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.

STRONG CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY

Blackie U.F.A. Co-operative Society was organized some two years ago, and has a very interesting and a successful record though it does not proclaim it from the housetops. The writer was recently down there and while unable to go into the full details, succeeded in drawing forth a few items of interest among which are the following:

The society is engaged primarily in the lumber and coal business, owning two lumber yards at Blackie, and the largest coal shed in the town. A good stock of lumber of all descriptions is carried, as well as hard and soft coal. The business was started with a subscribed capital of about $700. No effort has been made to cut prices unduly on their competitors. The society has undoubtedly been an influence in maintaining normal prices. The subscribed capital now is over $4,000 a portion of which represents cash invested by new members, the balance being accumulated patronage dividends. These patronage dividends are declared to all members in proportion to the amount of business done by them, after a cash payment of eight per cent. has been paid as interest on capital stock. The patronage dividend has never been less that eight per cent. and has ranged as high as ten per cent. Both interest on capital invested and the patronage dividend are declared every six months. In addition there is a cash reserve of over $3,500 in which each member has an interest. The number of members in the society is between 80 and 90.

The society has its paid manager, O. W. Bowlus, to whom almost the entire credit must be given for its practical development and success. The writer was afforded an opportunity to look over the books and other details of this work through the courtesy of the bookkeeper, and the investigation proved most interesting. Thus the record of one member in the society is as follows: His original investment was $50 cash. A few months later, being satisfied with the outlook, a further $100 cash was invested. The dividend on purchases from the society to the end of 1916 amounted to over $160 for which 16 additional shares of stock at $10 each were issued to him, and a credit balance carried forward as part payment of another share. His participation in the reserve fund if it were divided today would be in the neighborhood of $280, or in other words, in addition to receiving eight per cent. interest on his investment of $150, he has actually interest in the society equivalent to nearly $600 cash.

Another interesting feature of this organization is the egg circle which has been organized through the efforts of the women members of the Blackie Local U.F.A. The eggs from this circle are practically all shipped to Calgary, and the business done ranges from $150 to $200 per week, and this, it must be remembered, is not a mixed farming district but a so-called wheat growing area. Adjoining the office of the co-operative society is a hall in which the meetings of the society, U.F.A. Local and the Egg Circle are held, as well as other functions of a social nature. The U.F.A. Local at this point, while not the strongest numerically, is still very much to the front when there is anything doing, as might only be expected seeing that its membership is partically the same as that of the co-operative society.

While digging through some old papers a few days ago I came across the following report of a committee presumably appointed by one of our conventions many years ago. I reproduce it because in a general way the report of this committee still seems very much to the point and may be of use to some of our locals.—P.P.W.

CONSERVATION OF UNIONS

Your committee feel that we cannot be too insistent in our recommendations as to the selection of local officers, that the same be not chosen from the ranks of business men, or those whose personal interests may be contrary to those of the farmers since such officers will not further the interests of the farmers even if they do not actually oppose. Many a local has been wrecked by such officers.

To build up and increase the interest of your locals, we feel that the first requisite is sociability, and we cannot too strongly commend the remarks of our editor, Mr. Chipman, "that our wives and daughters be given equal place with ourselves in all the affairs of the local union, business as well as social and educational." Nothing is more attractive than lunching and supping together, having a cup of coffee followed by a program arranged for at a previous meeting and consisting of songs, solos, quartettes, readings, recitations and papers presented on farm work by the members, either ladies or gentlemen, or both, with the fullest possible discussion following each address. Debates often stimulate great interest. Contests for membership will increase the local and provincial funds.

With the buying of formalin, flour, coal oil, etc., in bulk, you also show the practical side of the U.F.A. work so it is not hard to obtain a large paid up membership, but we must seek to educate by use of local talent, so often lying dormant in all communities. This is better than importing outside talent though this should also be done. Dances are often held to increase funds, but these lack the educational features already mentioned and which are very much to be desired. When once public interest is aroused in the U.F.A. meetings, funds will be easily raised for any legitimate purpose.

We recommend that a letter be sent from the central office to each local secretary, requesting that a committee be formed for the purpose of collecting the fees due, and visiting all the farmers of the district with a view to getting them to become members of the respective locals, also that all our local unions be asked to fully discuss the life membership plan and to obtain as many life members as possible since this will also augment the organizers' fund.

We recommend that any district applying to the central office for an organizer, shall be required to at least secure 12 paid up members, and a fee of at least $5.00 be forwarded to the central office, to assist in defraying the expense of the organizer, same to be credited on membership fees.

We recommend that any union applying to the central body for a speaker shall agree to supply at the same time, some special entertainment for the district, that a special collection be taken for organizing purposes and such funds obtained be forwarded to the central office for same.

We further recommend that should the system now recommended be adopted, and it is considered that sufficient funds have been received to warrant it, a special organizer be put in the field to cover at least the picnic season, and the different locals be asked to co-operate with the central body and in order to make this plan a success to arrange for their picnics with the organizer, so that he can organize a route to cover the ground at the least possible expense; the organizer to be under the directions of the board of directors.

TO KEEP THE TRAIL WARM

R. E. Adams, secretary of Sulphur Springs Local No. 466 reports that this union held its first debate on Friday evening, April 20. The subject of the debate was "Resolved that city life is preferable to country life." The advocates of city life won their case hands down through the superiority of their technique, though the opinion of the meeting was and always will remain in favor of life in God's glorious country. After the debate everybody danced until the wee sma' hours. Beginning with this event the union proposes to keep a warm trail through all the summer. On May 4 there will be a business meeting and social evening. On May 25 A. E. Ottewell of the Extension Department of the University of Alberta will be on hand with a lecture illustrated by moving pictures—not lantern slides—but regular city movies. On June 8 there will be an ice cream social for the benefit of the Red Cross Society.

CLAYSMORE HERO GONE

The regular meeting of Claysmore Local No. 660 was held on April 25, twenty members being present. The secretary was instructed to buy two cars of tamarac posts at a price of ten and a half cents per post, f.o.b. Claysmore. The Farmers' Platform was brought up for discussion, but politics do not appear to be a strong point with the members, Lee McCallum being the only one to express strong opinions re the subject. He did not think much of sending the question list to candidates, as he was sure we would not get an honest opinion from them anyway. He thought it was like putting a club in their hands and asking them to kill themselves. It was decided that after the month of May, the union meetings would be held twice a month instead of once as at present. The secretary reports the death of one of their members, Lieut. G. B. McDonald, who died from wounds received at Vimy Ridge and the central office takes this opportunity of expressing their sincere sympathy with the friends and relatives of the deceased in their sad bereavement, and also with the Claysmore Local in the loss of an active member.

WOMEN CO-OPERATING

Jay W. Scofield, secretary of Hamlin Local No. 28, recently organized, reports: Fourteen residents of Hamlin district voluntarily met at the Quiet Nook schoolhouse, on March 9 and organized a local union. The officers elected were: President, E. H. Turner; vice-president, G. W. Howard; secretary-treasurer, Jay W. Scofield; also a board of six directors. The union started off with 18 charter members. Regular meetings will be held on the first and third Saturday in each month. At the third meeting, held on April 7, three new members were enrolled. The ladies also co-operated with the men at this meeting, and gave considerable assistance. At the fourth meeting, April 21, four new members were admitted, making a total of 25. After every meeting a program and social entertainment is held, which so far have been greatly enjoyed.

A special meeting of Prairie Dell Local No. 112 was called on March 17 at 8.30 p.m. The binder twine question was taken up, and it was decided that same would be ordered through the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company. The hail insurance question was discussed, further action being deferred until further information was received. A motion to raise the membership fee to $1.50 this year was carried.

UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA — EQUITY

U. F. A. AND HAIL INSURANCE

To all Men and Women who are members of the U.F.A. and also to all those who should be, but are not—**WRITE HAIL INSURANCE** through your own organization, via the Local Secretary route.

A FEW REASONS

1—**General.** In 1915, farmers in Alberta paid to private companies the sum of $1,119,816.10 in premiums, of which certainly not less than 25 per cent. or about $280,000 was spent by those companies in commissions to private agents of their own appointment. Figures for 1916 are not yet available, but were higher if anything. In other words, nearly $600,000 has been paid out in two years as commissions for securing the business alone. You pay for that in the rate per dollar of insurance, which has been raised 1 per cent. this year to provide for this unnecessary cost. You are going to have to pay for the regular commissions this year, so why not pay them to your own organization? You can best help yourself by writing with the U.F.A. in 1917.

2—By writing through the U.F.A. you are assured of a square deal because:

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(c) The terms of our policies may be equalled by a few, but theyre are none better.

(d) We have a competent staff of adjusters who know how to compute a loss with justice and equity.

(e) The U.F.A. and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association have both taken up the work with the determination that by united effort the hail insurance business shall be placed on a basis which will ensure greater security, economy and efficiency for you and yours.

Get in touch with the secretary of your nearest U.F.A. Local and place your application with him. If you have no local handy, get busy and organize. You will need it sooner or later for many other things that touch you in a vital spot—your pocket—but you need it for Hail Insurance right now.

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