

Canadian Co-operative Society at Sydney Mines was organized in 1906; it is the oldest and one of the most successful co-operatives in the purchasing of consumer goods in Canada today.

In Quebec, development of the co-operative movement began with the formation of a farmers' mutual fire-insurance company in 1852. Co-operative insurance soon spread to the life-insurance field, the first fraternal society being formed in 1863. Mutual fire insurance and fraternal societies continue to be important types of co-operative in Quebec and have spread to other provinces.

Another early development in Quebec was the organization of La Caisse Populaire de Lévis by Alphonse Desjardins in 1900. This was the beginning of co-operative credit and savings institutions, which now play an important role in the Canadian economy. The first farmers' co-operative trading organization in this province was formed in 1915, and a fishermen's co-operative was organized in 1923.

A Canadian farmers' organization, the Dominion Grange, was granted a federal charter in 1877. It was formed from branches of the American Grange in Ontario and Quebec. At its peak, the Grange had 31,000 members, of whom 26,000 were in Ontario, where they operated a salt-manufacturing company for 38 years. The Grange also went into fire-insurance business for 22 years and in 1879 started a banking operation that lasted seven years. The Grange eventually united with another farmers' organization.

About 1890, the Patron of Industry organization came to Canada from Michigan; it handled binder twine for farmers on a co-operative basis.

Agriculture in the Prairie Provinces began to develop rapidly about 1890. This encouraged the early settlers to try to establish better marketing facilities. The beginnings of the co-operative movement in this section of Canada were made by organizations formed by these farmers.

The federal Department of Agriculture helped farmers in the Territories (now Saskatchewan and Alberta) to form co-operative creameries during the 1890s and early 1900s. These provided marketing facilities for cream in communities where there had not been any. Another early co-operative creamery was established in the Duncan area of Vancouver Island in 1896.

There was much dissatisfaction among the Prairie pioneers about the marketing of grain. In the early 1900s, the Territorial Grain Growers Association and the Manitoba Grain Growers Association were formed. While some progress was made in obtaining relief through regulatory legislation, these organizations soon decided that co-operative marketing was the real solution and the Grain Growers Grain Company was organized in 1906. Some farmer-owned local elevator companies had been formed before this date.

Province-wide co-operative elevator companies were well established in each of the three Prairie Provinces by 1913. The United Grain Growers Ltd. was formed in 1917 through amalgamation of two of these: the Grain Growers' Grain Company in Manitoba and the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company.