

Comments on Co-Operation by Leading Grain Growers

Hon. George Langley, J. F. Reid and W. H. Lilwall discuss some points of Professor Gray's address on "Agrarianism." Mr. Langley holds there is no danger of Association taking up with any utopian schemes. Reid of Orcadia, says Grain Growers are not antagonistic to middlemen and would eliminate only superfluous ones. Grain Growers do not intend to start retail store system, will only handle goods in bulk in original factory packages. Lilwall of Wilkie upholds principle of strong central organization. Grain Growers' movement not dangerously rapid, but sound, steady growth.

THE paper on "Agrarianism in the Canadian West" read by Professor Gray at a meeting of the Warmouth Grain Growers, treats so frankly many live questions of interest to both country and city, that *The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm* invites correspondence from its readers on the different subjects discussed. In this issue are given some of the views of leaders in the Grain Growers' Association, and others will be published in next week's issue.

Hon. George Langley's Views
Hon. George Langley, Minister of Municipal Affairs, read Professor Gray's paper with much interest, and expressed himself heartily in sympathy with the general tone of the address and the views of Professor Gray.

"There may be danger of the enthusiasm of some of the members of the Grain Growers Association carrying some local too far, but there is no danger of the organization as a whole taking up with any utopian schemes," said Mr. Langley. "There seems to be the two conceptions of the aims of the organization along the lines of co-operation. My own conception and that I believe of the large majority of the members, is that we shall use our co-operative mechanism to handle goods where there has been altogether too disproportionate a difference between the price received by the producer and that paid by the consumer. Take the matter of apples for illustration, where our system of co-operation has been so much benefited to grower and consumer."

"There is no possibility of the Grain Growers' Association being turned into a great commercial enterprise, capitalized on a large scale, and selling shares of stock. To begin with, legislation granting such powers would not be given, even if the majority of the Grain Growers thought such a radical change of policy desirable which is not the case. The central organization today can only purchase goods as orders are received from the locals, and I believe that this is the proper system for us to follow."

Hon. Mr. Langley's time was so taken up with receiving delegations, meeting old friends, and answering questions asked by Reeves and Secretary-treasurers, that he could only spare the representative of *The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm* a few minutes, but he promises to comment at some future time for the readers of this paper, on the various points of Prof. Gray's interesting lecture.

Does Not Speak for Executive
Mr. J. F. Reid, of Orcadia, a member of the Grain Growers' Association executive, discussed with a representative of *The Saturday Press and Prairie Farm* the criticisms by Professor Gray of some features of the Grain Growers' Movement. Mr. Reid is one of the most energetic members of the Grain Growers' Association, and is very well known throughout the whole province, as he has been one of the principal speakers at nearly all the district conventions of the Grain Growers' Association in the province.

"I wish it understood that when discussing this paper by Professor Gray I am expressing simply my own views, and not speaking for the executive," said Mr. Reid. "I am in full accord with much of what he says, but there are several criticisms he makes with which I strongly disagree."

Not Hostile to Middlemen
Professor Gray says that the antagonism of the farmer toward the middleman

Agrarianism in Canadian West

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likely be smaller than in the case of those forms of co-operative distribution in which you are now engaged. Now your locals are co-operating in the distribution of standard, bulky commodities, such as flour, coal, apples, lumber, fencing, binder twine, etc. For such commodities the work of retail distribution is so slight that you can carry it on through your locals practically without cost. The margin of saving or of credit in a more elaborate system of retail distribution will not be as important as you may imagine. The distributive profits of the stores of the Rochdale Pioneers has rarely averaged more than 10 to 12 per cent. It is not to be denied that co-operative distribution in England has become a substantial success, but it is also well to remember that the early history of the movement was marked by numerous failures both in retail and wholesale distribution, and the present success is the result of three-quarters of a century of painstaking, constructive progress.

Who Will Pay Retailer?
It is probably unnecessary to remind you that the retail store has been an important, though costly, source of agricultural credit in this Western country where capital is so scarce. It will be necessary to consider the millions of dollars which represents the existing indebtedness of the farmer to the retailer is to be provided for if the existing mechanism of marketing is to a considerable extent supplemented by a new distributive mechanism.

I hold no brief for the present system of retail distribution. As compared with a fully developed and efficient system of co-operative distribution, it is unquestionably less economical. Nevertheless, it is only fair to point out that a sudden and radical attempt to destroy or replace the system will be exceedingly costly not only to the retailers themselves, but also to the communities in which they are established.

Farmers' Interests Are Those of Community
It is a mistake for the farmer to feel that he has no interests outside of his own class. Whether he likes it or not, his interests are closely bound up with the well-being of his community. The sudden, even partial and local annihilation of the existing system of retail distribution, especially if effected as a result of a bitter economic struggle such as appears to be imminent between the conflicting

has been characteristically a blind, unintelligent hostility. I do not agree with this. We have only opposed the superfluous, unnecessary middleman, and we realize how indispensable a certain number of middlemen are. In some instances I believe that it would have the Grain Growers to pay some of the middlemen greater returns than they are receiving today; only make them work for the Grain Growers instead of the manufacturers.

"Take a local implement agent, for example, who receives \$15 commission for the sale of a binder. He may have to take that binder from the station and store it in his warehouse, take two or three trips out into the country to sell it, per cent. more if anything goes wrong with it. I do not think that this implement agent receives too much commission, but if we could get that binder at the right price in the first place we could afford to pay that implement agent for distributing and doing expert work on a large number of binders bought at a reasonable price, a much higher sum than \$15."

No Retail Business
"As to the Grain Growers inaugurating an extensive system of retail distribution I do not think that there is any possibility of this being done, at least for a long time to come. We do not intend to duplicate the already existing machinery of distribution. We do not propose to sell any goods by retail, or distribute any goods to our local organizations except in bulk, in the original factory packages. We are not touching clothing, dry goods, only a few of the bulkier commodities in groceries, and only where a great saving can be effected for our members with the minimum of trouble in distribution."

Co-operation Thrust on Central
"Instead of our central organization pushing the policy of co-operative purchasing, the question was thrust upon our central by the locals doing co-operative business without legal protection. We got legislation which protects the locals, and would assist in educating the locals in doing a safe co-operative business. To be sure the charter of the Grain Growers' Association covers a very wide ground, but in securing our charter it was just as cheap to have one covering a broad field in case we might want to take up other work in the future. We have no intention whatever of duplicating the system of retail distribution, or replacing it, but the immediate and radical change in prices which occurs when one of our locals starts to do a co-operative business is sufficient proof that the farmers of this province were being charged too much for what they bought, as well as paid too little for what they sold."

Strong Central Necessary
W. H. Lilwall, of Wilkie, one of the district directors of the Grain Growers' Association, took up some points of Professor Gray's paper.
"Personally I believe that a strong central organization is the secret of successful co-operation, rather than the local organization to central organization, which is the system Professor Gray advocates."

"The most successful business concerns, whether co-operative or private enterprises, depend for their prosperity on a strong central organization. Take the Standard Oil Company, the big meat company combines, the implement trusts, and in our own province compare the

interests, will prove most costly to this country and to the farmer himself. May I express the hope that the constructive policy of your leaders in developing your activities will be marked by conservatism and caution and that it will be developed in such a manner as to impair as little as possible the interests of the entire community."

Co-operation Should Move Slowly
In the above remarks I have not intended to condemn a single one of your proposed experiment in co-operation, I firmly believe that if you move forward with proper caution, every form of co-operative agricultural organization may be developed in this country; marketing, credit, production, distribution—all of these functions will be more adequately carried on by co-operative organizations. It is because of my confidence in the splendid possibilities of your organization that I seek to warn you of the dangers of utopianism."

Education Most Important
Social progress is necessarily slow. The rapidity of the forward movement is always limited by the necessity of waiting until the leveling process of education raises the level of intelligence of the great masses of mankind. For that reason the most important role of your organization should be to promote rural education by every agency, which can be made to fulfil that purpose. It is especially necessary that you concentrate your energies on the improvement of the technical methods and the business methods of the average farmer. We are likely to devote an undue attention to the mechanism of marketing and credit. For every dollar to be saved by the improvement of this mechanism, there are ten dollars to be saved by improving the methods of the individual farmer on his own farm."

Compromise Better Than War
We are living in an age when the entire social system seems based on struggle and conflict. Men are divided by international rivalry, sectionalism, individual competition, and the organized conflict which we call struggle. In some of the aspects your farmers' movement resembles the labor movement in its class-consciousness, yet I make bold to express the hope that the splendid enthusiasm of your movement will not be based entirely on the principle of class selfishness. At points your interests will conflict with those of other classes, but I think we are solving our social problems. May your farmers' movement take the lead in introducing the principle of compromise, of sacrifice as a basis of adjusting the conflicting interests which endanger our civilization."

success of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company with its strong central control with the local elevator companies of the North West American states with no central organizations. Co-operation is only possible through a strong central organization.

Co-operative Stores Would Fail Here
"Conditions are very different here from what they are in Great Britain and Europe, and co-operative retail stores are only possible where there is a large industrial population. Our province is too sparsely settled to make it possible for us to enter the retail business like the old country retail co-operative societies."

"As regards the educational work of our association, I believe that the co-operative movement has already done more to educate the farmers of this province and teach them business methods than any other institution in the country. We are teaching the farmers to put their business on a cash basis, to do business on business principles."

"In reply to the criticism that the Grain Growers are in danger of moving forward too rapidly, would say that one of the prominent features of the Grain Growers movement is the steady, uniform growth of the association. It is not by any means a sudden, emotional, class-conscious uprising of farmers, but the conservative expression of a very real spirit of co-operation, a sound, safe, steady growth. In ten years the membership has grown to about 40,000, and is naturally growing faster as our association gains in influence and importance, while organizations like the Grangers in two or three years gained millions of members and went to pieces as rapidly."

Private Creameries

To the Editor:—
A meeting of the creamerymen of the Province of Saskatchewan representing the owners and managers of the privately operated plants, was held in Moose Jaw on March 1st. A few of the small creameries not represented by personal attendance, but those not present sent letters of hearty commendation, and as a result of the meeting, an organization was formed to be known as the Saskatchewan Butter Manufacturers' Association.

Those in attendance represented 92 per cent of the butter manufactured in private plants and 95 per cent of the commercial ice cream made in the province and approximately 85 per cent of the commercial milk sold.

The amount of butter made by the private creameries of the province equals if not exceeds the amount made by the government creameries. There are thirteen creameries in the province subsidized by the government of the province to the extent of a large sum each year, and these plants have no connection whatever with the private plants.

The first government creamery was started about eleven years ago, and the first private creamery was started about eight years ago and at present there are nine private creameries. The policy of the government has been to subsidize in various ways the government creameries, even to loaning them large sums of money at 3 per cent, per annum, but has refused to extend any aid or assistance and withheld advice from the private creameries.

In view of these conditions, the new organization was formed with the following objects:

1. Improve the quality of creamery products.
2. Increase production of cream in the province, thereby encouraging and assisting the farmer in more profitable production.
3. Improve marketing conditions.
4. Promote the grading of all cream.
5. Work together in harmony for mutual benefits.

The following officers were elected:—
President, A. Mihalko, Saskatoon, manager Saskatchewan Pure Milk Co. Ltd.; Vice-President, O. W. Anderson, Humboldt, proprietor Central Creamery Co. Ltd.; Secy.-Treas., J. A. Caulder, Moose Jaw, manager Saskatchewan Creamery Co.; R. Heim, Prince Albert, manager Prince Albert Creamery Co. Ltd.; B. F. Grun- den, Estevan, proprietor Souris Valley Creamery Co.

It is the intention of the Association to hold frequent meetings, and the next one will be about the middle of April in Saskatoon.
"Quality" is the motto of the new organization.
F. R. FULMER, Secretary.

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Rev. M. F. Munro, B.D., and Rev. Colin Young left during the week for Toronto to attend a meeting of the home mission board.

HARD TO LAND
An English correspondent said in Washington: "I once tried to interview Lord Kitchener, the English war minister. I tackled him after dinner in a hotel lounge as he sipped his coffee and puffed on a huge cigar. He stared at me when I proffered my request, then he blew a cloud of smoke and said: "I never gave an interview in my life, and I never intend to." "This seemed decisive enough. I felt myself getting red, and I stammered, as I prepared to go. "Well, then, Lord Kitchener, will you at least give me your autograph?" He blew another cloud of smoke. Then he answered: "You'd better go off and make your own autograph worth having."

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Men's Chrome Shoes, good solid working shoe for farmers; sizes 6 to 11 at, pair... \$3.50
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Rolled Oats, 20 lb. sack for...	90c	No. 1 Red Apples, per box...	\$1.90