must be opened. The Hudson Bay route must be a realization in the least possible time. Access to the markets to the south of us (almost at our door) must be had. The producer and consumer must be brought into closer touch with each other and under the most advantageous circumstances. Every barrier that interposes between us and the users of the material we produce must be broken down. The popular teaching of the day by trade and transportation companies is not what is a reasonable profit for the service rendered, but "How can I extort the last cent possible from both producer and consumer in the rendering of such service."

Railway Extortion

In this connection I wish to refer to the extortion of freight and express rate charges. Why is it that we in these Western provinces are so seriously discriminated against? Surely not because railway building is more expensive out here nor yet because it is more expensive to operate? Why then this discrimination? It must be that the companies are putting into effect the axiom above referred to, namely, "That trade in this country is able to stand the extortionate rate." It will be the duty of this convention, first, to enter their earnest protest against such discrimination; and, second, to prepare themselves through their executives or other constituted authority to furnish such information to the railway commission at its next session as will lay bare the iniquities of these systems.

I desire to call attention to the fact that the Elevator Bill is now before the House at Ottawa. Your executive thought it wise to ask that if any important changes were made in the bill now submitted they would have an opportunity of being heard on such changes before such bill became law. Intimation to that effect was forwarded to the minister of trade and commerce at Ottawa, and a reply has been received fixing Monday, the 29th, as the date for such conference to take place. It will be the duty of this convention to place in the hands of the parties to whom this work is assigned such instructions and information as is deemed necessary in order that the best possible results may be secured.

The People's Problems

Did time permit, it would be profitable in this connection to enter into the discussion of a number of very important economic problems which press themselves upon us for solution at the present time.

- (1) The rapid growth of our cities and the monopoly of their advantages by a few political and industrial schemers.
- (2) Shall the rule of the people be given over to the syndicates and corporations?
- (3) Shall our legislatures have power to legislate in spite of the people's protest and to refuse legislation in spite of the people's demands?
- (4) Shall rings and bosses, machines and lobbyists, corporations and monopolists continue to dominate our government, and if not, then by what means are they to be prevented?

These and kindred topics suggest very inviting and important fields for study and investigation. We shall not attempt in this address to deal at any length with these problems. The most that we can hope to do is to present very briefly one or two chief aspects of the movement towards a more perfect democracy or self-government in political and industrial affairs, and in this connection would



R. McKENZIE, re-appointed Secretary
Manitoba Grain Growers' Association

designate private monopoly in politics and industry as being the central and most threatening evil of our times.

Self-Government a Myth

The law declares in favor of securing self-government in political affairs, but comparatively little is said about securing self-government in industrial affairs. Yet the principle of self-government and democracy is just as necessary to liberty, justice and development in the latter case as in the former. Oppression by an aristocracy of industrial monopolists is as bad as oppression by an aristocracy of political monopolists. Up to the present time this principle of self-government, so much referred to as the fibre of our constitution, when we come to look for political application has been very imperfectly carried out. The people spoken of by the political stump speakers and election campaign literature as the

"sovereign people" have, I might say, no direct efficient control. They are sovereign de jure but not de facto, except at election times. The actual power experienced by the people consists chiefly in the periodic choice of another set of masters who make laws to suit themselves and enforce them until their term of office expires, regardless of the will of the people. We are governed by an elective aristocracy which in its turn is largely controlled by an aristocracy of wealth. Behind the governments and the legislatures are the corporations and trusts. Behind the machines, the rings and the bosses, are the business monopolists, the industrial combinations, and the plutocrats; behind the political monopolists are the industrial monopolists.

This then, in very brief is the state of affairs. What is the remedy? We answer the principal remedy is Direct Legislation, because it opens the door to every other reform. No one who really believes in self-government can refuse to support the Initiative and Referendum for they merely enable the people to veto laws they do not want and to secure laws they do want, that is, they enable the people to govern themselves.

Did we have Direct Legislation what rapid strides would we make along the lines of civil service reform, proportional representation, the elective ballot, equal suffrage, efficient corrupt practices act, and the popular Recall, all of which are really necessary in order that the people may really own and operate the government, under conditions most likely to secure wise legislation and honest, intelligent and economic administration.

Real Public Ownership

I desire to call your attention in the concluding part of this address to co-operative business and public ownership of industrial monopolies, remembering that government ownership of industrial monopolies is not public ownership, unless the people own the government. Public ownership of the government is essential to real public ownership of industry, and public ownership of government involves what we have previously said concerning Direct Legislation, so that these must be a part of every thorough and reliable plan for the public ownership of industrial monopolies. And yet I wish to say that an advance in public industry, or government ownership of industry, is not an unmitigated evil; indeed it may be advanced in aid of the movement toward good government, because in the first place it helps to do away with private corporations which are chiefly the corrupting influence and certainly one of the leading obstacles to good government today. Secondly, it increases the importance of governmental affairs, and intensifies the disasters resulting from corruption, partisanship, and the spoils system and so arouses the interests of the citizens and impels them to demand reforms that will guarantee pure and efficient management. Therefore, except under especially adverse circumstances, sufficiently powerful to overcome the effects just named, government ownership of industrial monopolies tends towards good government and public ownership of monopolies, both of which tend, of course, to the diffusion of wealth and power and the realization of a more perfect democracy.

Co-operative Principles

A scheme is being worked out for the introduction of co-operation in both buying and selling which we believe will result in material advantage to both the producers and consumers of this country. Such a scheme to be large enough and comprehensive enough to embrace what is essential will require careful study, and I would suggest that this convention devote what time is necessary to the discussion of this proposition. It might be wise to appoint a number of the members of this convention who might be able to devote some time to this work to act in conjunction with your board of directors in perfecting such plans as they think

Continued on Page 10