

Manitoba Grain Growers

Conducted Officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by the Secretary

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THE success of the local association may usually be gauged by the success of the directors' meetings. In some few places of course the success attained has been largely attributable to the initiative and driving force of a single officer, and in others to a general progressive spirit which has actuated the community apart from any special direction through a select group. But generally, and very naturally, success comes through the co-operative activities of the board chosen to direct and lead the work of the association. It is fully to be expected that success is if the directors do not meet and discuss and plan and work. When the directors are "on the job" there should be no such thing as failure.

It has been suggested that directors and other officers of the local association should be put through an installation ceremony and required to take an oath of office. Perhaps that would not be wholly desirable, but it is certain that every officer when he is elected should record for himself a whole-hearted resolution that he will do his utmost as an officer for the success of the cause. He should recognize that a special responsibility rests upon him for the furtherance of the best interests of the branch, and should so practically relate himself to that task that others will be inspired and attracted by his enthusiasm and his activity.

For Public Welfare

As a group the officers and directors of the local branch should regard themselves as constituting a public welfare committee for the neighborhood. The interests committed to them by the association involve nothing less than that. By constitution we obligate ourselves to care for "the all round development of rural life with a view to making it as satisfying and as effective in the commonwealth as possible," and to "forward in every honorable and legitimate way, the interests of the rural population." Surely this demands that the nine men elected to official position in the local association shall earnestly question among themselves as to what service they may assist the association to render. Wherever good may be done, morally, economically, socially intellectually, there the association finds its sphere; and the directors should direct both in the search and in the task.

A Specific Obligation

The last convention of the provincial association, recognizing the value of the weekly organ of the farmers' movement and the necessity for keeping our people familiar with our ideals and activities through reading its pages, passed the following resolution which speaks for itself and which should be seriously discussed by every board sometime during the year:—

"This convention urges as a means to the strengthening of our work, that every local association be asked to regard it as a primary obligation laid upon their board of directors to take as an essential part of each year's work, the arranging for a canvass of the association's immediate district in the interest of maintaining and extending the circulation of The Grain Growers' Guide."

When the annual meeting comes, every board of directors ought to report to their association as to the fulfilment of their duties as a branch.

Everlastingly at It

If there ever was any slow-poke-ism in the working of the Grain Growers' movement it is being rapidly eliminated. Some of the district associations are already planning their fall work in detail and looking forward to such a closely organized and thoroughly co-ordinated campaign as has never been put on before. Here for example is a preliminary suggestion which is under consideration by the advisory board of one district:—

"To divide up the district into three sections. Then if we could get three

men with their cars and make up a program of two or three speakers and have two meetings a day for each party. That would be six meetings a day, and would give opportunity to plan a meeting for every nook, hole and corner. Advertise thoroughly, get there with the program and in this way everlastingly keep Grain Growers before the farmers."

There is something for all district workers to put in their harvest pipes and smoke during the dog days. The district that does this kind of thing does not depend on outside help. It means the enlistment not of one or two but of a staff of at least six or seven speakers from among their own associations, who will prepare themselves to give a week's service. The idea is to leave no "nook, hole or corner" untouched, and it is unquestionably the ideal that is needed. The slogan that must be taken up at a very early date is "One Hundred per cent. in every local association." Adequate consultation, advertising and canvassing will reach the ideal, especially when district and local officials have pledged themselves "everlastingly to keep Grain Growers before the farmers."

Kemnay's Women's Work

The Kemnay association organized its Women's Section about the middle of last March. They at once began active work along progressive lines. Before the end of the month they had secured a night with Miss Ada Ward on her work, "With a Blackboard in France." About the end of May they secured a course in home nursing conducted by Miss Clark of the Extension Department of the Agricultural College. A little later they arranged for a millinery class from the same department with Miss Blackburn as instructor. Then they had S. E. Clement, M.L.A., speak to them on "New Laws relating to Women," and early in June, Miss Cora Hind, of the Free Press, addressed them on the food situation. They arranged to have their members see the I.O.D.E. war slides on May 24, and in the realm of co-operative buying secured as a section a supply of fish. Thus in things material and intellectual, economic and political this group of live women grain growers are making their organization tell for the good of the community.

For Better Schools

Mr. F. Bansom, secretary of the Souris district association, reports considerable interest and activity on the part of local branches in connection with the proposal to establish Municipal School Boards. The Trustees Association of Winchester and Brenda were planning a campaign along this line and the arrangement of meetings was made possible through the medium of our local associations. The series included meetings at Mountainside, Medora, Cranmer and Regent. Beside local speakers, these meetings were addressed by G. Hunter, inspector of public schools, who detailed certain weaknesses and injustices of present rural educational methods and urged that some change was necessary in order to secure efficiency and success. He described in detail the educational system of Denmark which had made

the people of that country one of the most progressive, enlightened and contented peoples in the world. He advocated the change to the municipal board as one which would tend to bring our Canadian population to this status, improving rural conditions generally and establishing a population of intelligent and efficient citizens upon the land. It would be well if this important and practical topic could be thoroughly thrashed out in every local during the coming season.

New Associations

The need for organization of the rural population has never been more widely recognized in Manitoba than during the present summer. Conditions of living, the increasing cost of commodities, the increase of railway rates and the unparalleled activities of the big interests have been making people think and act. Economic conditions especially are being studied as never before and apart entirely from any influence of the Grain Growers' campaign local communities are taking the initiative and proceeding to organize. Two such cases are to be recorded for the past two weeks.

Snowflake and Beausejour.

On Thursday, August 1, at the request of local farmers, J. L. Brown, of Pilot Mound, vice-president of the provincial association, and W. R. Wood, visited the town of Snowflake and addressed a large number of the people of the district. Following the addresses, those present decided to organize a local association, which was forthwith done, the officers elected being Isaac Mothersall, president; B. T. Robertson, vice-president; W. H. Moore, secretary-treasurer; with Oscar Findlay, F. N. Bryan, W. Wallace, Arnold Barber, R. Mothersall and C. Stewart as directors. The new branch expects to add largely to its membership during the coming months and will be in a position when the busy season is past to undertake an active community program for the winter.

At Beausejour following a canvass by the United Grain Growers Limited, widespread interest has been created in the association. At a meeting recently held, preliminary steps toward organization were taken, when 83 names were enrolled as members of the association. Here a new record is established in initial membership of an association, the largest up to this time having been 51. It is confidently expected that this number will be largely increased in the immediate future and Beausejour may, by the end of the year, be the largest local association in the province of Manitoba.

The Fellowship of Campaigning

To campaign together generates comradeship. The brotherhood of the battlefield is one of the compensations for its suffering and its horror. The deeds of heroism that are done are mostly prompted by care for a man's fellow soldier. Even the peaceful campaigning of a Grain Growers' "drive" is a stimulating and inspiring experience. The workers in the recent summer campaign in Manitoba were without exception good travelling companions, and ready to take the occasional discomfort involved with a philosophic cheer-

fulness and bonhomie that added much to the general enjoyment. And as they tackled meeting after meeting together and faced daylight and dark, rain and shine, wind and dust in company there grew up a new and very pleasant camaraderie that will not soon be forgotten.

The groups were splendidly heterogeneous. A Missourian and an Aradian, a Manitoban and an Albertan, a Roman Catholic and an Orangeman, a (former) Conservative committee-man and a (former) dyed-in-the-wool Grit, a grand-mother and a girl scarcely out of her teens, a school teacher and a journalist, a high Unionist and a Laurier-Liberal; all sinking their differences in order to loyally co-operate for the furtherance of the rural life movement of Canada. It was worth while being a grain grower to rub up against such a variety of personnel. If any little partisan or sectional prejudice still persisted in any one's heart, campaigning with such companions should have finally and fully dissipated it. For in spite of all differences of race and creed and political view, there was cordial agreement as to the fundamental necessity of organizing our rural life for its self-development and self-defence and in the prosecution of that aim, no efforts were spared.

Unity of Interests

The hearty recognition of the unity of the various elements in the farmers' movement was, another pleasant feature. The old association realized afresh its relationship to the farmers' company. It was reminded of the days when a business company organized to explore the intricacies of the grain trade and to secure fairer terms was the supreme necessity. In due time the need was met and the new organization today still stands loyal to the original ideals of service and the square deal. The men who represented the company made a plea, second to none in effectiveness, for the maintenance and extension of the association. The Women's Section was most efficiently represented. "The sentimentality and fad" notion was forever laid to rest and the branches were convinced that for community work there must be effective co-operation between men and women. The Grain Growers' Guide came to be known as the indispensable organ of the movement, apart from which no one can be kept adequately conversant with the present-day activities of the movement.

And last, but by no means least, there was the joy of the formation of new ties and the establishment of acquaintance with our local standard bearers at the various points touched. Every branch that is alive has an individuality of its own. There is always a faithful few who stand staunchly and strong for the cause and help to hearten the discouraged and to stimulate the indifferent. The kindly entertainment provided for the speakers at many points will not soon be forgotten. But greatest and best of all was the evidence frequently afforded that at almost every point there are some of the younger men who are acquiring accurate knowledge of the movement, its principles and its practice, and are becoming capable leaders of local thought and activity. Some day we will have a rally of these splendid fellows and it will be an inspiration to the whole movement when we gather three or four hundred who have seen the vision and set themselves to realize it. In the meantime there will be faithful work done in hundreds of quiet corners by these loyal volunteers and the association will gradually, but surely, be moved nearer to the ideal of "our rural life one hundred per cent. strong."

Practically, then, the greatest, the most fundamental of all reforms, the reform which will make all other reforms easier, and without which no other reform will avail, is to be reached by concentrating all taxation into a tax upon the value of land, and making that heavy enough to take as near as may be the whole ground rent for common purposes.—George.

