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Alberta

This Section of The Guide is conducted officially for the United Farmers of Alberta by P. P. Woodbridge, Secretary, Calgary, Alberta, to whom all communications for this page should be sent

Extracts from Official Circular No. 7

To the Officers and Members of... Local Union...

Ladies and Gentlemen:—A number of letters are received from time to time in regard to the difficulty of maintaining interest in the unions. I propose to deal with this at a greater length in one of our circulars in the near future. There are, however, two or three points which it might be well to touch on here. There is an ever increasing tendency on the part of individual members to use this office for the purpose of obtaining specific information on a large number of subjects. The tendency is a bad one. On one day last week I was called upon to give specific information on eleven different matters involving technical details. Ten of these questions were from members of the Association only three of whom were secretaries. Of the seven subjects referred to me by individuals, every one of which was of interest to the farmers as a whole, probably five could have been dealt with by the local union in regular session without consulting this office at all. Our Unions are organized mainly for the purpose of education. One of their chief uses should be for the discussion of questions of this kind. If no member of the union is able to solve the difficulty the Central Office is always ready to help, but the information sent out, while for the benefit of the particular individual case, is intended for all. The information should be kept on the union files and should be made public among such members of the unions as can be induced to attend the meetings, so that anyone experiencing similar difficulties in the future will know how to deal with same. There are occasions sometimes where haste is required and where the secretary of the union is too far from the individual in trouble for them to get in touch but for the most part there is no reason why all these communications should not come thru the secretary of the union, who is the person elected to look after such work. For the future, unless there are extenuating circumstances, we propose to recognize secretaries only in matters of this kind. Individual inquirers writing direct will be expected to give the name and number of their union, and unless there is some good reason why a contrary course should be pursued, the answer to such inquiries will be sent to the secretary of that union, so that the union will get the benefit of the case as well as the individual.

Non-Members and Co-operation

Another point that has come to my notice is in connection with bulk purchasing. A short time ago, a letter came to hand from the secretary of one of our unions organized some four years ago, which has been gradually dropping off in membership ever since. This year they have seven members, yet the secretary is able to send in a very interesting report in regard to the carloads of flour, twine and other commodities which have been purchased. So far as I know, the seven members of that union are not big enough farmers to use all these carloads of stuff among themselves. The inference would seem to be that in this, as in many other cases I know of, the results of the work of the farmers' organization in the past six or seven years are being given by our members free of charge to all and sundry. We have spent a great deal of time and trouble in building up great farmers' organizations, which have been the direct cause for certain firms breaking away from the combines and undertaking to deal with the farmer direct at a considerably reduced price. Do you think it is right or in the interests of your organization generally that the benefits which you derive in dollars and cents as a result of the work of your association, should be given to all and sundry, many of

whom have never been members of the U.F.A. and have no other interest in it beyond the opportunity which it affords them to purchase goods at a reduced price? You cannot build up your locals unless you are able to give the members at least some slight advantage which the non-member does not have. You cannot prevent every farmer in the province from enjoying the improved economic and legislative conditions which we are gradually bringing about but it is only right and proper that a man who is not connected with your union should be charged a price sufficiently above that charged to the members, to make him see that it is worth while to become a member. If he will not join the union voluntarily, he should at least be made to help support that union by paying a price for goods purchased thru the union, slightly in excess of the cost to those contributing to the general funds in the form of a regular membership fee.

EGG CIRCLES

A number of our unions have recently organized Egg Circles. We have been able to secure a supply of patented carton boxes holding one dozen eggs each, inscribed to order. Samples of these special carton boxes will be gladly sent to any of our unions interested in the formation of egg circles or desirous of placing their eggs on the market in the most up-to-date and pleasing style.

ABOUT TAXATION

A number of inquiries have been received from different parts of the province recently, as to whether home-steads, pre-emptions or leases from the Dominion Government, the title of which is in the Crown, can be legally assessed for taxes by provincial, municipal, school or other local authorities. It should be noted that taxes levied in such cases cannot be held as a lien against land, but provincial, municipal, school or other local authority making the assessment has full power to proceed in such a manner as they see fit to collect the taxes from the person who occupied the land when the assessment was made.

A BIG PICNIC

A very successful picnic was held by the Bottrell U.F.A. No. 286 on July 17, among the poplar bluffs on the ranch of C. V. Thompson, the very genial postmaster at Dog Pound, who very kindly granted the free use of his grounds for the occasion. Mr. Thompson also assisted in other ways to make the affair the great success it turned out to be. The weather being perfect and the people in the locality and surrounding districts evidently in the proper mood for a holiday, a very large concourse of people assembled to take in the sports and otherwise enjoy themselves during the day. It was estimated that at least 1,000 people were on the grounds. The committee appointed for the purpose of making and carrying out the arrangements took a good deal of trouble and incurred considerable expense in fixing up a splendid race course and in other ways preparing the grounds for the successful carrying out of the many events contained in the program, such as horse racing of different kinds, bucking contest, bending race, tilting at rings, broad and high jumping besides many other features of sport which space will not permit me to mention. Besides the erection of a large tent, very kindly loaned by J. T. Boucher, local merchant at Bottrell, and placed entirely at the disposal of the ladies, the committee had also put up a building 20 by 50 ft., part of which was used as a booth, the remainder being solidly floored for dancing, in which pastime the young folks engaged to

their hearts' content. A special committee managed the refreshment booth during the day, dispensing to the big crowd large quantities of ice cream, soft drinks, fruit and all the other refreshments and confectionery usually kept for such occasions. The committee realized from the booth and other sources the sum of \$380, and after paying all expenses a handsome sum was turned over to the union. The Bottrell Union have for some years been buying in carload lots and during the present year have so far purchased two cars of flour, one car of lumber and one car of shingles, thus effecting a considerable saving to the members of the union.

WARRICKVILLE PICNIC

H. J. Gould, Secretary of Warrickville Union No. 614, reports that they had a very successful picnic on July 13. This union was organized on March 18, 1914, and has been holding meetings regularly ever since.

BIG TIME AT BERRYWATER

The Berrywater Branch No. 195 has at the present time 26 members on the books, of whom 22 are paid up. In the line of co-operation this local has enabled its members to buy coal oil and plow shares at quite a saving over local prices. In July a most successful picnic was held under the auspices of the local at the E/E Ranch, by the kind invitation of Arthur Bond, one of the members. There were fully 500 people present. The sports included horse races, foot races, football, baseball, etc. After supper a bucking contest of more than ordinary interest came off. Five horses were ridden, both horses and riders giving a good exhibition of the real thing. The proceedings finished up with a dance in the barn in the evening. The local takes this opportunity to thank everybody who by financial assistance or otherwise helped to make the picnic such a success. This particularly applies to the ladies who brought baskets. \$10.70 were put in the funds after all expenses were paid.

RE-ORGANIZED

Orton Union No. 227 was re-organized a little over a month ago by our Vice-President, Mr. Speakman, who was at that time making a tour in the district. Their secretary, J. McMurray, reports that they have held good meetings regularly since then and the members are taking a great interest in the movement. They hope to do some co-operative purchasing, etc., later on.

CAMROSE CO-OPERATING

J. K. Van Petten, Secretary of Camrose Union No. 575, reports that they have now forty-three members paid up, all of whom are greatly interested in co-operative purchasing, etc. They have bought salt, wire, flour and twine co-operatively, the latter having been purchased from a local man at a considerable saving.

VARYING WEIGHTS AND GRADES

Editor, Guide:—I have just been out on a few days' business trip as far as Estevan. At different points I stopped off and drove into the country. The crops generally, from Melita west, will be very fair, and the general opinion is that they will yield much better than was anticipated ten days ago. But this year there will be a great difference in weights and grades of wheat. On one farm I found two different fifty acre fields threshed, one on fall plowing and the other on summer fallow. Both samples looked a good two northern, but the weights in the two fields varied over 2½ lbs. to the bushel. It might be interesting for other farmers to make a note of this and see how their own wheat on different parts of the farm and on differently worked land weighs out. When this is done, it will account for some cars weighing less than anticipated. We believe it will be quite a common thing this year to find cars of wheat from the same farm varying in weight as much as 50 bushels to the car.

WM. MOFFAT

Sec., The Grain Growers' Grain Co. Ltd. Winnipeg, Sept. 2.