The Farmers of Ontario are Uniting

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county in the west to Dundas county in the east, the organizers found the farmers were ready and anxious to organize.

SITUATION IN ONTARIO.

The work of the organizers revealed an interesting situation in Ontario. For years it has been said that the farmers of Ontario would not cooperate. It was found that for years the farmers of Ontario have been cooperating. They have been doing so through hundreds of local companies and associations. Most of these organizations have transacted only a few thousand dollars worth of business a year. Others, like the Erie Farmers' Association of Haldimand county, or the Norfolk Fruit Growers' Association of Norfolk county, or the Farmers' Dairy Company, of York county, have conducted business ranging in volume from $100,000 to $200,000 and $300,000 a year. Thus they have been proving all the time that the farmers of Ontario can and do cooperate. The number of successful cooperative enterprises in Ontario conducted by farmers, is large. To begin with, there are between 250 and 300 farmers' clubs. These clubs are scattered all over the province. A large percentage of them have been very successful in the purchasing of supplies, such as mill-feeds, sugar, salt, fencing and flour for their members. Some of these clubs, like the English Line Farmers' Club, in Northumberland county, have bought as much as $7,000 in supplies for their members, and even more, in one year.

There are also 400 to 500 successful telephone companies, operated in one form or another, by farmers in all sections of Ontario. These companies have done much to teach farmers how to cooperate, and to help them in doing so. Besides these organizations, there are some 40 to 50 successful cooperative fruit growers' associations, about 100 subordinate granges, that do considerable cooperative work, as well as many local business enterprises cosducted by farmers with gratifying financial success. Through the work of these organizations during the past few years the farmers of Ontario have been getting a good drilling in the principles of cooperation and now are prepared to branch out on broader lines

Two factors have intensified the desire for strong central organizations: Numerous local associations have found their efforts to cooperate vigorously opposed by local merchants, mill owners and other local concerns that have done their best to upset the farmers organizations. The express desire of the Western Farmers' Organizations, which last year purchased 28 car loads of Ontario apples, to cooperate with farmers' organizations in Eastern Canada, has shown the need for provincial organizations in Ontario to look after the development of the interprovincial trade. Out of these conditions have grown the conviction that the time has come that these local units should concentrate their efforts for the promotion of the best interests of all. This led to the calling of the meeting held in Toronto last week.

A REPRESENTATIVE GATHERING.

The meetings were held in the Labor Hall. Some 200 farmers were present, representing Farmers' Clubs, subordinate Granges. fruit growers' associations and farmers' exchanges in all parts of the province. Those present represented probably 10,000 organized farmers. The meeting thus was unusually representative in character. A striking feature of the gathering was the presence of Mr. Roderick McKenzie of Winnipeg, the secretary of the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, and a director of the Grain Growers' Grain Company. Mr. McKenzie had come east expressly for the purpose of conveying greetngs from the Western organizations. He spoke twice, explaining the character and the success of the farmers' movements in Western Canada. Telegrams were also receved from officers of the Saskatchewan and Alberta associations expresing their desire that the farmers of Ontario would unite with them in a great farmers' movement, which may ultimately become truly national in character.

The convention opened with the appointment of Col. J. G. Fraser, of Burford, as chairman, and Mr. C. E. Birkett, of Brantford, as secretary. At the last three sessions of the convention, Mr. F. M. Chapman, editor of The Farmers' Magazine, Toronto, presided.

OPENING PROCEEDINGS.

The morning and afternoon sessions of the first day were largely devoted to the hearing of addresses by representative farmers who described the success that had attended the efforts of farmers in their districts to cooperate. Mr. A. G. Gurney, Paris, Ont., told how successful the Brant County Fruit Growers' Association had been, and Mr. Elmer Lick, of Oshawa, showed how the members of the Oshawa Cooperative Fruit Growers' Association had saved many thousands of dollars through cooperative methods.

The success that has attended the poultry circles of Ontario county was described by Mr. Henry Glendinning, of Manilla. The value of the eggs sold through these circles last year was well over $25,000. The farmers who belonged to them received better satisfaction and now are keeping more and better fowl.

The organization and conduct of the Chatsworth Marketing Company was described by Thomas H. Binnie of Durham. who showed that since the inception of the farmers' company in Chatsworth the general merchants of the village were doing an even better business than they had formerly. Mr. Binnie, as did most of the other speakers, emphasized the necessity for sinking all petty prejudices and jealousies, and showed how important is the choice of a tactful, experienced manager.

The outstanding success that has attended the work of the Farmers' Dairy Company, of Toronto, was described by Mr. A. J. Reynolds, of Solina. Some seven years ago about 200 farmers who were selling milk in Toronto, decided that they were not receiving fair treatment at the hands of the milk dealers of Toronto, and organized the Farmers' Dairy Company. Since then the company has grown until now it has 370 shareholders and $40,000 of paid up stock. It is handling about 400 cans of milk a day. Its sales this year will amount to about $300,000. It has paid its shareholders a premium of six per cent., and in addition pays them about 10c a can more for their milk than its chief competitor in Toronto.

Mr. T. H. Adams of Essex, spoke about the seed corn growers of Essex county. He showed that there is room for a strong farmers' organization to be formed in that county, which would enable the seed corn growers of Essex to supply corn to the other farmers' organizations throughout the province. Mr. E. G. Hoover of Selkirk, told how some 400 farmers who belonged to the Erie Farmers' Association in Haldimand county, have made a specialty of producing clover seed with the result that their sales of seed clover last year amounted to about $100,000. These farmers are in a position to furnish clover seeds, through the United Farmers Cooperative Company, Limited, to the other farmers' associations of Ontario.

TELEPHONE COMPANIES.

The development of the farmers' telephone movement in Ontario, was described by Mr. Anson Groh, of Hespeler. Mr. Groh touched on the opposition to this movement that had been raised by the leading telephone company of the province. and told how in spite of this farmers have got together and organized. Farmers belonging to his company had been told that if they organized independently they would be unable to obtain long distance connections or connections with the near-by towns and cities. In spite of this threat the farmers had organized and later found no difficulty in obtaining the necessary connections.

Mr. G. A. Brethen, of Norwood, described how the Holstein cattle-breeders in the Belleville district were led to unite in the holding of annual public auction sales of cattle. As they got to know each other better and to have more confidence in one another the sales grew in success until now buyers are attracted from long distances and are delighted with the purchases they are able to make, while the breeders are able to place their stock before many more buyers than they could by individual effort and thus obtain better prices.

Representatives of a number of farmers' clubs and subordinate granges told how their organizations had cooperated in purchasing supplies, and of the great savings that had been effected. Practically all the speakers expressed an earnest desire that strong central organizations should be formed. Late Thursday afternoon Mr. McKenzie, of Winnipeg, described the success of the farmers' associations of the prairie provinces. He was followed by Mr. E. C. Drury, of Barrie, who told how the various provincial farmers' organizations in Western Canada and the Dominion Grange are represented in what is known as The Canadian Council of Agriculture, which is intended to represent the farming interests of Canada. Hitherto the weak link in the chain has been in Ontario because the farmers of Ontario have not been properly organized.

THE TIME IS RIPE.

The evening session on Thursday was crowded with delegates. Mr. Geo. Keen, of Brantford, spoke on the subject, "The True Spirit of Co-operation." Mr. Keen has had a wide experience in co-operative enterprises. He emphasized the point that successful co-operation depends upon the presence among the members of the spirit "each for all and all for each." Where people co-operate for purely selfish purposes they are not likely to obtain a permanent success.

Mr. W. L. Smith, editor of The Weekly Sun, Toronto, stated that during his 16 years of experience he had never seen a meeting so full of promise as the meetings he had attended that day. Mr. Smith pointed out how some sections of Ontario are particularly adapted for the production of timothy seed, others of alsike and others of seed corn. This condition suggests how farmers can cooperate in the exchange of their products without its being necessary for middlemen to come in between. Mr. Smith was not in favor of the starting of local stores, as was attempted many years ago, but believed that it would be possible to make a success of cooperating in the handling of bulkier products, such as cement, salt, sugar, coal, and mill feeds.

FARMERS ENTHUSIASTIC.

Mr. J. J. Morrison, of Arthur, who had been acting as an organizer and who had visited farmers' clubs and subordinate granges in many sections of Ontario during the previous few weeks, told how he had found the farmers everywhere keen to cooperate. Farmers have found that were they to rent their farms they would be unable to obtain a rent that would pay them proper interest

Farmers Voice Their Views

At the meeting held in Toronto last week of farmers from all parts of Ontario, for the purpose of forming two strong provincial organizations, the following two resolutions were carried unanimously:

Iron and Steel Bounties.

"Whereas, the bounties on iron and steel were abolished a number of years ago in response to a widespread popular demand;

"And whereas, their renewal or the granting of a bonus on iron ore at the present moment is utterly indefensible, both on economic grounds and as being an added burden on an already overtaxed public;

"And whereas, their renewal or the imposition of an import duty on those sizes of fence wire now on the free list will make it easy for such a combine to be formed as will crush out all competition and have the power to control the market and extort exorbitant prices from the consumers;

"Therefore, be it resolved that this meeting of representative agriculturists of the Province of Ontario hereby utterly condemns any such renewal of bounties or bonuses or the proposal to exact any import duties on the above-mentioned products."

Railway Taxation.

"That this convention, representing all branches of Ontario agriculture, strongly approves of the principle that railway property in this Province shall be compelled to contribute to municipal revenue on precisely the same basis as that on which farm property is now taxed—that is, according to value."

The following day a deputation waited on Hon. R. L. Borden and members of his Cabinet in Ottawa, and presented to them a copy of the first resolution. A second deputation the same day waited on members of the Ontario Cabinet and presented them with a copy of the second resolution. Both deputations were given a courteous reception.

Cooperation Advocated.

A third resolution passed at the Toronto convention favored the enactment of Dominion and Provincial legislation facilitating the incorporation of cooperative companies. As this legislation has been blocked hitherto by the opposition of the Retail Merchants' Association, it was decided that the farmers' associations throughout Ontario should be asked to interview their members on this subject and secure their support for such legislation.