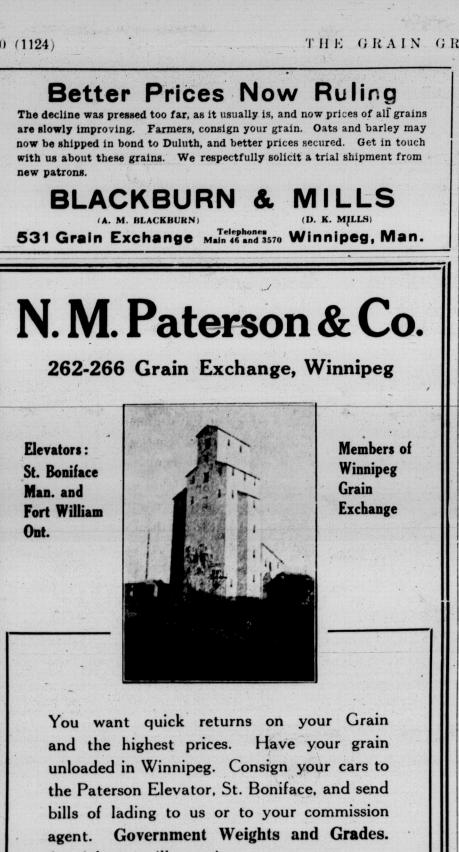
October 29, 1913





## Alberta Section

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by P. P. Woodbridge. Secretary. Calgary, Alberta

## SIR HORACE PLUNKETT ON BENE-FITS OF CO-OPERATION

The following excerpt from a letter written to the farmers of Ireland, by Sir Horace Plunkett, founder of the co-operative movement in Ireland, should be of interest to Canadian farmers. It would hardly be possible to choose better words to call attention to the conditions in Canada today, and by substituting the word Canadians where the word Irishmen appears, and the U.F.A. where I A. O. S. I A. O. S. appears, the message applies equally forcibly to the present day condition in Western Canada that it did to conditions in Ireland at the time Sir Horace Plunkett wrote the letter.

A well organized Association of farmers improves the conditions of the farming industry in five main directions.

"(1) It enables them to own and use jointly expensive machinery which could not be owned generally by in-dividuals. It gives the members the use of all the profits of the latest appliances for the manufacture of butter and other milk products. In Denmark, half the bacon factories are owned and worked by co-operative societies of farmers. will be able to develop through the Irish societies the poultry and egg trade, which all efforts of the individuals have failed to accomplish. It lowers the cost of production for its members in many ways. It obtains for them seeds, ma-nures, feeding stuffs, implements, and

nures, feeding stuffs, implements, and general farm requisites of the guaranteed quality and at the lowest cost. "(2) The Association can exercise some control, in the farmers' interest, over the marketing of live stock and produce. It can get these commodities carried at a lower rate to the market and in much better condition. You all know how carrying companies favor foreign produce as against yours. A radical reform in the carriage of agricultural produce is urgently needed, but you will not obtain redress until the producers are organized into a powerful combination. I may add that even then you will have to bulk your consignments as your foreign com-petitors do. In short, if you were organized as they are, you would be served

as well. "(3) Similarly, when the market is associated together, you can have your goods sold by your own agents, in your own interest, and thereby you would save to yourselves many of the middle profits which repre-sent the astonishing difference between what the producer gets and what the

"(4) It has been proved that by co-operation the farmer can borrow money at a much lower rate of interest money at a much lower rate of interest than he has to pay when borrowing individually: and what is also very important, he could have the loan made for a sufficiently long term to enable him to repay it out of the profits earned by the application of the loan itself. "(5) Lastly—and this is the greatest advantage of all—when you learn how to work together to do the things I have sketched above, you will find that, by

sketched above, you will find that, by exchange of ideas among yourselves, by friendly discussion and mutual help. you will become better farmers, better business men, and, as you will be building up the country on the surest foundations, better Irishmen.

"Now here are five great purposes to be effected by the movement which I am asking you to join. I need hardly tell you that a great deal of thought and study will be required before you can accomplish them all, or even to do any one of them well. But my object in addressing you will be gained if I have persuaded you that these things must be done if we are to save what has almost come to be our single industry; and, furthermore, that these things can only be done by yourselves, not acting separate-ly, but all pulling together "And now I am come to the actual work of the I.A.O.S. and must explain why its services are needed by you, al-though, as I have told you, it calls upon you to do all these things yourselves. When a body of farmers in any parish have made up their minds that they have made up their minds that they have got to join together for any of the purposes I have described, the first question they naturally ask is—How are we to set about it? "Of course it is essential that you

should learn to trust each other. Take my word for it, before you have gone very far in the practice of co-operation, you will find that mutual confidence pays. Till now you have always managed your own affairs, without seeking to interfere with your neighbors' business, nor allowing them to interfere with yours, and you are not unnaturally shy of embarking upon an undertaking, the management of which you will have to share with others. You are right to be cautious. Before you consent to join any business association, you must be satisfied that the rules by which all the members are to be bound will make it certain that the responsibilities, the risk and the profits of the business to be transacted profits of the business to be transacted will be equitably divided between all the participants. It would be a long time be ore you could puzzle out such rules for yourselves. It would be ruinous to begin a co-operative enterprise without a thorough understanding of the principles and rules of co-operation. But the I.A.O.S. has exhaustively studied the constitution and procedure of successful farmers' combination in other countries, and has organized many successful farm-ers' combinations in Ireland. It is ready to send down competent organizers to explain the whole system to you, as soon as you really desire our assistance. Besides this it will send you printed information on the method of forming a society, and also pamphlets dealing in detail upon many of the subjects which I have touched lightly upon in this sketch, which is intended only to show you how others are making agriculture pay, and how you can do the same. You now see the part the I.A.O.S. is ready to play in this work of national regeneration. It is for you to say whether you are ready to play your

Part. "You may be told that the success of the foreign producer over his Irish rival is due, not to methods of combination but to government assistance. The truth is, it is due to both these things, and to the first more than to the second. It is quite true that in many of the countries whose competition presses severely on us, State aid to the farming industry has, in the past, been in strange contrast with its utter neglect by our own government. But the Irish farmers have now a properly equipped and endowed De-partment of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland, manned by Irishmen, which is prepared to give you instruction and aid wherever it can be usefully imparted, and wherever your own unaided efforts would fail to effect the necessary reform. 'In conclusion, let me tell you plainly

that if you join the movement which the I.A.O.S. is promoting, although the benefits are sure, they will not come all at once, or without great efforts and some sacrifices on your part. On the other hand, the benefits are not only of the substantial kind. Everyone who has studied the effect of agricultural co-operation all over the world, as we studied it, knows how the mere have fact of men meeting together and working together to improve the business of their lives, not only adds to their comfort and prosperity, but leads to an all-round social amelioration, and materially adds to the enjoyment of life, which nowadays, Heaven knows, is dreary enough on an Irish farm. HORACE PLUNKETT."

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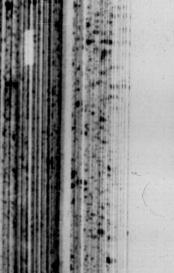
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