

# Applying the Boost Principle

*Some Suggestions for Developing the Local Associations. How to Attract Members*

*How to Hold Them. Buying and Selling Co-operatively. The Association as a Club, with Ideas for a Library;*

*Question Drawer; Bulletin Board, Etc. The Objects of a Local Branch.*

*Topics for Discussion. Developing the Social Side. Sustaining the Interest in the Summer Time. What Other Associations Have Done.*



**W**HAT are the functions of a local branch of the Grain Growers' Association, or of the United Farmers of Alberta? What line of work should be taken up in order to

attract and hold the interest of the members?

How may the membership be enlarged and the sub-association developed into a strong and thriving body of energetic workers?

How may the members work together to their financial advantage?

How may the business and social life of the association be harmonized?

These, and a score of other questions, are opportune at the present time, when the Grain Growers' movement is attaining such remarkable growth, and new associations are being formed throughout all parts of the west. It is essential that the development of the work be through the sub-associations, consequently it is a vital necessity that these associations be live working factors, so popular in the community that members come voluntarily, and of such great advantage to its members, socially, educationally and financially that it will be deemed a privilege to join, instead of a duty.

That these things may be achieved by any local association working along the right lines is beyond doubt; it is simply a matter of detail and enthusiasm. The history of the older associations is filled to overflowing with methods of success; it is scintillating with clever ideas, and the many plans of conquest which have been evolved out of long experience will be of the utmost value to the new associations, and to others which are still in a lethargic state.

The first function of the sub-association is that it become a virtual school for the study of the social and economic questions which must be solved by legislative and co-operative means. The manner in which these studies may be taken up will be treated in this article. While, however, this is the chief object of the local bodies, it will be found difficult to sustain the interest from month to month solely in this manner. The association must be made a club, a place of magnetic attraction. It must be made to appeal to those members who are intellectually inclined, as well as to those whose interests flag during the course of an address or a debate.

Some of the main ideas evolved from other associations are to make the social and business welfare of the members strong features. The former may be accomplished by the introduction of lady members, and the holding of concerts, socials, dances, banquets, plowing matches and picnics, etc. The keenest business interest of the members will be aroused by the purchase of binder twine, formaldehyde, flour, lumber, farm machinery, etc., co-operatively; by selling farm produce co-operatively; by establishing association weigh scales, and by maintaining a bulletin, upon which is to be posted prominently in the place of meeting, lists of everything the members wish to trade, sell or buy.

Then plans can be worked out for holding debates to which the entire community is invited; by establishing an association library equipped with all the essential books, and many of the prominent daily papers and magazines. A question drawer may be maintained, and the members supplied with ornamental badges, which will not only indicate they are paid-up members, but advertise the association in the community.

## How to Increase the Membership

If the association is conducted so as to give direct benefit both financially and socially to the farmers of a community, it will generally result in a large permanent membership, but every effort must be made at the start to interest and educate the producers as to the benefits of organization. An idea that has been tried satisfactorily by several associations is to form a membership committee of the whole association, every man of which is pledged to speak to the farmers near his home. To the member bringing in the most applicants a handsome prize is donated.

Other associations have divided their territory into districts and appointed committees of three men each to make a driving tour of each section, distributing literature, and making a diligent effort to secure new members.

Another plan of campaign is the method adopted by the Mountain View association in Saskatchewan, and other associations; that is to send a circular letter to every farmer in the district pointing out the benefits of the Grain Growers' organization, what it has accomplished, and telling of the co-operative, social and other work undertaken by the local

association to meet changing conditions and requirements. It is essential that the requirements of the farmers be made known through the sub-associations in the form of resolutions upon which action may be taken either at the annual convention or at other seasons of the year, and it is also necessary when occasion arises, that the general executive be given full endorsement of their actions either by petitions or resolutions.

In order to intelligently study and pass resolutions upon the various social and economic problems which affect the farmer it is necessary that there be plenty of live discussion and debate, and there are various means by which this may be handled. Some associations simply announce the subjects to be discussed at the next meeting and invite the members to study up in order that there may be a free exchange of views and opinions; others conduct a series of debates, each of which is participated in by four members, followed by discussion which brings out with striking force all the pros and cons of the subject at issue. Another method is to either invite a well known public speaker or officer of the Grain Growers' Association, or by having the members prepare papers, which can

telligent action by our people. The safety and success of a democracy is found in the intelligence of the people composing it; the safety and success of a tyranny, whether of aristocrats or plutocrats, is found in the ignorance of the populous.

Some associations have adopted the plan of reading aloud articles from THE GUIDE which are afterwards thoroughly discussed. In the back issues of THE GUIDE will be found some valuable information for this purpose. In all debates and discussions the greatest benefit will be achieved if discretion is used. Resolutions which are too radical in their wording sometimes have a contrary effect to that for which they were designed.

Discussions and debates in the local associations develop public men and strong speakers. They tend to develop and improve the capabilities of the members; they draw men out of themselves and are a stepping stone to better things.

## Buying and Selling Co-operatively

Apart from this broader work of the sub-associations there are innumerable ways in which the local associations can operate toward the financial and social benefits of its members. Today there are many associations throughout the west that are purchasing by co-operative means lumber, binder twine, formaldehyde, cordwood, fenceposts, farm machinery, machine oil, flour, coal, oatmeal, bran, seeds, gasoline, coal oil, etc., etc. At Girvin, Sask., a co-operative company was formed with power to purchase coal, wood and lumber, besides building and operating elevators, or manufacturing. This company is purely local and every member is a member of the Grain Growers' Association. The Bagot, Man., branch saved from 1 1/2 cents to 2 cents a pound on binder twine by purchasing large quantities for its members. The Neepawa Grain Growers were successful in bringing the local merchants down in their price for binder twine. The Kellie, Sask., branch for the past two seasons have co-operated in buying binder twine, and state that the plan has worked well. Last year they also purchased a mixed car of flour, oatmeal, and bran. It might also be mentioned that this association also erected a weigh scale near the stockyards and elevator for which shares sold at \$5, each member limited to five shares. The charges for loading a car at the loading platform was \$1 and for draft of stock, 10 cents. The weigh-master received 50 per cent. of the gross earnings. Wheatfields, Man., association, in August, 1909, organized a co-operative lumber company because the prices there were \$8 and \$10 a thousand and higher than other places. The farmers at once gave the new company orders for \$5,000 feet of lumber. The Red Deer, Alberta, co-operative association, under the management of the United Farmers there, has been a signal success. In recent numbers of THE GUIDE full details of their endeavors have been given, so that nothing need further be said here.

## Shipping Clubs

Other associations have adopted other means of working for the advantage of their association. The Lewisville, Alberta, branch, during 1909, conducted a shipping club for the co-operative shipping of grain, and of this G. H. Manser wrote to THE GUIDE last December, "There was opposition at first to our loading together; we did not have a 'bee' and load one man's grain, but we each took our own. The writer remembers one time of over 20 of us pulling in together to load two cars in one day, which we accomplished in seven hours, loading some 3,500 bushels of oats in the two. But they could not stop us. We had our copy of the Grain

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"Bob Evans," owned by Wapella Standard Bred Horse Association

association. In this connection it would be well to point out that the whole commercial world is strongly entrenched behind organizations, and that for this reason the farmers have been oppressed and trodden under foot.

Still another way to wake up the community, and to increase the membership is to use the local papers on every occasion possible. It will be found that news of the Grain Growers' Association will be very acceptable by the editor, for it affects a large number of his readers. Every association should have a press reporter who will insert notices of meeting, with a cordial invitation for all farmers to attend; reports of work done by the local association, and by the Grain Growers' Association at large.

Probably the most important function of the local Grain Growers' Associations is that it become a force and power in the community which will shape public opinion in order that the strongest pressure may be brought to bear on the provincial and federal governments when it is found necessary to pass any new legis-

afterwards be published in the local paper or sent on to THE GUIDE.

## Appropriate Subjects

Of the subjects to be discussed are the intricate workings of our transportation, banking and loaning systems, companies, corporations or trusts and combines; government ownership of terminal and internal elevators; the independent commission plan; the tariff, with special reference to machinery prices; methods to remedy the present livestock conditions; how to prevent violation of the Grain Act; farm financing, especially with regard to when liabilities shall fall due; direct legislation; a sample market; land values and taxation; consolidated schools, and other phases of education; the discrimination in freight rates; life membership; great reforms of the past, and how they were brought about; the anti-combine bill; the Hudson's Bay Railway; etc., etc.

Mr. E. A. Partridge, writing for THE GUIDE some time ago, said, "Education is undoubtedly the first requisite of in-