

# Manitoba Grain Growers

## Homeopathic Tabloid

**PRESCRIPTION:** For local associations whose secretaries have been attacked by the epidemic of "report" paralysis. Take—yes, that is the word, not merely read, but TAKE one each day until full vitality is restored.

1.—Query: How long should the directors of a local association extend their patience with a secretary who has not yet returned the semi-annual report, due at the end of July?

2.—Query: How long should the directors of a local association extend their patience with a president who does not see to it that his association's report goes in within three days of the time when it should be in?

3.—Query: How long should the ordinary members of a local association tolerate directors who do not make it their business to see that the regular returns are regularly made by their executive officers?

N.B.—Above capsules not to be taken in any case where the 1917 annual and the 1918 semi-annual reports have been sent in, but there are 50 locals in the province that need them.

## Dry Bones and Brass Tacks

One of the encouraging things about Grain Growerism in Manitoba, is what might scripturally be termed a "stirring among the dry bones." Of course that expression must frankly be admitted to be heretical. The strictly orthodox will never admit that in this splendid, twentieth century, up-to-the-minute movement, any bone could ever be other than marrowful and juicy. But conjecturing for a moment the unorthodox and unwelcome possibility of several bones having become, let us say—to a slight degree, dry—there is today a stirring which is significant of revival.

### Who Stirs?

Who are stirring? Well, in a word, the young men of the province. Not alone the young in years. Many of them are so, of course, but there are those who have seen many summers and winters who carry still the young heart and the inquiring mind and the progressive and aggressive life-principle. The young men of the province are saying to the association: "Have you enlisted us and marshalled our strength and set us to the task in Manitoba, that with ever increasing urgency demands to be done?" You have the vision, the ideal, the goal in view, but have you been practically getting after its attainment? Has the movement of the last three years been a concerted and purposeful driving with irresistible force upon a clearly conceived and definite objective, or has it been to a degree a drifting with what seemed to be prevailing currents?

"To be specific," they ask "How many men under 40 have you today in line as competent association advocates, trained by two or three seasons activities, ready when called to go to an adjacent district with a well-thought-out presentation of the farmer's case, ready to talk for 20 minutes effectively on the objects of the association, on farmers' co-operation, or on the taxation proposals of the farmers' platform? In the 300 odd locals have you 25 such young men? Have you six? Have you three? If by any possibility there are not 25 such, is it not time for any and every bone in the movement, dry or juicy, to be feeling a little uneasy? Can effective work be hoped for without at least one well-equipped and competent worker of the kind described to every ten local associations?"

### Whence the Lack?

The possible—or rather, the certain—lack of such is no reflection on the young manhood of Manitoba. We have the young men. Even after so large a proportion have left the province for war duty, we still have the men. But have they been marshalled; have they been called, definitely and specifically and personally to training and to action in order that they may be equipped?

## Conducted Officially for the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association by the Secretary

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Many of them today are reading, many are doing good service as presidents, secretaries or directors of local associations, and are simply standing at attention for the association to open the door of opportunity to them that they may take up the work of the larger sphere. What has been discussed, what has been planned, what has been done to open the door and to welcome to the task these young men who have in their own local branches been taking the first steps toward self-equipment?

It may be asked, Why stress the time feature—"under forty"? For the reason that the association which is not getting and gripping men under that age cannot be regarded as getting the community in any effective way. There is no discredit nor disrespect to the men who are in their "fifties" or "sixties" or even "seventies," but if our workers are to be as effective as they ought to be, we ought to be getting them into the harness before they enter the "forties."

Has our association been getting them? Have we got them? If not what do we propose to do now to get them?

### Fifteen to Twenty-one

And with these questions there rises persistently the other question, What about getting the youths of 15 to 21? Is it not true that in our Grain Growers' meetings usually they are conspicuous by their absence? Speaking generally and without any data other than a general knowledge of a good many branches, one might hazard the guess that the Manitoba association has not today enrolled more than 250 or 300 within those ages. Within that period, ordinarily the farm boy develops from a school-boy into a man who can handle a team, or a binder, or a tractor. He becomes in a very large number of cases an expert farmer. Can the association afford that so far as relationship to its work is concerned these years should be wasted? Not without sacrificing something that might prove an incalculably powerful factor in its success. It may be too much to expect that a young man shall know all that is to be known of the problems of rural life at 21, but he should have completed at least one grade in practical study of it, and the next five years should make him, on the one hand a master of the science, and on the other a well-equipped servant of the art of human living in a rural community. Has our association been getting them? Have we got them? If not what do we propose to do now to get them?

### The Problem of the Stranger

Again there is the question of the foreigner, the stranger within our gates. Has the association any message, any gospel, any salvation to bring him? For years there have been many thousands of them scattered on the land in Manitoba. Have we gone after them? Or has the task seemed too difficult? Have we fully discussed their problems? Can we say why nothing has been done? Are we satisfied that nothing shall be done? When do we purpose facing the issue? Where shall we find leadership for the new untried adventure of bringing Grain Growerism into touch with the Ruthenian and Polish farmers?

### Rural Life Experts

Another "dry bone" stirring, asks regarding experts. And when he uses the word he means, not simply a man who can go out and give a good general address on the movement or assist in organizing a local. He means a man who both theoretically and practically has studied rural sociology, who knows what has been done and what has been proposed to be done, toward rural betterment, who is a master of the principles of the science so far as they have been formulated, and who thus is fitted to represent the movement,

say, to a University class in ethics or political science, or in any gathering of fully trained sociologists. Has the association got such a man? Is it preparing any of its workers to be such men? Is it opening any door at all by which such status may be reached, or is it satisfied to grub along with a third rate acquaintance with the science and the art which should largely constitute the vitality of its existence?

### Crowding Problems?

And still they come. There is the question of the wisest and most effective publicity, the question of getting the literature of the cause into the hands of the people and getting them to read it, the question as to the best form of organization for co-operative business, the question of the branches that lapse periodically, the question of the thousands who are still utterly indifferent, and many others. In these days the "stirring bones" say insistently that they must be faced, they must be discussed, they must be wrestled with and wisely issued. So there is work for the executive and for the board of directors, and for the individual thinker, and for the local directors, and for the group of enthusiasts, and for every mother's son who can think something and do something to move the chariot along. Let us get at it this fall, together and with a will, that resurrection may follow the "stirring of the dry bones," and that new life and victory may be the result.

### Another Ten Reports

Below are given some details from another series of ten semi-annual local reports. They are interesting as giving some general indication of the progress made.

In dealing with the first question, "Did your directors, as a board, discuss plans for the summer campaign?" two leave the space blank, one states that it was discussed in general meeting, three say "No," and four answer "Yes." That is to say, half the local associations did not take counsel among themselves as to what might be done during the summer to increase membership. Or to put it otherwise, whatever gain was made might possibly, and even probably, have been doubled if the other associations had planned and worked.

In answer to the second question, "What course was taken toward increasing membership?" two out of the ten leave the space blank, three indicate that nothing definite was done, two refer to local canvass, one mentions work done by the president and the secretary, one says "Every person promised to get all the members possible," and one indicates a "membership contest." Of the two who leave the space blank, one reports that there were no additions and the other, 30 new members. Of the three who speak of nothing definite planned, one reports no additions and the other two, ten and two respectively. In the case where the president and secretary took up the work no results are reported, and in the case of the promise of help from the membership eight members were added. The membership contest apparently was without result, and the two cases of local canvass added respectively six and ten members.

Comparing the membership with that of 1917, the following results are shown: Eight branches have increased by the following numbers, 17, 5, 27, 56, 9, 43, 22 and 8. Two have decreased by five and seven members respectively. Among the increases it should be noted that three of the associations included were new organizations or organizations which had reported no membership in 1917. Excluding these three, the other seven averaged 39 members at the close of 1917. Their total was increased by

103, making an average gain of about 15 members per local, or nearly 40 per cent.

As regards women's work in the association, six associations out of the ten report no women members. The other four report 14, 19, 6 and 5 respectively. One branch out of the ten has a women's section.

In general, the above figures do not differ very materially from those examined in the issue of two weeks ago. They are encouraging as showing substantial increases. They ought to be stimulating as showing what a few live workers may accomplish.

The Central office is still waiting for a large number of reports. If you who read this paragraph are a secretary or a president will you kindly see to it that if your report has not been sent it goes forward by the first mail. If you are a local director will you not make it your business to see that the report from your local association is filled up and sent in.

### Correlated Ideals

Manitoba Grain Growers who have the constitution of the association in their hands with its statement of aims will be interested in comparing those aims with the purposes avowed by a progressive organization recently established in England. It is known as the League of Faith and Labor, and sets before itself four ideals which are expressed in the following propositions:

First—The deepening of the sense of individual responsibility for a right ordering of life, personal and social, and for the abolition of all social and economic evils and enslavements that constitute a denial of human personality.

Second—The elimination of the present artificial device of class distinction, which in education and social life, as well as in national and international affairs, offends against human brotherhood.

Third—The establishment of the best obtainable system of democratic control and administration of the means of production and of an equitable distribution of the fruits of industry.

Fourth—The fuller expression in human life of the spiritual principles of faith, truth and beauty.

### An Unique Debate

A local association is reported recently to have debated the question as to whether the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association had better continue along the lines of work in which it has been engaged up to the present time or strike out with new methods along new lines.

We have no report of the debate itself to hand, but the topic is a very suggestive one and raises many questions which should be of general and practical interest. Has the association been consistently progressive? Has it been on the alert as to the necessities and opportunities that have faced it from time to time? Has it been as aggressive in organization as conditions demanded? Has there been a striking sameness in its mode of operation? Has that sameness been a vice or a virtue? Has the general association ministered effectively to the locals, or has it permitted some which might have been saved to languish and die? Has there been enough practical discussion and consultation of policy and program on the part of the boards, provincial and local? Has there been enough utilization of local talent? Are there things which the association should be doing today which are being left undone, or half done? What may we do this fall and next winter to better realize the aims we have set before us? Are there other aims which as a rural life association we should have set before us which we have not yet taken up? If any local worker or association has anything helpful to say in answer to such questions the Central office and the general board will be glad to have it. Has anybody anything to offer "for the good of the order?"

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