

United Farmers' Progress

Report of E. J. Fream, Retiring Secretary of the U.F.A., at the Opening of the Annual Convention in Calgary on January 21

Gentlemen:—In presenting this, my fifth report to you, as secretary of the Association, I wish to thank all who have so kindly assisted in the work and in making my share of same a success. I feel that I can speak more freely on this matter at the present time owing to the fact that it is not my intention to ask for a re-engagement, and with your kind permission I should like for a few moments to place before you some of my thoughts, which have occurred to me during the past year in relation to this work.

It is not my intention, however, to sever myself entirely from the work that I have been engaged in during the past five years, unless it is your desire for me to do so, but rather I hope that many opportunities will arise wherein I can show that I am just as much in the work even though I am not undertaking the active management of same. I am one of the few life members of the Association and I am proud of that fact, as I recognize the value and driving force of an effective organization.

Plea for Co-operation

In severing my services as your secretary-treasurer, I am doing so with great regret but, at the same time, with considerable hope and expectation that the position that I now hold in the great commercial organization of Western Canada will be only another means of enabling me to assist in the solving of the problems that most affect us, and which place us as farmers in an unfair and unsatisfactory position at the present time. I am convinced that our success lies in combination and co-operation, combination first, so that we can show a united front to those who would prey upon us, and co-operation so that as a result of same all may participate in the profits resulting from our labors, and with that in view, I am looking forward with pleasure to the work of the next few years, as it is in that period that these questions must be solved and the problems now affecting us must be placed on a sound economic basis.

Unions Now Number 440

Dealing with the work of the Association for the past year, I beg to report that good progress has been made in the growth of the U. F. A. and this can best be considered by a few statistics showing the membership fees collected during the past few years. This comparison shows a steady growth in our membership and is as follows:—

1909.....	\$1073.50
1910.....	\$2026.00
1911.....	\$2936.00
1912.....	\$3600.00

The growth in the number of Unions has also been steady, the increase for 1912 over the year previous being 120, while the number of Unions now on the books is 440. Of course, in giving these figures it must not be forgotten that some of the Unions which are still receiving circulars and other information issued by the Central office have not been heard from for a considerable time, but more will be said on this question later.

The life membership fund has not grown, and this may be traced to the fact that no great effort has been made to push same, but if we are to get the greatest measure of success from our work we must take steps to secure a permanent fund, as otherwise the handicaps which have to be contended with are exceedingly great.

Individual Farmer's Duty

While this is satisfactory considering the handicaps the farmers have had to face during the past three years, it is not all that it should be, and until it is possible to bring home to every man, in the most forcible manner, the fact that it is his duty to take part in the questions of the day and lend his assistance in solving them, it is not right

for any man (or for that matter any group of men who have organized themselves into a local union) to think that his duty is done once he has subscribed for membership in the Association, as this should be recognized as only the start of the work, and until this is fully realized it will not be possible to secure that full measure of success which by right belongs to the farmer of Western Canada. Until that comes it will still be possible for those in authority who do not see eye to eye with the farmers to ask your representatives what proportion of the voting population do they represent, and to say as they stated last winter, "You represent only fifteen per cent., what about the other eighty-five?"

Need for Education

Another reason for the necessity for a complete and effective organization can be found by the action of many farmers last winter, when, without thought, they signed petitions prepared by a body entirely opposed to them, and thereby delivered into the hands of that body a weapon which almost gave a death blow to the rights of the farmers in the matter of loading cars. With a little educative work which can be secured through the medium of the local unions of the U. F. A. this would not have occurred, and until such methods can be overcome, until such time that the farmers realize that they must study the economic problems of the day and be prepared to give a discussion on them, it is imperative for them to take an active part in the discussions of the day, and when this time comes they will be so interested that they will not think of dropping out then.

Dealing with this organization work more specifically the amount done by me during the past twelve months has not been great, and for the first part of the season the reason for this can be traced to the fact that it was necessary for me to be away for such a consider-

able time at Ottawa, but although this was the case it did not prevent us from arranging several long trips, and a large amount of organization work has been accomplished.

Assistant Secretary's Activity

The bulk of the work has fallen on the shoulders of my assistant, Mr. P. P. Woodbridge, who has been in attendance at nearly 100 meetings during the year, including several district conventions, while Messrs. P. S. Austin, D. W. Warner, J. C. McLeod, I. F. Rowland, Quinsey, Dixon, Miller and others have done considerable work and have materially assisted in bringing about the results which have been accomplished. In fact it is possible to report that during the past year, in spite of many obstacles in our way, more unions have been visited, more organization work accomplished, and more district meetings attended, than in any year previous, and yet in spite of this we have been unable to fill the demand for assistance which is always coming to hand.

To make our work a success, to make it possible for every district to be visited at least once a year, it is necessary for the permanent force to be considerably augmented, and to do this the first requisite is the financial assistance. Taking the past year in comparison, at the start of the season the returns came to hand in a splendid manner and it really did seem as though the result would be the organizing of a force which would effectively cover the whole province, but during the summer months this support fell away to a great extent, and it was not until late in the fall that the returns were once more forthcoming. This is one of the reasons why many of the unions who have asked for assistance have been unable to procure the same. Those who were in a position to give their services without a thought of compensation were too busy to permit them to undertake ex-

tensive trips and those who were willing but who required assistance, it was not possible to guarantee that assistance at the required time.

Need for Organizers

When the time arrives that it will be possible to have a good fund on hand, then will it be possible to have a force of at least four good, active men, whose duty it will be during the time of the year when the work can best be carried on, to see that every local union is visited, that the necessary amount of vim is instilled into the local men, and that the local officers are better instructed as to the best methods of carrying on the work. To do this requires an assured income of not less than \$8,000 per year for organization work alone, and when that is done it will be possible to give the greatest measure of good to the greatest number. The time seems to be gone by when we could depend entirely upon volunteers' work and it behooves us, in order that we may take advantage of the many opportunities that will arise, to gird on our armor and be ready to meet the foe on every occasion. To do this we must build up an effective, permanent organization, and the length of time required to effect this depends entirely on the men behind the gun.

Preparation of Circulars

Turning away from the organization work and taking up the secretary's office work, it can be said that this is constantly increasing, as can be evidenced by the postage account alone, which is now over the \$500 mark. As the Association grows the routine work increases and this can best be shown by stating that while, in 1909, one hundred copies were all that was required of each circular, in 1912 the requirements had increased to 750 per issue, and even with this large amount several of the circulars are out of print.

In preparing these circulars during the past year an effort has been made to make them as interesting as possible and to give the information required, in a condensed form, but in a manner which would be acceptable to all. It is interesting to note in connection with this work, that many requests have been received from other countries for information relating to our association, and especially for copies of some of our circular letters, which had just appeared in The Guide.

The Fight at Ottawa

At the directors' meeting immediately following the last annual convention the directors appointed your secretary as the delegate to go to Ottawa and represent the farmers there when the Canada Grain Act was up for consideration. The result of this work has been given to you by the board of directors, but as a result of same, and of the necessity of making a second trip to Ottawa in March, it meant that I was absent from Alberta for a considerable portion of the winter.

Many Problems Dealt With

As usual a large number of questions have been dealt with at the central office, and in every instance an effort has been made to meet with the wishes of the members. This work includes the securing of loading platforms, fencing of right of way, settlement of right of way claims, collection of claims, overcharges on freight, and many other matters of like nature between the farmer and the railway companies, in fact in many instances these matters have been taken to the Railway Commission and the farmers assisted thereby. Besides this, assistance has been given in securing pound districts, herd districts, school districts, and rural municipalities, and in fact in almost every line which might be mentioned including, in a few instances, the secur-

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Are You Buying Flour?

The best way to purchase flour is for the Grain Growers of the Local Association to get together and buy a carload and thus save the profits of the middleman. Fifty cents per sack saved in this way is just as good as fifty cents earned by the sweat of your brow. There is more flour being purchased on this plan during the present winter than ever before in the history of this country. In addition to the financial benefits this co-operative buying helps to give the farmers more confidence in each other and more interest in the general affairs and prosperity of the community. When we are far enough advanced the Grain Growers will have their own flour mills and eat bread made from their own wheat, ground in their own mills and sold through their own co-operative agency. When ordering your flour, be sure to do so from firms that advertise in The Guide, because in so doing you are making The Guide your market place and making it stronger to fight your battles. The firms advertising flour in The Guide are:

- Echo Milling Co., Gladstone, Manitoba,
- Grain Growers' Grain Co., Winnipeg, Manitoba,
- Robin Hood Flour Mills, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan,
- Western Canada Flour Mills, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The flour handled by these firms is as good as is made anywhere in the world, and they are all ready to quote prices to Grain Growers in carload lots that will mean a big saving. Here is a chance to help yourself, help The Guide, help local industry and at the same time forward the cause for which the organized farmers are working.

THE GRAIN GROWERS' GUIDE.