

Alberta President's Address

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Its advocates are found in every party, and they hold the most varied and contradictory theories and beliefs regarding taxation, tariff, temperance, trusts and other economic questions.

They unite only in the belief that the people should have a way to express and enforce their will in government. This is a platform upon which all can and should unite; in short, Direct Legislation simply provides the means for doing what the majority of voters want done.

The resolution adopted at our convention here two years ago, instructing the secretary to draw up a petition to the local legislature requesting that Direct Legislation become a part of the constitution of the province at the next session of the house, was carried out.

Your legislative committee, as will appear in their report, attended the House with a largely signed petition for this purpose, but beyond a resolution that the matter should be investigated and attended to at its next session, nothing definite was done.

We felt that the matter was not dealt with as fully as we had been led to expect, and I trust arrangements will be made at this convention to see that this important matter is no longer shelved unnecessarily. We need a statute incorporating this form of government into our constitution, and it will be our fault if we allow the government to thwart our efforts to obtain it.

It is through Direct Legislation we are able to express and enforce our will as a people and to have our wishes carried out. It shows that as an organization we recognize the importance of this measure as we make this the first plank in our platform. When this question is settled, public ownership of public utilities will also be settled. We hold that where free competition becomes impossible, as in telephones, telegraphs, railways and other public utilities, such business becomes a social function and should be owned, controlled and managed by and for the people, through their proper government, municipal, provincial or national, and we are working to this end.

Taxation of Land Values

As a province we take pride in the progress we are making toward Direct Taxation. With our capital city, Edmonton, a single tax city, Calgary only waiting for the passing of a by-law—which has had its first reading—to become one, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat also working toward that end, Wetaskiwin seriously considering the matter, all our towns and over fifty rural municipalities working it, is a remarkable showing.

British Columbia will, I believe, adopt the single tax, and our neighboring province on the east, Saskatchewan, has adopted the single tax in all her rural municipalities, giving the urban municipalities the option for doing so; this system is, therefore, province-wide and will soon be generally adopted.

The West may be proud of this record and justly so. It is unjust to tax industry and the products and savings of labor; this encourages the land speculator and discourages industry; nothing the West has ever done will so attract desirable settlers as removing this tax on industry and thrift. I hold that each man is entitled to all that his labor produces and that no tax should be levied on the products of his labor, and I hope the time is not far distant when all public revenues for Dominion, Provincial and

Municipal purposes will be raised on land values, irrespective of improvements and the abolition of all other forms of direct or indirect taxation. Single tax is not a tax on land, but on the value of land, it would, therefore, not fall on all land, but on land that had value, and on that in proportion to its value. It would be a tax, not on the use or improvement of land, but on the ownership of land, taking what would otherwise go to the owner as owner and not as user.

In excluding all values created by use or improvement, the value attaching to bare land only would be considered in assessments. Thus the farmer would have to pay no more taxes than the speculator who held a similar piece of land idle, and the man who, on a city lot, erected a valuable building, would be taxed no more than the man who held a similar vacant lot.

Few realize the importance of, and what single tax really will accomplish. Let me point out some of its most important recommendations. It will take the weight of taxation off the agricultural districts, where land has little or no value, irrespective of improvements, and put it on towns and cities where bare land rises to the value of millions of dollars per acre.

It will dispense with a multiplicity of taxes and an army of tax-gatherers, simplify government and greatly reduce its cost.

It will do away with the fraud, corruption and gross inequality inseparable from our present methods of taxation, which allow the rich to escape while they grind the poor. Land cannot be carried off, and its value can be ascertained with greater ease than any other.

It would give us, with all the world, as perfect freedom of trade as now exists between our provinces, enabling our people to share through free exchanges in all the advantages which nature has given to other countries, or which the peculiar skill of peoples has enabled them to attain. It would destroy trusts, monopolies and corruptions which are the outgrowths of the tariff; it would do away with the fines and penalties now levied on any one who improves a farm, erects a house, builds a machine, or in any way adds to the general stock of wealth. It would leave everyone free to apply labor or expend capital in production or exchange without fine or restriction, and would leave to each the full product of his exertion.

It would, on the other hand, by taking for public use that value which attaches to land by reason of growth and improvement of the community, make the holding of land unprofitable to the mere owner, and profitable only to the user. It would thus make it impossible for speculators and monopolists to hold natural opportunities unused or only half used, and would throw open to labor the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man, thereby solving the labor problem, doing away with involuntary poverty, raise wages to the full earnings of labor, make overproduction impossible until all human wants are satisfied, render labor saving inventions a blessing to all, and cause such an enormous production, and such an equitable distribution of wealth as would give to all comfort, leisure and participation in the advantage of an advancing civilization.

Surely, such a scientific and equitable form of taxation is worth our careful study, embracing, as it does, such important questions as tariff, transportation and the many others so closely entwined in it.

Hail Insurance

The Hail Insurance was taken up by your committee and energetically pursued, but with all the effort we were able to exert, the minister of agriculture refused to carry the government hail insurance for another year, until the new rural municipalities act came into force, the evident desire was to let in private corporations without regard to the best interests of the farmers. The committee remained in Edmonton and watched every clause referring to hail insurance, and if we had not done so I fear the act providing for hail insurance would have been of little value.

Dominion Affairs

Hudson Bay Railway. We are glad to see the government are pushing th

building of this line; the Canadian Council of Agriculture took this matter up at Regina and we passed a strong resolution to the government requesting that work be carried on at both ends simultaneously, also to proceed with necessary work in the harbor on the Hudson Bay. We want to be careful to see that this outlet remains in the possession and under the control of the people and operated for their benefit.

We welcome the prospect of a parcels post and trust nothing will prevent its being adopted this year. There can be no question that, properly managed, the parcels post can be operated more economically at lower rates, and with greater efficiency, than the express business. It would reach to every corner of the country where rural mail delivery is operating. It will be, if adopted, a long stride in national co-operation.

Cheap Money for Farmers

Cheaper loans for farmers is another question that will be considered by the convention. Last year I referred to Provincial Life Insurance, suggesting that the amount received in premiums should be loaned at a fair rate of interest to home industries. I see Wisconsin has now State life insurance in operation, and Massachusetts an industrial insurance, both giving satisfaction and I see no reason why we could not adopt a similar system, and if a Provincial bank could be established, it is estimated that the amounts received from depositing farmers would equal or surpass the loans made to borrowing farmers; an authority states this to be the case in most instances.

These are, I think, the outstanding questions which will claim our attention during this session; although there are others which have claimed the attention of your board, and will be received in the various reports to be submitted.

Dr. Abbott says, "The present unrest in the world is man's demand for the remainder of his charter rights; his right to govern himself; his right to destroy the evils which are destroying him." If we keep these thoughts in our minds we can make this New Year with its new issues, its new efforts, new duties, bigger desires and higher aspirations one of outstanding progress in the records of the United Farmers of Alberta.

May the desire of this association ever be that love, the true Christian spirit shall rule more and more the daily lives of all men on the three great battle fields of progress—Politics, Commerce and Religion—until philanthropy shall be unnecessary and idleness shall be unknown.

HOME ECONOMICS CONVENTION

The Convention of Home Economics Societies will be held at the Agricultural College, Winnipeg, on February 4 and 5. All women interested in home or community life are invited to attend any or all of the sessions. The program includes addresses from such well known speakers as Mrs. Nellie McClung, Dr. Mary Crawford, Mrs. E. W. Hamilton, Mrs. A. V. Thomas, Miss E. Cora Hind, Mrs. M. Vialoux, Miss Laura E. Black, as well as addresses from the ladies who comprise the executive of the Home Economics association. The College staff in Home Economics will also contribute several addresses during the Convention. Ladies who wish to attend will have the advantage of excursion rates, and in purchasing single ticket to Winnipeg, should procure Convention certificate from agent, which, when signed by the secretary of the Convention, will permit the holder to return free. It is hoped that many ladies will take advantage of attending this Convention.

The Conventions in session at the College in February, and which all are invited to attend, are:

Agricultural Societies' convention—Feb. 5 and 6.

Home Economics convention—Feb. 4 and 5.

Canadian Seed Growers' convention—Feb. 4.

Provincial Seed Grain Exhibition—Feb. 1 to 6.

A SURE LOSS

"Yes, smoking is an expensive habit. When one gives his friends cigars all the year round his loss is no little one."

"Do you mean in cigars or friends?"



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The City Beautiful never will be really beautiful until it has become also the City Equitable. The government must take for its own use the values that it creates, ground values; and it must leave to the individual the values that he creates, labor values.—Chicago Public.

Diligence alone is a good patrimony.