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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 communications for this page should be sent.

ORGANIZED FARMERS AND POLITICS

The following is a summary of the address given by our president, H. W. Wood, at the Social Leaders' conference, recently held in Edmonton. The summary is taken from the Edmonton Bulletin and the subject of the address was "The Organized Farmers and Politics."

H. W. Wood said that the objects of the U.F.A. were to deal with economic conditions which for a long time had been unsatisfactory to the farmers and not with the current political affairs of the country. They had found that great interests were effecting legislation in favor of themselves. The farmers had not the highly developed leadership nor the money to compete with those interests along these lines. Their only hope was to mobilize the strength of numbers against them.

He traced briefly the history of farmers' organizations in the United States as a political force, their rise and fall. The difficulties which had led to their downfall, said he, were that these organizations had been inclined to be radical in their principles and declarations, but were unskilled in political organization. The result had been that whenever they did win a temporary supremacy a great mass of unskilled people had attempted to put into effect radical legislation.

In the meantime the opposition parties had maintained their organizations and worked against them. The other parties controlled the press and a constant flow of ridicule and criticism, true and untrue, was directed at the reformers. There was also the old spirit of party prejudice in the people which could not be eradicated and which had to be contended with. The result of this ridicule and criticism and this prejudice was that the weaker members of this new party fell away and went back to their old affiliations. The new movement also attracted all the discredited, broken-down politicians of the old parties who sought only their own advantage.

The greatest difficulty of all was, however, that in no democratic country in the world have the people really learned to rule. We have democracies in theory, but in no country in the world have the people taken advantage of their opportunity. The power has always been in their hands, but they have never used it.

The lack of intelligent citizenship is the reason why the people cannot govern themselves today. Men are well-meaning enough, their motives are patriotic enough, but their citizenship is not sufficiently developed to carry on the work of governing the country, with the result that the political forces are in the ascendancy.

But it is also essential to deal with the legislative conditions before any effect can be brought to bear upon economic conditions. We have realized that we are organized to deal with legislative affairs. We must develop our economic institutions and then as people become interested in them they will have their attention drawn away from political institutions and more and more bound up in those institutions which are for the interest of the people themselves.

As people learn to understand economic conditions better, they become weaned from party politics and prejudice. Instead of building up a new political party we are promulgating safe and sane political ideals. We will be piling up political force and through that force piling up useful legislation. We do not want to mix with any organization, but we do want to influence the men who do make the laws so that our mobilized voters will have an equal influence with the superior organization and money of the special interests.

Mr. Wood declared that the U.F.A. was freer today than any third party could possibly be. It was unbound by any political connection. It was free to support who it pleased and to exert the power of its massed citizenship in any direction it saw fit. In consequence its members were less affected by the political party prejudice than any people he had ever known and as that prejudice

continued to fall away so the political influence of the organization increased.

"I cannot conceive of any better method," said he in conclusion, "to build up the standard of citizenship necessary to make democracy effective."

THE PEARSONVILLE PICNIC

Secretary J. O. Roberts, of the Pearsonville Local, reports: Pearsonville schoolhouse, being centrally located in the district between Suffield and the Saskatchewan River, it was decided by the Pearsonville Local of the U.F.A. as the best place to hold the annual picnic. The date was Saturday, July 28. Through the untiring efforts of our worthy president, W. W. Stokes, and the genial chairman of the committee, W. R. Sharp, the picnic was a grand success.

A fine program of sports was provided for the afternoon entertainment and the committee put up an unusually valuable and appropriate assortment of prizes. After the races, etc., were over, speeches were in order and the president introduced Mr. Tregillus of the Central office at Calgary, who spoke for about 20 minutes on matters pertaining to the good of the order. His words were both instructive and entertaining. We were greatly disappointed in the non-appearance of two other speakers who were expected, A. J. H. Donahue, director for Medicine Hat, and Captain Pringle, of that city, both of whom were detained by illness. Baseball was next in order and a spirited game was pulled off between East and West Pearsonville, the Easts winning. At nine p.m. the schoolhouse was cleared for dancing and same was indulged in until early morning.

One purpose of the picnic was to create a spirit of good fellowship among the members and non-members and to get the non-members interested in the work and we believe that much good was accomplished along these lines. The ladies also are showing great interest in the work of the local as has been evidenced by the attendance at recent meetings and at the picnic and we hope that this interest will continue and increase because the ladies can do as much and more than the men to make the order a success.

NEWS FROM THE LOCALS

D. R. Borthwick, of Kinsella, reports as follows: "The second annual fall fair and picnic under the auspices of the U.F.A. and Red Cross auxiliary was held on Friday, August 10, and was a great success. Enclosed you have copy of the prize list. There was keen competition in all entries. The weather was ideal and everyone enjoyed the outing. After all expenses were paid we were able to hand the Red Cross auxiliary \$77.35, balance on hand. Our receipts amounted to \$279.90, expenditure \$202.55."

The prize list shows numerous prizes for displays of vegetables, flowers, domestic science, needlework, poultry and other exhibits, with a number of specials donated by various business concerns. The local is to be complimented on the progressive spirit shown in uniting with the Red Cross auxiliary for this event.

The secretary of Dewberry Local, No. 98, F. Hardwick, reports that at their meeting held on September 1 the members were favored with a visit from F. S. Grisdale, B.S.A., principal of the Vermilion agricultural school, who gave them a very interesting and helpful talk on soil cultivation. The address was greatly appreciated by the members, and a large number of visitors were also present. The committee was appointed at the same meeting to arrange for a concert, box social and dance in aid of the Red Cross Fund, the date being set for October 25. Mr. Hardwick concludes: "We are trying to make our local what it should be, a power for good in our district." The above report would indicate that they are on their way to success in this regard.

Streamstown local U.F.A. gave a Red Cross tea in their schoolhouse on August 17. Tea was served from 5 to 6.30 and although the weather was threatening, quite a number turned out.

About \$14 was collected at the tables, the offering being voluntary. A baseball match followed the tea and the evening was spent in dancing. A hand-embroidered linen table centre and a pair of hand-knitted socks, donated by members, were raffled, and although tickets were sold for the small sum of 10 cents, the two articles brought in \$10.80. Ice cream and lemonade were sold also, and altogether about \$50 was taken in, which was much better than expected, owing to the busy haying season and the rain in the evening keeping many away from the dance.

A meeting of the Malmo local, at which a good crowd was in attendance, was held on August 27. The members placed their first order for a car of coal with the United Grain Growers and will soon order more. They are joining with the Wetaskiwin District Association so that they can get the benefit of co-operative buying on other articles which cannot be shipped to their nearest station, Hobbema. Their membership is increasing and at the present time they have over 20 enrolled.

Nilrem branch of the U.F.A. held a very successful picnic on July 21. A good program of sports was provided by the committee, and the refreshment stall was looked after by the ladies. The day being favorable a good crowd was in attendance, and the profits, which amounted to \$66.75, were donated to the Red Cross Fund.

A NEW WHEAT PEST

Insect damage to the wheat crop in the districts around Sedgewick, Killam and Willow Hollow, in Alberta, were examined late in July by Prof. Cutler, of the university, and Donald Mackie, entomologist of the department of agriculture. This damage amounted from one to ten per cent. on the various farms visited and all wheat seemed to be uniformly attacked, that in the centre of the fields equally with that on the outer edges. Strong full wheat growing on moist low ground was also equally parasitized with the dried parched crops on high ground. No other crops than wheat were attacked.

On examining the affected wheat it was found that in practically all cases the stems were bent over at right angles just above the second visible joint, and that the wheat had continued to grow upward, thus forming another right angle at the third visible joint, showing that a considerable time had elapsed from the date of the damage to the time of reporting. On examining the stems, a number of minute insects were discovered close to the break, inside the stems, but showing a tendency to work upwards. Microscopic slides were made of these insects and on examination under a high power microscope they proved to be a species of thrips, some in the larval and others in the imago state. They apparently injure the stem from the inside by biting the tissue and sucking the sap just above the second joint. When a strong wind strikes the wheat, naturally the stems bend over and break at the weakened point, thus causing the farmers, at the first glance, to have the impression that the crop has been hauled; closer examination, however, will show, that owing to the uninjured heads and the regularity of the damage, that hail was not the cause.

No reports have been received by the department of agriculture of this pest having been previously recorded as damaging wheat in this province, and it may be that owing to the excessive dryness and heat this year a phenomenal development of this insect has taken place. However, farmers would be well advised to take due precautions against such a recurrence next year. Stubble land should be plowed in the fall to a depth of at least five inches. Straw should be burned by the end of April and it would be advisable to have a crop rotation.

A thorough investigation was made of the district for hessian fly, but no traces of this insect were found, although there were slight traces of the western wheat stem saw fly.

BIG RAM SALE IN ALBERTA

Great interest is being shown in the first ram sale ever held in Alberta, which is announced to take place at Lethbridge on October 10 and 11. A large number of breeders from Southern Alberta and outside points will be represented. It is believed that this sale will become a regular event each year, as is the case at other sheep rearing centres in North America.