

# Saskatchewan's Opportunity

By E. A. PARTRIDGE

**NOTE—MR. PARTRIDGE HAS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING DRAFT OF AN ORGANIZATION SCHEME FOR THE SASKATCHEWAN GRAIN GROWERS' ASSOCIATION, AND HAS SET FORTH THE OBJECTS TO BE ATTAINED THEREBY. THIS SUGGESTION WILL BE DEALT WITH BY A FULL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT MOOSE JAW ON NOVEMBER 1ST. MR. PARTRIDGE IS ONE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO PREPARE SUCH A SCHEME.**

To the Directors of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association.  
Gentlemen:—

A satisfactory plan of campaign for the thorough organization of our farmers as members of the Grain Growers' Association would appear to require the following particulars:—

1.—An up-to-date statement of the general objects of the association as understood by the leaders in the work of organization.

2.—The featuring of some immediate objects of association to stimulate interest while organization work is in progress and make the organization more effective when completed.

3.—Method of procedure in carrying on the work of organization and in trying to accomplish the special objects of association.

4.—The systematic pushing of the Life Membership feature of the association which, if developed, will insure the permanence of the organization and continuity in the performance of useful functions by the Central Office.

5.—The securing of organization workers.

6.—The financing of the work.  
Your committee therefore, making such division of the subject, beg to submit as follows, for your approval:—

1.—A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATION.

(a) To organize the farm population of the province for the study of those economic and social problems, having a bearing on the material prosperity and happiness of its members, and which can only be satisfactorily solved by the intelligent and concerted exercise of their voting power and the widespread practice of co-operation among them.

(b) To collect such materials from scientific and literary sources, the annals of class organizations, particularly the details of co-operative enterprises, and the records of legislative enactments in our own and other countries, as are necessary for the proper information of our people, and to print and widely distribute the same.

(c) To present the demands of our people for legislation, in the form of Bills supported by arguments, to the proper legislative bodies, and where necessary back up these demands by organized agitation.

(d) To urge each and every farmer to become an active member of one or other of the local political associations, according to his choice, creating these associations where they do not exist, with the purpose, not of perpetuating the party system, but of securing the nomination of candidates on both sides of politics in every rural constituency, pledged, if elected, to vote for the measures demanded by the organized farmers.

It is to be distinctly understood that neither the Central nor any subordinate association, nor any officer thereof in his official capacity, shall pledge support to, or form any alliance with, a political party or a party candidate, the function of the association being that of a non-partisan school of economics, social science and good citizenship, not that of a party machine.

(e) To encourage the practice of co-operation by our members in the production, shipment and sale of commodities, the purchase and distribution of supplies and for other purposes as found necessary or expedient, not within the association as one of its functions, but by creating new, or connecting themselves with existing, co-operative organizations suited to their needs; and in this connection—

(f) To make as far as practicable official inspection and report on the methods of successful old-world Farmers' Co-operative Societies and the effect of such organizations upon the material well-being and character of their members.

2.—IMMEDIATE OBJECT OF ORGANIZATION SPECIALLY EMPHASIZED TO STIMULATE INTEREST WHILE ORGANIZATION WORK IS IN PROGRESS AND MAKE THE ORGANIZATION MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN COMPLETED.

To secure the enactment of a Provincial Direct Legislation law including such essential features as:—

(a) The Initiative, whereby, say, 8 per cent. of the electors may, by petition, propose a law which must be enacted forthwith by the members of the legislature or submitted by them to the people, to be made law or rejected as a majority vote decides, not later than the next general election.

(b) The Referendum, whereby, say, 5 per cent. of the electors may, by petition, compel a measure passed by the legislature to be submitted to the people and approved by a majority vote before becoming law.

(c) The Recall, or right of, say, 25 per cent. of the voters to compel a member of the legislature to appear before his constituency for re-election or dismissal—a provision enabling the people to summarily discharge an unfaithful public servant.

(d) The Publicity Pamphlet—a device for equipping the electors to intelligently exercise their franchise, and consisting of an official publication mailed to every elector, say, 90 days prior to an election or the taking of any Initiative or Referendum vote, containing among other things the title and text of each measure to be voted on. In this pamphlet the proponents and opponents of the proposed laws have the right to insert, at the actual cost to themselves of paper and printing only, such arguments as they may see fit to make.

Direct Legislation is the most effective instrument ever devised by the friends of Democracy to enable the people as a whole to make laws suited to the needs of the many, instead of being forced to live under laws made by so-called representatives in the interest of the few. In short, it stands for Peoples' Power as opposed to The Rule of the Rich.

Direct Legislation has been endorsed by the organized farmers of the three Prairie Provinces. There is an active Direct Legislation League with headquarters at Winnipeg. Many states to the south of us have adopted it or are agitating for it. It has the approval of most progressive thinkers. The time seems most opportune to make it the central motive of an organization campaign.

The census returns show that the rural and village population of Saskatchewan outnumbered that of the towns and cities five to one.

Any legislation of benefit to the farmers would therefore be of benefit to an overwhelming majority of the population. Hence the justice as well as the desirability of farmers taking a leading part in the making of laws.

Direct Legislation is an implement peculiarly adapted to render the association effective in securing the passage of laws desired by its membership.

The Annual Convention expresses the consensus of advanced opinion among the farmers in matters calling for legislative action. The Central Executive stands ready to formulate Bills in accord with such opinion and prepare petitions to secure the bringing of these Bills before the legislators, and where not enacted by them to the direct vote of the people. The local associations scattered over the length and breadth of the province are in a position to speedily circulate the petitions for signature and afterwards to give such aid in moulding public opinion in favor of the Bills as will assure majorities in their favor when the vote is taken.

The Central Executive would always see that arguments in favor of these Bills were inserted in the publicity pamphlet and the locals would provide plenty of

champions to combat any opponents of the Bills who might invade their immediate neighborhood.

This weapon of Democracy once on the statute book of the province and a majority of the farmers once included in the membership of the association, and the association would be the dominant factor in the shaping of Provincial legislation. Surely this is a consummation worth striving for! One that the tariff reformer, the free trader, the single taxer, the believer in public ownership among them, may enthusiastically unite with one another to bring about as a means to the special end each has in view.

Another immediate object to use as a stimulus to organization work might be suggested, namely a concerted effort throughout our membership by personal requests, deputations and petitions to induce the Provincial Government, through the Departments of Public Works, Education and Agriculture, to co-operate with the Central Executive of the association to make the rural school house an educational and social centre for the development of good fellowship, for recreation of a cultural character and for instruction in civics, co-operative enterprise and the arts pertaining to domestic science and the work of the farm.

This would involve movable school furniture, seats for adults, ample stabling, text books, and an itinerant staff of demonstrators and lecturers. Also a commission should be appointed composed of departmental officers and representatives of the association to visit progressive old-world farming communities and study their organizations, their methods of work and business, their social activities and other interesting features of community or individual life with a view to assisting the progress of our own people.

3.—METHOD OF PROCEDURE IN CARRYING ON WORK OF ORGANIZATION AND IN TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH THE SPECIAL OBJECT OF ASSOCIATION.

The first step, should this plan be adopted, would be to publish it in The Guide with a strong appeal to the membership to individually do something to bring about the complete organization of the farmers within the Provincial boundaries. Some might furnish time, others teams, others again money or gifts of pen or speech. Still others could extend their hospitality to workers or at least offer a little praise and exhibit a little enthusiasm for their encouragement.

Next an effort might be made to induce the sister provinces to adopt a similar program. The breadth of the flame would increase the heat. A circular would be sent to each secretary of a sub-association and each secretary of a school district inviting renewed activity in the existing sub-associations and efforts to start new ones in unorganized territory.

Short pithy references to Direct Legislation as a means of making the government responsive to the will of the organized farmers should be inserted in The Guide from time to time. Letters, too, dealing with the question of making the school house a social and educational centre for adults as well as school children should be sent to The Guide.

The co-operation of the members of the Direct Legislation League should be invited and their writers, speakers and literature utilized as much as possible. Data should be collected from Switzerland, Oregon and other places where Direct Legislation is enjoyed. County organization centres should be established in every Provincial electoral division, financed by voluntary contributions of the members of the locals situated within its boundaries and designed to undertake or provide for the organization of any territory not dealt with by committees appointed by the members of existing locals, WHICH COMMITTEES WILL BE DEPENDED UPON TO ACCOMPLISH MOST OF

THE ORGANIZATION WORK OF THIS CAMPAIGN. The GENERALS can PLAN a campaign; the SOLDIERS must do the FIGHTING.

For the furtherance of the work of organization the Central Executive is asked to advise the subordinate associations as follows:—

Each school district is to be regarded as the area from which a local association may draw its membership, but where lack of population or membership makes it expedient to enlarge the area, two or more adjacent districts up to four, may be drawn upon and their outer boundary lines shall mark the limits of the membership area for that subordinate association.

The purpose of definitely fixing boundaries is to enable the Central Office to distinguish organized from unorganized territory by reference to departmental maps showing the boundaries of school districts, and to know definitely from the reports of sub-associations what percentage of farmers within their respective districts remain outside the organization. The members of well organized districts may thus be encouraged by published comparisons to do better still, while poorly organized districts may be incited by the evidence of the inferiority of their work as compared with others, to do better work in the future.

The plan of campaign involves an attempt by the members in each and every sub-association district to enlarge their membership until it includes every active and retired farmer and the adult members of his family, resident therein; also such other persons as are known to be in sympathy with the farmers' aims; but at the same time, as far as may be, TO EXCLUDE EVERYONE ELSE. A list of eligible persons should be agreed upon by a committee, and these invited in some systematic manner to become members. Committees should even be appointed to undertake a house to house canvass for this purpose. Also meetings of a social character should be held and non-members invited to attend with the same end in view.

The use of rural school houses or other rural places of meeting, where adequate, rather than town halls, for the holding of association meetings, is strongly recommended.

It is further expected that each subordinate association after a period of vigorous internal organization work, will undertake the task of endeavoring to organize subordinate associations in school districts adjacent to their own membership area, by the holding of organization meetings therein, preceded as far as practicable by a house to house canvass by the committees selected for this purpose and assigned small definite areas. Small leaflets, briefly and in bold type, setting forth the plan to completely organize the farmers of the province and the mediate and ultimate objects to be attained, should be in the hands of these committees to inspire them with a sense of the importance of the part each little group was playing in a concerted and widespread movement.

To again refer to County Associations, it has been suggested that those sub-associations, anxious for a County organization to cover their Provincial Electoral Division and to be used for the purpose of assisting in the work of organization and education along lines recommended by the Central Association and undertaken by the Central Executive, should send such a request to the Central Office. When a sufficient number of such requests has been received the Secretary could call a meeting of the delegates to be held in some suitable place in the Division to be attended by a representative of the Central Association. The basis of representation of locals might be one to ten.

A map of the Electoral Division, showing the school districts should be

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