

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, January 24th, 1912

## ONE ENEMY FALLEN

The Canadian Century, organ of Special Privilege, owned by Sir Max Aitken, of cement merger fame, has ceased publication. There were very few mourners.

## THAT RATE ON WHEAT

Readers of The Guide will have seen in press despatches that the through rates on wheat and oats to Duluth and Minneapolis are only applicable upon grain in transit through the United States for export, and not upon grain for local consumption. This restriction will mean practically that no advantage can be taken of the Minneapolis Market but that the wheat and oats can only go to Duluth. On this subject W. B. Lanigan, of the C.P.R., states that these restrictions were made by the interstate commerce commission and that the C.P.R. had no desire to place any restrictions whatever upon shipments to the south. Mr. Lanigan further states that he saw no reason why wheat shipped to Minneapolis on the new rates could not be disposed of locally, even in the face of the restriction. The C.P.R. rates on wheat and oats are only from Saskatchewan. Mr. Lanigan states that if relief is given to Saskatchewan by the southern route that there will be plenty of room in the terminals at Fort William to accommodate the grain from Manitoba and other points. There are no restrictions upon flax and barley shipped to the south on the new rates. We will investigate further in regard to the wheat and oat rates and give further information next week. In the meantime it would not be advisable to ship wheat to Minneapolis for domestic purposes.

## CONVENTION SHOWS GREAT PROGRESS

The annual convention of the United Farmers of Alberta, held in Edmonton last week, was decidedly the most successful annual gathering of the delegates of that great democratic organization. Three hundred delegates, representing upwards of twelve thousand farmers from all parts of Alberta, at a heavy expense to themselves, met for the purpose of improving conditions not only in their own province but throughout the whole Dominion. No one could help being impressed with the importance of the meeting and of the far-reaching effect of the result of the deliberations. There were men of every political shade, and of many different nationalities, but all were animated by a common motive—to find out the ills under which the people of the West at present labor and so far as possible to prescribe a remedy. There was abundant evidence that the farmers of Alberta are year by year devoting more attention to the study of conditions and taking a much more intelligent and active interest in the affairs of the nation. The very occupation of farming in this Western country, with its comparative isolation, tends towards independence and self-reliance and away from co-operation. But this tendency is being steadily overcome and the farmers are learning that their only hope of success in the struggle in which they are engaged is through co-operation with each other and by bringing as large a portion of the population as possible within the ranks of their organization. Each year drives home to the members of the United Farmers of Alberta the great value of their organization to them individually, and they realize that by supporting it in every possible way they are bringing about a condition of affairs that will give to

them a larger portion of the wealth which they create.

As usual the delegates were informed by visitors that they were the "backbone of the country", and that the "farmers were the foundation of the country's prosperity." But this is now becoming such an old story that it is rather hard to create enthusiasm in a farmer's breast by such statements. They were also urged to devote more attention to mixed farming and were told of the large aggregate value of the agricultural products imported into the province each year. They were told to change their methods of farming and to farm more scientifically, which would be better for the country. But, needless to say, they were not offered the slightest help, either by advice or by offers of co-operation from any source, on the matter of getting the full market value of the crops they are now raising. They were not offered any assistance in the matter of providing relief to the man whose crop was completely frozen and useless, to the man whose crop was hauled into the ground and his season's work wiped out in a few minutes, to the man whose stock was killed by the railway without any damages being paid, to the men who are paying from seven to twelve per cent. on their capital, to the thousands of men who are working chiefly to increase the value of land held out of use by speculators, to the men who are tariff-taxed upon everything they buy and who are railway plundered upon everything they ship and who are prohibited from entering the most profitable market for their produce. In the solution of these and a score of other problems which are vital to every farmer he gets little or no assistance. He must rely upon himself. But it is a very fortunate thing for the future of this western country that the men who are bearing the burden of its development are not shrinking from the problems which confront them. They know that if these problems are to be solved that theirs must be the work of solution and that the necessary sacrifice must be borne by them.

No doubt many critics will smile at some of the resolutions that were brought before the convention and will also ridicule some of the comments made by the farmers present, while discussing these resolutions. But consider a little. Those three hundred delegates were in session only three days, morning, afternoon, and on two evenings they worked far into the night. In that brief time they discussed problems equally as important as those that come before our provincial and federal Parliaments where our politicians spend from six weeks to six months threshing out generally matters of trivial nature, and as a rule avoiding those questions which vitally affect the people of the country. Of course the farmers' convention had one great advantage over the Parliaments. There was no need to make long-winded speeches for the benefit of the galleries, and for the press, and they were not wasting the time and the money of the country by playing the miserable game of "peanut, party politics." Anyone who has listened to the proceedings of even the House of Commons at Ottawa, and also to the deliberations of the farmers' annual conventions in the West, will agree that for real business the farmers' conventions are certainly miles ahead of the House of Commons. It should not be forgotten that the farmers paid the expenses of their delegates to the convention and also pay their full share of all the expenses of the House of Commons.

In making a comparison with the provincial legislatures and the House of Commons there is another important point that must not be overlooked. None of the Parliaments originate the most important legislation for the real benefit of the people. This work is done by unofficial organizations of the common people,

of which the United Farmers of Alberta is one of the chief. The real democratic issues of the country are first brought forward by the organizations of the common people and when they have educated the public to the need of such reforms our law makers then enact the necessary statutes to give them effect. The truth of this statement is everywhere recognized, peculiar though it may seem, and it is the strongest possible argument in favor of the building up of large organizations of the common people. The three farmers' organizations in the three Prairie Provinces are more important factors in the improvements of conditions in the West than are the three legislatures and federal Parliament combined. But even with this fact before us we would not in any way belittle the importance of our Parliaments. They are the law-making bodies of the land; but the duty of seeing that they make the right laws rests with the organizations of the common people.

Now let us consider the actual work accomplished by the convention in Edmonton in the three days of its labors. The farmers had found that the constitution under which they worked was not equal to their requirements. It was therefore revised clause by clause and greatly improved. The tariff question was discussed but was not given a great deal of time as all the delegates had already seen the "nigger in the wood pile" of the protective tariff which is supposed to "build up a well rounded Dominion," but which in reality only takes a goodly part of the wealth created by one section of the population and transfers it to the pockets of a few. For this reason the delegates contented themselves chiefly in passing a resolution re-affirming their support of the Ottawa Platform of 1910 and in declaring against a protective tariff in any form. In fact they even went further and declared that if they must pay a tariff tax they preferred to pay it into the federal treasury, where it would be used for public purposes, rather than into the pockets of private individuals and corporations.

There were no two opinions expressed as to the source from which revenues should be raised for the transaction of public business, namely, the value of the land and natural resources of the country. This was set forth in a strong resolution and it was also advocated that a super-tax be levied upon land held out of use by speculators. It was realized that the land speculators were taking the lion's share of the actual wealth created by the people of Alberta, and, as it was entirely unearned by these enterprising individuals and corporations, the unanimous opinion was that this unearned increment should be taken for public purposes.

It is gratifying to know that the Province of Alberta is making more progress towards equitable taxation methods than any province in the Dominion. It is only a question of time till the same system spreads from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The only thing necessary is to educate the people to the benefits of the system. At present the farmers are paying very high rates of interest on all money they borrow, and upon all overdue accounts, and this system was roundly condemned. Co-operation was warmly recommended, and the Canadian Council of Agriculture was requested to prepare a suitable Co-operative Bill for presentation to the Dominion government. The question of hail insurance provoked an animated discussion and instructions were given to the newly elected directorate to take up the matter with the provincial government for the purpose of working out a better system than the one at present in force, which is not giving satisfaction.

Every delegate was enthusiastically in support of Direct Legislation and a large number of the members of the provincial legislature