

The Late Farmers' Convention.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

A few hours spent by me in the Farmer's State Convention, lately in session in this place, gave me an opportunity to compare it with the last Legislative Assembly of this State. I did not, of course enter the hall where these practical agriculturists were deliberating with any intent to make such a comparison, but, being in, and having my eyes and ears open, the laws and processes of my intellectual nature contrasted the two bodies without any seeming effort on my part. And the first very noticeable idea which soon forced itself into the mind, and the conviction of its truth upon the judgment, was the fact that the average intellect and culture of the farmers' convention was certainly higher than that of the last Legislative Assembly. Formerly, that is to say, before the advent of railroads and telegraph lines, by which knowledge is increased and disseminated, it was usual to believe that the most intellectual son should be educated for either law or medicine, while the fool of the family would do a farmer. They entertained the opinion that talent was quite unnecessary in performing the appropriate duties of the farm—that education here was of no use, and that a man might be ever so stupid and stolid in intellect and yet conduct the operations of even an extensive farm quite as successfully as one who has added the knowledge of educational training to the advantage of a naturally strong and comprehensive mind. A brief study of the physiognomy and manners of the members, and of even the language of the various speakers, was sufficient to show that these men at least comprehended the idea that the business of agriculture will ordinarily not be followed advantageously by persons deficient in intellect; and that they had an appreciating knowledge of the fact that even superior powers in this department of industry will as certainly produce superior results as they would if exercised in any other business or occupation.

But a comparison in favor of the Convention does not end here. The farmers were more dignified than were the members of the last Legislative Assembly; and they seemed to have a far higher sense of duty and responsibility which impelled them to promptness in action and a degree of earnestness in labor which would admit of neither inclination nor yet of time for speaking simply to be heard. The open, frank, manly, and honest expression of the countenances of these men would under any circumstances check a villain in his advance to offer a bribe. I regard the assembling of this Convention as significant of the fact that the practical agriculturists of the country have at length realized the necessity for concert of action in order to their obtaining a remunerative price for their products. Hitherto, Oregon tillers have almost continuously failed to obtain even a moderately remunerative price for the great staple product of the country, however high the price paid at Liverpool. We have here the best wheat country in the world. A paternal government has given the land to the farmers, and yet they find themselves getting poorer from year to year, notwithstanding their simple living and industrious habits. Unaccustomed to close reasoning and to accurate research, many men of this class of our population have been perplexed as to the causes of such an extraordinary result. They always knew that usually the diligent hand and consenting brow received a sustaining and even encouraging reward. But they have found that in some exceptional and unexplained manner the ample products of their yellow harvests have failed to leave them even a small residuum of yellow coin to clothe their families and to educate their children. At length they see clearly enough that avarice has preyed upon the root of their once growing prosperity, and that capitalists and middlemen have appropriated the labor of their hands, and, in short, that they sowed in toil and others reaped the products of their labor. To discover and apply a remedy for this evil, seems to have been the object of the Convention. On this subject there was at first some difference of opinion. Upon the whole, however, I think it may be affirmed that they at length very generally agreed upon the necessity of having warehouses of their own in which to store their grain, &c., until the offering of a remunerative price. But, in order to

make this plan effectual in its practical working, they should avoid contracting debts with the merchants if they would not anticipate the proceeds of their labor and create a necessity for unlocking the warehouse door to the importunate creditor, who, whatever may be the fact, is sure to pretend at least, soon after harvest, that he is in great straits for money to meet the demands in the hands of the Portland or San Francisco wholesale merchant.

As the farmers arrived from the various portions of the State, I took especial pains to draw their attention to the fact that hitherto the companies or organizations that had conveyed the products of the farm to the commercial metropolis of the country, had made such charges for the service that no margin was left for profit, or even a living compensation to the producer, every thing like this being absorbed by warehouse, steamboat, and railroad charges. I very distinctly remember that, a good many years ago, when there were very few furniture manufacturers in the country, I found that it would cost me more to have my furniture conveyed from Portland to Albany, on steamers, than I had paid for it in New York and for freight charges from thence to Portland. I of course had it brought up on wagons. At the time of my writing this article, the railroad charges for carrying wheat and other products from Douglas county amount to an absolute prohibition. Even the river charges have always, until the organization of the present opposition company, been such as to make it impossible for the farmers in the up-river counties to send turnips, potatoes, and many other farm products to Portland, and this too while that city was obtaining these needed supplies from California, through ship-owners, who saw that if they would have these products for freight, the prices charged for the service must be such as to admit of a living remuneration for the toll of the producer. All the farmers in the Willamette valley above Oregon City have abandoned fruit raising for the California market because freight charges on the river absolutely prohibit the thing being done. Common sense and financial skill ought to enable steamboat and railroad capitalists to see that if they would make a business for their boats and roads the charges for freight must not only be below, but greatly below, the point of the prohibition of production.

All experience in Oregon has hitherto shown that when a rival company has reduced freight charges to a living rate, the farmers have not felt the necessity for sustaining the weaker company by their patronage. The older company, grown powerful by extortion, has employed the accumulated wealth gathered from the farmers' fields of laborious toil, to crush down the company that stood ready to help the producer. This being done, the prices were again put up, and thus the farmer made to pay for destroying his friend.

With facts and opinions such as these I sought to possess the minds with which I came in contact, that others might see and feel the absolute necessity of giving their business to the recently organized steamboat company. I did this because I am sure that it affords the farmer his only existing means of getting anything for his labor.

But there is another reason why not only the farmer but all other classes should give their patronage to the opposition company. Every dollar paid to Mr. Holladay for either freight or passage goes to Germany, after deducting the expenses of running his boats and of operating his road, for the purpose of paying interest on about \$11,000,000 of borrowed money. It cancels no Oregon indebtedness after coming into his hands, but is at once felt as an exhausting drain. Not so, however, the money paid to the other or opposition company, which is in every sense a domestic or home company, which receiving, for example, say fifty dollars for freights and passage, pays it out in Oregon to some one who pays it to the next creditor, and he again to another, until, thus circulating among us from hand to hand, it cancels even thousands of dollars of indebtedness in the course of the year.

I would like to say more, but space will not permit me to continue a subject I may resume in another number of the Farmer.

COLUMELLA.

Ben Holladay, C. H. Lewis and A. P. Ankeny have filed articles of incorporation, in the name of the Willamette Bridge Company. They propose to build a bridge across the Willamette at Portland.

According to the Scotch papers, steam cultivation is rapidly winning its way in Scotland as well as in England.

Railway War in the West.

The excitement in Illinois and some of the other Western States over the exactions of the railway companies seems to be increasing. During one week recently, farmers' conventions were held in several towns—Earlville, Elgin, Clinton, Sugar Grove, Cambridge, etc.—to concert means of defense, and though very little seems to have been accomplished of a practical nature, a spirit has been manifested among the people which neither the railways nor the legislatures can afford to disregard. "Central Illinois," says *The Chicago Tribune*, "is nearly a unit in the purpose of fighting the railroads to the bitter end. The fever has extended into Iowa and Indiana. Wisconsin and Minnesota will catch it by and by. The same spirit is cropping out in Kentucky and Tennessee, and it will extend South simultaneously with the movement to the North-West."

The situation which the Western grain-growers and stock-raisers have to face is serious enough. The roads upon which they depend for transportation control legislation in some of the States, and are rapidly gaining the mastery over it in others. Consolidation is gradually putting down competition, and where rival companies have not yet united under one management they have generally come to some sort of a mutual understanding which enables them to enforce whatever tariff they please.—Thus a half dozen capitalists have acquired the power to raise or lower at will the price of all the necessaries of life, and by a sudden change in their rates of transportation to make fortunes in a single day, at the expense of the productive classes. It is estimated that the railways take three-quarters of the farmers' grain as toll for carrying the other quarter to market. Out of a hundred acres the Western grower cultivates only twenty-five for himself, and seventy-five for the railroads. Nor is this the only subject of complaint. Competition still has some influence on the great trunk lines, and the result is an onerous discrimination by which competing points are favored, and intolerable burdens laid upon other towns. Shipments are made from Boston to Chicago, 1,100 miles, cheaper than from Chicago to Earlville, which is only 75 miles. The rate on grain from Ottumwa to Boston is 73 cents per hundred pounds, while from Somonauk, on the same road, 200 miles nearer, it is 83 cents. In other words, the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad charges the Somonauk producer 10 cents a mile for not carrying his grain 200 miles.

There is a statute of Illinois against discrimination of this kind, but it has not been enforced, and the roads have shown a disposition to defy it. A bill, however, has recently been introduced in the State Legislature, and passed unanimously through the Senate, imposing a penalty of \$100,000 for a repeated violation of the law and making it the duty of the Railroad Commissioners to institute a suit upon the application of any citizen—the cost to be paid out of the State Treasury. This law, if honestly enforced, and coupled with an enactment fixing a maximum tariff, would doubtless relieve the Western farmers for the present. But it would only postpone, not avert, the conflict between the people and the railway monopolies which impends in all parts of the country. The representatives of the roads at the Illinois capital declare that if the freights were reduced even one-sixth they could not pay dividends; but why? The roads cost but a moderate sum to build, and their legitimate running expenses are not a quarter of their revenue. The truth is the companies have watered their stock, by stock dividends, until, if we can trust the speakers at one of these Western Farmers' Conventions, "four hundred dollars' worth of original stock is now equivalent to twenty thousand dollars' worth;" and upon all this enormous increase, as well as upon the outlay required to influence legislation, buy up unprofitable competing roads, and fight the law, they must earn at least twelve or twenty per cent. If they are checked now by a stringent law, how long will it be before they send their own representatives to the Legislature to have that law amended, or buy up the Railroad Commissioners whose duty it will be to execute the law, or, failing in these measures, lay their hands upon the courts, as rich cor-

porations have done in New York? We cannot shut our eyes to the truth that the railroad influence in the United States is a dangerous power, which threatens industry, commerce, and political morality alike; that it is constantly growing, and that no means has yet been devised for controlling it. The railway problem is the problem of our time.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

Board of Education.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, SALEM, OREGON, April 19th, 1873.

On the 4th of April, 1873, pursuant to call, the Board of Education of the State of Oregon, together with a majority of the professional teachers heretofore selected to assist at the semi-annual examinations, met in Salem, at the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to arrange the necessary preliminaries for the coming meeting in July. Present: Governor L. F. Grover, S. F. Chadwick, Secretary of State, and Syl. C. Simpson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, of the State Board of Education, and Profs. T. M. Gatch, B. L. Arnold, I. Allen Macrum and A. J. Anderson. Absent: Prof. J. W. Johnson.

On motion, it was resolved that the professional teachers selected to assist at the semi-annual examinations are *ex officio* members of the State Board of Education, while sitting as the State Board of Examination, and are entitled to vote on all questions relating to the examination of teachers, and the granting of certificates thereon.

The State Board of Examination having thus being organized proceeded to consider the regular business of the meeting. After long and careful deliberation the following regulations were agreed upon to govern the examination of applicants, and the granting of diplomas and certificates at the meeting in July:

1st. Candidates for Life and State Diplomas will be required to present satisfactory evidence of good moral character, and of marked success in teaching for a period of at least three years, one year of which must have been in the State of Oregon. They must also pass satisfactory examinations in the following branches of study, in addition to those required by law in order to obtain county certificates, to-wit: General History, Algebra, Geometry, Composition, English Literature, Book-keeping, Physiology, Natural Philosophy, Theory and Practice of Teaching, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and School Laws of the State of Oregon.

2. To obtain a life diploma the applicant must answer 90 per cent. of the questions in each branch correctly. To obtain a State diploma, good for six years, he must answer 80 per cent. of the questions in each branch correctly.

3. Candidates for State certificates of the first and second grades must present satisfactory evidence of good moral character and of marked success in teaching for a period of six months. They must also pass satisfactory examinations in Elementary Algebra, Book-keeping, Physiology, Theory and Practice of Teaching, and School Laws of the State of Oregon, in addition to the branches in which candidates are required to be examined by County Superintendents.

4. To receive a State certificate of the first grade good for two years the applicant must attain 90 per cent. in examination in each study. To receive a State certificate of the second grade good for six months, he must reach 80 per cent. in examination in each study.

5. Testimonials as to moral character and success in teaching for every grade of diplomas and certificates must be signed by at least one person known either actually or by reputation to some member of the Board of Education.

6. Examinations for all kinds of diplomas and certificates will be conducted as far as possible in writing. But candidates will be examined orally, of course, in reading; half the questions in mental arithmetic will be propounded and answered orally, and in orthography the words to be spelled will be "given out" by some one of the Examining Board. If deemed expedient by the Board oral exercises may be used also in the examinations in some of the other branches.

7. Ten questions will be asked in each study; and the questions will be valued upon such a scale that the aggregate credits upon a perfect examination for a Life or State diploma will be 1,000.

8. Extra credits will be given, and

noted upon the candidate's diploma or certificate, for all correct answers in any study over and above the percentage required to entitle him to such diploma or certificate.

9. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will distribute the branches of study among the different members of the Examining Board. Each member will prepare the questions and conduct the examinations in the branches assigned to him, under the general superintendence and control of the entire Board.

The adoption of additional rules to govern the details of the examinations was deferred until the meeting in July.

Candidates may prepare themselves for examination in the several studies by consulting any of the standard text-books in those branches. The following named books are mentioned as indicating the probable scope of the examinations, to-wit: Robinson's Arithmetics, Clark's Grammars, Guyot's Geographies, Spencerian system of penmanship, Barnes' U. S. History, "Peter Parley's" Universal History, Bryant and Stratton's Book-keeping, Anderson's General History, Brooke's Algebra and Geometry, Hart's Composition, Shaw's or Hart's English Literature, Steele's 14 Weeks in Physiology and Natural Philosophy, Page's Theory and Practice of Teaching or some other good work on that subject, Saunders or Wilson's or Parker and Watson's Readers, Webster's system of orthography. Candidates are warned, however, that the examinations will not be confined to these or any other text-books. It is the purpose of the Board, to examine fully and freely upon the different branches of study without particular reference to any text-books whatever. The best preparation on the part of the candidate will therefore be an independent and thorough knowledge of the subjects of the various school studies in which he is to be examined. The examination upon the Constitution and school laws of Oregon will probably be directed mainly to the history and text of each of those instruments. No particular manual will be followed. Close study of the instruments themselves and of the prominent facts as to their origin &c., will be the best preparation for the candidate.

SYL. C. SIMPSON, Sup't of Public Instruction.

CROPS IN CALIFORNIA.—The *Petaluma Argus* says the crops in Sonoma County are well advanced, and though there is much complaint of drought, it is safe to count on nearly an average yield. The heavy fogs and dews that always prevail during the months of May and June, are almost certain to insure good crops in Sonoma and Marin.

The crops on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley are like to prove almost an entire failure beyond the Point of Timber, at which place they promise fairly.

In Fresno County, during March, thousands of acres of land were seeded which, owing to the drought which has ensued, will not make hay.

The Fresno *Epitaph* says the continued drought precludes any hope for the late sown grain, and fore bodes ill fate to all cereal crops.

Wool.—There is a general disappointment in the wool trade. The market for the last clip commenced with a general effort to bear down prices, so as to purchase from growers at moderate rates. But farmers, in view of the trade the year before, refused to sell at such prices. Hence the same bear down and hold back policy has mostly continued up to the present time. Tens of millions of pounds of foreign wools have been imported and used at a decided loss, rather than meet the views of our wool growers, and allow prices to advance. As the growers have, at least in part, refused to yield, and dull prices have prevailed so long, it is very likely the effect will run over to the next clip, when prices will be still lower. Perhaps the dealers had not intended to thus keep the wool markets down, through the year; but the time is approaching when they will begin to make arrangements to buy the coming clip as low as possible.—*New England Farmer*.

DOUGLAS COUNTY.—The *Eugene Journal* learns from Mr. Sharp, who is just down from Bohemia, that the prospect for that camp the present season is very flattering. Mr. Hendee, of San Francisco, will soon put up a ten-stamp mill on the ground owned by Jesse Barker, of Douglas County, the rock of which prospects about \$23 per ton from the croppings. Placer mines were discovered last fall on the southeast side of the Bohemia mountain, which it is said will pay \$5 a day to the hand. About eighty Chinamen will go to these diggings in a few days. Mr. Knott's workmen are expected up in a few days to resume operations with the mill which is already on the ground and everything bids fair for a lively season.

A close and revised calculation of the stocks of wheat now in Great Britain shows that an additional importation of 6,575,000 quarters—equal to 55,000,000 bushels will be required during the balance of the current harvest year.