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United Farmers of Alberta

Conducted Officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by the Secretary

H. Higginbotham

Calgary, Alberta

WE have the following letter from Chas. H. Harris, director of the Medicine Hat district:—
May I ask for space in the Alberta page of The Grain Growers' Guide, to make an appeal to the farmers in the Medicine Hat district, to wake up and get busy and assist in getting every tiller of the soil to become a member of the U.F.A.

Come, Brother Farmer, we need you, and you need us; we want to get together; remember, our interests are all alike—what is good for one is good for the other.

We know there are in every neighborhood good sound-thinking men and women, that can be of great assistance in promoting the cause for which the U.F.A. stands; in fact, there is hardly a man or woman but who has good ideas germinate under his or her hat, and we want you all to get together and assist us in sifting out the best, and applying them to our many problems, so that we may settle them right, and by so doing, better our social and financial conditions.

We must remember that we are living in the age of time, when all industrial and business concerns are thoroughly organized and that we are constantly dealing with those concerns, and unless we are also organized, we are dealing with a disadvantage, and therefore we are most sure to get the worst of it. We are always at the mercy of the other fellow. In years gone by, we have had to submit and allow a bunch of gamblers to make the price of the product of labor, and many a time that price has been so low that it did not give us wages for our labor. Last year we got out of that sort of thing, but, Brother Farmer, unless we strengthen our organization by securing more members to our locals so as to give strength and strong backing to our able president when he goes to do battle for our cause, and fight for a square deal for you and me and every tiller of the soil, we can expect nothing but a return to the gamblers' principle as soon as the war is over.

We have the strength and ability, if we only wake up and use it. I cannot expect more space at this time in which to point out the many reasons why we should all be united in this great cause, but I am at liberty to go anywhere in the Medicine Hat district and assist in strengthening the locals we now have, and organize new ones, wherever the farmers may wish to have me come.

Clairmont's Big Rally

One of the largest and most successful U.F.A. meetings ever held in the north country assembled in Clairmont in the Grande Prairie district Monday, March 25th. Sixty-two duly accredited delegates were in attendance. With the kindness of the Rev. M. Younger the Baptist church building was occupied on this occasion. With the 62 delegates and many visiting members, even standing room was at a premium. On the platform were the following: Joshua Fletcher, president; J. H. Harris, vice-president; Rev. C. F. Hopkins, secretary-treasurer; W. F. Bredin, district director on the Central board. W. Molyneux, of Calgary, representing the livestock branch of the Grain Growers Ltd., and M. Reynolds, a new arrival in the settlement, who has purchased a farm near Clairmont. Some fourteen years ago Mr. Reynolds was present at one of the first meetings which the organized farmers ever held in Alberta. This was the historic meeting held in the Robbin Hill schoolhouse.

On his opening address, President Joshua Fletcher spoke as follows:—

At this meeting of the Grande Prairie District Association of the United Farmers of Alberta called here today we hoped to have been able to arrange for representation from each of the nineteen local unions in Grande Prairie and Peace River land districts. In meeting here today we do so knowing that the world is going through the most strenuous times known to human

ity. The very latest advice from the battle front tells us that the liberty and freedom of our race hang in the balance. It is a grave question at this moment where we need our men the most. We need men of physical excellence and calm judgment in the first line of defence. We require the ceaseless energy of our scientists that we may keep pace with those wonderful and terrible engines of destruction. We need men of ability and honesty in our parliament and legislative halls. We believe that throughout Canada and the United States we are well supplied with men of large calibre and ability. Let us try then to keep in the front rank men of honesty and integrity. It has been said that "an honest man is the noblest work of God," and some humorist has added "and it is about the rarest."

Coming nearer home it is our duty as individuals and it is the duty of this organization and the most important duty at the present time to increase production and safeguard transportation in every possible way. We regret that it is a fact that while we may take care of production and receive the approval therefor from our various governments and other combinations of men, still we painfully realize that our transportation system of railway and steamship lines, including the cold storage plan of handling perishable products, are in the hands of huge corporations. It has been truly said that these corporations have no conscience and no soul. The railway companies have succeeded in convincing the authorities at Ottawa that they must have another increase of fifteen per cent. on their already high charges. This has now gone into effect and a vast sum of money will be demanded of Canadian industry to buy titles and build up a Canadian aristocracy. The railway companies, so we are informed, cancelled all convention rates as affecting the organized bodies of industrial classes. The reason given is that the common people were protesting against any increase in passenger and freight rates.

Recent reports state that the president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association in Toronto, in company with six of his colleagues, appeared before the government at Ottawa and protested against the importation of farm tractors by the government. They protested against the free admission of farm machinery and made a general protest against any further concessions being granted to the farmers before their being consulted. These huge corporations throughout Canada and the United States are thoroughly and effectively organized. They believe, as we are forced to believe, that any government, no matter by what name it is known, will yield to the strongest pressure. They are demanding legislation and fixing unnecessary conditions under the pretext of war necessity, but experience teaches us that what they gain they never relinquish.

Various resolutions will be presented to you today regarding food production, the sale of food products and the fixing of prices. During the present year your executive will come in closer touch with our own central body at Calgary through our having elected W. F. Bredin on our Central board. We should also find ourselves a little closer related to the Canadian Council of Agriculture and in a position to assist in solving those larger problems which confront the industrial people of Canada.

Our organization during the early years of its existence found it absolutely necessary to engage in the grain trade that we might learn the whole business from the inside. This has been highly successful. This afternoon you will hear an address, which I assure you you will appreciate, by M. W. Molyneux, of Leduc, dealing with the co-operative shipping of livestock. Mr. Molyneux is an accredited representative of our own company, "The United

Grain Growers Ltd." We trust that this district association will proceed under his direction to form a commercial branch. In this we will be wisely instructed from time to time by Mr. Stephen, the superintendent of our elevators in this district.

The grain trade of the past season has been surrounded by unusual conditions and extremely difficult to handle. The shareholders of our local elevators are to be congratulated upon having a man so capable of dealing with the public and at the same time retaining the confidence of the head office. Our relationship to other organizations is something which we must carefully consider individually and collectively. The Grain Growers of Manitoba and the Grain Growers of Saskatchewan and the United Farmers of Alberta stand together as one great family. Recently we have admitted to this family the United Farmers of Ontario, an organization patterned after our own in the Province of Ontario with the greatest variety of products of any province in the Dominion and a population of over two and one-half million people. The United Farmers of Ontario should reach our highest expectations.

Turning to our sister province of British Columbia we may say that our relationship as conducted by our Central bodies has not been so successful. In our Edmonton convention, January, 1917, we were pleased to meet the president of the B. C. Fruit Growers' Association on our platform. We noticed with regret that organized agriculture in B.C. was not represented on the platform of our Calgary convention, January, 1918. Situated as we are, British Columbia is our natural outlet. If we can make it possible, our orders for fruit and other products of that province should be sent there. The death of the late Premier Brewster was a serious loss to Western Canada and most particularly was it a loss to Grande Prairie. Last fall, where the late Premier and a number of his associates visited this settlement, we noticed the warm sympathy he had in our affair and how he appreciated our geographical position and our natural resources. On this occasion the Premier and his company were entertained at a banquet in the Grande Prairie hotel in Grande Prairie City, and although a serious wrong was committed there, it was so fault of our visitors that no representation of organized agriculture was allowed to appear before them. The program was entirely made up of the legal fraternity of that much advised city.

We are informed that our guest was himself surprised at such a prosperous bunch of lawyers and that agriculture, the basic industry of this province, was not in evidence. The premier was quick to grasp the situation and said in his address that he belonged to the industrial class and followed rough outdoor work along the Canadian coast line. We observed that he was not guilty of being a lawyer politician.

We are being asked now to co-operate in a measure with merchants' associations and boards of trade. These matters are worthy of your consideration. In conclusion we may state that a more complete organization and a largely increased membership are the urgent requirements of the time and we trust that any effort made here today along commercial lines will simplify our advance and increase membership in our local unions.

Annual Report Delayed

We very much regret to inform you that owing to the unprecedented scarcity of printers' labor in this part of the country, the restrictions due to the operation of the Factory Act, and other matters wholly beyond our control, the issue of our Annual Report, approximately scheduled for last month, has been delayed.

Our printers, however, are now working as hard as they possibly can, and without making any definite promises intimate that the work will be off the presses before very long.

The members of our different locals are looking forward eagerly to this issue, and for this reason we are just as anxious as every one concerned that there shall be as little further delay as possible.—Yours faithfully, The United Farmers of Alberta, Publication Department.

Mar

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