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It Welcomes Practical Progressive Ideas

# FARM AND DAIRY

## & RURAL HOME

The Recognized Exponent of Dairying in Canada



Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land—Lord Chatham

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## The Progress of the Farmers' Movement in Ontario\*

From Small Beginnings the United Farmers of Ontario Have Made Good Progress But Much Organization Work Remains to be Done—By J. J. Morrison, Secretary, United Farmers of Ontario

TWO years ago last March the United Farmers of Ontario and the United Farmers' Cooperative Company were organized. The idea of forming the company was to have a legal organization through which the clubs and members could do business with one another. On July 22nd following, a business office was opened in Toronto, and we applied for and secured a charter under the Ontario Companies Act. We have a joint stock company with \$10,000 capital. This is divided into 400 shares of \$25 each, and of these about two-thirds have been sold to clubs and members.

One reason why more of our stock has not been sold is largely because only two of our clubs have taken more than one share. A club with a membership of 25, with only one share of our stock, has therefore a per capita investment of only one dollar. Of course, we have many individual shareholders. All the directors of both the association and the company have taken stock, thus showing that they have confidence in the company's future. Next winter, however, we expect to undertake more aggressive work in getting our stock before the farmers and inducing farmers' clubs affiliated with our organization to take up more of it.

One of the improvements that we have in mind for next winter is to get the clubs to adopt more uniformity in the selection of the dates for meetings. We usually have some literature that we wish to send to them, and in the near future we hope to begin issuing a four or eight-page paper or bulletin, through which we hope to reach the majority of our members. By having all the clubs meeting on one night, or at least on a night of the same week, we would have no trouble in getting information to them while it is still fresh. Our literature could be published to reach clubs at about the time of their meeting if this uniform system were adopted.

### The Winter Convention.

It seems advisable at present that we change to some extent the programme of our winter convention at Toronto. At present the convention is wide open when the business of our company is being discussed. No other company competing for the people's trade would allow of that procedure. It may be that we will call one business meeting of the secretaries of clubs in which the business of the company will be discussed in detail. We could retain full control of who is to attend this meeting, and of the information that goes out from it. We will also have an open meeting in which everybody interested in the

movement will have an opportunity to hear of the business that is being carried on, and of the progress that it is making.

In connection with the organization of our work, our first consideration should be to increase the number of local clubs. Of these we have now about 200 in affiliation, with a membership of 5,000. This is not enough for the Province of Ontario. There are, roughly speaking, 20,000 school sections in the province, and there is no reason why there should not be farmers' clubs in most of them. To assist in this work it is the present plan to make these district conventions a permanent affair. We shall endeavor, however, to hold them at a more opportune time of the year. They would be better held in the fall, say

November, just when the clubs are starting in on their winter programmes.

After the war, when the armies are disbanded, and the nations get down to the business of paying off war debts, we shall have a period of reconstruction. The prospects of the farmer during that period are not bright. The war debt will have to be unloaded on somebody, and judging from past experience, the burden will fall heavily upon agriculture, for though taxation can be shifted by the financial interests to the farmer, it cannot be shifted by him to other people. When the war broke out it was found necessary to devise new taxes, such as the stamp duties. At that time it was said that these taxes would be borne equally by all classes of the community; that the railways, the banks, the express companies and the patent medicine concerns, would all have their share to pay. But what do you find? Go down to the station and buy a ticket for Toronto and find out who pays the railway company's war tax. Tender a cheque at a bank, buy an express order, or a bottle of medicine and see who pays for the war stamps. The bulk of taxes of this kind can be shifted to the farmer, but there the shifting stops and the paying begins.

### Representative Government Threatened.

There are other matters on which the farmers will need to keep themselves informed regarding this question of taxation. Recently I heard in Toronto a man by the name of Curtis who represents what is known in Great Britain as the Round Table Conference. He openly ridiculed our ideas of democracy. His idea of democracy was that a man should be appointed to run the country's business, and that we should stand behind him in everything he did. He outlined a plan by which the Canadian Government would appoint two or three men to meet in conference in Great Britain with similar delegates from other parts of the Empire. These men would settle what each colony should pay toward imperial defence. They would be supposed to tell our Government what they should pay, and we would foot the bill. As men who believe in representative government and in the principle that without representation there should be no taxation, are you prepared to have Government appointees dispose of your money in this manner with no voice whatever in saying how much shall be levied or how it shall be spent? Responsible government cost us a civil war in this country, and inside of 100 years, we are to be stripped of it. This is not a matter for politicians but for the people to settle, and the farmers, as the largest tax payers, must be so organized that their opinion will have proper weight, or the people in towns and cities will settle the question for them.



### Organization Born of Necessity

THE reason for an industrial organization among farmers must lie in some vital service which it is expected to perform if it is to have virility enough to live in the face of the competition to which every new farmers' organization is subjected. A farmers' business organization cannot be formed without competing with agencies already established. If it is a serious business undertaking, the forces of competition will be directed toward crushing it; it will be viciously attacked by its competitors; insidious suspicions of all kinds which are apt to influence the average farmer will be circulated regarding it; it may be crippled by the railroads through quiet discrimination in the furnishing of cars or in the extending of transportation facilities to its competitors, or by some other influence over which its competitors have control; and it is likely to fail at the start in the face of the fire which it will have to meet unless it is founded on the bed rock of necessity.

\* A synthesized report of an address delivered at the District Convention of the United Farmers of Ontario.