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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### THE FARMING CLASS IN WESTERN CANADA.

Ceylon, Sask., Feb. 20.

Last week, in Regina, was held one of the three big Provincial conventions of farmers that have become a regular institution in the Canadian prairie Provinces.

The real meaning of this gathering is not indicated by the mere fact of the meeting of the 800 delegates and visitors, nor by the further fact that the Grain Growers' Association in Saskatchewan has over 10,000 members and is aggressively pushing its organization. There is a deeper significance in the fact that the affiliated farmers' organizations, both east and west, are viewing the big public questions from a national standpoint, and are laboring earnestly to break the thralldom of party politics.



The Grain Growers' Association is a class-conscious body, laboring to solve the problems of the Canadian agriculturists; but, perhaps because it stands for the interest that outranks all others combined, it has taken the democratic position on every public question, as the enemy of privilege.

If Canadian manufacturers can meet foreign competition abroad, it asks, why do they need protection at home?

But it goes farther and declares the farmers ready, if the lowered tariff asked for renders revenue insufficient, to bear their share of a direct tax.

It asks for government ownership of the terminal grain elevators, as the only possible means of preventing the debasing of Canadian export wheat, but at the same time it has fathered two immense co-operative schemes to protect the producer till he gets his wheat to the terminals.

In asking for government farm loans it only desires that the privilege now enjoyed by the banks and railroads be broadened into a right in which all shall share.

And it went on record as repudiating the English Tory plan of a discriminating duty against non-British wheat, which "would increase the price of the poor man's loaf."



Party insurgency, as it exists in the States, has scarcely begun here, but it is a promise of better things to see an organization of national proportions stand consistently for the right as it sees it, and in so doing administer a rebuke to both the parties to which its membership belongs.

When Laurier made his Western trip in the summer of 1910, he was astonished at meeting at every stop west of Winnipeg, instead of a crowd of gaping admirers, an earnest body of farmers who knew what they wanted and were determined to place him on record as favoring or opposing the measures they demanded.

The Conservatives were delighted, but only a year later they sang to a different tune when they saw

their own leader administered a dose of the same medicine.

It is to such influences as theirs to which governments must learn to bow if Canadian statesmanship shall ever outgrow the narrow limits of political parties.



It is an interesting speculation whether the time has arrived when the agricultural interests of a country shall become permanently united in an organization that shall guard the interests of the farmer in all matters of public policy.

There are some things that would indicate it. The farmer today finds it increasingly necessary to study the science of agriculture, to follow market tendencies, to practice good business methods, and to take an active hand in politics. These activities impel, nay, they compel, association to an extent never known before.

Whether the present affiliated associations of Canadian farmers shall strike root deeply and be cultivated wisely enough to weather future storms, may be a question, but if they should fail their successors will be placed nearer success by their existence.

GEO. W. ATKINSON.



### ECHOES FROM THE NEW ZEALAND ELECTIONS.\*

Wellington, New Zealand, December 12, 1911.

The forces of monopoly and privilege scored heavily at the recent elections for the New Zealand parliament. The questions of local and national Prohibition confused issues very much and quite eclipsed the land question. It was encouraging, however, to notice that a larger number of candidates supported the taxation of land values in their addresses, and gave prominence to it, than ever before.

Arthur Withy, one of our land-value-tax leaders here, fought an energetic campaign. Although defeated, he polled 50 per cent more votes than any other advanced Liberal who faced, as he did, not only the unscrupulous hostility and lavishly corrupt expenditures of the liquor trade, but also the antagonism of supporters of the Government and of the Opposition. Under the circumstances we are well satisfied with his 2,461 votes.

Mr. Withy has done excellent propaganda work throughout his Auckland campaign and is now free to devote himself to spreading "the new evangel" throughout the country. We have numerous requests for his services in country districts, and I have no doubt of encouraging results for land value taxation at our next general election.

Mr. Fowlds had to face a second ballot. He came in at the head of the poll on the first ballot, but without a full majority. As the Opposition was third, Mr. Fowlds' contest at the second ballot was with the Socialist candidate, who had come in second. At the second ballot the Socialist was supported by reactionaries, and Mr. Fowlds was defeated by 31 votes—3423 to 3454. His defeat was

\*See current volume of The Public, pages 151, 154.

due in part to what appears to be a wave of revolt against the Ward ministry, which helped to carry him down, notwithstanding his having resigned from the ministry and made a progressive campaign. But another factor is an unnatural co-operation at the ballot box between Socialists here and the privileged classes. The present confusion cannot last long, however, and when it clears up a bit the principles for which Mr. Fowlds and Mr. Withy are strenuously contending will be better understood and stronger in the constituencies.

R. A. HOULD.

## INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

### A GOOD WORD FOR THE "HOBO."

Westfield, Chautauqua Co., N. Y.

I hope you will continue to keep close to the people as you did in a fine editorial\* on the "Hoboes" that came to my notice. As a hard working farmer and one struggling with debt, I cannot hire as the so-called "Independent farmer" can; so I am obliged to depend more or less on the men as they come along the road. While these brothers cannot buckle in and do the work of an ordinary "farm laborer," yet I find them men of finer intelligence and of keen craftsmanship in their line. And they often do excellent service in that way.

MATT C. PUGSLEY.



### WOMAN SUFFRAGE.

Chicago.

A few nights ago my wife expressed herself strongly, for her, against what she was emphatic enough to call "the brutality" of the recent "hanging bee" in Chicago, as she denounced it. I reminded her that these officials were not "brutes," but were her own official agents, carrying out her own orders as a citizen. This rebuke rather shocked her. But our daughter, who is thirteen now, came to her rescue with, "Don't you mind him, ma; they don't represent *us*, they are not *our* agents." You should have heard the emphasis on "*us*" and "*our*." But I guess she was right.

"VOTES FOR WOMEN."



### FROM A CALIFORNIA HOUSEMOTHER

In a Private Letter.

I thoroughly enjoy the right of suffrage. There came with the power to exercise it exaltation I never felt before. I could speak for my belief, and be counted, and it would mean being more real. Do you catch my thought? It's crudely expressed. But it surprised me—I knew I should be glad, but I did not know I should feel freed.

A. K. H.

\*Mr. Pugsley probably refers to an editorial paragraph on page 922 of The Public of September 8, 1911.—Editors of The Public.

## NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, February 27, 1912.

Roosevelt and the Ohio Constitutional Convention.

At the day's session of the Constitutional Convention of Ohio on the 21st, ex-President Roosevelt delivered upon official invitation a carefully prepared address on a variety of the problems of Constitutional government, chief among them being the Initiative, Referendum and Recall. The first two of these reforms, in their application as well to legislation as to Constitutional amendments, a majority of the delegates are under pledges to their constituents to adopt. [See current volume, page 181.]



In the course of his speech Mr. Roosevelt said:

We should discriminate between two purposes we have in view. The first is the effort to provide what are themselves the ends of good government; the second is the effort to provide proper machinery for the achievement of these ends. The ends of good government in our democracy are to secure by genuine popular rule a high average of moral and material well being among our citizens. . . . Our fundamental purpose must be to secure genuine equality of opportunity. No man should receive a dollar unless that dollar has been fairly earned. Every dollar received should represent a dollar's worth of service rendered. . . . As to the kind of governmental machinery which at this time and under existing social and industrial conditions—it seems to me that, as a people, we need the short ballot. You cannot get good service from the public servant if you cannot see him, and there is no more effective way of hiding him than by mixing him up with a multitude of others so that they are none of them important enough to catch the eye of the average workaday citizen. . . . I believe in providing for direct nominations by the people, including therein direct preferential primaries for the election of delegates to the national nominating conventions. . . . I believe in the election of United States Senators by direct vote. Just as actual experience convinced our people that Presidents should be elected (as they now are in practice, although not in theory) by direct vote of the people instead of by indirect vote through an untrammelled electoral college, so actual experience has convinced us that Senators should be elected by direct vote of the people instead of indirectly through the various legislatures. I believe in the Initiative and the Referendum, which should be used not to destroy representative government, but to correct it whenever it becomes misrepresentative. . . . The power to invoke such direct action, both by Initiative and by Referendum, should