

poor theorists, but they were certainly practical fighters."

Internal Dissensions

"However, the very presence of these men of means, authority and business experience on our board of directors was the cause of serious trouble for us. No body of workmen so large as our membership was ever brought together without having in it a certain number of men eager to suspect the motives and methods of the management. This contingent of our shareholders soon began to kick against what it considered as the domination of the bosses and to hint that they were not giving so much of their time and attention to the affairs of the association merely for their health or because they had any affection for the workmen."

"It was also hinted there was a lot more profit in the retail business than the reports of the association showed, and that somebody was getting away with the goods."

"At that period I was not the manager of the association, but I knew that every cent was honestly accounted for by the earnest and upright man who held that position. Eventually a number of the discontented drew out, and one morning we woke up to find we had additional competition in the form of another co-operative association. As this is a phase of experience that almost every well-organized and successful co-operative society has to meet, it is worth consideration. This new organization lasted but little over a year."

"In the course of its brief existence, however, its managers and shareholders discovered several facts that were decidedly surprising to them, though they are matters of common knowledge to all experienced retailers, whether competitive or co-operative. First, they found that the retail business is run on a much narrower line of profit than they supposed; next, they discovered that a larger cash capital is required to start and maintain a retail business than they had any notion of; next, their short experience brought them face to face with the fact that in conducting a credit business it is one thing to earn a net profit and quite another thing to have the money in hand at the end of the business year to disburse that profit to shareholders in the form of a cash dividend. But they felt they must make a showing by paying a dividend; and so they borrowed the money with which to pay it and allowed their bills with the wholesalers and jobbers to remain unpaid."

"Of course they could not fool the jobbing houses, and the result was the speedy wiping out of this element of our competition. Instead of giving the principle of co-operation a black eye in our community this experience undoubtedly helped to clear the atmosphere and to give a greater degree of confidence in the ability and honesty of the management of our association. After that there was very little talk about the suspicious presence of the bosses on our board of directors."

"In the earlier history of our association competitive merchants of our community neglected no opportunity to do all the underground work among our members they could; but in the course of years the edge of competitive resentment has been considerably dulled."

LANGLEY OPPOSES SAMPLE MARKET

Believes it Would Result in Heavy Loss to Saskatchewan Farmers

Regina, Sask.—Hon. George Langley, minister of municipal affairs for Saskatchewan, in a characteristic interview declared his conviction that the establishment of a sample market for grain in Winnipeg would result in great loss to the farmers of Saskatchewan. This statement from the minister makes it certain that the report of the royal commission, which is now being prepared by the secretary, A. F. Mantle, will be unanimous against the sample market, all the other members of the royal commission having previously expressed their opinions on this important subject. Mr. Langley said that he was supported in his contention by an overwhelming majority of the intelligent grain growers of the province. He stated that the loss to the farmers of Saskatchewan from the establishment of a sample mar-

ket in Winnipeg would amount to millions of dollars.

No Effective Competition

In discussing the question Mr. Langley said: "E. A. Partridge, of Sintaluta, an eloquent advocate of sample market, has said that British millers would be represented on such a market in Winnipeg and that there would be effective competition in the purchase of wheat. In reply to this I would say that when I was in Great Britain last summer investigating this question I asked the Vernon people and the Rankes, leading millers of England, and other large millers, whether their representatives would come to Winnipeg to select types within the grade. I was never taken seriously in this matter. The British millers always believed that I was jesting; 'Your Canadian wheat is itself a type,' they said. I may also say that I would not expect to see a single Canadian miller on a Winnipeg sample market competing for wheat. These dealers are all able to select their grain through their country elevators. The only active buyers will be the men who are interested in mixing wheat and when the unlimited blending of grain is introduced, what is known as the high line of our wheat will be destroyed in all the higher grades. The top will disappear and the general character of our product on the foreign market will be changed. The farmer will suffer and will not be aware of it. In one case out of ten a producer will get a cent a bushel more on the sample market as a premium for good grain within the grade, but as a result of mixing he will lose this cent and also another cent a bushel while the remaining nine farmers will lose two cents a bushel. The only way in which the country could ascertain how much the farmer was losing would be to send certain large quantities of graded wheat to the Old Country in its natural state without mixing. It would then become apparent how much loss was entailed through the process of mixing."

FARMERS' WIVES AND RURAL PROBLEMS

Not the least interesting news of last week came from Washington, but it relates not to currency reform, the Mexican situation, or to any of the several subjects that are now providing from the capital what the newspapers consider "good copy." Secretary of Agriculture Houston, according to despatches, has written to fifty thousand farmers' wives the country over requesting their co-operation with the Department, and inclosing stamped envelopes in which the women are asked to submit whatever suggestions they care to make regarding the needs of the communities in which they live. The women may give their individual opinions or they may discuss the matter in their social organizations or church societies, submitting a symposium in reply. Any information relating to the problems of rural life which the correspondents think should be known to the Department will be gladly received at Washington. It has been requested that all replies be made before November 15, a date that leaves the women ample time for cogitation after the rush of harvesting has subsided. Secretary Houston's letter goes to about a score of the principal farms in each of the country's twenty-eight hundred counties, and it is believed that the replies will bear the impress of the views of half a million farm women. The Secretary determined upon this procedure, it is said, after receiving a letter from a man who thoroughly understands the needs of the portion of the population engaged in tilling the soil, in which the writer said: "The farm woman has been the most neglected factor in the rural problem, and she has been especially neglected by the National Department of Agriculture." So far as we know, this is the first time that a Secretary of Agriculture, in mapping out his course, has ever taken into the counsel of the government the farmer's wife as a human being rather than as an adjunct to the farm—and an adjunct very much in the background at that—and we are glad to record our approval of Secretary Houston's innovation. If the farm women respond as freely as we believe they will, the Department of Agriculture will have in its possession a mass of information that should enable the Secretary to act more directly towards the needs of the people.—New York Outlook.

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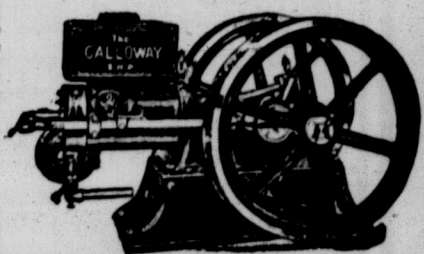
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