

TOMATO GROWERS

A MEETING AT HAMILTON - ADVANCE PRICES DEMANDED.

A MEETING of tomato growers of Wentworth county was held at the Dominion hotel Saturday for the purpose of considering what steps it would be advisable to take to get better prices from canners for tomatoes grown this summer than were paid last fall. There was an exceptionally good attendance, nearly 100 tillers of the soil being present. It took them a long time to get down to business, there being no person anxious to accept the responsibility of setting the wheels in motion, but when they did get started they transacted a large volume of business in a remarkably short space of time.

The first question discussed was whether or not it would be advisable to form a Tomato Growers' Association, and recognising the fact that in union there was strength, it did not take long to decide in the affirmative. The association starts out with about 75 members, and the officers expect that this number will be doubled when the farmers generally understand what the aims and objects of the association are. As an evidence of good faith, those who joined on Saturday deposited 25 cents each with the secretary. The election of officers was next proceeded with. R. H. Lewis, of Bartonville, was the unanimous choice for president, and E. J. Mahoney was elected secretary.

Having completed their organization the tomato growers started in to discuss other matters, the first of which was the price to be demanded for tomatoes next fall. Last fall the canners paid only 20 cents a bushel for tomatoes, and it was agreed that this figure was far too low. Some thought 30 cents a bushel should be the minimum. Others wanted to split the difference by setting the price at 25 cents a bushel. After

much discussion it was decided to allow every grower to make the best bargain he could with the canners, but every member of the association affixed his signature to an agreement not to accept less than 25 cents a bushel. If the canners will not contract for tomatoes at this price, there will be few of them grown this fall, as the farmers are very much in earnest in their demands. They have little fear of outside competition, as the freight rates are sufficiently high to protect them, and as they consider that their grievance is a just one they intend to fight to a finish.

The growers have another grievance against the canners, which they intend to have settled before setting out their plants this spring. The contracts which they have been asked and practically compelled to sign in former years contained an objectionable clause. It gave the canners the privilege of saying when the tomatoes were to be delivered. Frequently they were not prepared to accept delivery when the tomatoes were ripe, and the growers had no alternative but to let them rot on the ground. Later the canners would compel them to deliver the quantity contracted for. This clause of the contract will have to be struck out or modified. The growers will insist on being allowed to deliver their goods when they are ready.

Some of the canners had a talk with the officers of the Growers' Association after the meeting, and signified their willingness to comply with the demands of the association. The officers of the two associations will probably meet in the near future to talk the matter over, and to draw up a new form of contract.