

# RE DISTRICT MEETINGS

To the Secretary and Members:—Now that the threshing season is pretty well over and as the time for the holding of our sixteen annual district meetings is near at hand the time is ripe for an aggressive campaign of organization and education. The past ten months have been phenomenal indeed in so far as climatic conditions are concerned. During the whole of last winter and spring country roads were exceedingly bad. Partly owing to this and partly on account of the exceptional shortness of the summer season and the disturbing weather conditions following the harvest there have not been held during the current year nearly as many meetings of the members as would have been the case under more favorable circumstances. As is always the case with the falling off of regular meetings of the members it is to be feared that interest in the big and vital public questions which are facing us has somewhat lagged. These conditions have been accentuated by those causes arising directly out of the war such as the absence of many of our leading spirits at the front or in training and the shortage of farm help. These unavoidable conditions have affected local activities more or less detrimentally, but they have loaded more than a usual amount of necessary work upon your Central, which constantly and in many ways has been working for and safeguarding the interests of agriculture during the entire year. The power for good of an organization such as the S.G.G.A., however, depends primarily upon the activities of the local units which compose it. The Central would soon lose its power for good if it were not backed up by a large membership and by aggressive activities at the local points.

## The Need is Urgent

There has never been a time when the need for the organization of the farmers and for their intelligent acquaintance with the issues of the day has cried more loudly to those whose vision is capable of penetrating a year or two into the future than they do at this moment. Tho the effect of the perils which face Western agriculture will not be fully apparent for some little time to come, it is now that there obtains the most imperative need for strong organization and intelligent understanding. Now, while the bulk of the farmers are prosperous as never before; now, while many of them feel least the need of getting together for their mutual welfare; now, when men are content because mere chance—and a chance over which they had no vestige of control—turned a crop which was ten per cent. hailed and twenty-five per cent. rusted into a profit as great as those of many ordinary years combined; now is the time of greatest perils to Western agriculture. The cost of everything which the farmer has to purchase, including labor, has gone up by leaps and bounds. This cost will continue to increase at least until the close of the war. At the first faint glimmer of peace, wheat prices will drop most mightily and the chances are ten to one that they will drop below the line of the present cost of production. Nothing is surer than that every effort will be made, now being made, to capitalize the enormously inflated prices of all kinds of supplies made possible by the war and to maintain these profitable prices after the war has come to a close even tho the prices of grain may have dropped to the most discouraging minimum. In an effort to maintain these high prices every one will be made of the tariff as well as its abuse under the villainous "dumping clause" which permits of the grossest discrimination as was experienced by the farmers' organizations during the past season. In many lines of goods the protected manufacturers are setting not alone the prices at which they will sell their products, but also the prices at which the jobber is to resell the same, as well as the prices at which the dealer must sell to the consumer. Active and aggressive propaganda is constantly being made to prepare the public for yet greater exploitation under this so called protection and for the up-keep of the price of supplies, and so long as there still remains in the pockets of Western farmers any considerable portion of the profits which they made out of wheat growing during the war, every effort will be made to maintain the prices of all that farmers have to buy at a decidedly profitable basis. For these things the manufacturer, the wholesaler and the retailer are preparing themselves and all of them know

# Saskatchewan

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association by J. B. Musselman, Secretary, Regina, Sask., to whom all communications for this page should be sent.

that now while the farmer feels himself prosperous and contented is the time to entrench their position with high and yet higher barriers against a fair and open competition.

## Our Only Salvation

Now is the time to make our foundation strong; now is the time when we require to get every man in Saskatchewan into the Grain Growers' Association. To grumble is foolish, to kick but stirs up a dust and beclouds the vision a bit, to rave against conditions in general and a few people in particular may relieve the spleen a bit, but that is all. To chase a will-o'-the-wisp which promises to revolutionize society in a day by the stroke of a pen at the foot of a page of legislation may be a pleasant pastime, but it is apt to carry one far from home and from his wood pile, but to know, to understand, to comprehend, that is power.

Not discontent, not prejudice, not suspicion and self righteousness, but a clear vision, a sure grasp of the immutable principles which underlie our problems will enable us to shape our destiny as we want it and as it ought to be. Knowledge therefore is the supreme requisite. Not the meaningless theories of others which we do not understand, but facts which we ourselves comprehend. Systematic study alone can equip us with the knowledge which can make us powerful when organized. During the course of the coming winter it has therefore been planned that as never before the association shall give itself over to the study of those problems which affect the very foundation of the social and economic structure of Western agriculture. Literature in connection with what the Central executive is planning in this connection will be forwarded to you in the very near future. Every effort should be made to hold regular weekly or fortnightly meetings from now until spring. Each such meeting can be made interesting, entertaining, instructive and helpful, especially if the officers of the local will throw themselves enthusiastically into the work. Every effort should be made to increase the membership to the highest possible number and especially should this work be prosecuted amongst the women who so recently have come into their long denied right of the franchise and which the association did so much to win for them.

## Collect Membership Fees

Every effort should be made to collect all membership fees so that they can be remitted to the head office promptly. A special effort in this direction is necessary for the reason that during the rush season comparatively little work in this connection was done. In every case where secretaries have fees on hand remittance should be made at once. It should be borne in mind that under the constitution of the association a member having once joined the association continues to be a member and is liable for his annual membership fee until such time as he has either resigned from membership or been expelled by the local. It is especially important that meetings should be held in all locals before the month of November is out for the reason that district meetings will be brought on comparatively early in December. There are many problems which should be debated and studied in meeting before the district meetings take place in order that they may be more intelligently dealt with at the larger gatherings.

At one of your earliest meetings the whole problem of Municipal Hail Insurance should be fully discussed. This is probably the most pertinent question which is before the ratepayers of Saskatchewan today. In the course of the next four months co-operative hail insurance in Saskatchewan will in all probability either have been dropped forever or placed upon a permanently sound foundation which will give positive protection at cost for all time to come and, it is hoped, extend the same protection to the 1916 sufferers. But the fate of the whole project will depend in very large measure upon the degree

of understanding which the farmers of this province have of it. The question of co-operative credit is another which requires study in order that the association may reasonably and intelligently press for action in connection with it during 1917.

We are facing in the very near future a vote on the question of the few remaining liquor stores in Saskatchewan. It is highly imperative that every local should show its interest in this question and assert itself accordingly.

There never has been a year in which it was as highly imperative that a careful selection of reeves of municipalities should be made as this year. The fate of co-operative hail insurance will lie largely in the hands of the reeves who are elected and no reeve should be elected who is not a true co-operator at heart or who has not declared himself openly and fully on this important question of hail insurance. Too few farmers interest themselves in the election of their municipal officers. There is opportunity for thoroughly good work by your local in securing the interest of the ratepayers in the municipal election and in assuring the selection of true co-operators as reeves. The full board of directors of the association will meet at the head office in Regina on Thursday, November 23. Following this meeting further details of the plans for the winter's campaign will be published.

Fraternalty yours,

J. B. MUSSELMAN,  
Central Secretary.

## PROPOSALS RE DEBATING LEAGUES

Recommendations of the committee appointed by the executive of the association to deal with the matter of debating leagues and other methods for the encouragement of systematic study in economic and other public questions. The committee is composed of Mrs. McNaughtan, Miss Erma Stocking, Mrs. C. E. Platt, George E. Atkinson and John N. Burrill. The committee sat in the head offices of the association at Regina, November 8, 1916, all the members except Mr. Burrill being present, and beg to submit to the executive the following recommendations for its early consideration and prompt action.

That in order to better promote the study and discussion of economic and other problems pertaining to the general welfare of the people and the development of a higher and broader type of citizenship the following suggestions be put into effect: 1—That a provincial standing committee be appointed to have special charge of this department of the educational work of the association within lines of policy laid down by the Central executive. 2—That provision be made for defraying the necessary expenses of this committee in the prosecution of its work. 3—That the committee have authority to especially foster the study and discussion of public questions: (a) by the selection of suitable topics for lectures, addresses, essays and debates; (b) by selecting and classifying literature dealing with these topics and providing such locals as have decided to take up the work with reference for such sources of information; (c) by encouraging debates upon suitable subjects within the respective locals and if found feasible between various locals; (d) by encouraging and assisting in the institution of lecture courses as early as possible. 4—That all locals be circularized by the Central in an endeavor to persuade them to join the work and to ascertain those who will do so. 5—That this proposition be presented at each district convention. 6—That the executive take up with the University of Saskatchewan the matter of its supplying packet libraries containing material suitable for debates, discussions and studies on the subjects above referred to and that an effort be made to persuade the university to take up this work. All of which is respectfully submitted by your committee.

MRS. McNAUGHTAN,  
Chairman.  
MISS E. STOCKING,  
Secretary.



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