

The Women's Convention

Women's Section of Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association Hold Enthusiastic Meetings

A lively discussion on medical aid and other matters in which the delegates to the women's section of The Grain Growers' Association were keenly interested at once thawed out the constraint which usually marks a first session and started the fifth annual convention off to a most promising beginning.

After the opening exercises greetings were extended to the convention by Mrs. A. Graham on behalf of the local council of women. The speaker said that she represented a very young organization but not an insignificant one inasmuch as in it were represented twenty-one local societies. She brought the very cordial greetings of these organizations to the women grain growers and expressed her very deep regret that they had not been able to meet the members of the convention in a social way owing to the fullness of the program.

Committees were then appointed as follows:—Resolutions: Mrs. McNeal, Mrs. Black and Mrs. Osborne; Credentials: Mrs. Riggall, Mrs. Noggle and Mrs. Newbury; Courtesies: Mrs. Christie, Mrs. Platt and Mrs. Lutear.

Keen Discussion on Medical Question

In a very keen discussion on the medical aid question it became apparent that it is very difficult at present, owing to the war, to secure the services of nurses for rural districts. One organization reported having got an organization in shape for a nurse of the Victorian order and being unable to secure a nurse. Thunder Valley reported that they had had a nurse for a year who had been sent out by the Victorian order, that they had a hospital partially completed and that when it was ready they would have a second nurse. They paid the nurse \$45 a month and patients when able paid \$2.50 a day or \$12.50 a week. The nurse's salary had nearly paid her way and it had been found quite easy to make up the slight deficit.

In reporting on the work done among the young people Mrs. Haight reported that an excellent constitution for these junior organizations had been prepared and printed and there was quite a demand for them. A messenger was sent to bring Mr. Geo. Langley from the general convention to explain what the government was doing at the present session of the legislature to make the municipal franchise for women more comprehensive. Mr. Langley apologized for not having been able to introduce adult suffrage in municipal elections but explained that they were extending the rural municipal franchise this year to include women living with their husbands on homesteads or rented farms in cases where the renter was also a tax payer. The disability in regard to holding office was also being removed.

Extending Education

In her absence the report of Mrs. Frith, convenor of the social service committee was read by Mrs. Haight. Their work had largely been carried on under the guidance of Mr. Woodsworth of the bureau of social research. Mr. Woodsworth had recommended that in districts where there was no religious gathering the people should meet together on Sunday afternoons at a forum for a discussion of public questions. She had suggested a night school for the study of English to some of the foreign speaking people in her district and the idea met with their hearty approval. Some of the business men had very kindly volunteered to give instructions in business methods, but the inclement weather had hindered the execution of the plan.

A resolution requesting the government of Saskatchewan to continue in that province the bureau of social research was read and unanimously adopted.

Mrs. Haight's Address

With characteristic directness Mrs. S. V. Haight rapped one feature after another of the existing social order which worked injustice to large groups of people. She begged her hearers to take an active interest in the problems of the day and not by their indifference or ignorance to hinder reforms that might come.

All our enemies are not on foreign soil, according to Mrs. Haight. Graft, extravagance and disease had to be fought at home. Fewer expensive commissions, the speaker said, would be necessary if the people kept constant tab on the conduct of their representatives and made a conscientious study of reports.

It was Mrs. Haight's conviction that capital should be conscripted before labor or life and that we should guard against the growth of the military ideal in our country thru having military training in our public schools.

She wanted protected interests done away with and our natural resources straightway handed back to the people.

Mrs. Haight quoted some very convincing figures to show how much more highly men rated money than human life. In 1915 the United States

morrow we will learn to substitute co-operation for competition between man and man, nation and nation, and humanity and God.

The word must not be permitted to acquire a purely commercial meaning, but it must have a social meaning as well. Without co-operation these clubs of farm women would be impossible. The speaker said that wherever you find a club acting like a dead fish float-down a stream there was sure to be lack of co-operation. The executive board might have the wisdom of a Solomon and strength of Hercules but without the co-operation of every local and member it could not do its most effective work.

Mrs. Parlyby said she felt that these clubs had a great responsibility in that the people were all looking to the country for leadership. Many people in the cities were so placed economically that the question of daily bread prevented them from taking a stand on public issues but the tongue of the farmer was unfettered inasmuch as his bread came from the land and he was holden to none for a livelihood.

The speaker went on to emphasize the narrowing effect of daily grind of a woman's work and compared it

the home, and then a great hubbub arose. The women who remained in the homes were left only the drudgery of life.

The government was introducing a system of rural credits to encourage stock raising. Prof. Swanson wanted to see some of this money expended in making life more tolerable for farm women. The average country home, he said, was not even a workshop, let alone a comfortable home.

The best books and periodicals should be put within the reach of all rural readers, since everybody had a right to a chance for development.

The speaker mentioned, too, a going-away club which had been organized in a certain part of England; all the members paying into a common fund and each in turn taking a trip. He thought some such plan might be put into force in the rural districts of this country where the women were in such great need of variety in their lives.

In the pioneer days an evangelist used to visit the country districts and people flocked from far and near to hear him. It was a spiritual debauch, and was good for them in that it made a break in the dead level of their lives.

Legislators were very busy these days telling the people to practice thrift, but much of this talk of thrift was arrant nonsense. Why should the people commit slow suicide in order to lay up store for a day that might never come? Many people had practiced that virtue until it had become a vice. Wealth should be used wisely, but above all it should be used. The people who talked produce, produce, produce, as if that were an object in itself, made the speaker very weary. The aim of production is consumption.

Every rural woman had a right to have her physical wants, such as food, clothing, housing, heating and lighting, sufficiently supplied. After that she had a right to such other accessories of life as gave one confidence and self-respect.

Women should be given a real role to play in the church. Last week three women in Saskatoon were elected to the board of management of the Presbyterian Church, the first in Canada to hold such a position in that church.

Finally, Professor Swanson deprecated the theory that woman was a mystery, and expressed the conviction that this theory had done much to keep her in subjection. Another theory that must go was the child theory, that a woman only lived in the lives of her children. In his opinion the small family was better than the big family if the big family meant that the mother was to be exhausted and worn out. The great need was not for more babies but to keep those we already have.

Music in National Life

Music, like crops, may be low in grade, thin in growth and mongrel in quality, according to Prof. Hoole, of Regina College, who spoke on the national value of music.

After sketching the musical development of different races and the effect of their songs on the national character, Professor Hoole asked the very pertinent question, "What are we doing in Canada to bring the right kind of music to the people? While it must be admitted that very little was being done at present, there was much that could be done. Every home should have some musical instrument and a number of music charts.

In the small town choirs can be organized to sing part songs, cantatas and light operas. A number of small towns might be organized to hold an annual musical festival. Small orchestras were also very easy of formation. The church could be made much more effective by having more communal singing.

The schools should be made the foundation of a sound knowledge of the principles of music.

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The house of a prosperous farmer at Spring Lake, Alberta.

Government was spending \$450,370 for bugs and \$600,000 on hog cholera and only \$165,000 on children. In 1916 Saskatchewan appropriated \$242,000 for agriculture, \$30,000 for livestock and \$71,000 for dairy and poultry and not a cent for its children.

The speaker went on to advocate municipal hospitals, making it compulsory for doctors to report all contagious and particularly venereal diseases, medical examination of school children, police women, juvenile and women's courts.

Reports of the work of district directors occupied a large part of the second session of the convention. The complaint that the war had seriously handicapped the work of organization was general. Nearly all the directors reported that they had written a great number of letters and to most of which they received no reply. Many of the directors had visited a number of clubs in their districts and most had attended the district convention and tried to get in touch with the secretaries of the different locals there.

Mrs. Parlyby of the U.F.A. Speaks

At the afternoon session Mrs. Parlyby, president of the women's section of the U.F.A. in a brief and eloquent address outlined what she felt to be the possibilities in this movement for the organization of farm women. It was only a little while ago she said that we had discovered there was such a word in the dictionary as co-operation—to-day we were just learning to spell it. To-

to the torture of the Spanish Inquisition consisting of the slow dropping of water on the head of the victim until he went insane. She thought that these farm women's organizations would help to alleviate this almost intolerable monotony.

Before the war the real spirit of the west had been smothered in materialism but the big broad free spirit was beginning to emerge again.

Professor Swanson's Address

Women going into industry are not invading a masculine field but returning to their own, according to Prof. Swanson, of Saskatchewan University, who addressed the convention on "Labor and Life Among Farm Women."

Searching about in the early twilight of man's industrial history the professor found that women were the originators of many of the great industries of today. It had been exceedingly difficult at first to tie men down to the land or to the family, so that it remained for women to begin the tilling of the soil and the selection of grains. But the metal industries and the weaving and dyeing of cloth also began in the home and were fostered there until the guilds were organized to develop men in carrying on these industries, after the Black Death swept over England. There was a temporary return of the industries to the homes during the domestic period, but with the coming of the factories the great industries went out of the home for good. After a lapse of a few years the women began to follow these industries out of