

Saskatchewan Farmers' Parliament

Over 2,000 delegates and visitors assemble for the Annual Grain Growers' Convention at Moose Jaw

The sixteenth annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was held at Moose Jaw from February 12 to 16 with a full attendance of delegates, taxing the capacity of St. Andrews Church. Over 1,400 delegates were registered with an additional six hundred visitors.

As usual, Monday was spent in preparation by the directory and billeting committee and the convention opened formally on Tuesday. Mayor W. W. Davidson and John Crawford, president of the board of trade extended a hearty welcome to Moose Jaw and Hon. George Langley voiced the appreciation of the assembled farmers of the many plans made for their entertainment.

President J. A. Maharg then read his annual address which was well received and is given in full on another page of this issue of The Guide.

James Robinson, executive director of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company presented a short verbal report of this company's activities during the year, full particulars of which have appeared already in these columns. He contrasted present conditions in the grain trade with those which existed six years ago and it was his opinion that at no time had grain been bought on as close a margin as now. In spite of the fact that ten per cent. of the crop had been hailed out and there had been a visitation of rust, this season the company had handled 25,000,000 bushels and expected the figure to exceed 30,000,000 by the end of the season. Where the crops had been light the company had closed the elevators to save expense and it was significant that the farmers had protested against this as long as there was a bushel left to market as it would mean they would suffer without competition among the elevators.

J. E. Paynter, chairman of the Municipal Hail Insurance Commission spoke but briefly as hail insurance was for later discussion. Altho operated on the commission plan, they had been as much a farmers' institution as the Co-operative Elevator Company. It had been the general idea thruout the country that the Saskatchewan government was running the Hail Insurance Commission. But there was no responsibility upon the government for the fact that it had not been possible in this year of storms to meet claims in full. Every dollar paid into the Hail Insurance Commission by the farmers had been returned to them except for overhead expenses. Mr. Paynter was struck by the number of farmers who criticize without knowledge of the facts and it was his message to the convention that before indulging in criticism the delegates be sure that they had the facts. The report of the directors was then read and discussion deferred until the afternoon.

Tuesday Afternoon Session

Without much discussion the directors report was adopted unanimously when the delegates reassembled for the Tuesday afternoon session.

After explanations as to the legal right of a province and the aim in view, a resolution was passed that the consumption of alcoholic liquors in Saskatchewan be stopped altogether, except for medical purposes.

In connection with the report of the Executive, which followed, a delegate of the Rockhaven local came forward with the grand championship silver shield, won at the grain competition held at the Regina Fair. All the other prize winning locals on this competition were named and applauded also and Messrs. Patten and Elderkin, president and manager respectively of the Regina exhibition, spoke briefly of the success which had attended the grain competition. It was hoped to make it a continued feature of the fair from year to year.

The report of the executive this year embodied several reports formerly presented separately and was too lengthy to be adopted immediately. It was received instead and its discussion proceeded with under various heads.

Information was given a number of delegates in regard to the procedure of the central office in connection with the legal bureau. The selling of futures also came in for some humorous comment and some serious

discussion during which President Maharg and Hon. Charles Dunning, former manager of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, explained a number of intricacies of the grain business. Mr. Dunning's outline of the method of dealing in futures was particularly clear, but even then some of the delegates appeared to be more or less bewildered, which the speaker was quick to use as one of the strongest arguments why farmers should leave that kind of business alone.

An interlude to the afternoons routine was provided by the arrival of Major General John Hughes, who was in Moose Jaw inspecting local battalions. In paying his respects to the assembled grain growers he said that down at Camp Hughes this year he had commanded thirty thousand men and for the first five weeks they had had quite a time obtaining supplies contracted for in the west because of the lack of mixed farming. The meat had to be imported from Ontario, jam and potatoes from British Columbia, etc. The flour for the bread was all they could get in the prairie provinces. He hoped that the convention would be of benefit to the farmers, the province and the whole dominion.

The financial statement for the year was then taken up.

Some Railway Resolutions Discussed

Almost the entire morning, Wednesday, was spent in discussion of several railway resolutions concerning crossings, demurrage, grain doors, etc. James Dougall, agricultural agent for the C.P.R. was called to the platform and given opportunity to explain many matters. It was unanimously resolved that the executive take up the matter of railway crossings with the railway commission, to compel all railway companies to raise the planks on all crossings an inch above the rails in order that sleighs might not catch while hauling over them.

A resolution was likewise carried, requesting that all demurrage rates be made fully reciprocal. It was reported in the press that the railroad companies were seeking relief from the car shortage situation by applying to the Railway Commission for an increase in demurrage rates from the present rate of \$1.00 per 24 hours to \$4.00. Mr. Dougall explained that his company experienced great difficulty in having cars returned from the United States. There were now over 30,000 C.P.R. cars grabbed by American railroads. The increase of demurrage rates was intended to apply only to manufactured goods and Western Canada was not affected.

The immediate competition of the open link in the Weyburn-Lethbridge Branch and the gap between Assiniboia and Vantage was the subject of a third resolution, which was carried, and the convention expressed itself as strongly in favor of a transfer switch at the junction of the C.P.R. and C.N.R. near Carlyle, Saskatchewan. The idea in this latter resolution was to reduce the cost and delay experienced in securing Souris coal at this point.

It was resolved also that something should be done to adjust the law to protect farmers living near the railway who owned livestock. Too many animals were being killed because of defective cattle guards and too much difficulty experienced in obtaining compensation for these losses.

A resolution that grain doors be put on all sidings close to shipping platforms brought forth the information from the C.P.R. representative that his company was already in the habit of storing these doors beneath the platforms.

The farmers passed unanimously a resolution of thanks to the various railway companies for the assistance given in reduced freight rates on seed grain and livestock and Mr. Dougall was tendered a hearty vote of thanks for his answers to the many questions which he had been asked.

Ought to Exclude Racial Questions

On the Wednesday afternoon secretary J. H. Musselman was taken to task by delegate M. McLaughlin for an interview, which appeared in the Regina Leader of September 9, regarding Canada's race problems. Mr. Musselman explained that he had spoken as a private citizen and not in an official capacity and the wrong impression created by the article had been corrected in a subsequent interview. It was the sentiment of the convention that all discussion of a racial or sectarian nature must be excluded from their deliberations.

In resuming the discussion of the executive's report, the reorganization of the central office involved a discussion of the arrangement which had existed between the association and The Grain Growers' Grain Company in connection with trading activities, also the proposed appointment of district superintendents to bring about closer connections between the central office and trading locals.

The lack of capital and of storage facilities at local points had greatly handicapped the association in handling coal and other commodities. The difficulty was, the secretary explained, that farmers expected to get their coal supplies in about two months, their requirements not being spread sufficiently over the year, whereas it should be handled in the same way as the dealers handled it, storing it up in the summer month when coal was available in any quantities. During the season the central office had handled 1,560 cars of coal. It was difficult to get a house to break connections already established when the farmers' purchases were so spasmodic.

Commercial Bodies To Unite

One of the most important questions that ever came before the Saskatchewan convention or before any body of farmers in Western Canada was presented when it was decided to favor the transfer of the associations' trading activities to the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company. The announcement of the latter's willingness to undertake the distribution of supplies from local warehouses was made by Hon. George Langley and dropped like a bomb shell upon the delegates, who had had no preparation whatever for the proposal. The debate waxed warm, many delegates expressing themselves freely as resenting such an important matter being "sprung" upon them so unexpectedly. After considerable discussion as to the wisdom of immediate action a resolution framed by Secretary Musselman was finally carried with about twenty delegates dissenting. This resolution reads as follows:

"That the convention welcome the suggestion by the directors of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator

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Financial Experience Number

We Will Pay Farmers for Helpful Letters Giving Their Relations With Financial Institutions

In March The Guide intends to issue a special Financial Number. We want all farmers who have had valuable experiences in financing to tell these experiences for the benefit of others and the bettering of conditions. Dealings with banks, mortgage companies, bonding companies, investment concerns; with hail insurance, fire insurance, life insurance and livestock insurance companies—any of these are of interest.

- 1.—How have you been able to make use of the services of these institutions in developing your farming operations, improving your financial position as a farmer, providing for your family and the future?
- 2.—Have you any suggestions to make as to how these services could be bettered for the farming community and for the development of agriculture generally?
- 3.—According to what you have observed in your neighborhood, to what extent are the farmers themselves responsible for the lack of co-operation they so much desire from these institutions, and what are the chief hindrances they place in their own way? What can the farmers do to improve their case with the established financial companies?

In asking for answers to these questions The Guide does not want vague opinions or theories, but actual experiences. When you needed credit to finance some undertaking, what happened? How did you succeed? How did you fail? We are not trying to get together a lot of "ticks" nor flowery bouquets. We want to have letters which will be full of facts that will be useful to others who find themselves facing the same situation with which you had to deal. If you had to do it over again, would you go at it in the same way? Experiences on every phase of all kinds of financial business which the farmer transacts will be welcomed and only criticism which is constructive and based on actual experience is permissible.

The Following Prizes Will Be Awarded

- For the best letter received The Guide will pay \$10.00 cash;
- For the next best letter, \$5.00 cash;
- For the third best letter, \$2.00 cash;

For all other letters which can be used payment will be made at regular rates. The length limit is about 1,000 words. Do not describe your experience with all these different institutions in the same letter, but you may write a letter on your experience with each kind of institution, sending in as many letters as you wish. Keep down to actual experiences and constructive thought as much as possible.

Do not mention the name of the bank or other financial concern in telling your story, but give these names on a separate sheet for our own information. Each letter must give the real name and address of the writer, but not necessarily for publication. A nom-de-plume may be signed for publication, if desired. Write on one side of the paper only. Do not roll, but fold, your letter, which must reach The Guide office not later than March 7, and preferably by March 1. Address all letters: Editor, The Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg.