

not the same shortage of milk and milk products as in the winter.

Fall wheat came through the winter extra well, and up to a short time ago had every appearance of being uninjured by spring frosts. The cold weather during the first two weeks of April seems to have given it a set back. It is alive, however, and unless more of the cold, backward

weather, accompanied by frosts occurs it should get a very good start. Grass and clover seems to have wintered well. A little heaving is noticeable in the clover fields, but it has not, so far, injured the crop to any great extent. If the present warm weather continues the week of the 20th should see a good portion of the land sown. A fairly large acreage is ready for the

cultivator, and everything at present points to a good year for this section of the country. A nice warm rain would work wonders just now.

The annual meeting of the National Record Board will be held in the Prince George Hotel, Toronto, Monday April 27th, at 3 o'clock.

National Conference on Marketing and Farm Credits.

Community organization is, without doubt, the foundation of true co-operation, but the movement would lose its stimulus for growth and profane the name if it did not provide for the fellowship and communion of kindred bodies, and an exchange of ideas based upon actual experience and observations. This is the function of the National Conference on Marketing and Farm Credits, which met in Chicago for the second time on April 14th to 17th, 1914. This assembly included co-operators from all points of the compass in the United States and representatives from Canada. Men who have had actual experience, and faced the always present obstacles. Students of the movement, as it presents itself on both sides of the ocean, were there to express their views, not from the producers' end alone but from the consumers' as well, and to consider the various mediums through which the producers and consumers may be cemented into a mutual protective league. In this great body of men and women were those representing factions who, no doubt, are sincere in their beliefs, but evidence different degrees in the conception of co-operation. One would go so far, another one step farther, but this condition is ever present in the development or evolution of any principle. It matters not what the modus operandi of the minor bodies may be, ere the movement is placed upon the plane of universal union and stability the executives must understand the word as representing a league of producers and consumers who are willing to exchange with each other and money is to be a symbol of value, but after the deal is done and the costs defrayed any surplus must be divided proportionately among those who created it and put it there.

In one sense of the word this movement is not a direct onslaught on the middleman. They have existed since time immemorial, and middlemen ever shall be. It is their multiplicity and antiquated, wasteful system that people are warring against. It is the system of excess and duplication of accommodation, clerks, insurance, rental, delivery service, interest on investment, telephones, and such that the consumer would have relegated to the world's garret, while the producer realizes that the lack of standardization of products, individual buying and selling, the control of products by traders for ulterior motives, and the whole unfavorable manipulation of the channels of trade are second-hand and antiquated methods of commerce. A sheep rancher once constructed a large fence around his domain to protect his flock from the coyotes, but when it was concluded he found that he had fenced some coyotes in. This often occurs in a co-operative association. Men will creep in who are merely dollar-hunters or office-seekers, and assume the cloak of co-operation for their own aggrandizement. If this condition does exist, never before have so many men and women been willing to labor in the ranks for the common good. This is the spirit of co-operation, and though it may not cure every social and commercial ill it will, in the words of one of its advocates, sweeten the waters of human life and pluck many a thorn from the pathway of mankind.

PRINCIPLES OF CO-OPERATION IN MARKETING.

Co-operators and socialists alike have a more modest view than formerly regarding the possibilities of their respective ideals. This was emphasized by John Graham Brooks, of Harvard University, who said that early co-operators believed their scheme was to sweep everything before it. Competition was to disappear; conflicting interests were to be replaced by identities of economic welfare, which had only to be realized and a universal brotherhood was at hand. The recovery from this intoxication is now pretty well assured. Competition will not pass away; interests, as before between producer and consumer, will continue to stand over against each other in any movement of time and place. Every effective co-operative center instantly reacts upon local retail prices. This has been emphasized in Europe where the purchasers of fertilizers, seeds and instruments were being mulcted to the extent of 40 per cent. besides the thefts of adulteration. As in the successful store movement, co-operation brings these prices at once to fairly reasonable limits, and often puts out of business inefficient retailers who could exist only by these crude exploitations. Again and again, as these prices are dropped to meet the invading

co-operators, one sees the tug of war begin and a Canadian store reports, "We had a magnificent showing the first year. We made prices tumble all about us, but since then we have not had much to show." It is, of course, one of the glories of co-operation that it does bring down the prices and keeps them down—a result for which co-operation often gets scant credit; but when this margin of unfair prices has been brought down the real limits within which co-operators have to act is reached, and they are fairly pitted against opponents ready to try wits and efficiencies against the so-called "democratic business." There are thousands of these vigorous individualists, even in Danish bacon, butter and eggs, and in the English store movement, who do not fear co-operators in the least. The one success of co-operation tends to bring these men to the front, where they are quite ready to measure themselves against the new comers.

PRODUCERS' CO-OPERATIVE ORGANIZATIONS.

It will be possible to review only a few of the many points brought out in connection with these associations, but the operations of the Minnesota Co-operative Dairy Association is a beacon for co-operators in the dairy industry. A. O. Nelson, of Svea, Minn., told the conference how the society organized about seven years ago with the aim of affiliating the minor associations of the state into a strong selling agency—so strong that they might establish and maintain their own wholesale houses in the various large cities of the Union, and sell direct to retailers or consumers' organizations. This society organized on a share-capital basis, with one association, one vote. During the initial stages of development progress did not come on rapid wheels, but in later years the capital has accumulated and the business has grown, and in 1913 amounted to over the one and one-quarter millions of dollars. Although the goal has not been attained, that of establishing their own wholesale houses, yet they have been able to obtain concessions from wholesale dealers that have been of considerable pecuniary advantage to the members. There are now over 100 minor associations connected with the central body.

One of the obstacles to be confronted, in this particular instance, was that of procuring funds. The president of a local association would not deem it within his province to subscribe for stock on behalf of his society. The board preferred to have the consent of the entire association before it ventured to enlist, and that deferred the matter until the annual meetings. All would be unanimous in the approval of the scheme, but the engineering of such operations demanded field men and organizers, which the funds would not permit. However, finances are now in such shape that field work may be executed, which promises a more speedy development and attainment of their object. Another powerful factor to be confronted in the co-operative movement is this: so long as the campaign is educational, just so long are the interests and dealers with the movement, heart and soul, but when an attempt is made to enter the ring of trade and commerce, to buy and sell for the members, and to commercialize the movement for mutual benefit, then clouds appear on the horizon which develop factions with vastly different purposes.

Co-operation has apparently found a home in Minnesota, for in the Svea community alone they have a creamery, telephone system, consumers' and producers' store, live stock association and grain elevator, situated at Willmar, all run on the co-operative system. The spirit is abroad and reveals itself in church and school. A rural school, equipped with all modern appliances and conveniences, provided for the children and the pupils, outside the two mile limit, are conveyed to school at public expense.

Placing himself, for the time, in the position of an independent grower of fruit, H. C. Sampson, Sec.-Treas. of the North Pacific Fruit Distributors, demonstrated how he would be absolutely helpless in the disposal of his fruit when he came face to face with conditions as they exist. The increasing output, transportation inadequacy, and ill-construction of the machine as operated by the buyer and consignment system, legislation, advertising, the recovery of claims, standardization of products, distribution, financing and many other phases of the industry can only be handled effectually by united and co-operative effort. In proof of this Mr. Sampson

cited what their distributing agency had done in that regard, and explained the circumstances as they are in Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, where the association operates.

These four States at present have 505,000 acres of apples already planted, to say nothing of approximately 75,000 of other fruits. The cause of poor selection of orchard sites, soils and varieties, poor judgment of growers and effects of pests and diseases were to eliminate 255,000 acres of apples as being non commercial, they still have 250,000 acres confronting them some few years in the future. If one acre of orchard produces the conservative amount of one-half carload, in the near future they will be confronted with 125,000 carloads of apples instead of 8,000 carloads, as in 1913, or 15,000 as in 1912. However, from knowledge gained through eighteen months of study of the situation and 17,000 miles of travel and observation, Mr. Sampson is assured that there was no over production in 1912, and that through the application of the principles of fruit growing on the part of the producer, and assisted by the right sort of marketing and distributing machinery, the Northwestern apple grower will obtain a reasonable price for his labor, and a reasonable interest return on his investment.

Every trade or sale is a contest between the minds, personality knowledge of conditions, as well as the experience of the two men making the trade. If it be the sale of apples each man brings to the selling or buying, his knowledge of marketing and crop conditions, and his experience in the selling or buying of fruit together with his personality and business capacity; and just as he commands a larger experience, larger knowledge of market and crop conditions, larger business personality and capacity, to that degree will he drive a better bargain for himself or for those whom he may represent. This was evidenced in the operations of the North Pacific Distributing Agency when a New York buyer, desiring a large quantity of prunes, approached the subject to the sales agent and sales manager. He used three arguments to prove that the price he offered was all the market would warrant. In the first place, he claimed that the price in New York was low and would probably go lower; second, the production in the Northwestern States was unusually large, and, therefore, they must expect low prices. In the third place he suggested that through other prune-growing sections they were producing an abundant crop, and that it would reflect upon the price the Northwestern States would be able to obtain. As each argument was brought up it was undeniably refuted by telegrams and other information which the executive of the association had to hand. So successfully was the buyer balked in all directions that ultimately he paid the association \$1,100 more for the order than he stated positively ten minutes previous that he could pay. This is where the association excels in the knowledge of marketing and crop conditions, which they are able to obtain through their salaried employees.

A wise distribution requires that no market have too much or too little at the same time. If one knew where every grower or organizer was going to ship he could perhaps distribute his stuff more easily, but this is never known to the individual grower; only through a co-operative body or large organization are they able to supply the market in an equitable manner.

Large associations, to a certain extent, have a controlling power over the railroads. In one particular instance the Northwestern growers were being held up to the extent of \$16.00 per carload, over a spur line, in one of the fruit-growing valleys. The condition was remedied by the Central Association pointing out to the railroad, where in another instance in the state they would divert five carloads of produce per week, which rightfully belonged to that road, over another line. This amount would total to the road \$1,575.00. This argument on the part of the Northwest growers was weighty enough to persuade the company that it would be to the interests of the road to comply with the request of the association, and give them an honest rate.

The organization has endeavored to create a larger demand and increase consumption. By setting a reasonable price early in the season, a consumption of apples is started at once and continues throughout the season to the benefit of the producer and consumer alike. In this reciprocal manner the Northwestern Distributors gave