

April 6th, 1910

APPLYING the BOOST PRINCIPLE

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Act and studied it well. We ordered cars so that we would have one about every third day, that is, if they had come right; so we would have three or four names on the book following in the order mentioned above. We purchased scales from a truck buyer and obtained a site by the aid of C. C. Castle. I will recount some of our successes. First, about threshing time the C.P.R. sent one of their officials to make arrangements with our president re the season's shipping. Next we had offers for our oats; again we sent quotations to two British Columbia firms on our grain, these firms asking us for the same. Again, one of our prominent townsmen wanted to buy 10,000 bushels, offering us cash as soon as loaded, 34 pounds to the bushel and no dockage.

Other associations have used their organization to secure local improvements, such as telephones and good roads. The Clover Bar union in Alberta, made four complaints to the railway commission, two of which were successful, orders being issued for increased width of farmers' crossings and for fencing the G.T.P. line. They requested the government of Alberta to have the report of the chilled meat committee printed and circulated, and this was done. An agitation for a ferry at Clover Bar was successful. During the year the secretary there wrote over 200 letters. One association wrote to certain banks asking them to reduce their rate of interest on a par with other banks. Another local conducted a labor bureau for the benefit of its members, and this same association maintained a bulletin board at the place of meeting on which was prominently posted lists of articles for sale or wanted by the members. Recently one of the farmers' unions in Alberta planned a campaign against the gophers in the district and put up prizes for the members bringing in the most tails. The Spring Creek, Saskatchewan, association sent a delegate to Winnipeg last July to witness and report on the farm motor contests which were held at that time.

In certain parts of the United States farmers' associations have developed the co-operative plan to a much greater extent than in Western Canada. The Farmers' Exchange in New Jersey exercises the functions heretofore performed by commission men, thus getting the products of the farm to the market at a much reduced cost to the original producer.

Among the important work which may be done by Grain Growers' Associations is to give correct crop reports during the season and thus offset the fake bulletins sent out by the manipulators; to keep the central executive notified of all new moves and trickery on the part of the combine; to secure concessions from railways, such as better crossings and loading platforms, and to erect halls for a permanent place of meeting.

Developing the Social Side

During the past year, and particularly during the past few months, it has been amply demonstrated that the local Grain Growers' Associations can stir up great interest and strongly cement their organization by developing the social side of the work. Many associations have made virtual club rooms of their meeting

quarters where the members gather whenever they are in town. The rooms are equipped with all the latest magazines, especially those devoted to economic subjects, and with prominent newspapers on both sides of politics. In one or two associations a lending library has been established which is equipped with volumes bearing on the subjects of greatest interest to the farmers of the west. They have been a boon to the life of the community and have helped to solve the problem of keeping the boy and the girl on the farm by keeping them interested. Banquets, oyster suppers, concerts, dances and other forms of entertainment have been adopted by many of the associations as a means to develop interest in the movement. In many, a ladies' auxiliary has provided refreshments, and, indeed, the ladies have rendered valuable aid in the social development of the organization. At Camlachie, Saskatchewan, the ladies conducted a box social in aid of the local association and the proceeds from the sale of the boxes amounted to \$40.50. The entertainments held have been used as a means to develop the talent of the young people and in some districts the young men have participated in public debates.

Many associations have issued neatly printed invitations to their social functions inviting all the farmers in the vicinity to attend. It was universally found that some good speeches on the Grain Growers' movement resulted in making a lot of new members.

Interest Sustained in the Summer

During the summer the interest can be sustained either by holding plowing matches or picnics. Last summer the Shoal Lake association held a monster picnic at which \$400 in prizes for athletic sports and matches were distributed. A platform was erected and many prominent speakers delivered addresses. The town of Shoal Lake was handsomely decorated for the occasion. There is, however, some little controversy as to whether other associations should emulate Shoal Lake in fostering sport of a professional character. At a picnic held in Saskatchewan an amusing feature was a bachelor bread and bannock competition.

The local associations should hold meetings every two weeks if possible and at least once a month. Several sub-committees should be appointed to handle various phases of the work in order to keep all the members interested; if possible, the directorate could include a foreigner, in order to get the confidence of the foreign born population. Every endeavor should be made to secure life members and to encourage ladies to join the association. At Houston, Man., they have appointed a lady secretary in the person of Miss McConnell.

Every association should aim to double its membership and sectional interests should not be allowed to interfere with what is best for the association as a whole. The members should learn to trust each other. They must have a common interest in a common cause; must learn their inter-dependence on each other, remembering that on them more perhaps than on any other class, depends the responsibility of laying the foundations for a national structure.—E.H.S.

THE FUTURE IS ROSEATE

During the past year there has been a tremendous impetus given to the Grain Growers' organization movement in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, and it is estimated that the combined total membership in the three provinces now numbers very close to the 25,000 mark. According to the auditors' figures the actual paid membership in January of the current year was over 18,000, distributed as follows: 7,000 in Manitoba, 6,000 in Saskatchewan and 5,000 in Alberta. The enthusiasm generated, however, by the three greatest provincial conventions ever held by the Grain Growers has resulted in many new associations being formed, the membership of which will contribute an additional 3,000 to the association in addition to those who have not paid their dues.

When it is considered that this great organization of farmers has become welded solidly in less than nine years the scope of development may be appreciated. The first meeting to organize a Grain Growers' Association was held at Indian Head, December 18, 1901, with twenty persons present.

At the time the auditors' figures were compiled early in the year there were 500 associations throughout the prairies of Western Canada, but at the present time there are considerably over 650. New associations are being organized at the rate of about one every two days. Of the 600 associations in the west, 330 are in Saskatchewan, 195 in Manitoba, and 132 in Alberta.

Like the heavy train which makes a start with great difficulty and gathers speed slowly, the Grain Growers and the United Farmers have progressed until they have gathered a momentum that is carrying them along at record speed. The adage that nothing succeeds like success is working out, and where it was once necessary to press farmers to join they are now coming forward voluntarily and eagerly. There is a magnificent future in store for the association, and possibilities for justice and reform that no man can forecast.

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