

# U.F.A. Secretary's Report

The following report was submitted to the U.F.A. convention in Lethbridge last week  
by Secretary P. P. Woodbridge

Gentlemen:

In submitting to you my first annual report as your general secretary, I would first like to try and express in as few words as possible my appreciation of the high honor conferred upon me by your directors last January in appointing me as successor to one who had done so much to raise this Association to its present position of importance as our honorary secretary, E. J. Fream.

On accepting the offer I can assure you it was not without a certain amount of anxiety as to my ability to fill the position with honor and credit to our U.F.A. that I entered upon my duties. It required no great foresight even at that time to see that the year ahead of us would be one of great consequence and one in which many new problems would have to be faced, requiring quick decision and definite action on the part of those to whom the guidance of your Association was entrusted. And events have fully justified such a forecast. In a few days our sixth annual convention will have become an event of the past, and you will have had the opportunity once more to decide thru your votes whether your officers have been equal to the demands made upon them or not.

## Unequalled Progress

Dealing first with the progress of the Association I am indeed fortunate in being able to give to you facts and figures showing that our progress during the year just closed has never been equalled, and in every department of our work we are able to show remarkable growth.

The number of Unions on our books one year ago was 438. The records today show 570. Even more gratifying is the increase in the membership fees received. Last year, including everything up to the day before the convention we received in membership fees the sum of \$3,595. This year, closing our books on December 31, we had received \$4,704.90, an actual increase of over \$1,100, or 2,200 members in rough figures, while the supplementary statement showing receipts to January 20 of this year shows an additional increase of nearly \$500, or 1,000 members, most of which are for the year 1913, and which, had they been received in time to go on last year's books, would have made our list of fully paid up members show an increase of more than 40 per cent. over last year. When one considers that owing to lack of funds early in the year, it was necessary to cut organization work to a minimum, and that this great growth was almost entirely voluntary and due to local influence, the above figures are such as we may well be proud of.

Another point worth noting, perhaps, is that the demands for supplies have increased no less than 130 per cent. Whatever the significance of these figures, those in close touch with the Central office cannot fail to appreciate the fact that our members are at last beginning to take themselves seriously. Not only are new districts organizing, but old Unions from whom we have not heard for many a long day are proving that for them at least it is not impossible to come back. Also in many of our Unions there has been a noticeable increase of interest in the work and the possibilities of the Union, a determination on the part of the members to see that the business of the Union is the business of each member of the Union that bids well for the future of our Association.

## Office Work Increasing

It is not my intention to dwell to any extent on the routine work of the Central office. This is, however, always increasing and ever becoming broader in its scope. The day is not far distant when the work will of necessity have to be divided into two parts and a corresponding or assistant secretary be appointed as well as a general secretary. We have on several occasions this year received and answered upwards of eighty letters in one day. The absence of the secretary from the office for only a few days results in an accumulation of mail requiring many days to catch up with. With the many other matters, interviews, etc., all of

which require the personal attention of the general secretary, it is even now very difficult indeed to give the correspondence the prompt attention it should have and at the same time meet the other demands made upon our time.

During the early part of the year it came to the notice of this office that a number of firms in the city of Calgary were obtaining shipments of farm produce from the country, and payments of such

have also been dealt with, more or less successfully. To show just what this means one case against a railway company may be cited. The matter was an overcharge on a shipment of seed grain. The amount at stake only slightly in excess of \$10. Yet the case took over nine months to settle and required more than twenty letters from us, besides several personal visits to railway officials. The seed was planted, harvested and threshed,

consternation was caused among many of our members by the sudden revival of the old Canadian Society of Equity, Limited (in liquidation). It appears that thru the neglect of the shareholders and officers of the company, the winding up proceedings were never completed, and after a lapse of practically five years the whole matter was re-opened, at the request of one of the creditors, and a new liquidator appointed. The first notice that the contributors received that the matter was still alive was in the form of a curt demand for an additional \$10 per share, and a threat of legal proceedings if the amount due was not forthcoming within so many days. This was immediately reported to the Central office from several quarters and after some preliminary skirmishing judgments were postponed, and the liquidator persuaded to call a meeting of the shareholders to discuss matters. Owing to the prominent part our office has taken in the matter, your secretary was asked to accept a position as inspector, with two others, to superintend further winding up proceedings. While the acceptance of this position entailed a great deal of extra work and responsibility, it was felt that, as many of the shareholders were now members of the U.F.A. and as the Canadian Equity Society had always been a thorn in our side, that the final winding up of the company would be to the interest of all concerned, and with that idea in view the position was accepted. Our sincere hope is that events will justify this decision.

## Right of Way Claims

One very noticeable feature of this year's work has been the large number of railway right-of-way cases and stock killed upon the line claims that have been sent in to us. The C.N.R. are the worst offenders in the matter of payment for right-of-way. In fact, along the Goose Lake line I understand that there are claims against them of as long as three years standing. Unfortunately the law appears to be formed in such a way as to completely shelter the railway, and the regulations, from the preparing of plans up to the final approval of same by the government, are so bound up with red tape that the railway, if they so wish, can delay payment almost indefinitely, and no one can touch them. It would seem that the farmer should be very careful when right-of-way advance agents come along loaded up with sugary promises, as to quick payment if the farmer will sell at a low price. The agent must know that he is not in a position to carry out his promises even if he wishes to and the farmer would be wise to hold out for the full value of his land every time, for he may be sure the railway will not pay anyone till they are ready, and that when one man is paid the others also must be paid.

## Stock Killed on Railway

As has been pointed out at every convention, the present Dominion Act makes the case of the farmer who loses stock killed on the line under ordinary circumstances practically hopeless. Your secretary, however, appeared on behalf of members of the U.F.A. having complaints at each sitting of the Board of Railway Commissioners in Calgary, and in one case was able to obtain an order compelling the C.N.R. to complete their fencing on the right-of-way west of Edmonton, coupled with an order for compensation for certain stock already killed thru the failure of the company to do this fencing. We may say that whenever instances are reported to us where a company has failed to comply with the law, we have been able to bring the offenders to time in every instance with very little delay.

## Placing Harvest Help

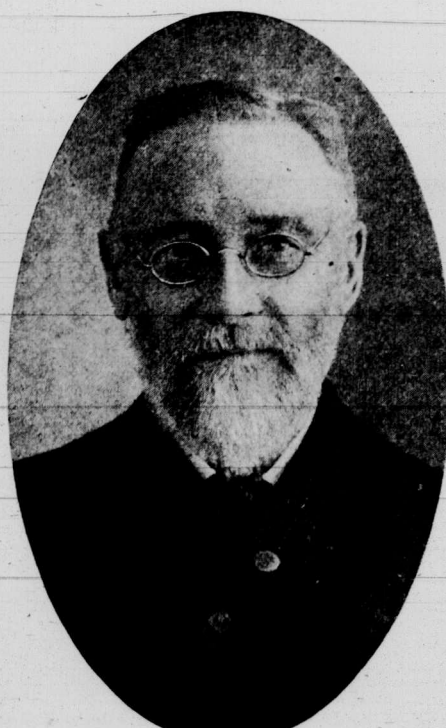
As usual, we assisted in the distribution of harvest help, only this year on a very much larger scale. Correspondence had been carried on with the publicity commissioner for Alberta in Winnipeg, who has charge of the immigration work, and

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## U.F.A. Vice-Presidents for 1914



D. W. WARNER, Edmonton  
First Vice-President



JAMES SPEAKMAN, Penhold  
Second Vice-President



ED. CARSWELL, Red Deer  
Third Vice-President



RICE SHEPPARD, South Edmonton  
Fourth Vice-President

were in arrears, in some instances over twelve months. We were able to take the matter up on behalf of several shippers, and, after considerable trouble, I am pleased to say that with one exception every account was collected. The total amount so saved by the shippers being in the neighborhood of \$400, for which no charge was made by us. The one exception was in the case of a party who sent us a check by mail which on presentation to the bank was refused. We immediately went to their place of business, only to find the place locked up and the party gone.

The usual number of claims against the railways and grain commission houses

and the farmer nearly ready to seed once more before his refund was forwarded.

We have also had a large number of disputes between farmers and machine companies referred to us, and here by personal visits to the Calgary office of the companies concerned we have in nearly every instance been able to straighten matters out to the satisfaction of all concerned.

The usual number of requests for assistance in obtaining loading platforms, stock yards and scales have been received, and we have in every case rendered all assistance possible, thru direct personal touch with the officials concerned.

About the middle of the year some