

The Western Dairymen's Convention.

It is with much regret that we give publicity to the following strictures regarding this institution, but a short time ago we highly commended it and considered it the most beneficial institution for the advancement of this branch of agriculture in the Dominion. We deem it but our duty to speak plainly, although it may by many be thought too severe. We apprehend that such a shock has now been given to the institution that it will be almost, perhaps quite, as difficult to restore the confidence of farmers in its utility as to restore confidence in the Provincial Board of Agriculture. It requires more than legislative grants to restore lost confidence. The dairymen's time has been wasted and their confidence and honor outraged—at least such are our opinions. Many strong partisans may take exception and try to falsify or stultify our statements, as they have previously done, but right will prevail, although it may be kept down for a long time. The injurious results from this meeting will be felt for many years, and perhaps may never be effaced from the memory of those living. If our remarks tend to some future improvement we shall not have written in vain.

The Western Ontario Convention was held in Woodstock on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of February. The gathering was good in regard to numbers, and a large number of persons that had not been in the habit of attending were there. It appeared to us that a great number of the old faces were absent. Every year many really good men that we have met in previous years have left, being dissatisfied with the management. We have noticed the partial way in which some things have been managed for many years. In fact, ever since the Government money was granted to it, this began to be visible. This year the climax has been reached, and the institution must become in as bad a position as the Government Herd Book now stands, unless remedial steps are at once taken.

Mr. Ballantyne has been playing his cards to obtain the Presidency for some years, and cunning plans have been resorted to. Mr. Ballantyne is an M.P.P.; he has had a seat at the Board of Agriculture and Arts, and has taken a most prominent position in regard to the Model Farm.

The election of officers has been conducted with what is termed sharp practice. A lot of fresh names have been whipped in, and the election took place before the usual and expected time. Consequently Mr. Ballantyne has gained his point; has had elected picked men from suitable localities to suit himself. By this means he has fanned into a flame a feeling of discord and dissatisfaction that must tend to the injury of the Association and the agricultural interest of this Dominion. We have noticed this ember for many years, but have as yet been unable to seize hold of it in a suitable manner. The practice of packing and buying up agricultural meetings has long been visible and utilized to the apparent or temporary advancement of an individual or a locality. The packing or purchasing of votes invariably tells against the interest of the real, plodding farmer. His vested rights are too often swept away by this means. The dodges that are practised by party politicians are not always honorable or honest, but when these practices are carried into our agricultural expenditure and the money voted for its advancement is used for such purposes, the sooner such expenditures are stopped or diverted into their proper course, the better for the farmer.

The injustice done to dairymen in the west caused such dissatisfaction that the Rev. W. F. Clark introduced a motion on the second day to endeavor to have fair play done to those who were dissatisfied. Mr. Parker was then in the chair, and

he delivered one of the most sweeping and condemnatory charges ever heard at any Convention, against the reverend gentleman, in which he used some extremely harsh terms. The charges were so cutting and telling that Mr. Clark immediately arose, seized his resolution, and tore it to atoms before the meeting, humbly apologizing for bringing it forward. The real fact is, that Clark's resolution was just what the western dairymen wanted; at a full meeting of dairymen it would have been carried and fair play been given. The other paid speakers were L. B. Arnold, Harris Lewis, X. A. Willard and Mr. Clark. These were the speakers for the dairy interest. The two first and most practical, experienced men, were appointed to deliver their addresses at the most unsuitable time, while the party speakers, under the garb of the dairy interest, were called to occupy the best part of the time of the Convention.

There never have been such disgraceful meetings under the auspices of the Dairymen's Convention as those held in Woodstock and Stratford, which are not the cheese centres, but have now the controlling influence. Ingersoll, London and the whole western peninsula are not fairly represented. There never was less opportunity given for the dairymen to profit from the practical experiences of Arnold and Harris. The usual mode of obtaining information was almost stamped out, namely the questions and answers. The time was too fully occupied by very long addresses, much of which was not as important to dairymen as addresses usually have been, and the discussions about them. It has astonished us to see with what patience a President will sit and listen to the long, tedious address of some fluent speaker who likes to hear himself talk and has good oratorical faculties. But when the sound of his voice has ceased, no new idea of value has been imparted—nothing tangible for the mind to dwell on; merely a rhetorical sound has been heard. The dairymen came to gain information in their particular calling, and have not been as well satisfied as usual. Many are disgusted to such an extent that the downfall of the Association is predicted. We have no doubt but these forecasts will prove correct, unless immediate and radical changes take place. Mr. Ballantyne, M.P.P., the President, has apparently directed his attention to advocating the Model Farm, and this has been pretty fully done to the detriment of the dairy interest. Read the speeches and dilations and comments upon them, if they are ever published. But we fear the Association dare not publish half that the President said, or that the speakers introduced. For instance, Mr. Wetherall, of Boston, one of Mr. Ballantyne's selected speakers, came out openly and frankly in his address, and with modest remarks, said he was in favor of

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In stronger and more emphatic terms, he announced that he was a Grit. His eloquence waxed strong when he dilated on and condemned all that favored a protective policy. Mr. Ballantyne's annexationist received no censure, but rather approbation, from the chairman. Politics should be omitted. We do not think our public money should be expended to encourage a disruption in our Dominion. Another important point was brought out. Mr. Ballantyne, the President, appeared far too fond of hearing his own voice and blowing his own horn. He tried to give an account of the great good he had done, and instanced one factory that had produced inferior cheese the previous season; but from his instruction this season they had sold at the very highest price. A voice asked for the name of the factory and for the price

received. Mr. Ballantyne said he did not think it necessary to give names, and the audience, with Wetherall, of Boston, and Roberts, of Cornell, applauded and cheered Mr. B. for such a suitable reply. We failed to see the merit of the cheers, except that the faction had on the previous day got such a victory over the dairymen that their joy knew no bounds.

The Hon. Harris Lewis, a gentleman who has delighted every dairyman who has heard him by his amusing, pleasing way of imparting his fund of knowledge on dairy matters gained from practical experience, in a humorous manner alluded to the wire-pulling that had been practised at this Convention, with a view, perhaps, of preventing any recurrence of the kind, as such must tend to the injury of the Association.

Some have for years condemned us for speaking so plainly, and no doubt they will continue to do so. We will just give you one more instance of the just and honorable manner in which some of this body have acted for your benefit. The last day arrived. Each of the invited speakers received his pay: Arnold, \$50; Roberts, of Cornell University, \$50; Wetherall, \$50; Willard, \$50; Lewis, \$40; Clark, \$30. A vote of thanks was then given to them, and they were requested to reply. All replied with thanks except Mr. Clark, who got up and informed the meeting that the committee had reduced his pay 40 per cent.; that he had given them a good paper, and that they had a surplus of cash. The chairman rep'd, upholding the steps of the committee. Mr. Lossee, one of the best dairymen in Canada, and one that all respect, but who has a strong dislike to speak much and always has to be drawn out, this time, uninvited, ascended the steps to the platform, with his large walking-stick in his hand and his gray locks flowing, and said: "Gentlemen, if you are going to act so mean, I shall leave the Association." This was enough. A resolution was immediately put and carried that all receive the same rate, \$50 each. This act of the committee was looked on as intending to censure Mr. Clark for trying to bring in a resolution favoring the dairymen's interest against their (the committee's) wish, especially as Mr. C. was expected to have been a bought and paid tool for the ringleaders. The Hon. H. Lewis committed a grave offence against this august body when he dared to allude to the wire-pulling that had taken place. One of the observers remarked that the chairman had exposed himself, sold himself, and lost his hold.

We applied on the morning of the second day for Mr. L. B. Arnold's address for publication. This had been granted us on previous occasions, but this year the chairman refused. You may well ask, why?

Again on the last day a request from the FARMER'S ADVOCATE office for the privilege of publishing Mr. Arnold's address, was read; also, an offer from the same office to publish the annual report as cheaply as it had previously been done. The chairman, Mr. Casswell, objected, and neither of the requests have been granted, but were both laid on the table on the morning of the second day. On the morning of the third day Mr. Ballantyne was asked by Mr. Weld if the propositions had been considered. Mr. B. handed the request to Mr. Weld and informed him that arrangements had been made for the printing. Now, this would show that Mr. Ballantyne had taken power upon himself very early, apparently before being elected, as the printing of the report could scarcely have been granted or promised after election. In the printed report of this Association for the year 1880, the following appears on page 120:

(Mr. Weld said: "I have a plan which may