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CROSSFIELD DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

The following report has just come to hand from A. A. Hall, Secretary of Crossfield District Association:

"I thought perhaps the members of the U. F. A. might like to hear what we are doing in the Crossfield District Association. We organized in Crossfield about nine months ago and the Association is composed of the following unions: Floral, Sunshine, Tan-y-Bryn, Oneil and Rodney, making five in all. We have an office located in the town and are handling flour, coal, fence posts, wire, binder twine, fruits in their season, etc. We are also shipping co-operatively practically all the hogs that are shipped out of the district. We have a set of five ton scales located in the stockyard and are looking around for a suitable place for a storehouse and another set of scales to be used for weighing coal, hay and other things which the farmer may want to use them for. We have handled the following goods since January 1, 1915: Nine cars of coal, three cars of flour and feed, three cars of cedar posts, one car of willow posts, and three one hundred pound kegs of formaldehyde. We have shipped out twenty-three cars of hogs and two of cattle, amounting to \$25,729.10. The cost of handling the hogs ranges from 20 cents to 35 cents per hundred. All this work is done by the co-operation of the members of the U. F. A. in their district, and let me say right here that the members of the U. F. A. in the Crossfield District are loyal to their own organizations, and that is why we are so successful. The next time you hear from us we hope to be doing the most of the buying and selling for the farmers of this district."

SOWING GOOD SEED

J. Higginbottom, Secretary of Lonebutte Union, No. 643, reports as follows: "I have been away for a few weeks and have not been able to see the person who acted in my absence. We, however, are still on the map and as we finish seeding grain hope to put in a crop of hardy annual U. F. A. I believe for all farmers it is a money maker. We reaped our first crop a few weeks ago when the Lonebutte school was declared an up-to-date school in the sense that now all intellectual and social meetings are free. (See Grain Growers' Guide, Aug. 26, 1914).

FALLEN HEROES

Dear Mr. Cross:—We have just read with deep sorrow the news of the awful bereavement that has fallen on Mrs. Cross and yourself. There may be some comfort in the thought that your boy gave his life for his country and died helping to defend humanity against monstrous savagery. We hardly think any words of ours can convey any real comfort, when the sorrow is so keen and fresh, but we cannot help expressing to Mrs. Cross and to yourself the profound sympathy that we and many members of the U. F. A. brotherhood feel for you in this trouble.

The U. F. A. has not been backward in its duty towards the Empire in these trying times either in the matter of cash contributions or the giving of men to fight our battles in the trenches. Several of our secretaries resigned to go to the front and the roll of honor of those who have fallen already contains names well known to the U. F. A. In addition to Lt. Col. R. L. Boyle, of Crossfield, who was always a strong friend of the U. F. A., another name I have noticed is that of David Cross, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Cross, of Nanton. William Cross is secretary of our union at that point and the letter quoted above has been sent to the sorrowing parents on behalf of the Association.

THE TAX ON LETTERS

The following letter was sent by James Speakman, president of the United Farmers of Alberta, to the Post Office Department at Ottawa:

"The Postmaster General, Ottawa.
"Dear Sir:—We want to protest most earnestly against the Post Office regulation causing all letters lacking the war

tax stamp to be sent to the Dead Letter office. This is a great hardship, especially on our widely scattered farm population, and we hope this absurd order will be cancelled, that all letters will be forwarded to the addressees, as they ought to be, and deficiencies in postage collected from the receiver.

"Yours truly,
"JAMES SPEAKMAN,
"President U.F.A."
Calgary, April 19, 1915.

The Post Office department in reply wrote as follows:

"Sir:—
"I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 19th inst., in which you protest against the regulation which requires letters on which the senders have neglected to pay the war tax to be sent to the Dead Letter office.

"In reply, I am to say that this department has considered it necessary for the present, at least, to adopt the course to which you object for several reasons:

"1—If letters upon which the senders fail to prepay the war tax were forwarded to destination and delivered to the addressees subject to collection of the deficiency or double the deficiency, the persons who mailed these letters might remain in ignorance of the fact that the war tax is required, whereas if their letters are returned to them they will remember the war tax next time.

"2—For the present, it does not seem advisable to treat letters for delivery in Canada differently in this respect from letters for places outside of Canada and, if all letters on which the war tax was not prepaid were forwarded to destination, the deficiency in the case of letters going outside of the Dominion, would be collected by other postal administrations and this would defeat the very purpose of the War Revenue Act.

"The department trusts that there will be no serious dislocation of business owing to this arrangement, as the public is being amply warned thru the newspapers and thru all post offices to be careful to prepay the war tax on their correspondence, and instructions have been given to the Dead Letter offices and thruout the postal service to have letters which are returned on account of the war tax being unpaid promptly dealt with every day, so that any delay will be reduced to a minimum.

"I am, Sir,
"Your obedient servant,
"A. W. THROOP, Secretary."
Ottawa, April 23, 1915.

The above letters are copied from correspondence between the Post Office department and the Central Office, and it is hardly necessary to make any comment on same. If the facts were not definitely stated there in the letter from the Post Office department, one would hardly suppose that it were possible for any serious, intelligent business man to cause such immense inconvenience, and often loss, to the general public, simply to make a few people "remember the war tax next time." It is likely that for a while at least our Association will be affected by this special war tax to a greater extent than other organizations, on account of the fact that so much of our correspondence comes from outlying districts where information as to what is actually required is not well distributed, and where the post offices are poorly equipped to meet the new demands being made upon them. As a matter of fact the big Central Post Office authorities themselves do not seem to be very well informed as to what the new regulations are and we already have instances where letters have been returned to the sender, and the tax collected at that end, and where they have been sent to the Dead Letter office at Edmonton and a notice afterwards sent to this office for the amount of the war tax, which is then returned to Edmonton before the letter is finally released. The whole thing is so absurd in its working out that one is inclined to wonder sometimes whether we really are a part of the great British public, living under the British flag, which, as our friends the politicians are so fond of telling us, stands for liberty

freedom and justice. We must surely be forgetting some of the principles for which our Empire stands when we accept so calmly and almost without comment, such autocratic interference with the ordinary course of business, just to teach us to "remember the war tax next time."

RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENTS

It may interest our members to hear how we have fared so far in trying to push thru some amendments in the Railway Act, that we considered necessary. In the report of the Transportation Committee for last year I particularly referred to amendments that were to give farmers a better chance in trying to get compensation for stock damaged or killed on a railway. An amendment that would have placed us in a better position in this respect was included in the proposed new railway bill brought forward early last year, but held up ever since on the pretext of the war. When the session, recently closed, was commencing, I tried to get that proposed railway bill again before the House of Commons, but the government refused to take it up, on the ground that it was contentious matter. When I could not get the whole bill before the House, I tried hard thru our National Council, thru the Railway Commission, and thru J. E. Armstrong, M.P., to get consideration at any rate for the one amendment, relating to the damaging and killing of stock on the railways. But no attention has been given the matter. This is not in any sense a party question. The late Liberal government brought forward such an amendment in 1911, and the Conservative opposition blocked it. The Conservative government brought forward such an amendment last year, but dropped it and has dropped it ever since, because it is "contentious" and there must of course be nothing "contentious" during the war. I have not had time to read very closely the debate during the late parliamentary session, but I have a dim impression that matters and even legislation that seemed "contentious" were handled there. But possibly the matters affecting the welfare of a political party are more urgent than matters of mere justice in a large part of the nation. I must frankly say that my experience during the last years has brought me in the conviction that we are getting hardly any consideration at all at Ottawa. I could bring forward a number of illustrations from subjects put in the hands of the executive by our conventions. In some instances we could not even get a reply. How long are we going to be content to be helpless, to be treated by politicians as if we hardly existed? Apparently we cannot get what we want from the present political party. Are we not yet strong and united enough to shake off the party yoke and to handle our matters ourselves without any regard for the interest of any political party?

JAMES SPEAKMAN.

ABOUT PICNICS

The time will soon be here when the annual picnics will be held, many of our unions in fact have probably already considered this matter and decided on a date. We hope that those who intend holding a picnic this year and desire the attendance of a member of the executive or board of directors as representative of the Central Office, will take particular note of the instructions and suggestions which will be found at the end of this article. There are two or three things which have been very noticeable in regard to the demand for speakers at picnics during the last two or three years. There is a lack of co-operation between unions in the same district which has caused on occasions a speaker to travel over the same ground three times in the season, when it would have been just as easy for the three to arrange their picnic on consecutive dates and thus make one trip cover the whole thing. When one considers that occasionally a speaker has to travel and pay for transportation over 200 miles or more, it is small wonder that our financial position is invariably such that the

Central Office is never able to afford equipment which is necessary if we are to do the best work we are capable of. Another instance of this lack of co-operation occurred twice last year and that was the case of two districts, fifteen or twenty miles apart holding their picnic on the same day, and in both cases the speaker finally landed at the wrong picnic because no arrangements had been made to meet him, nor had he been advised definitely how to find his way to the place where he was expected. We recommend that in every case unions consult with their neighbors and endeavor, so far as possible, to arrange several meetings in the same district to be covered at the same time by the same speaker.

Another thing we must insist on this year is that all unions sending for a speaker must arrange for him to be met on the station and transported to and from the picnic grounds. He must also be given definite information as to how far from the railway line the picnic grounds will be and in what direction. These little details are often very important when arranging a series of meetings in different parts of the country and when the Central Office supplies a speaker without cost to the union, surely we are entitled to ask for this much in return. To save time and disappointment, unions would do well to see that this information is sent in when making their application.

Another matter for your consideration is the arrangements for the program itself. Some of our speakers last year, after having received an invitation and having to travel a considerable distance at a cost of from \$20 to \$30 to the Association, found the program at the picnic so badly arranged that in a few cases they were not given the opportunity to speak at all, and in others found the arrangements so bad that the counter-attractions of sport, etc., which were being run off at the same time and in close proximity, rendered their efforts practically useless. This kind of thing is very little help to the Association of which you are a member, and whose money you are spending. We are pleased to meet your request for a speaker and often do so at great inconvenience to ourselves. There is no reason why every picnic could not be managed in such a way that at least one half hour during the day could be given up entirely to the speaker and everything else held up so that he could enjoy the undivided attention of his audience. I think that that is the least that one could expect after having travelled a long distance at considerable expense and inconvenience at the request of the management of the picnic.

For my own part, I must say that in three years experience I have never yet failed to get a hearing at any picnic I have attended. On the contrary sometimes the position has been reversed and instead of too little, there has been too much, at least for one man. I have been called upon sometimes to speak three times in one day. But to return to the matter in hand, there have been some occasions when it has meant pretty hard work with responsible people in charge of the picnic to get things in such shape that a decent opportunity to speak was afforded. In my experience I have found that if a special place, preferably sheltered by trees, or in some other way, is marked out as a place where those in attendance at the picnic can lunch or take supper in comfort, it will be generally used by all present, and that with very little trouble the people can be induced to spend half an hour or so immediately after the meal, listening to the speakers, who can talk from the back end of a wagon or democrat, if no platform has been provided. The essential feature is, however, that no counter attractions should be run off at the same time, that a definite time be set for the speaking and that this time be allowed for in the program. I hope that these few suggestions will find a place in the deliberations of all our unions when discussing the matter of a picnic this year, and that as a result we will have bigger and better picnics and that more good will be done to all concerned.

DISTRICT DIRECTORS:		
Victoria—P. B. Austin	Ranfurly	
Edmonton—George Long	Namee	
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	