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Manitoba

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association
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SOURIS DISTRICT CONVENTION

The annual summer convention of the Souris District Association of Grain Growers was held in the Masonic hall, Minto, Thursday, June 29. President Oscar A. Jones presided. After the chairman's address of welcome, the minutes of the previous convention were read by the secretary, and on motion of Geo. Love and A. Houck were adopted. On motion of Vice-President Jas. Steedsman, seconded by R. F. Chapman, the privileges of the convention were extended to visitors, a very large number being present from nearly all parts of the constituency. Moved by Geo. Rutherford, seconded by G. T. Watkins, "that resolution passed at the Napinka convention regarding \$5.00 levy for support of district associations be rescinded, having been found to be at variance with our constitution." Speakers to this motion besides the mover and seconder were R. F. Chapman, J. A. Lyons, Jas. Fleming, John W. Stow, D. Henderson and R. McKenzie, provincial secretary.

Discussion took place on the membership fee, showing that the \$1.00 fee was out of all proportion to the needs of the locals and trifling compared with the charges made by other business organizations. The matter was left in the hands of each local to set the membership fee to suit local conditions. Some secretaries reported an advance of 50 cents. Jas. Fleming, of Mountainside, who has taken an active part in the summer educational campaign with great acceptance, was requested to give his impressions of visiting the different branches and to outline the principles of co-operation as practiced by the Scotch co-operative societies in the old country. R. F. Chapman, another active worker in the summer campaign, gave his impressions as experienced while assisting at picnics, socials, etc. He made a strong plea for a more fraternal spirit throughout our locals, and urged the local officials to be satisfied with nothing less than ninety-five per cent. of the farming community on their membership list. While he approved of the purchasing of goods co-operatively for economic reasons, he thought it right wherever possible to patronize the local merchant of the district, and not to place the economical side of our organization above the educational side, but to remember that there were more valuable things in life worth striving after than just the saving of a few dollars on our purchases.

Secretary Allison drew attention to the need of having added to our membership roll the women and young people of the district, to help form a public opinion to offset any undesirable legislation, and to give opportunity for the women to educate themselves on public questions, that they might be able to use their franchise intelligently. Vice-President Jas. Steedsman outlined the influence for good as a result of the addition of women on our lists and positions on boards, and instances cases where he had visited locals where much benefit was derived from the social and fraternal point of view by the addition to the membership list of the women and young people of the district.

Geo. Love, Nings, and President O. A. Jones, Whitewater, sounded a note of warning as to the needs of watchfulness regarding legislation affecting future taxation made necessary to pay off the enormous war debt being incurred at the present time.

Vice-President Steedsman gave his impressions gained while making a tour of the sub-associations, noting the counter attractions of the villages and towns as a detriment to the growth of our locals and laying strong emphasis on creating a community spirit by establishing in every school house possible a local branch of the Grain Growers Association, showing the need for more sociability in our country districts to break down the reserve and individualism of country life, and to help win back to a useful civilian life our sol-

dier boys who are at present living in a vastly more social atmosphere than they have been used to. It will become necessary for us to create conditions more in harmony with their new experiences of life and to be in a position to welcome them back to the farms where many of them belong, bridging the gulf between the more jovial barracks room and the isolated country home as much as possible. We need to prepare conditions to receive not only our own boys back, but also the horde of immigrants that will flock here at the end of this greatest of all wars, and assist in domesticating and starting our own in a useful occupation as well as assimilating the newcomers. Two things were absolutely necessary—first the farmer must have cheaper money to improve his holdings and give employment to the returning soldiers; secondly, a freer market must be established that a reasonable profit may be obtained from this extra labor employed.

President D. A. Jones endorsed the preference for meeting in rural schools. His experience in visiting sub-associations had been that locals which met outside of villages invariably had a better attendance at their meetings and were more active in the work of the association. He looked forward to Manitoba having a satisfactory rural credit bill on its statute books, and believed that the committee appointed at the last session of the house to take action on this matter would be able to evolve a system that would prove of benefit to the needy settler, giving examples of communities that were at present doing their own banking business and carrying each others loans with very satisfactory results to the community.

C. S. Watkins, Langvale, spoke on the idea of visiting delegates attending local branch meetings and increasing the interest of the work, more especially along social lines. F. Ransom, Mountainside, spoke on the needs of the locals taking a more active interest in the management of our rural schools. Ed. Brown, Boissevain; M. C. McKinnon, Minto, and Marshall Little, Royall, gave short addresses on the work of their locals, especially on the purchasing of their supplies thru their secretary. Mr. Little thought their branch had acted wisely when they formed a company under the Co-operative Society Act which relieved the local secretary of much toil and anxiety. But even with that relief he thought the much abused secretary should have more money at his disposal to carry on the work of his branch effectively. In these times of war stamps, he said, it took some high financing to make ends meet, particularly if they did not have the support of the majority of the farmers in the community.

Provincial Secretary R. McKenzie then addressed the convention, going fully into the work that lay before the association, and the need for extending its influence and usefulness.

WM. ALLISON,
District Secretary.

ORGANIZATION WORK

"Wm. Allison, of Deloraine, secretary of the Souris District Association, spent a few hours in Melita last Thursday with a view to arranging for a meeting of the local branch for re-organization. For some time the association has been dormant, and it is hoped with a little effort to revive it and put it on a healthy and vigorous footing."

"The great need of the farmers at all times and in all places of the earth is organization and co-operation. Without organization co-operation is impossible. Because it has been impossible to hold them together in the past, Canadian farmers have been the dupes and ready victims of all organized industries. In self defence they must unite. There is no element in the country whose interests, East and West,

are so common and so well defined as the farmers, yet there is no body of men who are so difficult to unite on a common plane of action. One need not seek to mention in detail the causes of this condition at present, but just to record the fact of it and to point out the root causes. The chief causes of this failure of united action would seem to be pig-headedness and party politics—not politics simply, but party politics. The ballot is the great instrument of deliverance, and the farmers if united would be all-powerful in the land, but party politics is the curse and undoing of democracy. From every side we hear the protest against it, and in this protest is the hope of the people. Let the protest become vocal in action and the deed is done. The individual ballot is of no avail. He must mass his power behind his needs and desires. This is impossible while he is devoted on party lines. The party spirit is too strong for him.

When he destroys party issues he will be free and effective. To this end he must organize and unite and stay organized and united. The G.G.A. or some such organization must be the medium of united action. If it is not what it ought to be, make it so. It is in his hands and he can make it what he will if he stays at it and works in a spirit of fraternal give and take. Co-operation means compromise. It means mutual yielding for the common good. This is distasteful for the farmer. He gets so little for his long hours of toil that he wants all he can get and gives as little as he can. The G.G.A. may become a great educative force as well as a rallying ground for the accomplishment of common aims if the farmers will use it in this spirit.

Class consciousness and team activity are the great needs of the farmers. By these he may become dominant in molding the forces and destinies of the nation."—Melita New Era, June 22.

TREMAINE ASSOCIATION

Secretary Northcott, of the Rufford and Tremaine districts, sent in a check for their membership dues paid in up to date. A representative from the Central Association hopes to visit this district in the near future.

MEETING AT VIRDEN

A meeting of the local association was held in Virden on July 4, with a fair attendance. Considerable time was taken up with discussion of matters pertaining to co-operative buying and the new co-operative bill passed at the last session of the legislature. President R. C. Henders, of the Central Association, was present and addressed the meeting. He spoke on the present conditions of our organization and questions that the association are now dealing with and some of the essentials necessary to build up a strong local branch. A good interest was taken in the matters discussed, and the members attending felt that they had new views of the Grain Growers' movement and what it represented.

SELKIRK DISTRICT MEETING

The Selkirk District Association held a meeting at Stonewall on July 1, in the Agricultural grounds. A number of local branches in the district were represented. A generous lunch was served at 12.30, after which a platform meeting was held, and an address was given by R. C. Henders, president of the provincial association, on the aims and objects of the Grain Growers' Association, placing special emphasis on co-operative work, legislative and educational efforts of the organization. The speaker was given a good hearing, practically all the people on the grounds being present to listen to the address. At the close of the platform address a good program of sports took place, and a generally good time was enjoyed by all. The people went home feeling that if more such social gatherings were held they would be beneficial.

VISTA ASSOCIATION

The Vista Grain Growers have forwarded a further contribution of thirty dollars this week to the Patriotic Acre fund. Messrs. M. Cormack and W. Armstrong have donated this amount.