

tent. I should be glad to hear if you or any of your readers have any views on this subject.

Yours truly,

CIVIL SERVANT.

Ottawa, April 7th, 1914.

## CO-OPERATIVE NOTES.

### A Militant Advance.

The co-operative movement in Canada has been tremendously strengthened by the formation of two bodies in Ontario recently. The United Farmers of Ontario, an educational body, will be the medium through which farmers can study their peculiar interests and make pronouncements of their views on agriculture and public policy. The United Farmers Company, a commercial body, will be the medium through which supplies may be purchased. The latter organization will start as a joint stock concern, with a capital of \$10,000 made up of \$25 shares. Dividends on capital will not exceed 7 per cent., the excess profits may create a reserve fund or be distributed among customers as dividends upon purchases.

The convention at which these new organizations were launched included representatives of practically all of the agricultural co-operative organizations in the province. The extent of the application of the co-operative principle in Ontario may not be known to *Civilian* readers. The "Weekly Sun" says in this connection:—

"There are, scattered over Ontario, something like three hundred farmers' clubs, subordinate granges, fruit growers' associations, and so on, nearly all of which have done more or less co-operative trading of late years."

And the "Sun" gives examples of the workings of these bodies. For instance, the Norfolk Fruit Growers' Association sold \$600,000 worth of

apples in a co-operative way in eight years of operation; nine egg circles in one county (Ontario) sold \$35,500 worth of eggs in one year; the Farmers' Dairy Company, operating in Toronto, is paying practically 13 per cent. dividends to its farmer shareholders. These are instances of co-operative production and marketing, tending to improve the quality of the farming, the product and the selling, and giving the producer a fairer share of what it costs to get his products into the hands of the consumer. No civil servant, as a buyer of products of the farm, will begrudge the producer getting a legitimate gain for his labour. The farmer, however, like the civil servant, is dependent upon other agencies than his own labour for his supplies, and has been exploited by the expensive system of distribution now in vogue in Canada and elsewhere. The United Farmers' Company will help him to overcome the disadvantages under which he has been working in his purchases of articles he cannot produce himself. The United Farmers' Company practically becomes the farmer's wholesaler, distributing supplies through the local farmers' organizations, and handing back the profits either to the farmer himself or to his local association's store. They reach him ultimately.

The bearing of this new move of the Ontario farmers upon the general co-operative movement is this: that there would seem to be no reason why the farmer's wholesaler should not be the wholesaler of the co-operative stores now operating in Ontario, if they are willing to contribute capital upon the same basis as the farmers do. The greater the outlet the United Farmers' Company has, the better terms will it be able to secure from those with whom it deals because of the size of its orders. This union of interests is a dream which may come true in the not distant future.

Besides the twenty-five co-operative