

Farmers Determined in their Opposition to Military Service Act

Mass Meeting in Toronto Decides to Continue the Opposition to the Act—An Organizer to be Appointed—Official Organ will be Started—Deputation Sent to Ottawa—Farmers Stand Made Clear—Important Resolutions Passed

ONTARIO farmers are aroused as they have had been in many years over the recent order-in-council conscripting farm boys from twenty-two years of age and are determined to leave nothing undone that can be done to induce the Dominion Government to revoke its decision in this matter. This was clearly shown at the meeting of from 2,000 to 2,500 farmers held in Toronto last Friday afternoon for the purpose of discussing the situation and determining what action should be taken. Everything that it was possible to do under the circumstances was done. While immediate results may not be achieved, ultimately much good should result from the strong stand our farmers are taking.

What Was Done.

In brief the convention prepared and issued a statement expressing their loyalty and the reasons which have led them to oppose the Government's action.

Definite recommendations were adopted for submission to the Government urging the exemption of owners or practical managers of farms and that where they have been drafted that they be extended leave of absence and that one killed man should be allowed for each 100 acres or major part thereof.

A committee was appointed to go to Ottawa and lay the views of the farmers before the Government and urge immediate action.

An organizer is to be appointed who will assist farmers in organizing to express their opposition to the action of the Government. Members of Parliament will be asked to resign their seats and to stand for election as farmers. Special attention will, in all probability, be given to constituencies such as East Durham, which is represented by Hon. N. W. Rowell, the Chairman of the War Council of the Cabinet, and who is believed to be largely responsible for the recent action of the Government. As this is almost entirely a rural constituency it is believed that farmers will have a good opportunity to make their influence felt.

A large sum was pledged for the starting of an official organ through which it will be possible for the farmers of the Province to make their views known on public questions and by means of which the work of organization throughout the province will be promoted.

President H. W. Wood, of the United Farmers of Alberta, was present and made a statement in reference to the famous telegram sent by the Executive Committee of that organization to the Government and read by Hon. Sir Robt. Borden to the mass meeting of farmers held in Ottawa recently. Mr. Wood let it be understood that the Alberta farmers felt that a mistake had been made in the wording of this telegram and expressed the deepest regret that it should have caused an apparent break in the sympathy that exists between the farmers of the West and the War. After hearing this statement the convention passed a resolution expressing its goodwill towards the farmers of Alberta and its desire to work in union with them.

Resolutions Passed.

In another column appear the main resolutions as passed at the large meeting held in Massey Hall Friday afternoon. As it was not found possible to complete all the business by Friday afternoon, a considerable number of the delegates remained over until Saturday, when considerable additional business was trans-

acted. Among the resolutions adopted on Saturday was the following: "That, supplementing the resolutions of this convention, the committee be requested to convey to the Government the following facts:

"1st. That because of the Order-in-Council of April 29th, which the Military Service Act, many farmers have been left without a man on whom the stock is not properly cared for and an alarmingly large

men do not know how to present their claims properly;

"2nd. Because many of the military officers are unfamiliar with conditions in the country and the conditions in consideration in their treatment of the men applying for leave-of-absence, are but increasing the unrest.

"3rd. That in view of these conditions we would urge the Government, in the interests of the Nation and of the Empire, to pass an Order-in-Coun-

The Resolutions Passed at the Big Toronto Convention

THE following are the resolutions passed last Friday at the Toronto convention attended by some 2,000 Ontario farmers, a report of which is given in another column.

The Farmers' Position.

"The organized farmers of Ontario believe that the time has come when it is in the best interests of the Dominion and of the Empire that there should be a thorough understanding by the Government of the position of the farmers of the province in regard to the effect of the working of amendments to the Military Service Act. Put briefly this position is as follows:—

"The farmers desire to express their unbought loyalty to the Empire in the struggle in which it is engaged and are determined to continue to put forth their utmost efforts in the successful prosecution of the war, and are willing to fight or to produce according to the needs of the allied nations.

"The success of the prosecution of the war, according to the statements of sufficient food to supply the needs of the armies at the front and the needs of the home front, is dependent upon the agriculture of this country.

"From their first-hand knowledge gained from actual contact with farm conditions, the farmers are convinced that the enforcement of the provisions of the M. S. A., as really enforced, will prove absolutely disastrous to the best interests of the Dominion and of the Empire.

"Farmers as a class do not ask for or expect to receive any special consideration at the hands of the Government in the enforcement of its provisions of the M. S. A., but would point out that these provisions as now they are enforced are bearing an undue hardship upon the agriculture of this country. This is because the vast majority of the skilled men in urban industrial districts are married men or men above the age of 25 years, whereas, in many cases are already at the front, and who have been brought up on farms, and, therefore, are thoroughly skilled and capable of directing their energies in the prosecution of the war.

"That true loyalty makes it incumbent upon the farmers to make these conditions known to the Government and to the public, especially as the results of the failure to follow the present policies.

"In support of the foregoing we desire to point out:—

"That long before the war broke out the rapid depletion of the population of our towns and cities was creating a food shortage which even at that time was becoming serious.

"2. That the war has withdrawn tens of thousands of our best farmers and farmers' sons into the military service. Thousands of other workers on the farms, because of the high wages offered, have been drawn from the farms to engage in work in munition factories. The effect of all this has been to create a drastic shortage of labor that is alarmingly reducing the production of our farms and intensifying the dangerous conditions in our cities.

"3. That while at first it was possible to take extra hire, where such existed, from certain farms without absolutely preventing further production, that condition no longer exists.

"4. That the men now being withdrawn from production are, in many cases, the directing heads of the farms on which they are employed. While vision on some farms it is absolutely impossible of filling the positions of the men who have been leaving the work on our farms, and who are now being withdrawn from production.

"5. That the removal of the men now being taken from agriculture is having an absolutely disastrous effect on the production of food and by forcing the sale of thousands of head of breeding stock and preventing the collection of preparation for next season's planting.

"6. That the welfare of not only our soldiers at the front, but of the residents of our cities is being greatly endangered by these conditions. As within a few months to materially increase the cost of living in producing enough food to supply the needs of 75 to 100 million city people.

"7. That in order that the Government and the public may understand the seriousness of the situation the farmers would urge that at least three members of the Cabinet, including the Minister of the War Council,

(Continued on page 13.)

number of farms will soon pass out of cultivation.

"2nd. That farmers, knowing the seriousness of the situation, and the confidence in the Government and a serious condition of unrest is prevalent in the country and is growing.

"3rd. That the Order-in-Council modifying provisions of the M. S. A. of April 29th, is not working out satisfactorily.

1st. Because the granting of leave-of-absence has been left in the hands of men who, because of their military duties, are in a position where they can deal with the situation properly;

"2nd. Because many of the young

men delaying further action by the Military Authorities and thereby enacting the young men from the farms being left in the country until the Government has had time to investigate the situation and deal with it adequately."

On motion of W. E. Brown and H. Bortman, it was resolved to request the Minister of MILITIA, and his representatives at Ottawa leave-of-absence of at least four days at home for the boys just prior to their departure overseas.

Character of Meeting.

Feeling ran high through all the meetings, the atmosphere of the convention at times was electrical. It

was apparent that the nerves of many of the delegates were highly strung because of the character of recent events. This led to some wild suggestions being made by a few extremists and at times to considerable confusion when during the large meeting Friday afternoon in Massey Hall a dozen men were sometimes on their feet at once trying to get the attention of the chairman. On the whole, however, the meetings were splendidly conducted, for which much credit is due to President R. H. Halbert, of the U.F.O., who as the presiding officer, acquitted himself most creditably.

It was not to be wondered at that the delegates present felt the situation keenly. Almost all of them knew of farms in their home districts that had been stripped of their last remaining man and where, in consequence, many cases great hardship was resulting. Peterborough, for example, told of seven farms within a radius of two miles of his place without an able bodied man on them. It was reported on Friday that many of the boys were willing to go that night to the front from Niagara Camp without being given the customary final four days leave of absence. Immediately after the meeting was taken to investigate this report and the report was received from Niagara that the report was unfounded as far as any young men being sent from Niagara to the front. Some days thereafter was concerned. Discussed that some commanding officers had treated the requests of farm boys for leave of absence with ridicule and disgust. From some of the delegates, Charles Henry, of Dobbin's took considerable time to try and convince the convention that the military officers were exceeding their authority in refusing to accept the fact that it was possible to get practically every young fellow exempted if it could be shown by means of an affidavit, presented to the proper military authorities, that the man was a son of a soldier. The convention was not prepared to accept this statement with the result that it was decided to telegraph Hon. P. A. Cresser for further information. Hon. Mr. Cresser's reply was received Saturday morning. It was to the following effect:—

"Message just received. Order-in-Council of April 29th, in the provision of order April 29th and provides where a man drafted is sole support of widowed mother, is invalid father or helpless dependent. Leave of absence may be granted by military authorities. All applications for leave must be made by man himself to commanding officer at Depot. Battalion and report after four days of an interview." (Signed) T. A. Cresser.

Some Disappointed.

Most of the farmers who attended the meetings left for home feeling that everything possible had been done and that they were being done to improve the situation and that the Government's results were sure to follow. Some of those present, however, seemed to feel disappointed that there was no act of compelling the Government to capitulate at once and return the boys already drafted to their farms. Of course, there was no way of obtaining such action by the Government. The Government's term of office does not run out for four years, and that in the meantime the opposition of the farmers will die out. Therefore it feels safe to maintain its stand. It is supported in its action by practically all the great papers and (Continued on page 13.)

Electricity

The Ho
I like the coun
of the city
I had my m
here on the far
ideal."

The speaker was
sprinkling who
young farmer of
he had had on
and I was intere
people. I was
life. Her reply
ed, for I had heard
was. She missed t
raining water and
he objected to con
their spot, labor an
could only turn a
good light at will
house. I would nev
complaint," she
ideal."

Had she only kn
pool area to impr
her, this country
at her city view
the farm, and at v
pass than her city
the same comforts
rest. Having elect
the electric light
and electric light
thousands of farm
recently I visited M
his farm near Brant
automatic water sy
resistance of some
to since my previ
connected up with
every room in the
and by electricity. C
I found an electric
lines enjoyed by v
cities. An electric
from the iron comp
ment. The Good ho
convenience of the
establishment and

The Home Game

But how about the
number of farm hom
the electric light
use electricity may
of. Small home light
been brought to a
perfection. A year
the home. The
Bath-tubs, of Strat
the home lighting p
defection it was giv
the electric light
plant and storage b
house and barns, re
machines, supplies
mechanical milk an
water as well. "It
be improvement we
house," said Mr. Ba
light."

But a warlike t
Mr. Do. R. Barrie
hundred acre farm
is a real partnership
and just across the
the farm. The
built for the junior
frs. Mr. W. C. Bar
are equipped with al
and both are lighte
lighting system, loc
The whole plant tak
of the building,
gas is run with coal
to supply consist
oil."

"Coal oil seems a
remarked Mr. Barrie,
as we use it in this
light of another kind
engine once a week
fully charged will be
running for a week.
pay and all lights ar
course, and more po
Barrie estimated that
all of a week will cha
from nothing to full
fuel, but for both ho
the light. In additi
ing light a pump wat
chug pump and wat
I have seen many
systems that used