

The Countrywoman

Annual Conventions

THE dates of the annual conventions have been set except that of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers. Manitoba Grain Growers' Association and the Women's Section are to meet in Brandon on January 8, 9 and 10, and the United Farmers' and Farm Women of Alberta in Edmonton, on January 21, 22 and 23. It is expected that the Saskatchewan convention dates will be announced elsewhere in this issue.

Perhaps never in the history of the farmers' movement has the call to farm people been more insistent and urgent for organization than at present. The history of the organization has been one of an ever widening field. Something was achieved only to open up a new line of endeavor. Each achievement has been the open door to wider opportunities. Economic and social structures have been tumbling about us during the last four-and-a-half years. We are confronted with the necessity to rebuild, reconstruct. The whole field of reconstruction lies before us. If that reconstruction is to be on a firm and just foundation, then each of us must have a hand in its laying. The farmers and farm women's organizations represent the latest word in improved building designs, and yet though are only at the beginning. Their planning does not over-emphasize any part or faction of the whole. Its motto is "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none." It emphasizes agriculture only in so much as agriculture is the basic industry of the country. Its program strives to relieve the producer of any undue burden and place it justly on the shoulders of those to whom it belongs.

The Women's Sections are an integral part of the organizations. Each of the three constitutions reads in part, "Women shall have the same standing in the organization as men." The burden of reconstructing rests equally on the men and the women of Canada. The call is just as urgent for women as for men. The foundation of all the social differences in our country are economic and political. Any other work we do is not getting at the root of the difficulties. The farm movement is the only one that strikes at the root of the matter, and it is essential that farm people should rally to the standard of these organizations. The rallying place is the annual convention. Any one interested in the readjusting of our social structure can ill afford to be absent from the annual conventions.

Don't fail to appoint your delegates. Expect them to bring back enough enthusiasm and "pep" to carry your local and section on for another year. Come to the convention yourself if you possibly can. Don't stay home because of the babies. Bring them too. The association is a family one. Don't let the lack of what you consider suitable clothes deter you from coming. Everybody wears the only clothes he or she has to wear. You'll enjoy meeting the other folks there, and they want to know you and how organization affairs are getting along in your corner of the country. Don't disappoint anyone, least of all yourself. Write your friends, "Meet me at the Brandon convention, January 8, 9 and 10."

An Envious Record

Misses Edith and Laura Halloran, of Nesbitt, Manitoba, aged 15 and 13 years respectively, are the proud possessors of a bronze medal each, earned as Soldiers of the Soil. Accompanying the medals was a letter of commendation from the Canadian government for the splendid work accomplished by them.

The girls were determined to help in the work of production, even if they could not become members of the organization known as the Soldiers of the Soil. They put in a crop of 400 acres last spring and this fall stooked it and harvested it without help, and finished their season's work by helping with the plowing of 140 acres. Many Manitoba girls have helped during the past year on the farms, but it would be hard to beat the record of these two daughters of John Halloran, of Nesbitt.

Woman Represents Times

Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, a well-known American, writer has gone to France, to attend the peace conference for the New York Times. Mrs. Atherton wrote one of the most widely read of the war books, "The White Morning," in which she outlined the possible downfall of Germany through the efforts of the women of Germany. Her many years of residence in France and in other European countries, and her wide acquaintance there, will give her exceptional advantages for her journalistic mission. Mrs. Atherton has just received the honor of being chosen as the favorite author of American authors in the voting contest which has been carried on for some time by the Authors' League Bulletin.

Calgary Municipal Hospital

The people of Calgary made a notable step in a progressive line when they voted so overwhelmingly for the municipalization of their city hospitals. Of the 5,955 who voted only 576 approved of the present form of administration.

Although a committee of the Medical Association stated at a joint conference of the aldermanic committee and the association committee, that if the matter were submitted as a plebiscite, the association would go to the legislature with their best lawyers. It is hardly likely that in the face of such a decided pronouncement from the people of Calgary that this step will be taken.

The hospital, to which large sums had been given by the city has up to the present been governed by a board of trustees who were in no way responsible to the city whose money they administered. The progressive people in Calgary could see no reason why the hospitals, as the schools, both of which were financed largely by public funds, should not be administered by a board directly elected by the people. The hospital is now a municipal affair and as such will be administered by a board elected by the people of Calgary, and directly responsible to the people who elected them.

Valuable Booklet

The domestic science teachers of the province of Alberta have compiled a valuable booklet dealing with the preparing and serving of hot lunches in the rural schools. This booklet may be obtained from the department of education although it is being freely distributed throughout the province.

It has been prepared after a careful survey of rural conditions. The booklet is being circulated by the department to encourage teachers and trustees to arrange for the serving of at least one hot dish every noon. This program has been tried with marked success in both the morale and health of the students. More than 60 per cent. of the children in rural schools carry lunch to school, and this eaten at irregular intervals, and frequently frozen, is frequently indigestible. With the preparation of one hot dish there is the advantage of supplementing the child's lunch, and of establishing a regular meal hour. Three ways are suggested as possible methods of securing supplies; the school board may supply funds from the general revenue, which is the ideal way, funds may be secured by giving a school con-

cert, or the money may be collected by making a charge for the luncheon, or by assessment from the pupils.

Complete suggestions are given as to staple supplies easily secured and suitable for climate and local conditions, and as to the necessary utensils. Chowders, cream soups and vegetables, hot milk dishes and meat soups scientifically prepared are among the suggested dishes. Suggestions are also appended for the mother who is preparing the additional cold luncheon.

An Important Board

On December 12, there was formed an important board, to be known as the Women's Advisory Committee of the Repatriation and Employment Commission. The chairman is Mrs. Charles Robson, of Winnipeg. Mrs. Robson was for some time president of the Local Council of Regina. Latterly she has been corresponding secretary of the Local Council of Women of Winnipeg, and a member of the executive of the National Council. Mrs. Robson's sub-

committee includes two other women, Mrs. Helen Reid, of Montreal and Mrs. A. D. Bowby, of Windsor, Ontario. The committee's work will be generally to advise on all matters in which women are concerned, and to correlate the work of the various women's organizations in the Dominion. It will consider problems connected with the repatriation of



He's Not So Sure of the Camera Man.

the 25,000 women who are expected to return from England during the coming months, and will also deal with the question of providing new vocations for the 10,000 women who have been engaged in the munition industries throughout the Dominion.

Federation of Clubs

The date for the meeting of the representatives of the various organizations operating under the Agricultural Education Act is planned for February 13, 14 and 15, in Winnipeg. Miss Mary MacIsaac, of Alberta, is the moving spirit of the movement. Each province is entitled to send two delegates, and it is expected to form a Dominion-wide federation of these societies. A brief questionnaire was sent out some time ago by Miss MacIsaac to the other provincial superintendents asking for appropriate place and time of meeting. The meeting is being held the week prior to that of the Home Economics Societies of Manitoba. It is probable that some of those in attendance at the conference will be given places of prominence on the program of the Home Economics Society.

Women Go Overseas

Miss Wiseman, president of the Canadian Women's Business Club, has left for England. She expects in January to meet Miss King, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce for Women, who has announced her intention of visiting England then. Miss King and Miss Wiseman hope while they are in England to meet with Mrs. Pankhurst in conference on questions regarding women in business, and other matters affecting women's interests. Miss Wiseman will represent the Canadian Women's Business Club at the conference. Miss Wiseman is the head of the Women's Department in one of the big Canadian insurance companies.

Women Urged to Organize

In an article in a recent number of the Common Cause, the need for organization among women workers is pointed out. "While the war lasts, many women," it says, "are neglecting their opportunities of joining their trade organizations. It is true that some of them are leaving the worst-paid employments to go into the war industries of today, where they will probably soon find themselves enrolled in the (National) Federation of Women Workers if they do not happen to join the union of their specific trade. But unless the workers left behind organize themselves, their condition will remain far from satisfactory; and after the war the munition workers returning to those industries will find things as bad as before. The slight rise in wages which has taken place in unorganized industries since 1914 bears no sort of relation to the enormous decline in the purchasing power of money. A very few facts will make this point clear. Untrained women in some of the munition businesses are easily earning 30s and more a week, exclusive of overtime money. Girls in the dressmaking trade are to think themselves lucky if they receive 16s a week after they have spent 18 months at the craft. It is fixed as a minimum; but as it is part of an improved scale, presumably the minimum was formerly less. We turn to the nursing profession, also feebly organized from an economic point of view. . . . The fixed wage, the wage which the educated woman can say she is worth, is £20 a year, considerably less than that of a London parlormaid in a fairly good situation. Until lately the women teachers were by comparison in an even worse position, since they possessed not only education but professional training and experience. Their self-effacement had its fine side. Less laudable was their reluctance to say that they belonged to a trade union. The London unit of the National Federation of Women Teachers has given them a splendid lift out of the rut of genteel abnegation and is now, we see, forming a reserve fund to continue the campaign until the principle of equal pay is conceded. But the moral of all these instances is that they who will not organize are lost."

The article goes on to say that there is another side to the matter. "Organization makes negotiation go more smoothly between employers and workers. The case of the workers can, as a rule, be put more cogently when it is expressed by accredited representatives. The formation of joint boards of employers' and workers' representatives under the Whitley scheme is actually having the effect of thrusting the blessings of organization upon some professional people who formerly could not 'demean' themselves by saying that they belonged to a trade union. In certain occupations the employers themselves are telling their workpeople to join their trade unions so that on both sides differences can be settled without confusion."

"Public war employment committees," the article continues, "are being formed on a similar principle, and only a few seats are allotted to individuals who cannot claim to speak as members of a profession or trade. The result of all these tendencies is that nondescript persons will be edged out unless their ability qualifies them to act as arbitrators or chairmen. The effect of this upon the position in public affairs of educated, unpaid, and often useful women should not be overlooked. If women of this type become ineligible for serving upon employment committees, it will be more than ever needful that qualified spokeswomen should be found among organized wage-earners. Here lies the difficulty, since wage-paid work leaves little time for public work, and vice versa."