



ALBERTA SECTION

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by Edward J. Fream, Secretary, Innisfail, Alta.

UNITED FARMERS OF ALBERTA

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The Good Old Winter Evenings

In a few more days the fall work will be over, the threshing machines will be stored away till next season, the plows will either be left in the ground, frozen in with the last furrow turned or will be hauled into the sheds for the winter, and the provident farmer will be prepared to enter into some plan for the enjoyment of his well earned rest of the winter season. He will want to get things moving in his district so that he will not forever stick in the same old groove. We are told that nothing succeeds like success, but it is equally true that nothing stagnates like inaction. Therefore it behooves us, now that the winter season is on, to set the thinking cap going and to work it to the fullest capacity while the tired muscles of the body are taking their well earned rest.

There are several ways in which this needed action can be secured. There is the literary or debating society, but this too often develops the few instead of the many. There are the dances, but again unfortunately mater and pater familias generally stay at home and let the young folks take in this class of entertainment alone. There are the average tenth rate shows which hit the rural districts during the winter months, bleeding the inhabitants of some of their hard earned cash and leaving behind them as a reward a feeling of extreme nausea. There is also left the one class of society and entertainment which will draw young and old together, encourage the debating instincts of the would-be orators and statesmen of the district, enable the younger generation to trip the light fantastic toe and give the songsters and elocutionists a chance to be heard. That is done by the organization of a branch of the farmers' society, The United Farmers of Alberta. The chance is then given of developing all the different forms of entertainment and at the same time giving the opportunity of having some valuable work done in the community.

In the districts where the organization is already effected it behooves the officers to get busy, see that the gaps are filled up and then start on the winter's work. In the districts which have not yet been reached by the organization let the interested ones get together and form a local union. The effort is not great and once it is effected there is the idea of permanency and stability of the work which will help materially in keeping it going and which cannot be secured in so effective a manner in any other way. The local union is a good thing for young and old and will be a benefit to the district. Many residing in the neighborhood have had to leave school too early to assist in the burden of life and to do their share in making the pot boil, and these are backward in coming to the front on account of their lack of training. The meetings of the local union will give them the much needed chance to get in touch with the different problems of the day and secure education and information which would otherwise be out of their reach.

Too Few Farmer Legislators

The cry is going up all over the country that the legislative halls are filled with lawyers, doctors and others who do not care one iota for the wishes of the great population of the country, the farmers, and there is a growing demand that more farmers should be nominated and elected to fill these offices. What chance would there be for these farmers, even after their election, to compete against the trained men of the other professions? Much as it goes against the grain of every man to do so, he is compelled to admit that without some training in the public questions of the day the farmer members would develop into mere voting machines and would not be of much

value to the community at large. This education must begin at once, and the surest and safest plan is to have these questions threshed out in the local school house when the farmers and their families get together as members of one common organization to take up these problems.

The statement is sometimes made that there is nothing to discuss at the local farmers' meetings and consequently that the farmers soon get tired of getting together just for the purpose of twirling their thumbs, also that they have no great questions of moment before them. Just think for a moment, though, and it will be possible to discover room for many forceful arguments and brilliant debates.

Take the subject of the tariff, for instance. This question is very much to the front at the present time and many evenings could be very profitably spent discussing it from every point of view. High tariff, low tariff, tariff for revenue only, free trade, preferential tariff and reciprocity are all phases of the question which could be considered.

Then there is the elevator question, both as regards line elevators and terminals. There is a great deal of thought necessary on this question, especially along the lines of whether a square deal is being given and received at the present time. The different sides of the case need to be threshed out and an insight secured into the marketing of the products of the grain fields. The need of options should be considered, the value of a sample market for the disposal of the grain as compared to the present plan. Then there is also the question of the expense of marketing. It can be safely said that at the present time one company is handling practically one-third of all the grain which is being marketed. At a low computation there are between three and four hundred firms in the market to handle the remaining two-thirds. Is there any need of all this additional expense being placed on to the selling price of the grain? This is a line of thought which will take much study.

The Co-operative Spirit

Then there is the possibility of developing the co-operative spirit, doing away with the middle men and bringing the producers and consumers in closer touch with each other. It is only by meeting together that this question can be fully realized. Then we have the present system of marketing the meat products of the country. This requires thought and argument to bring the many to the common level.

Many other questions can be considered in like manner. There is the troublesome one of needed amendments to the Railway act, of government ownership of utilities, the great and growing question of direct legislation, and so on in endless variety. Besides these public and national questions there are many others of a local nature which can also be taken up. How is the road work done and where should it be done? Is the weed problem handled in a satisfactory manner? What steps are taken to preserve the timber of the district? To preserve the game? and many such problems will bring out interesting discussions and will fit the Farmers to take their place in the legislative halls of the country. Can not many profitable winter evenings be spent in the discussion of these questions and will not the result be better citizens for the country at large? It is truthfully admitted that such matters cannot be seriously discussed without making better men of all who consider them.

But in dealing with these questions of the day the lighter side must not be forgotten, and while the serious and public side is being developed the lighter and happier thoughts must not be allowed to lie idle. The ladies, old and young, must be drawn into the

work and must be made to realize that their help is needed. This can be done in two ways, either by having two kinds of meetings, the first one for public business and the next for entertainment, or by combining both sides at each meeting. Just take the ladies along and see how much more interesting the meetings will be, and let them take part in the discussions. The result will be much valuable information which would otherwise not be thought of at all. Then after an hour or two of discussion, break away for a while, just look around and see if the ladies are not ready to bring out the lunch baskets for a picnic supper. Then as the final, bring out the young people and let them give their portion of the entertainment. Yes, the old young people as well. Let the forgotten fiddle be tuned up, encourage the older ones to once more recite the recitations and poems of their day; let the newer songs and pieces be given as well, and then sit the end see if the net result is not of lasting good to the community. See also how much better the work will go, how quickly the chores will be completed and the pleasant thoughts which will accompany you during the day. Then note the eager anticipation which will be displayed for the next meeting night to come round. All it needs in a settlement is a few to break the ice at the start and call a meeting of those interested in the welfare of the district. The rest will come in after the work is well under way.

Lastly, the great value of forming the U.F.A. lies in the fact that in union there is strength, and with the added force of numbers the reform you will think of and advocate during the winter evenings will be secured.

To many this will seem like a dry sermon and a mere repetition of facts, but if we once start thinking and acting then the sermon will not be in vain. Are you interested and will you help us with this great work?

CALL FOR L. I. D. CONVENTION

At a meeting of the executive committee of the Alberta Local Improvement Districts' Association, held in Calgary on September 26th, it was decided to hold the annual convention in Red Deer, on Nov. 22nd and 23rd, 1910.

Arrangements have been made with the C. P. R. and the C. N. R. and the G. T. P. Ry., whereby reduced rates may be obtained by delegates and others attending the convention. Delegates must purchase first class full fare one way tickets to place of meeting and obtain from agent at starting point a certificate to that effect on Standard Certificate Form. Where delegates have to travel over more than one railway to reach place of meeting, they will require to purchase tickets and obtain certificates as above from each railway. Each delegate must hand his certificate to secretary of convention, who will sign the same. When Standard Certificates are surrendered to agent at place of convention, return tickets will be issued at usual convention rates.

The councils of the various local improvement districts throughout the province are requested to send to the secretary of this association on or before November 1, 1910, proposed resolutions, in order that same may be printed and returned to the various councils for consideration thereof before the meeting of the convention.

The executive calls to the attention of the L.I.D. Councils that they have amended clause 15 of the draft by-laws, to read: "That each council be requested to send one duly accredited delegate, whose credentials shall be signed by the chairman and secretary of his council."

The attention of the executive has been called to the fact that the department's auditors for Local Improvement Districts are charging back the expenses of delegates to the last convention. A sub-committee of the executive has waited on the department in this matter, and there is no doubt that satisfactory arrangements will be made by the department,

or legislature, whereby all such expenses may be paid out of Local Improvement Districts' Funds.

The executive of this association would urge upon every L. I. D. Council the necessity of sending a delegate, in order that the convention may fairly represent the opinions and interests of the different parts of the province, and while only one delegate is asked to represent a Local Improvement District, all councillors and secretary-treasurers will be made heartily welcome.

Copies of proposed resolutions and program of the proceedings at the convention will be issued later at a date prior to the meeting of the convention.

Trusting that you and your council will unite with the executive to make this convention a success, we are

WILLIAM MASON, Pres. Bon Accord,
JAS. McNICHOL, Sec.-Treas.

Blackfoot.

SUBSCRIBING FOR CREAMERY STOCK

The usual monthly meeting of Blackfoot Union took place on Oct. 6, there being twenty-six members present. Much satisfaction was expressed at the formation of a Direct Legislation League in Alberta. The C.N.R. have granted permission to put in a crossing right at the loading platform, thus doing away with the necessity of crossing the line three-quarters of a mile to the east or a quarter mile to the west of the platform. Mr. McCormick, secretary-treasurer of Lloydminster creamery, paid us a visit. He gave a very interesting address and account of the work, and the necessity for the farmers to back this concern in order to make it a success. Although not a single patron was present at the meeting, he disposed of twenty-five shares. We intend holding a harvest home supper at an early date. All arrangements are in the hands of the social committee and quite a talented program is promised.

JAS. STONE, Secretary

Blackfoot.

FARM CROSSING SECURED

Word has been received from Pincher that as a result of the representations made by the executive of the U.F.A. the road crossing over the C.P.R., asked for by one of the members, has been secured. This matter has been completed by the writing of only two letters, and it is only fair to the railway officials to state that they were most courteous and prompt in attending to the matter as soon as the request was drawn to their attention. Needless to say that the farmer who was interested in this question is hugely delighted at the prompt manner in which the matter was handled.

MORE ORGANIZATION REQUIRED

Word has just been received from the farmers in the vicinity of Gilby, asking that full information be sent them at once to enable them to organize a local union. Gilby is situated in the vicinity of the present successful Eckville branch, but no doubt the farmers find that they are too far away to enable them to attend all the meetings regularly, and they would like to have a branch in their own district. The information asked for has been sent to the interested parties.