

## men as an Organized Force

VERY great movement must have a beginning somewhere. Perhaps it is not always easy to trace the causes that lead up to the beginning of a movement. I do not doubt that lack of opportunities for farm women to meet with each other for social affairs or to work for those in need was one of the causes. For years have been giving their attention led up to the organization of the Women Grain Growers in Saskatchewan. This largely influenced the movement. Later, Macdonald women saw the advantages to be gained from being part of a great organization such as the Grain Growers' Women Federation, and became part of it. It is the days before organization of women's clubs if women were fortunate to live within driving distance of a church they attended the church on Sunday. In many cases there were not even the churches to make things more comfortable. When there were churches were not open to women. They divided the people then into cliques, sometimes none too friendly with each other. There were the Methodist women, the Presbyterian women, the Anglican women and other denominational women. Each denomination attended its own values and missionary societies. There was very little contact with these women of other denominations. There wasn't provided a common meeting ground for all and every woman in the community.

### The Farmers Organize

Farm women began to see that these Grain Grower meetings were not the unalloyed evils they seemed to be. Although they took the men folk over to the schoolhouse or to town and kept them there until all sorts of unceremonious hours they realized that through this meeting together men were getting their neighbor's viewpoint, and the focusing of the farmer's viewpoint was gradually and constantly changing farming conditions. Better farming conditions and distribution of farm products were being achieved through the farmers' organizations.

Then women began to take stock of their own condition. They could see that the reason that they did not have the modern conveniences and comforts on the market was because they could not afford them, and they could not afford them because a protective tariff kept them just out of reach of the ordinary farm people. As someone has aptly described the awakening: "Women began to see that back of their special department and problems, the efficient management of the home and the care and training of children lay the real

*Through their Clubs they are making Country Life more nearly Ideal---By Mary P. McCallum*

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home problem. Labor-saving devices, conservation of health, better rural schools and higher education were directly connected with better markets, co-operative buying and selling, and better agricultural credit. In other words the farmers' problems were their wives' problems too. What could be more natural than that she should assist the farmers' movement, and that is exactly what she did."

### The Very Beginning

There is no gainsaying that the club movement among farm women grew primarily out of a pronounced need for some form of social intercourse. The monotony and isolation of farm life with its consequent restricted opportunities for recreation, and development of service was the despair of many a thinking woman. How was she to retain the advantages which life on the land offered to her, the privacy, the simplicity, the joy and restfulness

ation on the part of Mr. Green brought about a successful convention of farm women in Saskatoon in February of 1913.

At the first convention there was great discussion as to whether they should become Homemakers' Clubs or evolve an organization of their own. The preponderance of opinion was that they should become a part of the farm community. The problems were not the hands of all concerned. Their problems were identical, and what concerned one as much concerned the other. Then why not, they reasoned, belong to one organization? The answer was yes. It was made to include every man and every woman. The lectures of that first convention were held in the convocation hall of the university. Over 50 women registered, although there were many who did not. Mrs. A. J. Smith addressed the convention, gave Mrs. A.



Some of the Builders whose Handicraft is the Women's Sections of the Farmers' Organizations.

Top row: Mrs. A. Tooth, Eli, Man, first president of the W.S.G.G.A. and present vice-president; Mrs. Violet McNaughtan, Harris, Sask., hon. sec. W.S.G.G.A. and for four years provincial president; Miss Jean Reid, Alia, Alta., hon. pres. U.F.W.A., first provincial president. Lower row: Mrs. K. V. Haight, Keeler, Sask., provincial president W.S.G.G.A. and for four years vice-president; Mrs. Walter Parlyk, Alia, Alta., provincial president U.F.W.A.; Mrs. J. S. Wood, Oakville, Man., provincial president W.S.G.G.A., formerly vice president.

of the life lived close to nature and at the same time effectively assist social movements for the betterment of communities. In the end, the individual who could accomplish little, alone, might become a part of an organization.

It was in the fall of 1909 that Rayon Beynon, the staff of the Grain Growers' Guide, from the first she wrote vigorous articles advising the farmers to organize. She felt that they might better their status, socially, politically and economically. At that time, the farmers were not heard, and she urged their voices in demand for the franchise. Miss Beynon emphasized the fact that it could never be brought to the attention of the government if they were not organized and worked for it. This continued until the winter of 1913, just a few months before the formation of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. The late F. W. Green, who was the first president of the association, said that Miss Beynon, asking her for suggestions for a convention for the women who annually attended the convention, was the first to suggest their own.

Thames of the Winnipeg Free Press; Miss Beynon, of The Grain Growers' Guide; Mrs. Nellie L. McClung, Miss Clendinning, of the Farmers' Advocate; Miss Cora Hind, of the Manitoba Free Press; Mr. Chipman, of The Guide; Mr. J. H. Green, Mr. M. Burdon, then of Saskatoon, Miss Munn, of The Star, Mrs. F. G. Spruling, Miss Irene Moore, of the Morning Phoenix; A. as Bertha Willoughby, of the public school staff, and Miss Jean Grant, now editor and proprietor of the Market Examiner, in said many times since, the women at that convention endeavored to cover every subject in the universe. Only experience could teach them the value of concentrating on a few of the most important subjects, and of depending on their energies by attending everything.

But it was a beginning. The women were unanimous in approving of holding future conventions of like nature and of organizing a Women's Grain Growers' Association. A resolution was also passed asking the men to pass by-laws allowing the women to have their

own local executive and charge of their own funds. It being impossible to organize on a definite basis until said by-laws were passed by the men's convention, it was decided to form a nucleus for a future organization by appointing a committee of women to carry on the work for the ensuing year. The personnel of that committee was, Mrs. A. V. Thomas, Mrs. Hawkes, Mrs. S. V. Haight, Mrs. John McNaughtan, Mrs. Hilton, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Lefebure, Mrs. Plaster and Mrs. Wesson.

### The Second Convention

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### Beginnings in Other Provinces

A personal history of these farm women's organization is that they are the product of a single mind, or of a few minds, but of a large number of farm women. It wasn't farm women's common sense that must have these farm women. "It was gradually evolved by farm women with a wisdom of their own selves. It reminds one of that comparison of government which is made after the manner of the fable: "There are two kinds of governments—the kind that 'does for' the people and the kind that makes the opportunity for the people to do things for themselves. Certainly the whole farm women's organization is the latter. The farm women, has been one of the most carefully planned and evolved organizations in the world. The first step in its growth has been the direct outcome of careful planning of what went before. It is built on a sound and logical foundation, and has stood the test of time. It cannot remain as it now is. It must ever be the expression of the needs of the farm women of this ship, and in that case it will change as times and demands change, and will be always the medium between the farm women and the government."

The movement in Saskatchewan stimulated a similar movement in Alberta, water spreading to Manitoba. Rumors are abroad that when Quebec farmers organize their farm women will organize with them. Not a few hints have reached the West that the women of Ontario are even now ready for the movement. The whole field seems alive to the great need of union and solidarity among the farm people of all the Dominion.