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WRITE FOR PRICE LIST TODAY

 We Wholesale to a Nation Instead of
Retail to a Neighborhood

**Consumers' Lumber
Company**

VANCOUVER, B.C.

Alberta

This section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by
P. P. Woodbridge, Secretary, Calgary, Alberta, to whom all communi-
cations for this page should be sent.

THE SECRETARY'S MAIL BAG

Today is Tuesday; yesterday being the day for The Guide copy, and having to interview an unusually large number of visitors I was unable to attend to any mail. This morning's accumulation, in addition to ordinary routine work, contains letters which may be sorted under the following items:

1. A letter from a member who is at present the owner of a homestead in the northern part of the province, but who may not be the owner much longer. He has secured a \$500 loan on his homestead at 12 per cent. interest payable half-yearly, and has probably signed an application form agreeing to pay a 2 1/2 per cent bonus in addition. The legal expenses of the firm when negotiated, together with arrears of taxes, amount to \$200.50 out of \$500 raised on the mortgage. He wants advice.

2. A letter from a member who has got into trouble with a lumber company in regard to non-payment of a note. He has \$29.85 costs entered up against him. He remits a money order and wants me to see the lumber company and get the matter settled for him.

3. A letter from a union who want the C.P.R. to put in a level crossing for their convenience. It probably means seeing the railway company and taking it up with the Board of Railway Commissioners as well, possibly the preparation of the case to submit to the Board at their next public sitting in Calgary.

4. A letter from a railway company re. complaint as to shortage in certain cars of coal shipped to one of our unions. They want further detailed information.

5. A complaint from a member in dispute with a local milling company re shipment of certain cars of wheat, which means a personal interview with the company concerned.

6. A letter from a member who has failed to deliver certain grain contracted to a truck buyer, who it appears was not licensed at the time.

7. A letter from a member who has discovered a certain clause in his fire insurance policy that does not appear to be quite fair. He wants to know if the clause is in common use or not.

8. A letter from a secretary who from personal experience has just become acquainted with one of the many injustices which are part of our present law.

9. A letter from a member who has apparently had a raw deal in connection with his application for a car. The car book has been manipulated in some way. He wants justice.

10. A letter from an Eastern University asking for suggestions and criticisms on a series of articles which it is proposed to publish dealing with certain national questions affecting agriculture.

11. Two requests for short articles on association work for publication in Christmas numbers of certain periodicals.

12. A letter from a member who had given an exclusive listing of his farm to a real estate agent, afterwards withdrawing same verbally, which withdrawal was ignored by the real estate man and the farm sold, a deposit being paid on the same. The agent is now suing for the handing over of the farm to the prospective owner.—P.P.W.

THE ELEVATOR AND THE U.F.A.

The following paragraph is taken from the report of one of our locals and explains itself. "The greatest grievance seemed to be that the shareholders and U.F.A. members are unable to get their supply of winter coal, while the merchants and farmers living over in ——— haul away the coal from the elevator a day or two after it arrives, hence after the U.F.A. members and local shareholders show up for coal after making a trip from ten to thirty miles, the coal is all gone. The members and

shareholders seem to think that an injustice is being done and it was the consensus of opinion that the citizens of ——— and shareholders of the Farmers' Elevator Co. particularly, should have an opportunity to get their supplies first. It was the opinion that the coal should be held a reasonable length of time and some special and favorite rights should be given to the shareholders to get the coal in view of the coal situation."

This is a fair sample of opinions sent in to this office on more than one occasion. The idea seems to be that we as farmers, having created a public utility in the shape of the Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Co. are therefore entitled to special benefits over and above such benefits as the public at large shall receive. From a selfish viewpoint that may be good reasoning, tho the introduction of government assistance, using public funds renders even this point debatable. The main thing that I see about this is however, that since the advent of the Elevator Co. one often hears the statement made that the Elevator Co. was created to give service to the U.F.A. yet the local unions of the U.F.A. with a very few exceptions have entirely failed to realise the possibilities of the situation and make use of the Elevator Co. in their capacity as a local union. On the contrary, complaint after complaint reaches this office to the effect that the presence of an Elevator in the district and the handling by it of supplies thru the warehouse has killed the union entirely, or seriously diminished its interest and work. The fault in this case is just as much that of the U.F.A. local union as it is that of the Elevator Co. If on the advent of the Elevator Co. the U.F.A. members forget the existence of their local union and their co-operative ideals to work as a unit, reverting to the old individualistic system, they must take their chance with those who have never supported the co-operative idea and have always remained individualists. The answer to the above quoted paragraph is that neither the Elevator Co. or anyone else, public utility or not, has the right to refuse to sell to any man who offers them the price they are asking for their goods, unless he be a criminal or already indebted to the company for a considerable sum of money. There is even an element of doubt in regard to the latter.

How then can we secure the benefits which morally belong to us? The answer is simple. Instead of disbanding or allowing your local union to drop out of existence you need to strengthen it. With the advent of the Elevator into your district you need more than ever to use your union as the purchasing agent in place of the individual, unless you wish to see the control of the public utility which you yourselves have created pass out of your hands. You need to get together and make your union a medium for placing your orders with the Elevator Co., for giving such instructions as may be necessary for its distribution on the arrival of your car, and for protecting your interests as a community generally. This may mean the raising of a small sum of money for use as a deposit in securing your car, or other incidental expenses, but the idea that a dollar per year is going to secure for you the millennium and that you can continue to secure special privileges ahead of your neighbor with using any of your own money, or without any effort on your own behalf, is an idea which the sooner it is money for use as a deposit in securing dropped the better.

Co-operation is Power

The advent of the Elevator Co. into this Province gave the U.F.A. the greatest opportunity that was ever presented to advance the cause of true co-operative effort in trading matters that has ever been presented to it. So far, with very few exceptions, the U.F.A. has failed absolutely to realise its oppor-

tunity. If the local unions at points where the Elevator Co. has units would use their opportunities they could practically monopolise the entire attention of the Co-operative Department of the Elevator Co. and in doing so they would accomplish a two-fold object. First, they would secure to themselves the full benefits afforded by an organization of their own making; second, they would put themselves in a position to control the policy of that department. They would enable the Elevator Co. to institute a system of co-operative dividends in that department, or to compel it if necessary. They would establish a solid and permanent buying power that would break up the present unsuitable and unsatisfactory method of doing business, a method which is unsatisfactory to all parties concerned, and they would create an organization capable of smashing right from the start many of the combines which have for years successfully resisted all our efforts to overcome.

I do not think that I am exaggerating in any way the possibilities of the situation. I have had cause to study the situation very closely during the last three years. I believe that the possibilities are still with us. It requires a little energy, possibly a little more forethought than is required to pull into the Elevator any time you see fit and take your bag of flour or load of coal, but in the end it will pay you, for it will mean not only a big step forward in your trading ambitions, but also the re-organization of the U.F.A. in such strength that our economic and other problems which the Elevator Co. can never solve without our aid, will be brought appreciably nearer.—P.P.W.

WANT LIVESTOCK SHIPPING ASSOCIATION

The following letter has been received from D. M. Kennedy, President of Waterhole Union, No. 383: "I am president of the Waterhole Local and tho we have not been meeting regularly it is not any sign that we are indifferent to the possibilities of our union, but rather thru lack of time, etc. We are far from a railway station and between freighting, etc., we are busy nearly all the year round. Personally I do not encourage much of a boom at the start. This year our crops have been badly frozen and we must get the most out of them, and as the yield is considerably reduced we will have more time on our hands than usual, so I think it a fine opportunity to get together and do a few things that would be well nigh impossible if we had a good crop. I would be glad of any information you could send me re the forming and operating of a Livestock Shipping Association. I feel we could make it a success. We are the only Local using Spirit River as a shipping point and may be a little handicapped on that account, but I do not think it fatal."

DEBATE ON THIRD PARTY

The regular monthly meeting of Swan River Local, No. 168 was held on Saturday evening, November 4. A very enjoyable time was spent discussing topics of local interest, among which were the obtaining of a Government telegraph office, erecting a cattle chute and loading platform at the station and the obtaining of a local freight agent. The meeting was well attended and the secretary, Mr. McKillop reports that the interest in the organization seems to be increasing from month to month. The subject for discussion at the next meeting will be a debate: "Resolved that the third political party would be a benefit to our country."

ACTIVE YOUNG LOCAL

Thos. Wood, secretary of Clover Hill Local, No. 307, reports that this union will hold their yearly meeting at Wabla to elect officers for 1917. The membership to date is forty-one, which is not bad for a ten month old local. They bought a car of cedar posts last May and a carload of Galt coal in July. They also bought twine and flour co-operatively and have a carload of lumber and three cars of coal on order, and orders are being taken for a car of lumber and one of fence posts at the present time.

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