

# The Grain Growers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, December 30th, 1914

## HELP THE BELGIANS

The response to the appeal for help for the suffering Belgians has been very generous. Every day brings many contributions to the Belgian Relief Fund conducted by The Guide. The contributions range from \$1.00 to \$100 and are an evidence of the widespread sympathy which the farmers and their wives in this country feel towards their suffering fellow beings in brave little Belgium. All over Canada contributions are being made for the assistance of these suffering people and a campaign towards the same end is now being waged in the United States. In order to help the Belgian people it will require millions of dollars and immense quantities of food and clothing. Hundreds and thousands of Belgian refugees are now in Holland and Great Britain being cared for by the generosity of the people of these countries. Those who still remain in their home land, however, are in great want and are being cared for by the "Belgian Relief Commission" composed of representatives from neutral nations. It is impossible to contribute too freely to this cause, as these people will have to be cared for probably for another year at least, or until the war is over and they can again begin the work of restoring their old homes—that is those who are left. We shall still be pleased to receive contributions to the "Belgian Relief Fund" and checks sent in should be marked payable to that fund and addressed to The Grain Growers' Guide. All contributions will be acknowledged weekly and forwarded to the Belgian Consul to be applied at once to the relief of the Belgian people.

## THE PROBLEM OF PRODUCTION

More and more it is being forced home to the farmers of this country that the chief improvements in agricultural conditions must come from the efforts of the farmers themselves. In other words, the most effective help is self-help. Already farmers have accomplished exceptional results thru their organization, but the work already done thru this organization is a mere tithe of what can be accomplished as the organization develops. Up to the present time the efforts of the organized farmers have been devoted largely to improvements in the grain trade, co-operative distribution and economic improvements thru legislation and thru self help. All of this work has been of the most vital importance and there is still much to be done in the same direction, so that there must be no cessation of effort towards further betterment. Despite the heavy handicap under which the farmers of the west labor on account of unjust economic conditions, created mostly by unfair legislation, it is an unquestioned fact that there is great room for improvement in farming methods. It has been felt, up to the present, that other agencies were devoting more or less attention to productive methods and that it would be wiser for the organized farmers to confine their efforts to economic problems. Now, however, there are many well-informed and observant members of the organized farmers who believe that this same organization

which has accomplished so much along economic lines, could, with great benefit to the organization and great benefit to the individual farmers, take hold of the chief productive problems and assist in showing the farmers how they can cultivate their land so as to produce more bushels to the acre and how to care for their crops and live-stock so as to produce better returns. The United States Grange, the most powerful farmers' organization in the republic, while not neglecting the economic problems, devotes a great deal of attention to the better farming movement. In Western Canada agricultural colleges, high schools and demonstration farms are doing good work towards better farming, but not one farmer in ten is reached by these agencies. The "Better Farming" trains, which travel thruout the west in the summer, also are performing valuable work, but they go thru the country only once a year, and stop only an hour or two at each point. The agricultural journals of the west are also contributing their share to this effort, but not more than one farmer in four reads an agricultural paper of any kind, and reading to the majority of people is not as effective as face to face and heart to heart discussion. In view of the situation as we have thus briefly and incompletely outlined it, the organized farmers can well afford to consider whether the time has not arrived when they should take hold of the problems of production and carry along this work side by side with their efforts to secure economic improvements.

## MAKE A BEGINNING

At the risk of being tiresome we wish to urge upon our readers the value and indeed the necessity of putting system into their farm work. During the winter months now upon us there is more leisure time on the farm than at any other season. This is an excellent opportunity for farmers to take an account of their standing. No better occupation could be found for a few evenings than for a farmer, with the assistance of his wife, to prepare a complete statement of his assets and liabilities, showing when the latter must be met. It is a simple matter to prepare such a statement and it is of immense aid in the planning of next season's work. After a farmer has thus studied out his financial situation he has a good idea of what he is prepared to do in the way of future development. The next thing is to prepare a simple accounting system which will enable the farmer to tell whether his different crops and his various live-stock investments are returning him a fair profit. There is no difficulty in working out such a system of accounts, and once the work has begun it will show such interesting results that it will never be departed from. Year by year the number of farmers who are keeping a system of accounts is increasing and it is only such farmers who are in a position to say definitely where-in they are making or losing the largest amount of money. It is always of advantage to have the farmer and his wife work together on this system, because the more the farmer's wife knows about the business the more satisfactorily it is generally conducted.

## THE SCHOOL FAIR

One of the most promising fruits of rural educational efforts in recent years is the school fair, which is described on another page of this issue. The school fair affords a safe and necessary outlet to the youthful "do something" spirit; it directs the spirit of rivalry into proper channels, and its spectacular features appeal to the imagination of every boy and girl. In addition to the merits enumerated the entire work of preparation for the school fair is of a character to foster "the farm home" movement. The boy or girl who has excelled in the production of some superior animal or plant or article of use cannot but thrill with pride at the acknowledgment of the achievement. The school fair can be directed to stimulate a keen desire for better farming, better living, better business, more beautiful homes and almost everything that is now lacking on the farm. One great advantage of the school fair is that its introduction entails no great expense. Wherever there is the spirit the way is easy to find. One person in the community, with the proper enthusiasm, coupled with tact, can make the movement a success. A second article on phases of the same subject will be published next week.

## SAVE YOUR MONEY

There is a continuous stream of letters coming to our office from farmers all over the West asking whether certain companies which they have purchased stock in, thru a travelling salesman, are reliable. In most instances we have never heard of the company until we receive these requests for information, and in a very large number of cases an investigation shows that the company has no financial standing and that the farmers have no possibility whatever of securing any return for their investment. It would be charitable to believe that in many cases these companies are promoted with good intentions, but they are too frequently visionary schemes which have no possibility of success. In other cases the evidence points to absolute dishonesty of motives and intentions, and in such cases the farmer who purchased stock from the smooth spoken and persuasive salesman was probably regarded as an "easy mark." In the majority of cases the farmers do not pay cash for these shares which they purchase, because they do not have the ready money. The persuasive salesman, however, shows the farmer how easy it will be to pay for the shares some time in the future and accepts his note for the amount, bearing the current rate of interest. In due time the note is discounted at the bank and the farmer is forced to pay, even though he may feel certain before the note falls due, that the enterprise is either a fraud or a failure. We could enumerate a score of enterprises into which the farmers of the West have put over \$1,000,000 in the past four or five years and from which they have never received a cent and never will receive a cent in return. The time to investigate such companies is before the purchase of shares—not afterwards, when it is too late. Farmers ought to know by this time that when any commercial enterprise is certain to produce big

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