

# Farmer's Advocate

## and Home Journal

REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COPYRIGHT ACT OF 1875

December 4, 1907

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

Vol. XLII. No. 793

### EDITORIAL

#### For Members of Agricultural Societies.

A critical time is approaching for the agricultural societies. The annual meetings of these organizations are set for the near future, and upon the outcome of those meetings will largely depend the degree of usefulness and success the society proves itself to be in the community. The idea of an organization of those interested in farming matters is a good one as such an organization is in a position to do certain work to the advantage of each district which individuals could not do, but the organization cannot run itself and to be of any use must simply represent the combined efforts of enthusiastic men, women and children. There is frequently a tendency after a society has been formed or after the annual meeting, to leave everything to the officers while the other members either criticize or lend a very indifferent support. These are things that each individual should count for himself, then proceed to the annual meeting with enthusiasm and make suggestions and take an active interest in what is going on. Nor should a man be disgruntled if the majority do not take to his proposals. Every Government has an opposition and every opinion has its alternative. A society may be all wrong in its policy, but it only strengthens it in its course and weakens it in influence and general usefulness for those who may be in the right to withdraw. A man's first duty to any organization of which he becomes a member is to know what it is for, and his second duty is to make that society of the utmost possible use.

In the different Provinces, the agricultural societies have different constitutions based upon the wording of the Act by which the Government of the Province is authorized to render financial assistance to societies. In Alberta and Saskatchewan these Acts are framed to meet the demands of modern conditions in the agricultural world, but in Manitoba, the Act being framed some years ago, omits to take cognizance of certain functions which a society may properly perform. For instance in the new Provinces provision is made to lend Government assistance to seed fairs, field grain competitions, and co-operative experiments, and the amount of the money grant to each society for the work it carries on whether it be fairs, field competitions or what not is based upon the amount of money the society distributes from its own funds, while in Manitoba the amount of the Government grant is based upon the amount of money a society takes in at its fair and if a certain number of meetings are not held in a year Government assistance is curtailed. This, by the way, was the method in force in Ontario until last year but the Act there has been amended so that the amount of the Government grant depends upon the amount the society distributes in prizes. In Manitoba the Act has been responsible for the carrying on of many summer fairs after all trace of their usefulness had disappeared, for unless a fair were held the Provincial grant would not be forthcoming. The Act is also responsible for the prominence of sport at Manitoba fairs and in fact makes the Government foster sport (which may or may not be a good thing) because the society that could swell its gate receipts by a good baseball game and so draw a crowd was entitled to a grant in the same ratio as the society that depended altogether upon its agricultural display to draw the same sized crowd. The amending of the Act in Manitoba so that the Government grant may be based upon the amount of money the agricultural society distributes in prizes for agricultural products, or upon the amount of agricultural work done, would then allow of the closing of many of the local fairs and of taking

up work of greater value to the community, such as prize farm competitions and the awarding of prizes for field crops. These are things which the country needs and at the annual meetings of the different societies it would augur well if certain aspirants to office would adopt this as their policy and pledge themselves to work for the amending of the Act. In fact, in all societies in all the Provinces incoming officials should be able to lay before the members their plans for the incoming year. The society would then have some definite object and policy in view, and would know at the end of the year how well its officials had discharged their duties.

#### Christmas Number Next Week.

Next week, December 11th, the annual Christmas number of the Farmer's Advocate and Home Journal will be published. It will be a token of the season's greetings from the publishers to the readers. It will contain some of the best pictures we have been able to get together during the year and these will be presented in an unusually attractive style. The reading matter and advertisements also are mostly specially prepared with a view to throwing light on present day problems and providing interesting reading. We feel confident that our readers will appreciate and enjoy this slight token of our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and will do us the favor of letting neighbors see it. The holiday season is a critical time for us for upon the warmth with which our paper is received depends to a great extent the advances we will be able to make in the following twelve months. Figuratively speaking our stocking will be hung up and it has a great capacity for both new and old subscribers.

#### Marketing Wagon Loads.

Although the details of wheat marketing are discussed with more frequency than any other subject among farmers, it is evident from letters received by the agricultural press, officials of the Grain Growers' Associations, and the grain commission firms, whose advertisements appear regularly in this paper, that not only are producers handicapped for want of facilities for marketing but that there is a large class who do not take advantage of the facilities already at hand. Many farmers, seeing the entire lack of competition among buyers on local markets and the other evidences of understandings that prices for farmers loads shall not be broken, conclude that there is no longer any competition in buying and that prices remain at a fixed figure until the local buyer receives instructions to raise or lower them. This conclusion, while generally correct as applied to farmers' loads and local markets, is not true of carload lots on the Winnipeg market. The doing away of competition in buying on the local market is one of the natural results of the more common use of the telegraph and telephone and of organization to secure economy in handling, not only grain but all other commodities, but the assertion that competition in buying no longer fixed prices is true only of local markets, on the whole-sale market for grain at Winnipeg the price of a grade will vary every hour depending upon the combination of circumstances which affect the markets. The man, therefore, who is not satisfied with his local market conditions and who wants to take advantage of the competition in buying should see how he can get his grain upon the carload or cannot get neighbors to go in with him to make up a carload or if he cannot get a car, he will be obliged to sell to the local buyer at the price fixed for the particular grade, and this is where the competitive buying on the grain exchange fails to benefit the producer and makes it possible for a large army of parasitical

traders to live well on the margin between local and Winnipeg (which are really Fort William) prices. Herein lies the real problem of the grain trade, namely to secure to the man who has a wagon load of grain to sell, the advantages of the competition in buying which exist where carloads are sold to millers or exporters. This year the evils arising out of the "harmony" which exists on local markets are intensified on account of the great range in the quality of grain and the urgency of every one who has outstanding accounts. In many cases, farmers who would under ordinary conditions have one or more carloads of grain to sell this year, may have but one half a car or less of two widely different grades, and the continuous demands of those whom he may owe induce him to sell on the local market in small quantities. Nor are the local buyers blind to their advantages and, whether acting upon instructions from their head offices or not, profess not to be anxious to do business at any price. Such conditions are acting most ruinously upon trade and deter the anxiously awaited liquidation of accounts, for there is many a man who if paid full value for his wheat on Winnipeg basis would be able to clear off all his debts, but who on account of the despicable tactics evident on many local markets is compelled to renew notes, and in every case the amount of money put into circulation is curtailed. To overcome the difficulty of securing the intrinsic value of grain on the local market it may yet be necessary to change our whole system of storage facilities.

#### Building Upon Miracles and Mud Sills.

The unfortunate entanglement of the Society of Equity illustrates the error of placing undue confidence in the individuals who may be prominent in movements whose ostensible purpose is the betterment of conditions surrounding a certain class or in untested theoretical devices. In the principle of simple co-operation will be found a solution for many of the problems vexing the farming community but every time attempts to put the principle into operation fail the whole idea of co-operation is discredited. It is unfortunate that there is not more distinction between a genuine, honest attempt to develop a rational co-operative scheme and the counterfeit production of commercial lucaneers. Generally the latter are given the warmest reception because they magnify grievances and promise immediate and immense advantages. The genuine article, like all great and useful things, usually grows from small beginnings, solves one problem before beginning upon another, and leaves its actions to commend its advantages to the public. From simple beginnings in a small way co-operative movements that are founded upon the proper basis usually grow to dominant proportions while the movement which starts off with a great flourish of trumpets promising revolutions in trade and commerce invariably comes to the ground. The exceptions are so few that one is not justified in expecting them.

The Society of Equity, as an organized force, has probably run its course in Canada but the men who accepted its tenets are still living and probably have not lost faith in the principles of co-operation. With those who have once studied economic conditions and enquired into the advantages of organization to affect economy the idea of co-operation will never die. The mistake of these men in going into the Society of Equity was in regarding certain individuals as the Moseses and Joshuas et al of the modern industrial Egypt and in expecting sweeping changes. Nor did they realize how powerful were the influences operative to keep things in their beaten path. People should realize that existing conditions in trade or any other sphere of life are due to influence of about equal strength acting in opposite directions thus tending to