

Saskatchewan Executive's Report

This Report deals with matters of management, specific activities and business policy of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association

This executive report deals with those matters which come especially under the direction of the executive of the association, including all matters of management, specific activities, business policy. It will also cover those matters heretofore embodied in a secretary's address. Financial statements covering the general work, special departments and trust funds are given under a special heading.

Removal of Head Office

At its first meeting following your annual convention at Saskatoon a year ago, your Central Board decided that your head office should be moved to the city of Regina. Acting on this decision, your executive immediately set about to secure the necessary accommodation and to transfer your centre of business. After full enquiry it was found that the most suitable premises offering were those on the second floor of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company's building on the corner of Twelfth Avenue and Smith Street. Some slight alterations had to be made in order to fit these perfectly for the purposes of the association, and these were promptly made at the expense of the company. The removal was effected early in March and with the greatest dispatch possible, for the reason that additional space for the housing of the growing staff at the Central was imperatively required. This housing of all our provincial farmers' co-operative bodies in one building has assisted greatly in co-ordinating their activities for the good of the farmers in this province.

Enlistment Employees

The removal interfered considerably for a time with the work at the Central. The loss of the services of some former employees and the addition of new and inexperienced help at a time when business was increasing rapidly added materially to our difficulties. During the year a number of the staff who had been carefully trained in the work enlisted for overseas service, and, in spite of the serious interferences which this meant to the work at the Central, nothing but encouragement was given them in taking this self-sacrificing step. By removal to more convenient and more commodious quarters it became possible to add materially to our staff, and we now have a more complete and efficient organization at the Central office than was possible before.

In the realm of organization and in co-operative endeavor your Central has encountered many serious obstacles to the attainment of the service aimed at. Some of these will be dealt with in greater detail further on in this report. The continuation of the war greatly increased the difficulties of building up the new kind of business upon which you embarked three years ago. Almost insurmountable obstacles of deranged transportation, shortage of labor and shortage of supplies have resulted from Canada's participation in the Empire's struggle, while the enlistment of members in large numbers added greatly to the already intricate difficulties with which your work has had to contend in both your co-operative and your organization activities.

Executive Meetings

During the year the executive held meetings as follows: Feb. 7 to 9, Moose Jaw; Feb. 12, 1916, Moose Jaw; Feb. 14, 1916, Saskatoon; Feb. 17, 1916, Saskatoon; March 6, 1916, Winnipeg; March 11, 1916, Winnipeg; May 26, 1916, Regina; June 13 to 15, 1916, Regina; Aug. 3 and 4, 1916, Regina; Oct. 7 to 9, 1916, Regina; Nov. 17, 1916, Regina.

Your executive holds membership also in the Canadian Council of Agriculture. Meetings of this body were attended as follows: March 7 to 10, Winnipeg; April 27 and 28, Winnipeg; July 25 and 26, Winnipeg; December 2, Winnipeg.

We attended also and took part in the discussions at a number of meetings of the Joint Committee of Commerce and Agriculture. We attach much importance to the meetings of this committee and are persuaded that great good has already resulted and will continue to result from them.

We also attended a number of sittings of the Board of Grain Commissioners for Canada, when we contended vigorously against the line elevator companies' claim of ownership of grain stored for farmers. We gave evidence also before the Imperial Dominion Commission at Regina. In passing, we feel impelled to express regret at the removal of Dr. Magill from the chairmanship of the Grain Commission, but we believe that in his present position as secretary of the Grain Exchange, he will still be a force for the best interests of western agriculture.

One of the members of your executive, John N.

Burritt, of Indian Head, is now in active service for the Empire overseas.

The Canadian Council of Agriculture, was re-organized during the year and has now in the person of Roderick McKenzie an able secretary, devoting his entire time to the business of the Council. Formerly the Council was composed of representatives of the farmers' associations only; there have now been added the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, The Grain Growers' Grain Company, the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company, the Grain Growers' Guide, and the United Farmers' Co-operative Company of Ontario.

Recognizing the association's vital interest in matters of public school education, the minister of



J. B. MUSSELMAN
Secretary-Treasurer
Who read the Executive's Report

education for Saskatchewan, early in the year, invited your executive to nominate one of your number for membership on a committee to sit with the minister for the purpose of revising the course of studies for the schools of this province. Director C. E. Platt, of Tantalion, was nominated and subsequently appointed to the position.

Amalgamation of Farmers' Bodies

At your last convention by unanimous resolution you heartily commended your Central executive for its efforts to bring about a federation of all the western farmers' bodies on the basis of local units, provincial central bodies and interprovincial bodies, and this important question was given a great deal of earnest and sympathetic attention by your executive during 1916. Various conferences were held with a view to evolving plans for federation along these lines, and as outlined in Pamphlet No. 13, issued by the Central office late in 1915, and many points of agreement were arrived at. Indeed there seems to be no serious obstacle in the way of the fullest co-ordination of the various Saskatchewan bodies in their service of the farmers of this province, and there appeared finally to be only one major point of difference on the question of inter-provincial federation.

It was insisted by those who represented The Grain Growers' Grain Company that the proposed inter-provincial or national body which it was intended should carry on all the business of terminal warehousing and exporting of grain, importing of supplies, manufacturing, etc., should also be the medium thru which the grain purchased by the various provincial grain and elevator companies or consigned by individual farmers should be sold on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. The representatives of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and of the association, on the other hand, held that their company must retain control of the well established selling end of its own business; that the national wholesale body ought not to have dealings with the individual members of the provincial organizations nor to do business in a retail way, and further that the policy of the same company being both exporter of grain and grain commission merchant, thus in actual practice frequently selling to itself the grain consigned to it, is not

a sound policy. The representatives of the Grain Growers' Company refused to federate on any other basis than that of all the grain of the various bodies being marketed under one control. At the last conference called for the discussion of federation, it was announced that if the Saskatchewan bodies would not federate on the terms laid down by the representatives of The Grain Growers' Grain Company, then it and the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company, which has all along sold its grain thru The Grain Growers' Grain Company, would amalgamate as one company under one management. When it was discovered by the Saskatchewan representatives that the two companies had been discussing and planning amalgamation all further discussion on federation was dropped. Since then it has been publicly announced that these two companies will form "The United Grain Growers' Limited," under the charter of The Grain Growers' Grain Company with some slight amendments, build elevators in Saskatchewan and organize its shareholders into locals for voting and trading purposes.

Relations with Grain Growers' Grain Company

During the year 1916, as during a part of 1915, the association and The Grain Growers' Grain Company worked under a joint agreement for the distribution of some lines of supplies in Saskatchewan. At its annual meeting in November the Company announced that the agreement with the association would not be renewed at its expiration in December. No other agreement was suggested by the Company and there is now no working arrangement between it and ourselves.

At various times during the past three years suggestions and tentative proposals have been made to the Company aiming at some amicable division of the field of distribution of supplies in Saskatchewan in such manner as to avoid direct competition and, duplication of facilities, and yet continue to fully serve and support your local associations. All of these were either rejected or ignored by the Company, which has persistently refused to recognize any sphere for the association's co-operative activities.

The general work of the Central along lines of educational, provident, legislative, patriotic and propagandist activities was during the year 1916 well ahead of any former year with the possible exception of 1915.

Legal Bureau

Perhaps no department of your work has rendered greater service or is fraught with greater possibilities of service to the members than your Legal Bureau. Under this branch advice has been given by mail and in interviews to hundreds, and it is gratifying to be able to state that in not a few cases this has been of great value to them both in a preventative and in a remedial way. Members have actually been saved from bankruptcy by the advice and assistance thus rendered. At present two important cases are being prosecuted. One is the case of Messrs. Anderson and Eddy, of Bethune, vs. Canadian Northern Railway, being a claim for damages for horses killed on the right-of-way, and is merely one case selected out of scores of similar cases brought to the attention of the Central office. In connection with this case it may be wise to inform you that in the opinion of the association's solicitor, George E. Taylor, K.C., there is urgent need of new legislation fixing more definitely the responsibility of the railway companies, and Mr. Taylor has been actively engaged in endeavoring to secure it on your behalf.

The other is the case of the Hart-Parr Company vs. A. E. Wells. This is a case where the company sold the defendant farmer an engine which had been improperly constructed and which after repeated efforts could not be made to do a reasonable amount of work by the company's own experts. At the first hearing of the case decision was given in favor of the defendant, A. E. Wells, by Hon. Chief Justice Sir Frederick Haultain, the evidence that the engine in question had been improperly constructed being quite conclusive. The Hart-Parr Company appealed the case and your executive is of the opinion that when decisions are won in favor of farmers in the lower courts appeals are at times taken by wealthy claimants because they believe that the farmer in question cannot afford to follow his case thru the higher courts, and will on that account give up the fight.

Protecting Farmers

Thus far every legal case taken up by the association and on which decision has been decided in favor of the farmer, and on that account the act

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