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Alberta

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by P. P. Woodbridge, Secretary, Calgary, Alberta, to whom all communications for this page should be sent.

DISTRICT DIRECTORS:

Victoria—P. S. Austin	Ranfurly
Edmonton—George Long	Namaso
Strathcona—H. G. Vickery	Strome
Macleod—G. W. Buchanan	Cowley
Calgary—J. A. Bishop	Beddington
Red Deer—D. Buckingham	Stettler
Medicine Hat—E. E. Sparks	Jenner

CLAREMONT AFFAIRS

The following report has been received from J. W. Hurmer, secretary of Claremont Union, No. 725:

We held our monthly meeting on Saturday last and had a good attendance, three new members joining. We are not very strong as yet, but I think we will get a strong union in time, as we have the right spirit round here. We decided that we were not strong enough financially to send delegates to the convention, but we passed a resolution that this union do all it can to support a farmers' candidate on U.F.A. lines. We also held a discussion on consolidated schools, but most of the members think that we should wait till the bonds of the old schoolhouse are paid for first. The crops in this district are looking fairly good, but not so far advanced as last year.

FOR POLITICAL ACTION

Badger Lake Union, No. 563, has just held another successful meeting in which they took up questions of importance, especially the Liquor Act, on which there was considerable discussion. Altho the members do not consider that this act is just what it ought to be, they hope that once it is established it will be possible to have it amended, and voted in favor of the act. The question of nominating candidates in political contests was also taken up, and after some heated discussion a vote was taken which placed the union on record as being in favor of nominating candidates for federal and provincial elections or contests. The union believes that we must put men from our own circles in parliament if we wish to advance the principles of our organization. Crops in this district are heavier than they have been for the past seven years, and unless they are wiped out by hail, the union hopes to be in a position to purchase various necessities co-operatively this fall. So far they have been unable to do this on account of lack of funds.

ON JULY FIRST

River Bend Union, No. 388, held a big U.F.A. picnic at Jenner on July 1. A large and enthusiastic crowd gathered from many miles around, enjoying a day of fun and social intercourse. Baseball, tugs-of-war between visiting unions, foot and horse racing, jumping contests, etc., were all sources of joyous excitement. For true inspiration nothing else on the day's program equalled the earnest and eloquent appeal of S. S. Dunham, of Lethbridge, who for a solid hour dwelt upon the domestic joys of the "old shack," the rearing and beautifying of the new and more ample rural home, the virtues of contentment, the encouraging evidences of a glorious future for this land of pioneers, the necessity for sobriety, good business methods, political purity and sincere loyalty in co-operative effort by the tillers of the soil. The address was one to reach the heart and give much food for thought. It was followed by an address from Thompson Cuyler, of Medicine Hat, on behalf of prohibition, a point on which Mr. Dunham's appeal was very strong. Mr. Spencer, local member for Medicine Hat, also made himself known to the people of these parts in a pleasing and forceful address. The proceeds of the refreshment booth and of the big dance which continued till daybreak, added a substantial amount to the funds. This union, which now has a membership of 140, is still growing and doing extensive buying in carlots. Our co-operative association is taking the official initiative steps preliminary to getting down to real mercantile business.

ANOTHER GOOD PICNIC

The Gwynne Local Union U.F.A. and their Women's Auxiliary held an annual picnic on Dominion Day, which was favored with good weather and an excellent attendance. The picnic was

voted a great success. The union operated a small refreshment booth and gave a bowery dance, which resulted in a small profit to the funds of the union. The members, who put in a great deal of work, feel amply repaid by the publicity acquired.

SPECIAL NOTICE

In reference to the petition forms sent to all our unions recently for signature by women resident in the province of Alberta and asking that adequate provision be made by the government for the rigid enforcement of the Liquor Act, which was carried by so large a majority on July 21, if there are any of these petitions still out in the country, please see that they are sent in at once to Mrs. Fred Langford, 324 Superior Avenue, Calgary, Alta. These petitions will be used at an early date, and we would like to have them in if possible not later than the end of the second week in August.

GOVERNMENT AND WEEDS

The secretary of Colinton Union, No. 540, writes as follows:

At the meeting of the above union held on July 26, I was instructed to write you and have inserted in The Guide the following motion:

"That we, the members of Colinton Union, No. 540, are continually being reminded by our government of the importance of good farming and keeping our ground free from weeds. Last spring the government shipped into our district carloads of seed oats for needful settlers, and a majority of the oats were filthy with wild oats, buckwheat, mustard, etc. Wild oats were a thing unknown in our district, but from now on we will get our lawful share, thanks to our government seed inspectors. We give the government all the honor that is due them for the information we derive from the demonstration farms, demonstration trains, etc., but we do consider it an injustice when they contaminate a new and virgin district with noxious weeds and undo the work done by the good farmers of the district. The men who had the distributing of the seed were offered good seed oats by some farmers of this district, but they would not buy from them even at a reduced rate."

WAR RELIEF FUNDS

Belgian Relief Fund

Previously acknowledged	\$2,506.15
Wood River Union, No. 456	10.00
Gleichen Union, No. 96	25.00
Leighton Union, No. 512	15.75
Sullivan Lake, No. 312	5.00
University Union, No. 684	5.00
Melville Union, No. 50	2.00
Partridge Hill, No. 583	3.50
Horsehaven Union, No. 460	10.00
Pine Creek Union, No. 624	5.00
Sulphur Springs Union, No. 466	10.00
Gadsby Union, No. 129 (per Messrs. Reynolds and Mc-Morris)	10.00
Hanna Union, No. 536	10.00
Gadsby Union, No. 129	5.00
Total	\$2,622.40

U.F.A. Patriotic Fund

Previously acknowledged	\$795.20
Sharrow Union, No. 612	6.20
Stettler Union, No. 89	11.70
Partridge Hills, No. 583	7.50
Pine Creek, No. 624	3.00
Rodney Union, No. 57	13.05
Coaldale Union, No. 362	33.90
Kinsella Union, No. 277	10.00
Summerview Union, No. 147	43.70
Total	\$924.25

Red Cross Fund

Previously acknowledged	\$325.05
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Patriotic Fund

Previously acknowledged	\$149.95
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AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

The following is an interesting article on farmers' credit, and is taken from the Weekly News Letter, United States Department of Agriculture, dated April 28, 1915, Bulletin Foreign Agriculture Intelligence. The article is interesting in so far as it shows what might be done by any of our local unions under similar laws:

"Three plans by which farmers in actual practice have succeeded in improving their personal credit and securing loans at less than the prevailing rate of interest are outlined in Farmers' Bulletin No. 654, 'How Farmers May Improve Their Personal Credit.'"

"The first of these plans has worked out in certain localities in North Dakota so well that the farmer has been able to borrow money on his personal note at 8 per cent. at a time when the usual rate in his vicinity varied from 10 to 12 per cent. To secure this reduction in interest, the farmer agreed that the bankers should buy the dairy stock for which he wished the loan and sell it to him at actual cost. The purchase in a number of cases was conducted with the advice of state or federal dairy specialists. The men who furnished the money were thus in a position to make certain that it was used for productive improvements which would enable the borrower to repay the loan. Under this plan, in fact, the farmer may be said to have borrowed the improvement itself instead of the money to buy it with, for the disposition of the money was taken out of his hands."

"A plan of the same general character was carried out a year or two ago in Southern Idaho, but in this case three or four banks united in the purchase of a carload of dairy stock. In another case in Nevada a local creamery supplied the money and held back a part of the returns from milk and cream delivered by the borrowers. Altogether 491 cows and heifers were distributed among 64 farmers, the aggregate amount of money represented by the loans being \$39,483. This is the simplest of the three methods. It consists essentially in permitting the lender to say how the money that he loans shall be spent. Under such circumstances he naturally feels more secure, and the rate of interest lessens with the risk."

"In regions where for various reasons this plan has not proved possible, another method is to have the farmers collectively assume a certain guaranty for the notes given by individuals. In Southern Montana, for example, nineteen farmers organized an association and appointed trustees to represent it in negotiations with a local bank. The trustees were authorized to guarantee a limited amount to the bank on the joint and several liability of the association members. With this additional security the bank agreed to advance \$5,000 to the association at 8 per cent. when the general bank rate was 10 and 12 per cent. Two delegates from the association purchased with the money two carloads of heifers, which were distributed among the members, each animal being charged with a proportionate share for all the incidental expenses connected with the transaction. Each purchaser pledged himself to care for and breed the animals by methods approved by the trustees."

"In the third plan the guaranty is furnished not by the farmers themselves but by an outside interest. As the plan was developed in Wisconsin and Minnesota, this outside interest consisted of local business men who were in their way as much concerned as the farmers with the general improvement of agricultural conditions in their regions. Under this plan the business men subscribed a certain percentage of the funds loaned with the understanding that this was to constitute a guaranty fund to protect the bankers. Otherwise the plan was in its essential principles like that adopted in Montana."

"None of these methods require more than a temporary organization. A permanent co-operative credit association is, of course, a different matter, which

has, however, many advantages. Such associations encourage habits of saving, afford training in business methods, and may establish a collective fund for common agricultural purposes as well as providing loans to their members on more reasonable terms than they could obtain individually. The fundamental principle of their management is that no loan must be granted unless the committee in charge believes that the member and the association will both be benefited. The funds for the loans may be secured thru payments on shares, thru deposits, and by borrowing from outside sources. Associations doing business of this sort, however, are subject to statutory regulations, and it is of course important that these regulations be understood and observed by the management.

"A co-operative credit association must not be considered as in any way a substitute for other banking institutions, but rather as an ally of them. The deposits in such associations are frequently in such small amounts that it is unlikely that they would be placed in a regular bank. On the other hand the total of these small sums is frequently considerable, and such part of it as is not loaned to members of the association is usually placed on deposit in the local banks. In addition to the service which the association can render to its individual members both by aiding them to obtain proper loans and by preventing them from making unwise ones, the association can also be of service to the community in a number of ways, among which collective purchasing is perhaps the most prominent."

In commenting briefly on this article I would express the opinion that plan No. 1, in so far as it concerns the banks, is impracticable owing to the central control system of our banks in this country, which must carry with it strict limitations to the power of the local bank manager. In so far as the creamery is concerned it would be possible, but sounds almost too much like the millenium. For the most part the settlement in this province is as yet too young and too uncertain to justify the risk.

The second plan is an extension of the one outlined in my last annual report. It is quite within the realm of possibility for any of our unions who will take the trouble to organize properly, and has already been tried out on a smaller scale than the example given by two or three of our unions who purchased seed grain this spring on this plan.

The third plan is the same as that which was proposed for the Calgary district, and has been tried out at one or two places in Saskatchewan.

The co-operative credit association is, as the article says, a different matter, and in its full sense is not possible in this country on account of our banking laws. The work of such an association can, however, be carried out in a modified form by any union properly incorporated under our Co-operative Trading Associations Act.

The working out of plan No. 1 and the co-operative credit associations in the United States should be a sufficient and convincing argument to those worthy people—mostly bank managers and financial magnates—who are forever holding forth on the beauties of the Canadian banking system, which make it, if we are to believe all they say, one of the best—if not the best—in the world, and a great asset to the Dominion. The United States is not particularly noted for the practical assistance that it has given in the way of legislation of a helpful nature to farmers' organizations, but the fact that these things can be done in the United States is simply one more object lesson as to how far Canada is really behind those countries where agriculture is recognized officially as the backbone of the country and encouraged by every legitimate means possible.

P. P. WOODBRIDGE