

Agricultural Co-operation

How the Farmers must get together and do their own business if they expect to get the full reward of their labors

By R. HENDERSON, Secretary, Pincher Creek, U.F.A. in an Address before Summerview Agricultural Society

I make no apology in the choice of my subject this afternoon, rather do I regret that someone better fitted to do the subject justice, should not have addressed you.

My object will be rather to simply introduce the question of Agricultural Co-operation, in order that a free discussion, and I hope something practical will be the result of our meeting this afternoon. I congratulate myself in having the pleasure of opening up this subject in Summerview, which is regarded by all Summerviewites as the "Banner District" of Sunny Southern Alberta, and whilst I very heartily congratulate our friends north of the old Man River in obtaining nearly all the prizes at the recent grain and seed fair in Pincher Creek, and if in the near future we should chance to hear the railway conductors announce as the next station "Summerview," and "All change for Pincher Creek," I for one would feel neither envious nor jealous.

Coming to our subject of Agricultural Co-operation. It is hardly necessary for me to remind you that the farmers and farm laborers are about the only trade, business, calling or profession that has not a live organization for mutual protection, and self interest. Even the barbers of the great Pincher Creek, have lately formed a union with only two members, and have succeeded in agreeing to advance the price of a simple hair cut to 35 cents, and when we remember that the farmers form at least 75 per cent. of the entire population and the other 25 per cent. live almost entirely off the farmers, and many of this number

have grown rich financially, and in many instances by unscrupulous, over reaching and iniquitous methods.

I need hardly remind you of the first two or three years of the homesteader or those who have taken up improved farms. The awful privation and want of home comforts are also too well known to many of us, and many a trader in past years in this great new land has succeeded in keeping many an honest farmer in poverty, when they might have been in comfortable circumstances, if a properly organized Association had been in existence.

Nature's Hardships

It has not been an uncommon occurrence for the store-keeper to willingly undertake to supply the rancher with everything required and at prices all his own; then, perhaps poor crops, or hail, or frost or snow comes, rendering the poor rancher at the mercy of his creditors, then mortgage on land, cattle or crop, and in many instances when crop was maturing, would be bought up at a price simply scandalous, and by the time hay or grain was ready for market the price would invariably be 20 to 30 per cent. higher than the amount contracted for. I have heard of a case more outrageous still, which I cannot refrain from mentioning; that of a rancher, who in the early days got credit to a considerable amount from the local store-keeper. The rancher figured making a good payment in the Fall, but before the fall payment was demanded, otherwise a chattel mortgage, and ultimately sale of the cattle, a yearling bunch, which was purchased by a friend of the store-keeper and branded

on the rancher's premises, and allowed to remain until big enough to kill.

Now, I mention these facts to show how many farmers in the West have been imposed upon, simply because for the time they were unable to protect themselves, and the more wide awake merchants were ready to take the advantage. But you say, what has all this to do with Co-operation? Rather I should say all this and much more has been possible because of the want of Co-operation.

Better Prices Assured

I am sure that if we had all our farmers and laborers united in one live, vigorous association, for mutual protection, that a wave of prosperity would spread over our district, that we had not even dreamed of, much less realized. Let me briefly mention a few of the things whereby we might assist each other. I shall speak of pork, beef, eggs and butter and poultry, hay and grain, in fact anything we now raise on the farm. At present we simply have to take whatever we are offered, and we cannot help ourselves, and in many instances we bring our produce and cattle and stock up to the market point, and because we know no better, sell at prices far below the market value. For example, we may have a bunch of hogs ready to sell, and some second hand dealer or commission man will come along and say, "Oh, hogs are a lot cheaper this week, and they are only worth 8 cents now. I am shipping a car next week and will give you that, though I am afraid they will be cheaper before I ship."

Then we may have some fat cattle to

sell and some drover or buyer will come along and examine them and of course say, "Oh, these cattle are not good enough, and are only worth so much," well knowing that they are worth a lot more, and, of course, we have no alternative but to sell, and in many cases have to keep them months after they are sold, before they are delivered; and so I might go on over all our farming operations, with the same result.

Then take our hay crop. It is well known that our friends south of Pincher Creek, have perhaps the best hay farms in Southern Alberta, and enormous quantities of hay are shipped annually from Brocket and Pincher, and it is also no uncommon thing for many of our farmers to enter, and in many cases are pressed to make contracts early in the spring at from 9 to 12 dollars a ton, delivered at the station, when in nearly every case prices advance to almost double this amount, with the result that as farmers, we allow ourselves to let our year's crop, in many cases, slip from us at prices out of all proportion to the genuine market value.

Grain Problem Worst

But perhaps the way in which our grain is handled is the most ruinous of all. If I am not wearying you unduly, I must ask your indulgence on this question of Grain and Elevators. That something must be done, and that quickly, along this line goes without saying, and surely our friends east of us deserve our warmest gratitude for the stand they are taking and the fight they are making in compelling the government to listen

give their

nt pronouncement
loss of the House.
at Sir Wilfrid will
then said. Here,
criticism, that only
in the estimates
ate construction".
fair?

to bridge the Sas-
ise material, thou-
ould have to be
n the steep banks
river. There are
across the same
uding the South
em have taken less
while at the Pass the
per and the river
tract for the bridge
dly expect it to be
of a year. Accord-
r's reports a feasible
been discovered
claims that he can
ive road with same
e time. So that
plorations can be
ridge is building.
e sum voted next
can be proceeded
both economically

least Industry.—I
ore of a provincial
But what is to
melves organizing,
e Grain Growers'
d undertaking it
cessary, provincial
on and assistance?
ider is, that there
he embargo being
foot would likely
an chilled, dressed
ed cattle; or would
sufficient stock to
ing and make it
ever, that I have
o give a decided

own to a consider-
ou receive replies
your space will be

HOS. MacNUTT,
e 1, 1910.

for Prince Albert,

ter of the 28th of
fully endorse the
iff, the Hudson's
overnment control

The meat situa-
een able to fully

V. W. RUTAN,
1, 1910.

Assiniboia, Sask.

nce I only have
th ultimo today.
n four questions
lfrid.
that I will be very
of any assistance
placing these mat-
ive no hesitation
y views on these
and always have
duties and shall
ong those lines,
duction whenever

on's Bay railway.
s, and I know that
going on with the
atchewan river,
can get absolute
as to the best
ie will be pushed

rminal elevators,
rment ownership
al way, believing
cannot do busi-
ell as private in-

