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A TALK FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have just returned from Castor, where the Board of Trade, the Pure Bred Stock Associations and some six or eight local unions combined and gathered a fine meeting on April 6. There was a good exhibit, especially of horses, and after the stock judging a large number of farmers and townspeople in the Town Hall listened to speeches from the Hon. Ministers, Duncan Marshall and Garipey, and your president. I was glad to find such an earnest and hopeful spirit among our unions in that locality. The Castor union is doing a considerable co-operative business and a district Association is being organized.

It may not be out of place to glance rapidly at the activities of the president during the first quarter of this year. I started the week before the convention with meetings at Botha, January 14, and at Gadsby, January 15. Gadsby was a crowded meeting and when I had left it and was just going to bed, one of the town leaders came to fetch me to make another speech, to start a Patriotic Fund. I got back home from the convention on Saturday, January 23, and on Monday, January 25 I went down to Calgary, chiefly to help the work of a joint committee of the U. F. A. and the Elevator Company to try to get some business arrangement. Your readers have already seen in The Guide that we have ultimately succeeded in making such an arrangement as we think will help the local unions in their co-operative business. One evening during this week the Free Trade League invited me to their annual banquet to give an address on Free Trade. An interesting feature after the meeting was the number of the city men who came to me to tell me that they were farmers. The "Back to the Land" movement seems to be growing. One day the same week our second vice-president and myself travelled South to Cayley and spoke to a crowded meeting, full of warmth and replete with an oyster dinner. On January 29 I got back home to my farm for a few days and then on February 6 started for Winnipeg, to help to overcome difficulties that had arisen in regard to relief for our farmers in the dried out districts, in the shape of seed and feed grain. From there, on the 9th, I went to Regina, attending the annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, together with Messrs. Wood and Woodbridge. We had three very interesting days at that huge convention, composed of 1,150 delegates and 550 visitors. We realized a little more the power of our farmers' organizations, not confined to Alberta, but stretching thru Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, into Ontario—the power is specially evident in Saskatchewan, where, as one speaker quaintly said, he did not clearly know whether the government was running the Grain Growers or the Grain Growers the government. It looked to me as if the Grain Growers were on top. On Saturday, February 13, we attended the meeting of the National Council of Agriculture, composed of the executive of the four provinces, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and trying to handle Dominion wide problems. On getting back to Calgary on Monday morning, February 15, I found posters awaiting me, billing me to speak at two meetings at Nanton on February 16, a U. F. A. meeting and a Patriotic meeting, both of which were full to the doors.

In Nanton I gathered some interesting information about myself. I was told that at the Edmonton convention some men circulated the rumor that I was a millionaire. I wish the unknown friends who have discovered this secret would kindly tell me where those millions are, as I am sadly in need of them. On the 17th of February, I had an interesting visit in the Municipalities convention, and then got home again for a few days.

On February 23-26 we held an executive meeting, chiefly occupied with working out the business agreement with the Elevator Company. Sunday, March 7, we had a fully attended U. F. A. religious service in Crossfield and another in the country about fifteen miles East, where

we have two unions. The following week was a busy one—March 9, meeting of the Pork Packing committee; March 10, directors' meeting; March 11, special elevator committee work; March 12, meeting of the executive of the Rural Development League, of which I was made a member when I was away at Regina. Sunday afternoon, March 21, a religious U. F. A. service, six miles east of Olds, and lastly, on March 25-27, a trip to Edmonton with Messrs. Buchanan and Peel, from Cowley, to appear before the legislature in regard to some difficulties between a number of farmers South and some large sheep ranchers.

Our readers will see that the life of a U. F. A. president is a pretty laborious and varied one; on the whole an encouraging one. Everywhere I am impressed with the respect shown to the U. F. A. and so far as I have met our people, they seem mostly full of hope and the spirit of progress, especially in the development of co-operative buying.

At the request of the directors I have now come to Calgary for a while, not so much, as the directors say, to give my whole time to the work—I have been doing that all along—but to try to do it more effectively than it can be done from the farm.

JAMES SPEAKMAN.

C. N. R. AFTER GOPHERS

In response to a request from this office the C. N. R. has notified me that they are organizing a gopher extermination campaign along the right of way in the three Prairie Provinces. The company will greatly appreciate it if farmers in the vicinity of their line will co-operate with them in their work.

REINSTATED

I take pleasure in acknowledging receipt of membership dues and other remittances from Mayerthorpe Union, No. 539. This is one of the unions which was suspended last year and has not up to the present been publicly reinstated, altho membership dues were forwarded placing them in good standing early in January of this year.

CO-OPERATING IN POTATOES

From a letter received from B. F. Fink, Secretary of Arbor Park Union, No. 590, we gather that this district has got together and decided to raise a standard variety of potato for marketing purposes, and 20,000 pounds of seed potatoes of the Wee MacGregor variety have been secured by the union for the purpose of carrying out their ideas in this regard. The decision is a move in the right direction and might well be copied by other districts, not only in potatoes, but in any other farm products as well.

PROFITABLE CO-OPERATION

Keoma Union, No. 328, after a period of inactivity has got under way in good style. As a result of some of their attempts in co-operative purchasing, a saving of ten cents per gallon has been secured on oil and approximately \$2.00 per share on plow shares. A car of lumber has been ordered, also a car of fence posts and orders are being taken for flour. The union has started a gopher killing campaign and has undertaken to pay one cent per tail for each tail produced before May 1, and half a cent per tail for each one produced from that date until June 1. For this contest the union has created boundaries within which the gophers must be caught. Each male competitor over fourteen years of age has to pay an entrance fee, members of the union pay one dollar or its equivalent in tails and non-members \$1.50, ladies and children free. Affidavits may be required from each person that the gophers have been caught within said boundary. A series of dances and concerts are being held to raise the necessary funds to pay for the disbursements which will be made to the competitors. Three years ago this union secured 5,200 tails in six weeks and two years ago, under the same rules, at the end of June the count was 6,800. This year it is expected

that not less than 20,000 gophers will be killed off as a result of this competition. The union believes that money spent in competitions of this kind is well spent and that \$10 spent now will show more interest in the fall than any other \$10 spent on the farm.

WILL GIVE PATRIOTIC ACRE

A letter from H. J. Austin, secretary of Fairacres Union, No. 514, states that on account of present conditions they are unable to do anything towards the Patriotic Fund at the present time, but a motion has been passed favoring the Patriotic Acre scheme and ten members have already pledged one acre of wheat. A good many more are expected to give a guarantee later.

SUCCESSFUL CO-OPERATION

H. O. Klink, secretary of River Bend Union, No. 338, sends in a further remittance of \$34.00 for membership dues, which, with previous remittances, brings their membership up to 120. Mr. Klink reports that several new members are admitted at every meeting. The union is still doing co-operative buying on an extensive scale, having handled twenty-five carloads this winter. A strictly co-operative trading company—to be known as Jenner U. F. A. Co-operative Society—is in process of formation and everyone is feeling very enthusiastic. A piece of ground has been purchased and a fine set of pit scales is being placed on the premises, the scales being the property of the Union. The secretary reports that a very great deal of their success is due to the untiring efforts of their president, E. E. Sparks, who has given freely of his time and energy towards keeping the union going. A number of other officers and members of the union are, however, keenly interested and are always willing to take up the work when the president has more on his hands than he can handle by himself. The union held a special slaughter of gophers on April 9, the work being undertaken on a systematic scale. The report as to the results has not yet come to hand.

EDUCATIONAL RESULTS

The secretary of McCafferty Union, No. 415, writes in reference to a paragraph appearing in The Guide a week or two ago, dealing with the matter of membership dues. The paragraph was only intended as an incentive to other secretaries to get their membership dues in promptly, nevertheless we are glad to hear from the secretary of No. 415. McCafferty Union is continuing its good work for the past year or two and membership dues have already been received from this union for sixty-nine members, the total membership for the union being seventy-six for the first quarter of this year. The secretary remarks on the difference in the life of the meetings when compared with the time some two years ago when first a meeting was held. He states that formerly topics were brought forward and it was very hard to get anyone to make any remarks either for or against. Now the situation is very different and the members are only too eager to take the floor and have their say. This experience of the McCafferty Union is common and I received a letter from one of our other secretaries remarking on the same thing only a week or two ago. It is in matters of this kind where the educational work of our organization is most noticeable and can be carried out with the best results. A union cannot discuss matters pro and con, all taking part in the discussion, without each man getting his ideas broadened. The secretary gives the main credit for the results secured in this union to the President, H. T. Spencer, and his brother, Herbert, the former secretary.

CLAYSMORE WORKING

Claymore Union, No. 660, is very active and has recently secured a car of tamarac posts, also formalin and plow shares at a considerable saving.

DISTRICT DIRECTORS:

Victoria—P. S. Austin	Ranfurly
Edmonton—George Long	Namoo
Strathcona—H. G. Vickery	Strome
Macleod—G. W. Buchanan	Cowley
Calgary—J. A. Bishop	Beddington
Red Deer—D. Buckingham	Stettler
Medicine Hat—E. E. Sparks	Jenner

WANT AN ELEVATOR

Letts Union, No. 405, is also showing considerably more interest in U. F. A. work this year. Its secretary credits this to the saving effected in the purchase of strychnine and formalin. The unions at this point have been very busy recently securing applications for the necessary number of shares to get a local of the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company erected at Huxley. A strong committee was organized and ample shares have been secured to get the elevator. On March 26 E. Carswell, of the Elevator Company, and D. Buckingham, director for the Red Deer constituency, visited the district and held a meeting under the auspices of the union.

TEMPERANCE ORATIONS

Our Winona Union is adopting the following plan for helping the prohibition campaign, and possibly other unions may feel disposed to follow this example. The union is offering a prize to the winner in an oration contest, to be held on Friday evening, June 11, and any boy or girl of nineteen years or under, who is recommended by a member of the union or of the auxiliary may compete. The oration is to be on the temperance question, with special reference to the prohibition vote of July 21. The oration is to be composed and written by the contestant, and must not be over 1,500 words. The grading shall be on the basis of 60 points for logic, 20 points for composition and 20 points for delivery.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Sunnyvale local union and others will be interested to learn that we presented their resolution, concerning the property rights of married women to the Alberta government, and the Alberta legislature has just passed a short bill called "The Married Woman's Protection Act," giving a married woman the right to enter a "caveat" with the lands registrar forbidding the registrar to register any transfer, mortgage, encumbrance, lease or other instrument against the home and farm owned by her husband, on which the married woman has been living for at least two months. When a married woman has sent this notice to the registrar, her husband cannot sell, mortgage or lease the farm without her consent.

DOING GOOD WORK

A. Risely, secretary of Stainsleigh union, No. 157, reports that they have held a series of successful and interesting meetings during this past winter, discussing among other subjects, hail insurance, education, prohibition, co-operation and better farming methods. He also states that they have found the booklet, "Studies in Rural Citizenship," a great help to them. Being in a thinly populated district the membership is not large, but great interest is being taken in the work of the union. The union is particularly interested in the establishing of a public municipal hospital in the district, the need for which is very great.

A SOCIAL GATHERING

The regular meeting of Wildmere local union, No. 698, was held in Preston schoolhouse at 7.30 p.m., on Saturday, April 3, sixteen members being present. There was no business done with the exception of calling the roll and reading the correspondence received. The evening was devoted to a social entertainment, which was a big success, about fifty people being in attendance. A splendid program was provided consisting of songs, recitations, also games and dancing.

DOING BUSINESS

Sounding Lake Union, No. 670, reports having acted on the suggestion contained in my annual report for securing a line of credit of \$1,000 at the bank, and acting in conjunction with Stonelaw Union, have handled two cars of flour and feed and have an order for wire and plow shares under way. A number of the members of this union are subscribing to the Belgian Relief Fund and a committee has been appointed to report in regard to circular No. 4.