

UNITED ACTION

There never was a time when united action in all matters was more necessary than just now. The coming of foreign-born peoples, with their differing ideals and customs, the increase in the activities of labor with the consequent estrangement in sympathy and knowledge, the rapid growth of unionism with its tendency to narrowness and self interest, the heartless greed of profiteers in city and country and the unexampled development of the commercial spirit, have all broken up the unity of the older civilization and driven men to gather together in bands, classes and societies of varying type. Modern invention, particularly the automobile and the telephone have assisted in community disintegration. The former has widened the circle of acquaintance and lessened the bond of friendship. The latter has enabled people to hold intercourse without meeting in person, and though this is a convenience, it stands in the way of the formation of intimate friendship and lasting good fellowship.

The two great agencies that can promote union are the public school, acting chiefly through the children, and the semi-industrial organizations of men and women, known in rural districts as Farmers' Institutes, and Women's Institutes, and in towns and cities, what are known as Community Clubs, open to all classes.

The public school knows neither race, class, creed or language other than that of the country. All children meet on a common level, engage in the same activities in school and on the playground, forget their differences in origin and opportunity and mingle as Canadians with the same ideals and same fond pride in their country—its possibilities and achievements. This, of course, is true only when forces in the community give the school a free hand. No language can be too severe to apply to those who on account of racial pride or religious zeal would minimize the civilizing or unifying power of the institution that is most essential to the formation of true national feeling. The man is neither wise nor patriotic who puts the affairs of his private business, his family, his union, his particular industry or his race before the welfare of the whole body politic. We must rise or fall together. There is no other way to enduring success. The man who is socially, industrially or religiously so small and mean that he cannot move except on his own little orbit, is not fit for this age or this country. The man who supports the public school and all other agencies of the kind that make directly for truth and righteousness is worthy of Canadian citizenship.

The growth of institutes in rural districts is to be regarded with favor. They are the best means yet devised for educating the whole rural population not only in matters pertaining to agriculture, but in all matters relating to good citizenship. It would be possible, of course, for members of institutes to band together as a class seeking special favors in the way of legislation and demanding exemptions that are not granted to others. Judging by the activities in Women's Institutes the emphasis is upon social and moral problems, and the wisdom of education along these lines is apparent to everybody.

The foundation of unity goes deeper than all of this. National stability is based on a recognition of the fundamental virtues—justice and freedom, and these are based on religion. An irreligious people cannot become great, cannot endure from age to age.

And all true religion looks primarily not to forms and ceremonies but to conduct. Sects may come and go, priests and parsons may change or even disappear and yet true religion may live on in the hearts of men. It will be the beginning of the end for Canada when life is passed as if there were no God in the Universe, no sense of brotherhood in the race. The law of progress for the individual and the community is expressed in that most inclusive of all Commandments—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and soul and strength and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

THE SUMMER FAIRS

July is the month of exhibitions or summer fairs. Brandon, Saskatoon, Calgary and other centres vie with each other in an effort to attract the public. For the younger element the great attraction is the entertainment. For the older and more thoughtful, the great value of the exhibitions is the opportunity they present for culture or education and for social intercourse.

Exhibitors in all classes compare their products and learn needed lessons of reform. The general public take heart when they see what their country can produce, and they not infrequently follow their observations by investment. The fair is the very best medium for advertising goods, the very best opportunity for learning what is possible in all lines of manufacture and production.

The fairs have another great value in that they bring together in a friendly way all classes of the community. Old friendships are renewed and new

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ones established. Bitterness and feuds disappear as men and women unite in a common enterprise.

There is no country in the world which has a better opportunity to hold good fairs; for improvement is so rapid that every year brings something new. There is often a need on the part of the executives to bring in cheap attractions that appeal because of their novelty. There is no need for much of this in Western Canada for the real products of field and factory are in themselves the best attractions and too much of the lurid or spectacular interferes with the real purpose of the fairs.

There is a series of contests quite as interesting as those at the fairs. The plowing matches are instructive and profitable not only because they test individual ability in a special line of work, but because they bring the people of a wide area into friendly relation and because they train the young men of the land in the basic art of agriculture. None of the contests in Western Canada has as yet brought out such a crowd of spectators as went to the demonstration in Western Ontario, when 30,000 people were present to cheer the victors. Yet there are thousands who go to Portage-la-Prairie, to Pilot Mound and other centres in Manitoba, and shortly the whole country will be organized. Socially the gatherings have a great value and the demonstrations must of necessity mean better farming.

THE CROPS

Never in the history of the West did the crops present better promise than they do just now. The rainfall has in most parts been ample and the temperature has been perfectly suited to growing grain. Yet there are some districts in which the results will be disappointing because of the gross negligence or culpable ignorance of the farmers themselves. Weeds have not been exterminated and whole districts have been overrun because of the negligence of a few. There is no law which should be more rigorously enforced than that which relates to the extermination of weeds. With praiseworthy zeal both government and people have opened a war on the grasshoppers, and it is hoped their ravages will be limited. Eternal vigilance and punctual action are the only preventatives against plagues of this nature. But even when farmers have done their utmost and have been painstaking and intelligent in their labor, there is a Higher Power who determines after all whether there shall be abundance or want. The greatest need of all is that as a people we are worthy of the blessing of Heaven, for it is a surety. God looks after His own.

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

It is, of course, out of place for Canadians to express an opinion in United States Politics, but there will be general satisfaction that the Republican Party chose a moderate, fair spoken man rather than a firebrand. As a rule minorities make most noise. The stream that runs deep is usually silent. So it was in this case. The one thing that makes a bad impression on non-Americans is the bluster and braggadocio of a few of its people, notably the editors of papers and the platform orators. Fortunately Canadians understand their neighbours and local outbreaks are not considered as an indication that the malady is nation-wide. Yet one could wish that in some quarters there were more modesty. American newspapers, encyclopaedias and biographical dictionaries to the contrary, there have been some great men and great deeds that are not American. It may even be that a small orchestra is just as tuneful as a brass band. The Americans are to be congratulated that they have discontinued their band concerts for a time.

MOTHER'S BAKING

There is nothing pleases most men better than to recall the experiences of childhood. All the joys of youth are magnified in old age, and the present stands out in inglorious contrast to the past. There is no food equal to the pancakes and johnnie cakes that sister used to prepare and no drink equal to the coffee mother made. This applies to more than food. Games, dances, toys of the present day are derided, and the activities of the good old days extolled.

Now, this is all very well as diversion. The joys of memory are not to be considered lightly. Yet why should men in any serious way wish to perpetuate the old just because it is old, when modern skill, ingenuity, and scientific discovery have pointed

the way to better things? Why cry for the sickle when a binder can be had? Why demand the walking plow when the traction engine can haul with ease gang-plow of three, four or six blades? Similarly, why demand the old school with its bookish routine in an age when regulated play and hand-work can be so usefully employed for purposes of culture? And why be satisfied with the long uninteresting church service with emphasis on metaphysical distinctions when the world is pining for light on great practical issues? Why keep to the old ways of honoring the First of July when community organization can bring about exercises that are infinitely more pleasing and profitable? Why keep to old modes of taxation and raising of revenue, when science points the way to a better system?

The old we shall delight to remember simply because it is the old; but in all serious concerns if we would have happiness and success we must follow the leading of science.

In this world there is small room for moss-backs. The only man who can prosper through the years is he who can always keep young. He who has the inhospitable mind must remain near the end of the great procession.

CHANGING CONDITIONS

Anyone who thinks at all will note the change in all departments of life—the change in relationships, in methods, in modes of thought. Nothing could more forcibly illustrate this than recent political elections in Ontario, Manitoba and the Dominion. Old lines have been broken and new affiliations are being formed. The time-honoured system has been doubted, or found unsuitable, and the doubts and unbeliefs have worked over into practical action. It is more than likely that the new groupings will be only for a time, and any man would be politically wise to look ahead to to-morrow's alignment rather than backward to the old. It is perfectly true that party government in Britain arose as a solution for the problems raised by the existence of small warring groups. No government could have stability under the group system, and without stable government there is no hope of real progress. We shall go through the experience of group-government for a time, and then once again there will be a division on some broad issue into two great classes. It will not, however, be the old division into Liberal and Conservative, as we at present understand these terms. It is to be hoped that the division will not be along industrial, racial, or religious lines. This would mean class rule—which is unfair and nationally destructive.

There have been just as great changes religiously and socially as those we have witnessed in the political field. He is a wise man who recognizes changes in attitude and belief as unavoidable.

New experiences bring new conceptions and give rise to new formulae. The problem is to see where changes are leading, and to prepare wisely for the future. The champion for orthodoxy is often only a champion of old fogyism, a being who would put the golden age in the past rather than in the future. Blessed be the man with the forward outlook. The papoose, tied to his mother's back, looking backward, while still going forward, is a poor type of progressive citizenship.

This necessity of looking ahead applies to education, to industry, to methods of finance, and to every form of human endeavor. Looking ahead one can see new inventions and new discoveries, new ideas in which women and children will receive due recognition, in which the individual and state will reconcile their claims for sovereignty, and in which the eternal principles of equity and justice will be accepted and acted upon in all the affairs of life.

Nor does this longing for future perfection mean disloyalty to the old loveliness of life. Well has Charles Hanson Towne written:

Old books, old friends are best,
Old things are loveliest;
Old houses, and the glamour of old days,
The golden peace, the olden, quiet ways.

Old gospels, and old dreams!
With new delight life teems
When these are read, when these are told:
All youth at last grows old.

In bleak December, lo!
A whirlwind of white snow,
O heart! lost April then
Seems wonderful again.

Yet dreams new dreams, be glad
For all the soul once had,
Old books, old friends are best—
Old love is loveliest!