

CENTRAL OFFICE AT REGINA

By the time this reaches the members the head offices of the Association will have been established in their new home in the "Farmers' Building" in Regina. This building is the beautiful and commodious block of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, which occupies its entire ground floor.

In the same building are also the offices of the Municipal Hail Insurance Commission so that it is with the utmost fitness that it is to be known as the "Farmers' Building" since there will be few farmers in Saskatchewan who fail to look to one or more of the three great provincial co-operative enterprises directed from within its walls as being owned in part by them and to which they look for leadership in the fight of the farmers for "equity" and "a square deal."

Saskatchewan, as the only exclusively agricultural province of Canada more than any other province, is dependent for her future success upon her own provincial institutions, so that the upbuilding of a healthy provincial consciousness amongst her farmers and a sense of ownership and pride in their own institutions is of paramount importance. Except for this strong provincial self reliance and action unhampered by control from without the province there would scarcely be an Association today. Certainly there would be no great co-operative movement by the Association and there would be no Municipal Hail Insurance Commission with its enormous savings to the farmers of the province each year, nor would there ever have been the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company with its 230 elevators, its grain commission department at Winnipeg and a great terminal elevator about to be built at the lake front, every dollar of the profits of all of which enterprises are the property of Saskatchewan farmers exclusively.

The housing of these three great Saskatchewan co-operative enterprises as one family in the farmers' own building, located in the capital of the province, where they will be most readily accessible for the greatest number, should cause a thrill of pride in and respect for his chosen calling to surge in the bosom of every farmer in the province and should fill him with calm faith in the future and an unshakable confidence in the permanence and efficacy of the great co-operative movement of the associated farmers of Saskatchewan.

The Association's entrance will be the one on Twelfth Avenue, next the Public Telephone Building. All communications should be addressed: Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Farmers' Building, Regina, Sask.

J. B. M.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY FORMED

Central Secretary:—J. L. Rooke, our district director, was with us on Saturday the 18th in the afternoon and gave an address. There was a fair turnout to hear him and after his address, we took a subscription for forming a co-operative society. Ten members took shares and expect to have ten more to start with. We will hold a meeting on April 8 to organize and elect officers. I received a sheaf of membership tickets on Saturday's mail and I think they are a great improvement on the old ones.

At the last regular meeting a resolution was passed that we choose sides and canvass the neighborhood for more farmers to become members, the losing side to put up a supper, so by the time we have our next meeting I think our membership will have more than doubled. There are now thirty-one paid-up members. You will find enclosed a letter and statement from Martin Carlson, another member in trouble with the Farm Produce Company, Saskatoon, from whom he cannot receive his pay for produce which he sent them and he wishes the Association to take it up for him. We took up a collection for the Belgian Relief Fund and secured fourteen bags of wheat and eleven bags of oats, which we shipped Saturday the 18th.

J. C. SNELL

Secretary, Invermay Local.

ORGANIZED EFFORT REVIEWED

The following article is a copy from "The Public," a little magazine published in Chicago, U.S.A., calling itself "A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy, and a Weekly Narrative of History in the Making." The writer of the article is George W. Atkinson, of Ceylon, a student of economics and a very active

worker of long standing in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. It is here reproduced for two reasons. First, because it is an excellent review of the development of the farmers' movement; second, it gives us an idea of the manner in which that movement is being placed before our cousins across the line.

J. B. M.

PROGRESSIVE FARMERS

The fifteenth annual convention of Saskatchewan Grain Growers has met with the clouds of war still shadowing our horizon. Britain's overseas dominions have accepted their position as parts of the empire and are taking up their share of the burden. The streets are alive with men in khaki and public places are placarded with appeals for men and more men to make up the half million that Canada has undertaken to supply. We are hoping for peace, but are settled in our determination that with it shall be established the integrity of small nations, and that the principle of autonomous government shall be advanced. But the disturbing influence of war has not caused these farmers to recede from one single position taken in previous years, and they are inspired to greater efforts by some results already accomplished, and others in immediate prospect.

In previous years I have remarked on the almost utter lack in this province of anything like a community spirit; that as a whole we were an unintegrated aggregation of "stake" farmers and business men. Now, I am happy to note a most commendable growth of interest in matters affecting the common welfare. A single case will illustrate: Our common school system, as it stands now, is the result of a process of accretion—of additions and amendments to the body of laws and department regulations and the postponement of difficult and unpleasant problems. Naturally, a somewhat chaotic condition prevails and the efficiency of the system is not at all commensurate with the expense at which the schools are maintained. Last summer the Premier and leader of the opposition united in an invitation to a general non-partisan discussion of the school needs of the province in advance of an overhauling of the educational laws. The response was immediate and general. Papers opened their columns to the discussion. A public education league was organized and a survey of the schools of the whole province instituted. The prospective results from this movement are pleasant to anticipate.

Substantial achievements are already accredited to the Grain Growers' Association, but these are regarded as only the beginning of what is aimed at. Organized late in 1900 to correct the piratical abuses of the grain market, that question has for some time been in a fair way of settlement. Corrective legislation was secured and the Grain Growers' Grain Company entered the field as a competitor, handling grain on commission. It now has 16,000 shareholders and a paid-up capital of \$86,000. Subsidiary companies have been formed to handle the export trade, lumber business, and other lines. The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Co. followed in the local market, and is now the largest elevator company in the world, with 18,000 shareholders and 230 elevators.

Co-operative Trading Department

Western Canada is said to be the district of the highest range of prices in the civilized world. This, of course, is true only of the goods we have to buy, for our staple products are sold in the world's markets. The Association attacked this situation two years ago by instituting a co-operative trading department. With no capital stock at all the central office last year as jobbers supplied locals at wholesale prices commodities to the value of \$850,000. Jobbers' profits amounting to \$16,000, were divided among locals on the basis of business done.

An Implement Sales Act was secured, which provides for a standard contract conserving the rights of purchasers and guaranteeing the implement to perform the work intended.

Co-operative trading has been made possible by legislation enacted at the

request of the Association, and government hail insurance was put into operation at the same request. Prohibition and a dower law had long been advocated without effect, but were soon secured when the Grain Growers took a hand. The government has established wholesale liquor stores as a temporary expedient, but their abolition is now insistently demanded. The only remaining requirement for total prohibition is control of the importation of liquors from outside the province, but that must await an amendment to the British North America Act. A legal department has been established to give advice to contest important cases in court, and to draft and promote the enactment of desired legislation. A conference was held with a committee of the mighty Manufacturers' Association, and a joint committee of agriculture and commerce was appointed to promote an understanding between the two warring interests. Woman suffrage and direct legislation are almost here and the movements for free trade and agricultural credits are steadily gaining. Of these last two, the former will meet powerful and determined opposition, and the latter is yet in a somewhat nebulous form. The Hudson Bay Railway is to Canada what the Panama Canal was to the United States. It is steadily demanded by the Western farmers and as steadily resisted by eastern interests and transcontinental railways.

Prominent and distinctive among all the achievements of this farmers' movement stands its official organ, the Grain Growers' Guide, which in eight years has grown to a position of commanding influence in Western Canada, and as an exponent of fundamental democracy is second to none in the Dominion. The Saskatchewan membership of the Association has increased over 25 per cent in the past year, and now numbers over 25 per cent of the farmers of the province. A good beginning so long as it is regarded as but a beginning.

As noted above, this farmers' movement has developed several lusty and rapidly growing trading companies. These at present are largely independent of one another, the principal connecting bond being that of sympathy and common interest. They have now arrived at the stage of overlapping business, and are facing the alternative of friction and dissension or of a grand federation of all organizations under one management. A plan of federation has been worked out on the basis of independent local units to be affiliated with the central body. It is believed that this arrangement will preserve the vital principle of democratic control while permitting of unified management and unlimited expansion. This is a critical stage of development and its successful passage depends on a faithful adherence to the altruistic principle of true co-operation.

More Education Necessary

A sympathetic observer of this movement gave me his opinion recently that the farmers had travelled about as far as they could without a broader grasp of the situation. Said he: "When they know more they can do more, not sooner." The managing director significantly remarked in his report, "There is the possibility that we have been developing co-operative organization more rapidly than we have been imbuing the ethics of co-operation, and herein lies a real peril to your struggle for a true democracy." My opinion is this, the constructive part of this movement is the work of certain devoted idealists, loyally and intelligently supported by a few, acquiesced in by a large number, and regarded indifferently by the great mass of farmers. This is too narrow a basis for a great democratic movement.

I wish here to correct what has seemed to me a misapprehension on the part of some critics regarding co-operation. Co-operation may not be the basic reform, but I submit that democratic control of a business by its patrons and the division of its profits in proportion to its patronage produces a mental attitude that is absolutely essential if any social problem is settled in the interest of the common good. The fact that the Single Tax was not covered in any resolution

or scarcely mentioned once in any discussion, I think, demonstrates the contention I have long held that the people here know next to nothing of the philosophy of community-made values, albeit they have the principle planted in their midst. A characteristic address was delivered by F. J. Dixon, of Winnipeg, the first evening of the convention, but perhaps the minds of the delegates were too pre-occupied to give it the consideration it deserved.

The necessity for education within the organization is recognized by many grain growers, but nothing specific has yet been done to institute the work. The greatest, indeed the only popular democratic organization in the Canadian West is on the threshold of greater things than it can possibly realize at the present time. Shall it enter the land and possess it, or shall it return to a forty years' wandering thru the wilderness?

GEO. W. ATKINSON.

Ceylon, Sask.

SECRETARY ENLISTS

Central Secretary:—Since I have decided to enlist, I wish to thank you for the many courtesies which you have extended to me during the term which I have been connected with the movement of the associated farmers. And I bespeak for my successor a continuance of the kindly and courteous treatment which I received from yourself and from every member of the staff of the Trading Department. Yours respectfully,

M. M. RICHARDSON.

Secretary, Shaunavon Local.

ENTHUSIASTIC AT ENGLEWOOD

Central Secretary:—At the annual meeting on January 8 the Englewood Local G.G.A. elected the following officers for the ensuing year: A. Hood, president; D. Rumish, vice-president, and J. H. Simon, secretary-treasurer. We now have about twenty members in good standing, and have since December, 1915, bought three carloads of wood and two cars of coal, thereby saving \$226.80. On February 18 a social and dance was held in the schoolhouse, the proceeds of which were given to the Canadian Red Cross Association. The affair was arranged by our association of L. G. G. The sum of \$100 was realized. Mention must be made of a large cake made by one of the ladies and donated for the occasion. Tickets were sold and the cake raffled, the lucky winner retaining the top layer and the rest again cut and sold in smaller pieces, by which means most of the sum was raised. Two songs were rendered by school children, "O Canada We Stand For Thee" and "The Maple Leaf." An exhibition flag drill was given between the singing.

J. H. SIMON,

Secretary, Englewood Ass'n.

RED CROSS DONATION

Central Secretary:—Enclosed please find the sum of \$17.10 which are the proceeds of a sale of boxes at our last Grain Growers' meeting. We desire this amount to go to the Red Cross Fund.

GEORGE URWIN,

Sec., Neaden Ass'n.

BIRTHDAY PARTY

Dear Sir:—On February 29 last the members of the women and men section of the Local Grain Growers' Association gave a birthday party to our president, Louis Arnold, on the anniversary of his fifteenth birthday, and presented him with a small token of the high esteem in which the members of the local association regard their president. Mr. Arnold must be the youngest president of any Local Grain Growers' Association in this province, although he was born in 1852 in Germany. Mr. Arnold came to Canada as a young man. He settled for a number of years in Nova Scotia until answering the call of the young New West he came to this country, arriving at what is now Indian Head on July 18, 1882, and homesteading on the farm where he has lived during all these years. Everybody in the district south of Indian Head, far and wide, knows Louis Arnold, for at any meeting looking to the welfare of the community, Mr. Arnold is sure to be present.

FRANK O. BURRILL.

Sec., Sunny South G.G.A.