

# Manitoba Farmers' Parliament

Epoch making convention of Manitoba Grain Growers' Association held at Brandon, January 8, 9 and 10. Policy of Wider Markets and Increased British Preference re-affirmed—Entry of Canada into Naval Conflict Condemned

The tenth annual convention of the Manitoba Grain Growers' association, held at Brandon on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, January 8, 9 and 10, was universally acknowledged to be by far the most successful gathering in the history of the association. Upwards of 500 delegates, representing branches of the association from every section of the province, were present and the enthusiasm and unity of purpose displayed was abundant proof of the wholehearted devotion of the Manitoba Grain Growers to their great cause. The Manitoba Grain Growers' association, originally formed for the purpose of securing an improvement in conditions surrounding the transportation and marketing of grain, has developed into something far wider and more comprehensive and the pronouncements made and the resolutions adopted at this convention place the association in the very front rank of the army of democracy. In addition to dealing with questions relating particularly to the interests of the agricultural industry, the convention made strong pronouncements in favor of such progressive reforms as Woman Suffrage, Direct Legislation, the increase of the British Preference and eventual Free Trade, Co-operation, and the abolition of the bar room, while the fact that the farmers were not altogether selfish in their demand for the removal of tariff burdens was shown by the unanimous passage of resolutions asking specifically for the free admission of all food stuffs and opposing any scheme for Imperial Preference that would raise the price of Canadian wheat at the expense of the British consumer.

## The Ottawa Platform of December, 1910, was Reaffirmed in its Entirety

Resolutions were also passed looking to a union with the forces of organized labor for the advancement of the general welfare of the nation, and it was decided to invite the Trades and Labor Councils of the province to join with the association in conducting an investigation into the causes of the high cost of living.

## The Naval Question

The outstanding feature of the convention, however, was the stand taken by the organized farmers against Canada being dragged into the ruinous race of the European countries in the creation of huge naval armaments. Declaring their belief that war and preparation for war should cease and that international difficulties should be settled by arbitration, the delegates by a practically unanimous vote (there being but five dissentients) condemned the naval policies of both political parties and placed themselves on record as firmly opposed to any expenditure whatever of the public monies for the construction of naval armaments. Among the matters dealt with by the convention which related particularly to the agricultural industry, were sample markets for grain and the conditions necessary to make these a success, and resolutions asking for improved loading platforms, for the reduction of the grain dealers' commission on oats to half a cent a bushel, directing the executive to institute

an enquiry as to the cause of the very frequent shortage of weight in grain on arriving at the terminals and to continue its efforts for the establishment of Reciprocal Demurrage, asking for a government enquiry into the question of agricultural credit, and requesting the introduction of a bill in the local legislature establishing municipal hail insurance on lines somewhat similar to those of the Saskatchewan Hail Insurance bill. The question of the sample market provoked considerable discussion, much of which was due to the presence of a C.P.R. official, who was given the privilege of addressing the convention and endeavored to persuade the delegates that a sample market would be against their interests. Inasmuch as the establishment of sample markets at Winnipeg and Fort William in September 1913 has been ordered by proclamation of the Governor in Council, in accordance with the Canada Grain Act, the discussion was ultimately narrowed down to the question of what safeguards were necessary to make the sample markets a success, and though considerable divergence of opinion was expressed at the opening of the discussion, all misunderstandings were eventually cleared away, and a unanimous decision arrived at.

## Co-operation

That the association is not depending for the betterment of conditions altogether on agitation and the presentation of requests to legislative bodies, was proved by a large number of reports which were received of the activities of local branches in the purchase of supplies through their own co-operative channels. Co-operation, in fact, is becoming a very important part of the work of the branch associations, enabling the members to save considerable sums in the purchase of their supplies, and it is hoped that as a result of the conference on the subject this work will, in the near future, be placed on a permanent and even more profitable basis.

Another important undertaking which came before the convention was that of securing farm help from Great Britain by advancing fares to carefully selected agricultural laborers and domestic servants, the convention approving of a scheme on this basis which was outlined

by the secretary, Roderick McKenzie. The scheme will be administered from the central office of the association at Winnipeg, and at the same time a bureau will be established to supply farm help at harvest time and other busy seasons.

## A Working Convention

There were few idle moments during the three days of the convention, morning, afternoon and evening sessions being held each day. The evening sessions of the first two days, however, were of the nature of public gatherings, Wednesday evening being devoted to an address on Woman Suffrage by Mrs. A. V. Thomas, President of the Political Equality League of Winnipeg, and another on Some Principles of Social Progress, by Rev. Dr. Sinclair, also of Winnipeg, while on Thursday evening a highly successful banquet was held at which representatives of the financial, manufacturing and railway interests were the guests of the association.

The convention, as in former years, was held in the Brandon City Hall, and opened at 9.30 on the morning of January 8 with the enrolment of delegates, upwards of 500, including both accredited and visiting delegates, registering their names. Following this, the delegates gathered in the auditorium to hear the address of the president, Mr. R. C. Henders, of Culross, whose broadminded statesmanlike declaration of policy furnished the keynote to the whole convention. Mr. Henders' address was reported in full in last week's issue. Mr. C. H. Burnell, Secretary of the Oakville branch, having been appointed secretary of the convention, the report of the directors, which has also been printed in full in The Guide, was presented by Vice-President J. S. Wood, of Oakville. The report was unanimously adopted, and the convention then adjourned until two o'clock.

The secretary's report and the report of the auditors, both of which were of a satisfactory nature, were presented and adopted at the opening of the afternoon session. Following this a remarkable scene was enacted, when on the suggestion of Mr. T. H. Drayson, of Neepawa, an appeal was made to the delegates to contribute to the Fighting Fund of the Association, starting the good work himself

with a contribution of \$5.00. Within half an hour \$1,032.25 had been either contributed or promised, details of which are given elsewhere in this issue.

## Electrical Power for the Farm

The report of the committee on electrical power was presented by Mr. Fred Berry, of Springbrook, as follows:

Your special committee appointed at the last annual meeting of your convention on the question of power begs leave to report as follows:

We consider hydro-electric power the future possible and available supply as the most commendable. We have investigated the possible sources of power and have come to the conclusion that the nearest available supply is from the Winnipeg River, via the City of Winnipeg, where there is an immense supply of power going to waste.

We have ascertained there are two developments already in actual operation from Winnipeg River to the City of Winnipeg operating over high tension lines about sixty-five miles distance. Both are great successes. One is operated by the Winnipeg Electric, who at present are using all their development, but have in view a further development of some 50,000 horse power which may take two years to complete. The other is owned and operated by the City of Winnipeg who are not using all their present development and have power at present, we are told, they would sell at \$10.00 per horse power, covering hours 1 a.m. to 5 p.m. and would arrange for a higher price during the remaining hours. We are further informed that they are only using about one-quarter of the available water supply, but have arranged for full developments as demands take place.

We notice that through the wisdom of the Provincial Government of Manitoba a utility commissioner has been appointed who has settled very knotty questions in the City of Winnipeg. We therefore recommend as follows:

"That the Provincial Government be immediately asked to take the matter of power up with the utility commissioner with the view of building a transmission line from Winnipeg to Brandon and arrange for a supply of power from the City of Winnipeg or other source and that same be started much on the same lines

as the Provincial Government of Ontario is providing cities, towns, villages and the farmers in the province of Ontario." We are informed a line can be built for \$400,000 which would be good for thirty years. A much better line of high standard can be built for \$600,000 or \$700,000. This low cost can be accounted to us by reason of the fact it is an easy country to build through and the question of getting material, labor, etc., on the ground is of the very best. We need not point out the very many uses and benefits a construction of this line would mean. It is patent to all. We are of the opinion that the line would pay from the first year of operation. We are confident that several cities and villages on the line would afford a great source of profit and besides would afford distributing stations whereby the farmers could hope to have power distributed for immediate uses,



No. 3279

The above is a facsimile of the Membership Card of the famous Anti-Corn Law League, of Great Britain, which, under the leadership of Richard Cobden and John Bright, freed the country from the shackles of Protection. This card was sent to us by a relative of James Shaw, now living in Saskatchewan.