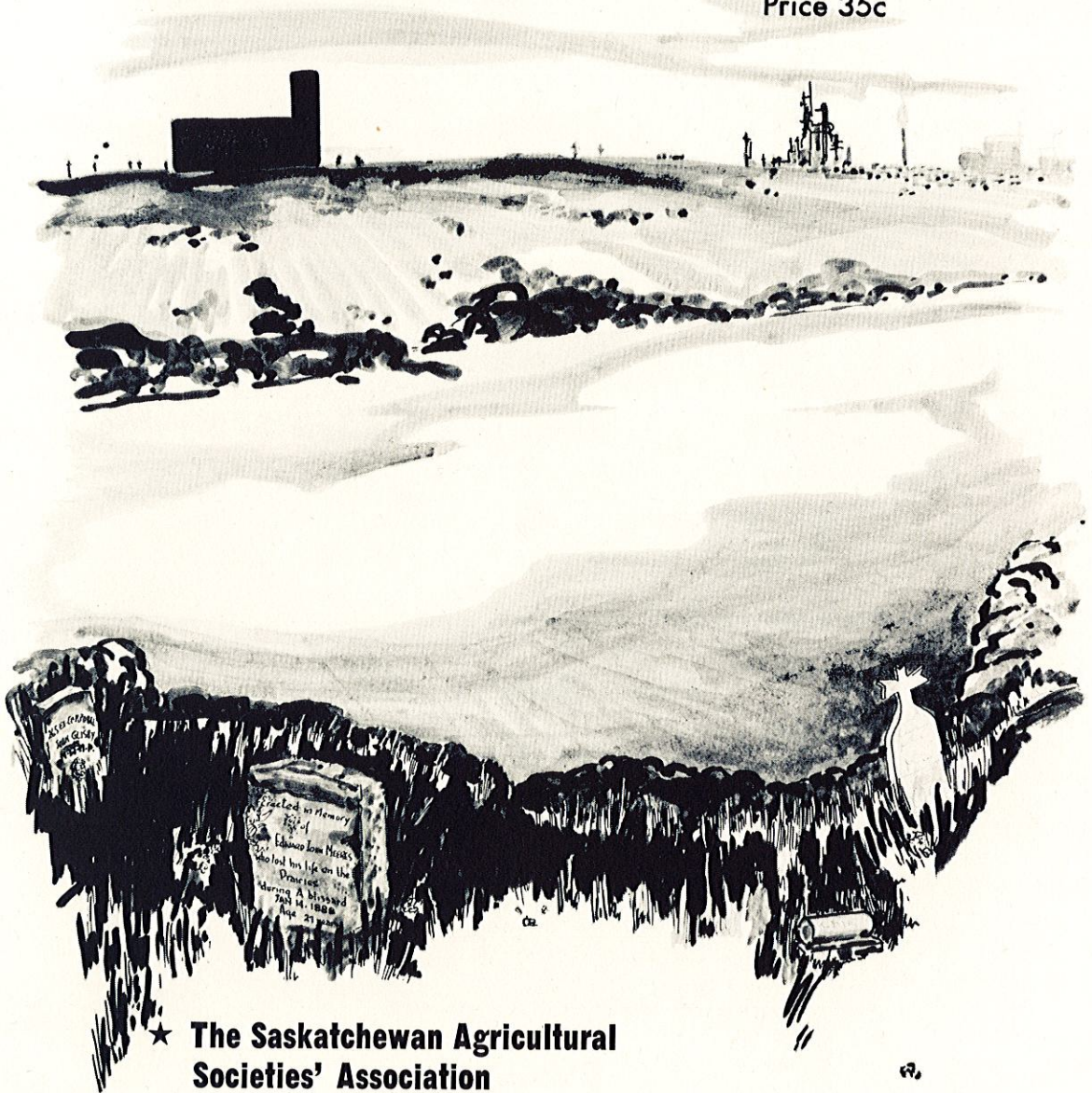


# Saskatchewan History

Vol. XIV No.1

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★ **The Saskatchewan Agricultural  
Societies' Association**

by F. H. Auld

★ **Mrs. Catherine Gillespie Motherwell,  
Pioneer Teacher and Missionary**

by L. L. Dobbin

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## The Saskatchewan Agricultural Societies' Association

**A**GRICULTURAL societies were established in the North-West Territories before the rush of farm settlement began. The earliest societies were formed in 1884.<sup>1</sup> By 1905 when provincial autonomy was obtained, there were 36 organized societies in Saskatchewan and 17 in Alberta. They rose to a peak of 160 chartered societies in Saskatchewan in 1927 but by the end of 1958 there were only 84 chartered societies and 3 other communities active in agricultural society work in Saskatchewan. For a time, until the establishment of the first experimental farm at Indian Head in 1888, the agricultural societies were the only agencies for agricultural improvement in the North-West Territories. Despite their early beginnings, the agricultural societies did not, as might have been expected, become the chief advocates of prairie farmers in the search for solutions of economic grievances.

With scattered settlement and sparse population their influence was extremely local, and their interests seem to have been concentrated on the holding of agricultural exhibitions. Not much encouragement for diversity of operations was given in the statute which authorized the granting of charters.<sup>2</sup> It prescribed the following activities for the improvement of agriculture:

- (a) By importing or otherwise procuring seeds, plants, and animals of new and valuable kinds;
- (b) By awarding prizes for excellence in the raising or introduction of stock, the invention or improvement of agricultural implements or machines, the production of grain and all kinds of vegetables, plants, flowers and fruits, home manufactures and works of art and, generally for excellence in any agricultural production or operations;
- (c) By offering prizes for essays on questions of scientific enquiry relating to agriculture and the best systems of protection against prairie fires.

Though interested in agricultural exhibitions, these early settlers were more urgently in need of elementary and fundamental information that could be used to make their farming operations more successful.

For many years after the first agricultural societies were formed in the Canadian North-West, settlers jested about the "wagers" of ten dollars which they had made with the government that they could live off the production of 160 acres of government land—a bet of \$10.00 against a quarter section. Agricultural settlement, particularly west of Manitoba, was originally somewhat of

<sup>1</sup> The following agricultural societies were incorporated in or prior to 1888 in that portion of the North-West Territories east of the 4th Meridian: Assiniboia (Regina), Battle River (Battleford), Broadview, Carrot River (Kinistino), Central Saskatchewan (Saskatoon), East Moose Mountain (Cannington Manor), Grenfell, Indian Head and Qu'Appelle Valley, Lorne (Prince Albert), Maple Creek, Moose Mountain (Carlyle), Moose Jaw, Moosomin, North-East Assiniboia (Kinbrae and later, Churchbridge), Pheasant Forks, Qu'Appelle (Fort Qu'Appelle), South-East Assiniboia (Carnduff), South Qu'Appelle (Qu'Appelle), Stirling (Saltcoats), Wapella, Whitewood, Wolseley, Yorkton.

<sup>2</sup> *Ordinances of the North-West Territories*, No. 8 of 1886.



a venture—tentative and experimental until pioneer farmers discovered by experience reliable methods of tillage and obtained grain varieties that could be successfully grown. The accidental discovery of the “summerfallow” in the years 1885 and 1886 and its gradual acceptance did much to add stability to prairie farming. Unfortunately for the settlers there was not then an agricultural department in the Territorial government nor an organization of agricultural societies to which they could appeal for help in solving their problems. With characteristic imagination and resource, some of them thought up a plan of action.

#### THE NORTH-WEST FARMERS' ASSOCIATION

Members of the Assiniboia Agricultural Society at Regina took the initiative in 1887 in organizing an agricultural conference to meet in Regina on October 11 and 12 of that year. It was a year of some importance to the North-West. Sir John Lyster-Kaye's ill-fated bonanza farm project<sup>3</sup> was begun at that time. Part of the gigantic Bell Farm<sup>4</sup> at Indian Head was selected in 1887 to serve farmers of the North-West Territories as one of the chain of Dominion Experimental Farms established to benefit Canadian agriculture. In the interest of immigration to the prairie region, the agricultural society exhibitions of 1887 were held in sequence from Moosomin to Moose Jaw so that press representatives and other visitors from the provinces could most conveniently observe and describe the exhibits from prairie farms.<sup>5</sup>

The objects of the Conference, stated broadly, were “to secure an exchange of opinion from practical agriculturists in the North-West Territories with a view to eliciting useful information from experienced sources.”<sup>6</sup> The state of agriculture in 1887 may be imagined from the variety of topics on which papers were solicited. These included: mixed farming; ploughing; harrowing; agricultural machinery; progress of agriculture; exhibitions in the North-West; dairy farming; cheese making; varieties of grain most suitable for the soils and climate of the North-West; cultivation of grasses; best time to cut grain; stock raising; best breeds of stock for the North-West Territories; prairie versus timbered lands.

The sponsors of the conference “hoped that the convention will lead to a permanent organization, which will hereafter meet annually, and that its deliber-

<sup>3</sup> One of the large farming enterprises founded during the 1880's and financed chiefly by British capital, it was incorporated as the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company, Ltd. It established ten farming centres, each equal to about one township in area, at Balgonie, Rush Lake, Swift Current, Gull Lake, Crane Lake, Kincorth, and four places in Alberta, where farming hazards were then as elsewhere not fully comprehended.

<sup>4</sup> So called because the resident manager of the Qu'Appelle Valley Farming Company which had acquired the 50,000 acres of excellent wheat land lying north of Indian Head and Qu'Appelle was Major W. R. Bell.

<sup>5</sup> A successful exhibitor whose variety of crops indicated both inclination and capacity for experimentation in those fateful years was W. R. Motherwell of Abernethy. In response to government appeal in 1887 for agricultural products of quality he sent material to a number of exhibitions. At Indian Head he won prizes with barley, peas and a collection of pickles. At Fort Qu'Appelle his awards were for White Fife and A.O.V. wheats, hull-less and ordinary barley, peas, flax and cheese. At South Qu'Appelle they related to exhibits of wheat, barley, flax and muskmelons. At Wolseley he was a winner with Red Fife and A.O.V. wheats, barley, oats, field peas, carrots, cabbage, cheese and pickles. See *Qu'Appelle Progress*, Oct. 13, 20, 1887.

<sup>6</sup> *Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford), Oct. 1, 1887.



ations will add materially to the prosperity of the agricultural industry of the Territories."<sup>7</sup> Exactly what the permanent organization would be or do is not clear, but the word 'deliberations' is suggestive.

Invitations to the Conference were issued in the name of George W. Brown, president of the Assiniboia Agricultural Society, and George B. Elliott, honorary secretary of the Conference. They were sent to all agricultural societies and notice of the Convention was also sent to the territorial press. Commenting on it, the editor of the Battleford paper approved the idea "if it avoids becoming a political machine and succeeds in developing a higher interest in practical agriculture and leads to the formation of local farmers' clubs which, in their turn, become valuable auxiliaries to the numerous agricultural societies already in existence."<sup>8</sup>

#### THE CONVENTION

The attendance must have been a disappointment to the promoters. Twenty-seven agricultural societies held exhibitions in the Territories and shared in Federal financial grants in 1887; but only eight of them were represented at the Regina conference. The Canadian Pacific Railway granted special rates but none of the Alberta societies attended. Moose Jaw sent E. N. Hopkins and Messrs. Watson and Anderson; Qu'Appelle sent W. S. Redpath; Indian Head sent R. Crawford, R. Insinger and W. E. Grant; Wolseley, Levi Thomson and Mr. Howey; Regina, George W. Brown, Henry Fisher, Mayor D. Mowat, James Bole and George B. Elliott.

Three other agricultural societies, remote from rail service, were also represented. Central Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) sent Messrs. Copland, Trounce and Garrison; Alameda, though not chartered until September 13, 1888 had held an exhibition in 1887, sent Chris. Troyer and J. J. Heaslip to the Regina Conference while Moose Mountain (Carlyle) was represented by D. A. McEwen and John G. Turriff, the latter being then in Regina to attend the North-West Council. The zeal of these persons in negotiating prairie trails for such extensive distances in the performance of what was largely a public service excites our admiration.<sup>9</sup>

Several others, including the Lieutenant-Governor, attended as visitors. These included D. F. Jelly and John Secord, members of the North-West Council, and W. D. Perley and Nicholas Flood Davin, members of the House of Commons. Also registered were Richard McKinnon of the Piapot Indian reserve, and Edward Carss and W. C. Cullum of Regina. A distinguished visitor was Dr. Wm. Saunders, newly appointed Director of the Experimental Farms system, from Ottawa. There were also several representatives of the eastern Press who had been invited to visit a number of the agricultural fairs in the North-West. Among them were William Weld of the *Farmers' Advocate*, London, W. W. Lynch of the *Montreal*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> The route from Alameda and Carlyle was via Moosomin, and the Saskatoon delegates had no benefit of rail travel. Saskatoon grain haulers at this time were suggesting that there should be at least four wells on the route so that it would not be necessary to carry water for horses in their wagons.



*Star*, Mr. Fox of the *Toronto Mail*, Mr. Trueman, a New Brunswick farmer and journalist and W. B. Alley of the *Colchester Sun*, Truro.<sup>10</sup>

Through the courtesy of Mr. Justice Richardson, the convention was held in the Regina court house. Two Regina clergymen were present and both participated in the convention proceedings. Mayor Mowat and G. B. Elliott were appointed chairman and secretary, respectively.

An early item of business was a motion by E. N. Hopkins, duly seconded and carried, "that this meeting deem it advisable to form a permanent organization and that a committee be appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws for the government of the organization."<sup>11</sup>

On the second day of the convention, the committee's report on organization was presented and adopted, officers were elected and it was decided to hold the next meeting of the North-West Farmers' Association on the first Tuesday in November of the following year. George W. Brown, George B. Elliott and Mayor Mowat were respectively elected President, Secretary and Treasurer. The constitution provided for four vice-presidents. Elected for East Assiniboia was R. Crawford, for West Assiniboia, E. N. Hopkins and Thos. Copland for Saskatchewan. Alberta, not being represented, failed to get a vice-president. The Lieutenant-Governor was elected a Patron; and his subsequent support fully justified the appointment.

From press reports the educational program seems rather unimpressive. Fisher read a paper on "The Cost of Threshing." Elliott dealt with "Progress of Exhibitions in Manitoba and the North-West in the past Twelve Years." Dr. Wm. Saunders spoke on several topics and stressed the lack of information and the need for greater knowledge of many phases of prairie agriculture and of climatic variations within the region. Messrs. Trounce and Levi Thomson talked about "Mixed Farming." C. C. Lynch, a specialist in dairying, offered suggestions on buttermaking; and Nicholas Flood Davin suggested that a meat packing plant might benefit our cattle producers. He pointed out that when meat packing plants were established in Chicago cattle prices rose from 2½ to 4½ cents a pound. It would seem that several of the topics mentioned in the convention invitation were not debated. If a report of the convention was published as was intended, copies of it do not seem to have survived the years.

In planning for the future, the convention adopted a resolution asking the president, the secretary and the treasurer to solicit grants of money from the Dominion and the Territorial governments to enable the Association to develop its services. The meeting also named D. F. Jelly to attend the Farmers' National Congress to be held in Chicago in December, 1887. George W. Brown was named an alternate delegate, and he attended when Mr. Jelly found himself unable to do so.

<sup>10</sup> Other visitors included W. L. Cotton and A. B. Warburton of Charlottetown; J. A. Bell and J. J. Stewart of Halifax; J. D. Hazen and H. B. Mitchell, Fredericton.

<sup>11</sup> *The Leader* (Regina), Oct. 18, 1887.



The Association was treated generously by the North-West Council when application was made to it for financial support, although two separate motions to authorize a grant of \$400.00 were passed only by the casting votes of the presiding officers. The Regina *Leader's* report of the proceedings indicates that the discussion in the North-West Council was lively and humorous:

The Council went into Committee of the Whole to consider the report of the Finance Committee that a grant of \$400.00 be made to the Territorial Agricultural Association, Mr. Ross (Moose Jaw) in the Chair. Mr. Cayley (Calgary) moved an amendment that the prayer of Messrs. Haultain, Lauder and Cayley for a similar grant to the South-West Live Stock Association (Macleod) be granted. (Laughter) Mr. Secord pointed out that the Agricultural Association was territorial. Cayley: 'Yes. Territorial like the Regina Hospital'. Mr. Sutherland (Qu'Appelle) moved a similar amendment for a grant to the Qu'Appelle Agricultural Society. (Laughter) He said he had no objection to the original motion; but Mr. Cayley's Association was a local one—the other was territorial. The Chairman ruled the amendment out of order, amid much amusement. Mr. Haultain (Macleod) objected to the use of the word 'prayer' in his amendment. He denied the connection of any such devotional exercise with the question so far as he was concerned. Mr. Cayley: 'I withdraw the amendment on the understanding that Mr. Haultain admits he never says his prayers'. (Laughter)

A vote on the report was then taken with the result of 9 for and 9 against. The chairman was called on to give the casting vote, which he did in favour of the Report and amid hearty cheers. Dr. Wilson (Edmonton): 'Regina forever!' (Hear, Hear).

The Committee rose and reported; and His Honour asked if the Report should be concurred in. (Cries of Yes Yes and No No.) Another vote was then taken and 8 voted for and 8 against. Much excitement and amusement ensued, and then His Honour decided in favour of the grant, with more cheers.<sup>12</sup>

This account of the North-West Farmers' Association is purposely detailed because of the interest which attaches to proceedings of that early period. For the same reason Mr. Brown's report of his visit to Chicago is revealing. He was cordially received in a gathering of about 400 delegates representative of many parts of the American Union. In a statement to the *Leader*<sup>13</sup> Mr. Brown is quoted as saying that the principal topics discussed were the American sheep industry, the merging of the telegraph and the postal services, the working of the Inter-State commerce bill, wheat growing and foreign competition in which India was conceded to be the most dangerous rival, her available export out of a crop of 378,000,000 bushels being 200,000,000 bushels. He got from delegates and, later, from persons in the Eastern States a view of the then rather discouraging conditions in the United States which were thought to be associated with the problem of assimilating into the country an excessive volume of immigration. He found that Commercial Union—a political slogan in Canada—was a meaningless phrase to many but that the idea was favored by those Americans who saw in it a possible absorption of Canada by the United States.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1887.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Jan. 10, 1888.



The *Regina Journal*, after interviewing Mr. Brown early in January made the following comment:

Nearly every question taken up resolved itself into a question of tariffs; and though Mr. Brown has always been a staunch protectionist, he acknowledges having returned with somewhat modified views on that question.<sup>14</sup>

At the banquet given by the Town Council of Regina to the delegates and visitors to the 1887 convention of the North-West Farmers' Association, George B. Elliott made an interesting remark in response to a compliment on his fine service in organizing the convention. He said that an artist could paint two pictures—one showing the hall at Brandon where the Farmers' Protective Union had its origin (in 1883) with bickerings and arguments about matters in no wise connected with agriculture. Naturally it was a failure. "But look on the other picture," he said, "on the bowed heads in our court room today while a minister invoked the blessing which we always admit is necessary in any good cause. Such a beginning boded a useful career for the organization."<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Elliott's contrasting comment concerning the Farmers' Union challenges our attention. Formed in Manitoba some four years previously,<sup>16</sup> after a real estate "boom" had "bust," the Farmers' Protective Union drew up a declaration of "rights" which mentioned among other disabilities the oppressive duties on farm machinery, the monopoly position of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and the vexations experienced in the administration of public lands. The Union wanted a rail route to Hudson Bay and representation in the Dominion Cabinet. Early in 1884 the Union sent a delegation to Ottawa—probably the first prairie organization to do so—to interview the Government. The delegates said on their return that the Government's reception was "not of that satisfactory nature which the importance of our mission demands."<sup>17</sup> In 1884, on the eve of the Riel rebellion, this Farmers' Union seems to have been itself contemplating an uprising against constituted authority in Manitoba.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever the errors of the Farmers' Union were, it seems to have lost favour early in its career.<sup>19</sup> Nor did the North-West Farmers' Association fare better. They do not seem to have met in 1888 as planned or again under that banner, although the field was wide open to them until 1901 when the Territorial Grain Growers' Association was formed with leadership which inspired action and achieved amazing success.

<sup>14</sup> *The Journal* (Regina), Jan. 12, 1888.

<sup>15</sup> *The Leader* (Regina), Oct. 18, 1887.

<sup>16</sup> Following its initial convention at Brandon early in December, 1883 the Farmers' Protective Union of Manitoba held a provincial convention at Winnipeg on December 19, 1883. See W. L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (University of Toronto Press, 1957), p. 211.

<sup>17</sup> J. F. C. Wright, *Saskatchewan. The History of a Province* (McClelland and Stewart, 1955), p. 78.

<sup>18</sup> N. F. Black, *History of Saskatchewan* (Saskatchewan Historical Company, Regina, 1913), Vol. I, p. 260.

<sup>19</sup> Radical features of its program, and the political sympathies of some of its leaders, coupled with secessionist threats by one of them, contributed to a rapid disintegration of the Union during 1884. See Morton, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-213. This short-lived organization does not appear to have spread into the North-West Territories.



The North-West Farmers' Association avoided public issues in 1887 but it cannot be said that it did so because its members lacked either aggressiveness or political sensitivity. A number of the delegates and some of the visitors to the 1887 Regina convention were definitely politically minded. Crawford, Turriff, Jelly and Secord were then members of the North-West Council. Mayor D. Mowat and F. R. Insinger were to become members of the Legislative Assembly, the former in 1891 and the latter in 1895. E. N. Hopkins had been defeated two years previously when he was a candidate for election to the North-West Council. In 1887, Perley, a former member of the Council, was a member of the House of Commons; and he was followed later to Ottawa by Thomson, Turriff and Hopkins. George W. Brown, President-elect of the Farmers' Association, then 27 years old, became a candidate for election to the Legislative Assembly in 1888 and was a member of that body from 1894 to 1905. He served as Lieutenant-Governor of Saskatchewan from 1910 to 1915. Neither lack of ability or political inexperience on the part of its members provides a convincing explanation for the Association's restricted activities.

The country was new and thinly peopled. Only 7,220 Territorials voted in the Dominion election of 1887; and 2,055 of them were in Alberta Territory. The votes cast in the election of 1901—the inaugural year of the Territorial Grain Growers—were 23,618 with 9,232 in Alberta. An experimental farm for the Territories, located at Indian Head in 1887 and operated from 1888, was to answer the questions which were raised at the 1887 convention and perhaps better than the Farmers' Association could hope to do. The convention program and the remarks of Mr. Elliott indicate that the function of the Association was to be educational rather than reformatory. The time element may also have been important. Homesteaders of 1887 had less experience of handicaps than they accumulated by 1901 when they formed the crusading Grain Growers' Association and their marketing problems in 1887 had not then been characterized by serious grain blockades and car shortages. In any event, the North-West Farmers' Association did not provide a union of agricultural societies or become the spearhead of a strong rural movement. The next attempt to form an organization of agricultural societies came after Saskatchewan had attained provincial status and the program of Saskatchewan grain growers had assumed a fairly well defined form and gained measurable success.

#### SASKATCHEWAN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES' ASSOCIATION, A SECOND EFFORT

Twenty years after the abortive effort of the Assiniboia Agricultural Society to form a farmers' organization through a union of agricultural societies, John Bracken, third Superintendent of Fairs and Institutes, remarked in his first annual report to the Commissioner of Agriculture in 1907:

The agricultural societies convention seems to have come to stay. Whether this convention should be continued under the direction of the Department or whether a fairs association should be organized is a question that should in the near future receive consideration. In any case, the needs of the present require that opportunity for representatives of all agricultural



societies to get together and discuss the problems facing them . . . shall continue to be given.<sup>20</sup>

Agricultural societies in the North-West Territories had a minimum of supervision and of mutual association from 1884, when a number of them were organized, until 1898 when a department of agriculture was established in a re-organization of the Territorial government. More intimate government direction was provided in 1903 when George Harcourt, B.S.A. was appointed the first superintendent of fairs and institutes.

Mr. Bracken's comment was related to the first general convention of agricultural society delegates held under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture in 1907. Earlier gatherings of agricultural society delegates assembled under the auspices of the Territorial administration by Charles W. Peterson or George Harcourt were held to arrange agricultural exhibitions in circuits in order that competent livestock judges provided by the government could be routed economically.

The program of the Agricultural Societies' convention held in Regina on December 11 and 12, 1907 covered two days instead of the usual evening meeting held annually to arrange a circuit of fair dates.<sup>21</sup> Forty-five of the fifty-seven societies were represented by an official delegate. The Minister of Agriculture, W. R. Motherwell presided. John Bracken reviewed the 1907 work of agricultural societies including seed fairs, grain field competitions, farmers' institute work and exhibitions.

Among the speakers were Robert Sinton, president of the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association whose topic was "How the Agricultural Society may assist the Livestock Industry in Saskatchewan;" T. N. Willing, Chief Weed Inspector on "Insects and other Pests of the Farm;" Hon. W. R. Motherwell on "Diversified Farming;" Harris McFayden on "The Conduct of Seed Fairs and Grain Fields Competitions;" John Mitchell, Grenfell on "The Amusement Features of the Agricultural Fair;" John Millar of Indian Head on "How an Agricultural Society may assist the Grain Grower;" George Harcourt of Edmonton and Principal W. J. Black of Winnipeg on "How to make Farmers' Institute Work successful in Western Canada." Mr. Harcourt also spoke on "The improvement of the Prize List" and Principal Black on "The Farmer in relation to Agricultural Education." From this review it is obvious that the outlook of 1907 for agricultural societies differed greatly from that of 1887. The conditions of 1907 will be better understood, too, by a perusal of requests contained in resolutions passed by the 1907 convention.

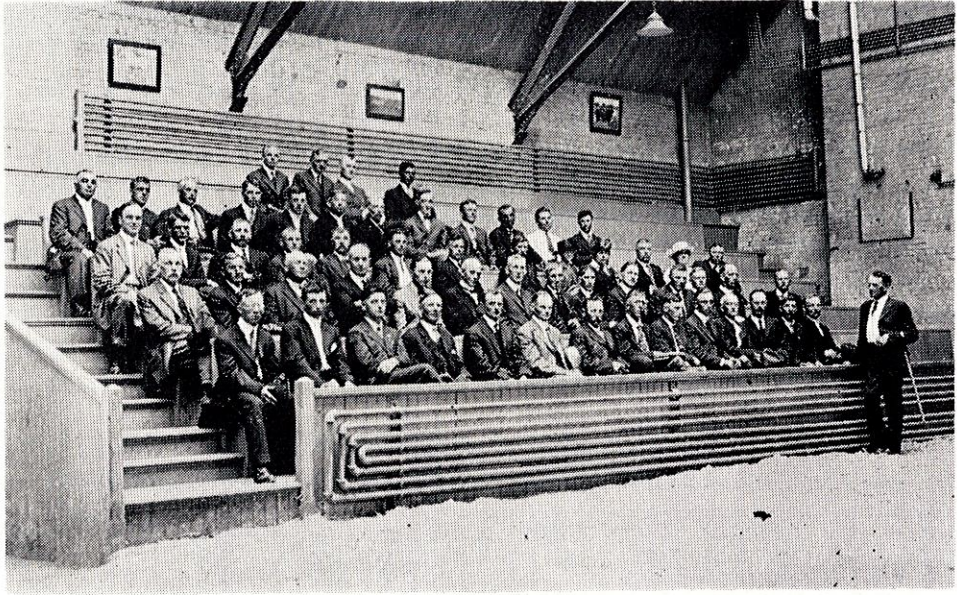
The resolutions<sup>22</sup> requested exemption from taxation of all grounds held primarily for the purposes of agricultural societies; more effective control of weeds; assistance to agricultural societies in acquiring suitable exhibition grounds; the establishing of facilities where testing of seed grain would be done free of

<sup>20</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1907*, p. 157.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-157.





*University of Saskatchewan Archives*

Agricultural Societies' Convention,  
Dean Rutherford addressing Members in the Livestock Pavillion,  
University of Saskatchewan about 1912.

charge for farmers; that legislative provision be made for seed grain advances to be a charge on the land and collectible as taxes during a suitable term of years; that the maximum number of institute meetings held in any year by a society and subsidized by the government be increased from two to four; that it would be advisable for the department of agriculture to give some assistance and direction toward the carrying out of a system of ploughing matches by agricultural societies; that because of inadequate transportation facilities for grain, coal and cattle, the parliament of Canada take active steps to exercise more public control of railway transportation than has hitherto been the case; that "it is essential in the best interests of the farmers of Canada that a National Farmers' Association . . . be organized at the earliest possible moment so as to protect and advance the interests of agriculture on all legitimate lines," and that legislation be amended to permit the payment of a grant of money paid in prizes by agricultural societies for a seed judging competition as is now done for stock judging competitions.

Another seven years passed before the organization of an association of agricultural societies was achieved in 1914; and it showed little evidence of stability. Its occurrence coincided with important and somewhat critical discussions about agricultural society finances. With a few exceptions the maximum of annual grants earnable by an agricultural society in 1914 was \$750.00; and this, in fact, restricted societies in their prize offerings and limited the number of competitions in which a society could engage without becoming involved in major financial responsibilities. At the agricultural societies' convention held in February, 1913, among the resolutions adopted were two reading as follows:



- (a) That a committee of seven, composed of three representatives of agricultural societies, two members of the faculty of the agricultural college and two representatives of the department of agriculture be appointed to devise a satisfactory method of financing agricultural societies;
- (b) That the necessary steps be taken to provide for life membership in agricultural societies by the payment of an adequate fee, such life membership to be optional and not meant to supplant the present annual membership.<sup>23</sup>

To deal with resolution (a) R. M. Crowe, Hugh Kippan and R. Garvin were named by the convention as representatives of the societies. To promote the life membership idea became the responsibility of George P. Campbell, A. G. Hawkes and Ed Crane. Representatives of the Department and the College of Agriculture in the ensuing discussions concerning plans for re-organization of societies were A. F. Mantle, Dean Rutherford and S. E. Greenway, who worked with the agricultural society nominees in a study of the financing problems.

To some members of the committee the solution seemed to lie in greater support of agricultural societies by rural municipalities and a re-organization of society structure to relate the society more definitely with the municipality in which it was located. Two plans were submitted to the agricultural societies' convention in Saskatoon in January of 1914.<sup>24</sup>

The majority plan recommended that the granting of a charter should in future be dependent upon a petition from not less than 100 persons who would each pay not less than ten dollars into the treasury of the proposed society. Approval by the Minister of Agriculture would not be granted if the petition was not supported by a pledge from a rural municipality that it would support the society by a payment of not less than \$500.00 a year for at least ten years. If the rural municipality agreed to support the society the reeve and one other nominated member of the council would be members of the board of directors of the society. It was thought that future issue of charters would be conditional on these terms and that existing societies should be encouraged to re-organize on this plan.

Investment of funds paid for membership in new or in re-organized societies would be undertaken by a provincial board of trustees. Investment would be in mortgages or improved farm lands. Earnings would be paid annually to societies pro rata. A society might borrow from the trustees up to the amount of membership fees originally provided by it.

A system of agricultural representatives was proposed to supplement the general plan. Such appointees would represent both the College and the Department of Agriculture and they would be appointed at the request of one or more councils. The salary of the representative would be paid by the Saskatchewan Government, and the provision of office space and travelling expenses up to

<sup>23</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1912*, pp. 362-364.

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1913*, pp. 315-320.



\$500.00 per annum would be the responsibility of the agricultural society and the interested councils.

The "Windthorst Plan" was offered by R. M. Crowe as an alternative. Newly formed societies, in order to obtain a charter, would have to invest \$500.00 in a suitable property to be registered jointly in the society and the Minister of Agriculture. Failing to meet the operating requirements of the Department, the society would forfeit its equity in such property. Instead of being dependent on legislative grants the society would receive sums from the rural municipality equal to the total prize money won from the society by municipal residents. Municipal liability in this connection would be safe-guarded by a use of standardized prize lists. This plan envisaged the agricultural society as a branch of the College of Agriculture and under the College direction for educational purposes. Correspondence courses would be free for juniors as well as adults. Scholarships and bursaries would be provided from public funds.

The 1914 convention of agricultural societies rejected both of these plans but voted that the study be continued by a smaller committee consisting of Messrs. Mantle, Rutherford, Greenway and Crowe. It may be noted that barely one third of the agricultural societies were represented at a special meeting held at Saskatoon in August to consider these proposals, and less than 60% of the societies attended the annual meeting when both proposals were rejected.

Progress toward the organization of an association was made in January, 1914 when it was resolved:

That this convention form an association and that an executive committee be appointed to work in conjunction with the director of the extension department and to further the interests of the agricultural societies. That each society in the province be assessed at the rate of \$2. towards the expenses of this executive committee. That Messrs. R. L. Kidd, Fairmede; W. A. Godling, Prince Albert; F. J. Batute, Perdue; W. H. Beesley, Moose Jaw; and A. M. Black, Paynton, be appointed the executive committee.<sup>25</sup>

Mention of this committee is made twice in official reports. Professor Greenway said in his 1914 report of work done in 1913:

At the annual convention held in January this year (1914) the delegates . . . appointed an executive committee . . . to work in conjunction with the Director. This committee has already signalized its being by an active interest in near-at-hand problems affecting the agricultural societies.<sup>26</sup>

Again in 1914 he wrote: "Of the assistance and practical sympathy of this body I herewith make public acknowledgment."<sup>27</sup>

That this arrangement met the wishes of agricultural societies may be doubted. In his report for 1920, Professor Rayner said:

The feeling has been evident among agricultural society officials for some time that the interests of the societies would be better served by the formation of a provincial association of agricultural societies.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>27</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1914*, p. 291.

<sup>28</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1920*, p. 123.



## A PERIOD OF UNREST

Conventions of agricultural societies held between 1913 and 1920 were especially concerned about two matters—society income and funds for the work of agricultural extension. The 1913 effort to increase society income and the relative resolutions have been mentioned. Another resolution of the 1915 convention proposed authority to collect for agricultural societies, as a municipal tax, the annual dollar membership fee. Other motions introduced in 1916, 1917 and 1918 asked for authority to tax lands for the benefit of agricultural societies at the rate of 25 cents, 40 cents and one dollar respectively per quarter section. Presumably there were too many Reeves and Councillors present to allow the adoption of these resolutions. These attempts however, emphasize the problem. The removal of the \$750.00 ceiling on grants about this time eased society financing but did not deter those who saw a need for an association of agricultural societies.

Somewhat different but not unrelated was the financing of extension work in agriculture in a period of expanding land settlement when the need for practical farm information was unprecedented. In 1917, Professor Greenway examined the extension program in several regions of central U.S.A., and on his return revealed to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture his impression and observations. He concluded with this comment:

All that I will add will be to say that it does not appear to me that we are supporting our chief industry to anything like the manner our resources warrant in money and certainly not in education propaganda—not a little of it.<sup>29</sup>

Earlier in his employment he had been irked to find that a portion of the University's share of the Agricultural Instruction Grant had been used to strengthen the research and teaching staff of the University in order to train men to develop extension services in the province and not exclusively, as Professor Greenway thought it should be, for extension services in the field. Neither Greenway nor the delegates to the convention seem to have understood that this use of the money was in accordance with the agreement made between the Dominion and Provincial governments. The facts of the situation are explained in detail in a statement by the late Dean Rutherford presented to the Advisory Council in Agriculture and published at the request of the Council in President Murray's Annual Report of the University for the year 1918-19. It is possible that this discussion was a factor in the decision to form the Saskatchewan Agricultural Societies' Association.

## ORGANIZATION ACCOMPLISHED, 1920

The convention of 1919 declined to approve the following proposed resolution:

Whereas, representatives of agricultural societies have for years been assembling in annual convention; and

<sup>29</sup> Archives of Saskatchewan, Department of Agriculture Records, Deputy Minister's Files, Correspondence with the Director of Extension.



Whereas, in the past the provincial government through the minister of agriculture have seen fit to pay the transportation expenses of delegates to the annual meeting; and

Whereas, amendments to the Agricultural Society Act make it obligatory on all societies to send a delegate to the annual meeting and pay their own expenses;

Resolved that the time has arrived when we, the delegates in convention, should organize as an association by electing a president, first vice-president, second vice-president, a secretary-treasurer and ten directors who, with the director of agricultural extension as a member *ex officio*, shall have full control of all conventions of the association and who shall perfect such organization by rules and regulations, fees, etc., that shall meet with changed conditions so as to give justice and fair treatment to all societies.<sup>30</sup>

It did, however, approve another alternative resolution which authorized and directed a committee of five to be named by the convention to draft a constitution for an agricultural societies' association and submit a copy within six months to every agricultural society in Saskatchewan so that the 1920 convention would be able to complete the organization if authorized by their respective societies to do so.

The committee entrusted with this task included S. E. Greenway, Ed. Waddington, J. A. Hagerman, E. W. Garner, R. M. Crowe and Dr. Fred G. Sparling. A report was made to the 1920 convention, approval was granted and the Saskatchewan Agricultural Societies' Association began its useful existence at that time. But it made no provision for bringing agricultural societies and rural municipalities closer together as was planned earlier. Its prime purpose was to increase the usefulness of all agricultural societies and to assist the Director in the work of his office. Future conventions would be organized by its directors and conducted by its officers.

Ed. Waddington of Alameda, who had been active in the preparation of a constitution became the first president; L. M. More of Colgate became vice-president and succeeded E. W. Garner as secretary early in 1921. Directors were J. P. Robinson, Cadillac; D. A. Kingsbury, Rouleau; F. J. Batute, Perdue;



Ed Waddington (1870-1941),  
First President of the Saskatchewan Agricultural  
Societies' Association.

<sup>30</sup> *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture, Saskatchewan, 1919, p. 205.*



Jos. Melling, Speers; R. D. Kirkham, Saltcoats; G. B. Jameson, Melfort; and E. W. Garner, Estevan.

For five successive years L. M. More was secretary of the Association. In 1920 he presented to agricultural societies by circular the viewpoint, constitution, and purposes of the Agricultural Societies' Association and invited their support. He stated that through the new organization

. . . it is felt that closer co-operation in carrying on the convention and any work that might arise between conventions, will be brought about. Societies not represented on the Directorate as well as the official members of the organization will be consulted and advised on matters of importance. In this way the Association, the Agricultural Societies individually, and the Extension Department will be brought into closer touch with each other and be better able to co-operate in solving their difficulties.<sup>31</sup>

He pointed out that among many matters which needed co-operative action to secure the best results was

. . . a better understanding of the work of the Extension Department, particularly what they are trying to do with farm boys through the Farm Boy's Camp and their "Follow-up" program. This is very important and needs the careful consideration and support of every society, for unless the "Follow-up" program can be made a success, the initial work of the Camp will have lost its value.<sup>32</sup>

Initiative was shown by Mr. More and his directors in urging support in 1923 of a campaign to eliminate the use of all but purebred sires and to revise exhibition prize lists so that only utility classes of livestock and poultry would receive encouragement through agricultural exhibitions. Community support of one selected breed was recommended as a means of gaining the attention of livestock buyers. Professor Rayner's appointment as secretary in 1925 linked the Association more closely with the Extension Department and proved to be an effective arrangement. Mr. More was thanked for his services and informed that the change in secretarial arrangements would make for greater intimacy with the Extension Department and greater economy in operating the Association.

Two competitions proposed by the Association indicate its attitude and outlook. One was an essay on the topic "Is the agricultural society fulfilling its mission?" Judges were Messrs. Rayner, Batute, Russell Wilson and Hedley Auld. The winner was Sam Lowe, Abernethy, Secretary of the North Qu'Appelle Agricultural Society. The 1926 annual convention authorized a competition among societies with prizes of \$25.00, \$15.00 and \$10.00 for the largest enrolment in the College of Agriculture from districts served by agricultural societies. It is probable, however, that the greatest service of the Association was the help given by its executive to the Director of the Extension Department in the development of extension programs and programs of the annual convention of agricultural societies.

<sup>31</sup> Archives of Saskatchewan, Department of Agriculture Records, Deputy Minister's Files, Circular letter p. 2 (copy on file re delegates to Agriculture Conference, Saskatoon, 1921).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.



The Agricultural Societies' Association showed its concern when a revival of agricultural societies did not occur after the second world war as was hoped for and expected. The Association was active in 1949 in holding ten regional meetings for discussion of the outlook for societies and in appraising their circumstances. Although society prospects were not then particularly bright, these special meetings proved to be most interesting, and they have since with the exception of 1952 been continued annually with benefit to all concerned.

The present custom is to meet in each of the six agricultural society districts at a selected point and to invite the attendance of delegates from nearby societies. The average attendance to 1958 was 44.

Useful discussions on a number of topics developed at such meetings. Recently some of them related to the prices of farm products; the future of farming; grants to agricultural societies; village deterioration; farm water supplies; the Agricultural Societies' Act; alternatives to wheat; report of the Royal Commission on rural life; farm labour; the marketing of wheat and eggs; seed cleaning facilities; father and son partnerships; a campaign for farm safety; the need for emphasis on quality in egg, poultry and potato production. These topics contrast with those of 1887 and reveal important interests not intimately related to the holding of agricultural exhibitions.

In selecting persons for honorary life membership the Agricultural Societies' Association has recorded its impressions of several people who worked in or for agricultural societies and the cause of agriculture. It was usual to give notice of intention to confer such memberships; but by unanimous consent of the convention this could be done and was done occasionally without notice. The practice begun in 1924 does not seem to have been followed annually, nor has there been uniformity in the number elected periodically. It is regretted that an adequate biographical sketch of each cannot be given here instead of a formal listing of names and addresses with the year in which recognition was given.<sup>33</sup>

1924 William R. Motherwell, Abernethy Angus MacKay, Indian Head	1933 John A. Mooney, Regina
1927 Hugh McKellar, Moose Jaw Robert Sinton (p), Regina	1935 Alexander McPhadden, Bounty
1928 Russell Wilson, Saskatoon Dean E. A. Howes, Edmonton	1936 Dean A. M. Shaw, Saskatoon J. B. Annable, Moose Jaw
1929 F. J. Batute, Perdue J. P. Robinson (p), Cadillac W. R. Abbott, Maple Creek	1938 Ed. W. Waddington, (p), Alameda Thos. Teare, Marquis
1930 E. Cora Hind, Winnipeg	1940 R. D. Kirkham (p), Saltcoats
1931 Walter C. Murray, Saskatoon Seager Wheeler, Rosthern	1943 F. Hedley Auld, Regina
	1944 W. J. F. Warren (p), Moose Jaw
	1945 Douglas Jaap, Speers
	1948 W. H. Brown (p), Elstow

<sup>33</sup> Former presidents of the Association are indicated by (p) following the name. Other presidents include N. B. Williams, Abernethy, 1922-24; Archie Wilson, Saskatoon, 1938-39; Irwin Dean, Estevan, 1944-45; W. H. Foster, Abernethy, 1948-49; Ivan McMillan, Craik, 1944-46; Norman Roebuck, Yorkton, 1947-48; and George K. Ross, Prince Albert, 1959-



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|--|--|
| 1949 Frank Wright, North Battleford<br>Lawrence E. Kirk, Saskatoon | 1956 W. G. Knox (p), Moose Jaw   |
| 1950 John G. Rayner, Saskatoon                                     | 1957 Clifford H. Whiting (p), Melfort  |
| 1951 F. W. Townley-Smith (p),<br>N. Battleford                     | 1958 W. R. Mair, North Battleford<br>J. S. Nutting, Radisson<br>E. P. Rae, Estevan<br>C. C. T. Robertson, Bradwell |
| 1952 J. D. MacFarlane (p), Aylsham                                 |  |
| 1955 N. W. Symonds (p),<br>North Battleford                        | 1959 R. McK. Glen, Punnichy<br>A. W. Young, Alameda  |

After its organization in 1920 the Saskatchewan Agricultural Societies' Association soon found that an annual membership fee of \$5.00 from societies did not meet its requirements, especially when some societies showed no interest in membership. An intimation in 1922 that a government grant of \$1000.00 was needed resulted in a grant of half that sum in the following year, which was paid annually until 1930 and 1931 when an increase was made to \$750.00. From 1933 to 1950 the grant was either \$100.00 or \$200.00. Recent regional conferences approved an annual membership fee of \$10.00 per society in support of the Association. The Association has given the agricultural societies and the Extension Department good if not brilliant service.

F. H. AULD



PRAIRIE PEOPLE

## Mrs. Catherine Gillespie Motherwell, Pioneer Teacher and Missionary

By L. L. DOBBIN

IT has been remarked that behind every great man there is an even greater woman. This could be said of Catherine Gillespie Motherwell, wife of the Hon. W. R. Motherwell, whose distinguished career as Minister of Agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan for thirteen years and later in the federal government at Ottawa from 1921 to 1930, is well known in the political annals of the Dominion. In addition to being the helpmate of her husband during the later portion of her lifetime, Mrs. Motherwell had a notable career as a missionary and teacher among the Indians of Saskatchewan previous to her marriage.

Born at Teeswater, Ontario, in 1866, the daughter of William Gillespie and Janet McAuley, Mrs. Motherwell received her public and high school education in this eastern town and later joined the ranks of the teaching profession in Ontario. In the year 1889 her parents and other members of the family, including Janet, John, Archie and George, moved to western Canada, settling in the Saltoun district about ten miles south of the present town of Balcarres. Learning that teachers were scarce in the North-West Territories and wishing to take advantage of the greater opportunities of service to be found in a new country, Catherine Gillespie decided to join the rest of the family in their new home.

Her first school was in the Orkney district west of Yorkton where she taught seventeen pupils for a salary of \$30 per month. She continued to teach in Orkney for a second term, receiving a favorable report from the inspector of schools for her work. It was in her second school, Katepwa S.D. No. 116, that she first came in contact with children of Indian parentage. She was greatly impressed with the need of these people and for the remainder of her life she never ceased to take an interest in their welfare.

In 1891 Miss Gillespie was employed by the newly organized Balcarres school district. The school was built one mile south of where the town of Balcarres was located ten years later. Old timers of the district still remember her as an excellent teacher. She remained with them for a period of three years during which time a resolve was forming in her mind to offer her services to her church as a teacher-missionary among the Indian people of Western Canada.

An opportunity presented itself in the summer of 1894 when she learned that the Crowstand Mission school of the Presbyterian Church was in need of a teacher for their staff. This school was located south of Cote Reserve in the north-eastern portion of Saskatchewan near the present town of Kamsack. This reserve is occupied by a band of Saulteaux Indians, and at that time was quite heavily wooded, although it contains much fertile agricultural land. Rev. C. W. Whyte was the Missionary at the time and having heard of Miss Gillespie's outstanding

work as a teacher, as well as her deep interest in Indian welfare, offered her a position which she gladly accepted. Evidence of her successful work at Crowstand is contained in a report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church for the year 1895 which states that "Miss Gillespie has done excellent work in the classroom. A kindergarten class has been conducted for some months for the little folks. Industrial classes are held regularly for the boys while sewing, knitting, straw hat making, and mocassin making are taught to the girls." She spent three busy, fruitful years at Crowstand Mission, then, realizing that a knowledge of nursing would be of great value in her mission work, she took a short course in hospital training.

Her next field was among the Crees at Mistawasis Mission (one of the oldest of the Presbyterian Indian missions in Western Canada) located twenty-five miles west of Fort Carlton, Rev. W. S. Moore being in charge as Missionary. Her father and sister Janet accompanied her to this Mission and did much to assist her in the work. The report of the Indian Agent at Mistawasis states: "The day school on the reserve is under the capable management of Miss K. Gillespie, a most excellent teacher who attracts a very fair attendance in spite of the large number absent at boarding schools. Since taking charge of this band I have not heard of any case of intemperance or immorality."

The Presbyterian Church report of this period (1901-1902) speaks highly of Miss Gillespie's work.

"Rev. Moore speaks in warm terms of Miss Gillespie's management of the Mission school and of the gratuitous services rendered by her sister Miss Janet. Miss Gillespie keeps seven of the children at her father's house from Monday to Friday on account of the distance from their homes to the school. Miss Gillespie has with great acceptance been in charge of the day school since 1897 but has now been appointed to the position of Principal of File Hills Boarding School."

The File Hills Indian Agency is located about twenty miles north-east of Fort Qu'Appelle, in a rolling and partially wooded area, gradually rising to a height of several hundred feet above the surrounding terrain. It is rectangular in shape, roughly twelve miles from north to south and nine miles from east to west. It contains four reserves, namely from north to south, Little Black Bear, Star Blanket, Okanase and Peepeeksis, the last mentioned being the largest and most thickly populated and containing extensive tracts of very fine agricultural soil. The population of the agency at the turn of the century was approximately 275 but gradually increased through the years until by 1935 it had almost doubled. Farming is the principal occupation on this agency—grain growing in the open southern areas and mixed farming and ranching elsewhere. The residential school and farm buildings adjoined the reserve on the west side, midway between the north and south boundaries. With the group of agency buildings close by it gave the appearance of a small village. The school during Miss Gillespie's tenure of office was a substantial stone structure of three stories accommodating thirty pupils and a staff of four. A farm and garden of 253 acres, 60 of which were under cultivation, were operated in connection with the school.





Original File Hills Boarding School in use 1889-1911.



File Hills Indian Residential School (closed in 1950).



When Miss Gillespie was suggested for the position of Principal of the File Hills boarding school there was considerable opposition from government officials as it was breaking a precedent to appoint a lady principal. However, she succeeded in persuading them that she possessed the necessary ability and received the appointment in 1901, her sister Janet being given the position of Matron on her staff. The Indian Agent, Mr. W. M. Graham, made periodic inspections of the school. Mrs. Motherwell recalled that on his first visit both she and her sister were a bit 'jittery'. However, Miss Janet was a fine housekeeper and manager. They had the school in order and the inspection seemed to have been successful, although the agent still had his doubts. Not until he had made quite a few of these rounds did he become reconciled to the idea that a woman was capable of holding this position.

The Presbyterian Church reports make it clear that the church was very pleased with Miss Gillespie's work in the school. The report for 1902 has this to say about her work: "Miss Kate Gillespie was appointed because of her successful experience among the Indians at Mistawasis and the appointment has proved satisfactory in every way. She visits the Indian families quite frequently and having some knowledge of the Cree language is able to read to them in their own tongue. She has many opportunities of ministering to the sick and in many ways illustrating as well as teaching the spirit of the gospel."

The following year the report said: "These two sisters are giving much time to evangelistic work with evident success. Mr. Gordon, the teacher, has co-operated with them to such good purpose as to not only increase the attendance at school but to touch effectually the industrial and religious life of the reserve. Services in Cree are held every Sabbath on the reserve at two points in tents, also in English at two other points, namely the school and at the home of Fred Dieter, the first of the ex-pupils to commence farming at the colony."

It was at this period that the famous File Hills Indian Colony was established by Indian Agent W. M. Graham, later Indian Commissioner for Western Canada. Mr. Graham had advanced ideas in regard to Indian training and progress. He strongly believed that educating young Indians and sending them back to the reserves without further direction was a waste of money and effort, as the influence of the older Indians was too strong. His plan was to survey the east and south portions of Peepeeksis Reserve, which consists of good agricultural land, into 80 acre plots each of which were allotted to promising graduate pupils of the various boarding schools. The plan proved to be an outstanding success and the Gillespie sisters played no small part in this achievement by preparing these young people for their new venture in farming. The success of the project is borne out by Mr. Graham's report of 1907: "I can say without hesitation that in my opinion no white community has made such a showing as these young people have. The style of farming is not surpassed here in any of the farming districts of the country."

When each of the boys at the school reached the age of sixteen he could choose a farm for himself and put in one month's breaking on it. The next summer, all



work being done under the supervision of the farm instructor, he cropped the land and did more breaking. While on the farm the school supported him in the same manner as when he was attending classes. When the boy was discharged from school he had several hundred bushels of wheat in his granary to help him become established. The last year a girl attended school she was taken out of the classroom and given entire charge of staff cooking, washing, ironing, etc. She milked one cow and cared for the milk, cream and butter. Thus she was trained in home-making when she graduated from school.

In the fall of 1905 the colony had the honor of a visit from His Excellency Earl Grey who personally visited every house and farm and gave encouragement to these young people. He expressed pleasure and surprise at the remarkable progress made.

The progress of the school and reserve from a spiritual and educational point of view, under the leadership of Miss Gillespie, can best be realized from extracts from annual reports of the Presbyterian Church which follow:

“There is hope that living together in a separate community and under the judicious care of Miss Gillespie and the Indian agent these young Indians will not only maintain the standing they reached in school but will be continually advancing in all that is true and noble.

The prospects on the reserve grow brighter year by year. The Indians are beginning to look upon the school as their own and take pleasure in every improvement they see about the place. Chief Star Blanket, who has hitherto been an enemy, has now become an avowed friend and has sent his little boy to us. Other boys have been received from homes where there has hitherto been unfriendliness.

One of Miss Gillespie's former pupils from Mistawasis reserve, Maggie Pratt, has come to File Hills to assist her in her work. Her clear knowledge of the Christian way of life makes her a valuable interpreter, and she is characterized by steadfastness and intelligence although but seventeen years of age. After a busy year with Miss Gillespie, she became the wife of one of the boys of the Colony and together they have established a truly Christian home.

Worship services are maintained regularly at the school by members of the staff and in the colony of ex-pupils by the farming instructor or the teacher while Miss Gillespie, upon whom the burden of evangelistic work mainly falls, is free to drive out among the older Indians and preach to a congregation where one can be gathered, or failing that, to speak to the ones and twos she may find at the homes at which she calls. Though engaged elsewhere on the Sabbath her heart is firmly set on the Colony of ex-pupils and well may the whole church rejoice with her in the wonderful change that is taking place among these young people.

A board of management has been chosen from the congregation and there is good hopes that this first attempt to place the management of the congregation in its own hands will prove successful. The building of a church was proposed at

the annual meeting of the congregation this year [1907]. The young managers were able to report that the contributions for the year amounted to approximately \$200, an increase of \$20 over the previous year. One half of this amount was given to the schemes of the church, \$30 for congregational purposes and the balance laid aside for the building of the new church planned for this summer [1907].

A subscription list for the creation of the church was at once opened and each of the young men subscribed \$25.00. According to the latest report the subscriptions amount to about \$600.'

Continued progress is indicated by the 1908 report of the Church:



Wanakapew Indian Church erected 1907.

“The missionary staff are rejoicing in a year of successful church work. The church has been built and opened, being given the name of Wanakapew (Angels sitting) Indian Church. The Indians made their first payment on their subscriptions notwithstanding that their crop was badly damaged by frost—a pledge that the whole will be paid up in due time. The average attendance at church services increased 20%. Old Pagans who had refused to listen to the gospel were at church and listened respectfully. In the earlier days there was difficulty in getting the parents consent, now the parents come to the school asking to have their children admitted.”

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the work amongst the Indians

of Saskatchewan during the year was a series of evangelistic meetings conducted by the missionaries themselves. These were greatly appreciated and many of the Indians were added to church membership and the missionaries themselves were greatly refreshed.

The year 1908 was an eventful one in the history of the Colony congregation and the residential school on the reserve. The hearts of the Indians were filled with mixed feelings as they learned early in the year that their beloved missionary was soon to become a bride and would be resigning as Principal—a feeling of sadness because she was leaving them and of joy for her because of her approaching marriage. However, she assured them that although she would no longer be living among them, her new home would not be far away and she would always be deeply interested in their welfare and would be happy to give them counsel in solving their problems. That promise was strictly kept throughout the remainder of her busy life; she continued to rejoice in their successes and to give comfort to those in sorrow.



The Honourable W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture for Saskatchewan, and Miss Catherine Gillespie were united in marriage on August 26, 1908. The ceremony was performed by the Reverend A. Robson at the File Hills Residential School. Only the immediate friends and relatives of the bride and groom and the pupils of the school were present for the ceremony. After the wedding the couple left for a honeymoon trip to Banff.<sup>1</sup>

Following their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Motherwell resided in Regina for a period of approximately ten years, while Mr. Motherwell was a member of the Saskatchewan Government. Mr. Motherwell valued his wife's judgment very highly, particularly in regard to Indian affairs and whenever in his dealings with them in his capacity as Minister of Agriculture he faced an important decision he invariably consulted 'Kate' before taking steps to carry out his plan. They frequently visited "Lanark Place," their beautiful farm home south of Abernethy, as well as the reserve and Wanakapew Church where they occasionally assisted in the services, especially during the war years, 1914-18.

Another milestone in the life of the Colony congregation was reached in 1922 when a beautiful manse was built across the road from the church and from that day to the present there has been a resident missionary. The completion of this project was a source of pride and joy to Mrs. Motherwell. These two buildings and a silver engraved communion set (a gift from both Hon. and Mrs. Motherwell) are memorials to her interest and efforts.

In September 1908 a meeting was held in Balcarres Church for the purpose of organizing the first Presbyterial of the Woman's Missionary Society in Saskatchewan. Mrs. Motherwell, together with Mrs. McKechnie and Mrs. Douglas, wife of Senator Douglas, were present at that meeting and were instrumental in forming the Presbytery of Abernethy. From this beginning the work grew rapidly until the Saskatchewan Conference branch later consisted of eighteen Presbyterials.

During the twenty-year period when Hon. Mr. Motherwell occupied the position of Federal Minister of Agriculture, they made their home in Ottawa. Yet, amid the whirl of social duties required of the wife of a member of the government, she maintained contact with her Indian friends and in the work of the church and the Woman's Missionary Society. Nothing delighted her more on her frequent visits to Saskatchewan than to visit the scene of her former labors and to note the progress of her former pupils. Mrs. Motherwell possessed the happy faculty of adapting herself to her circumstances and environment. She was equally at home in a humble Indian cabin or in the drawing-rooms of officialdom.

A memorable event on File Hills reserve in which Mr. and Mrs. Motherwell took part was the celebration on July 14, 1939 of the fiftieth anniversary of organized missionary work among the Indians of File Hills. To commemorate the occasion a stone cairn was unveiled bearing a suitable inscription. Mrs. G. H. Bennee, President of Saskatchewan Conference Branch of the Woman's

<sup>1</sup> *Morning Leader* (Regina), Aug. 27, 1908.

Missionary Society, performed the unveiling ceremony, after which Mr. Motherwell gave an inspiring address to the hundreds of Indians and others who had gathered for the occasion. He praised the efforts of the younger generation in achieving such a degree of success in their farming activities and gave much credit to the missionaries and teachers who had laboured among them so faithfully.

The occasion of the last visit of Mrs. Motherwell to the school will linger long in the memories of the Indians now living on File Hills and who were once her pupils. On Mothers' day, shortly before her 80th birthday, the Indians gave her a very special invitation to be present for they had all planned to gather in the new classroom building to express their appreciation and their gratitude for what she had done for them throughout the years. The building was filled to overflowing and after the usual Mothers' day service the Indian ceremony of the pipe was performed by a number of Indian young men after which a choir of Indian girls sang an appropriate number and finally a little Indian girl presented her with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Mrs. Motherwell was deeply moved by this expression of affection and with some difficulty expressed her appreciation for their lovely gift.



Group picture taken about 1940.  
Standing left to right, Miss Janet Gillespie, Mrs. J. B. Gillespie, Mrs. Olive Asapass, Mrs. W. R. Motherwell. Seated, Miss Janet Deiter.

Mr. and Mrs. Motherwell took up full time residence at "Lanark Place" after the former retired from active political life in 1940. They lived quietly and happily in the beautiful old farm home until Mr. Motherwell passed away in 1943. Later Mrs. Motherwell moved to the village of Abernethy where she, with her sister Janet and her sister-in-law Mrs. Gillespie, lived together for a time. Due to failing health she decided to give up keeping a home of her own, and for a number of months prior to her death in 1952, she lived in the Ina Grafton Gage Home in Moose Jaw. It is interesting to note that the late Mrs. Simon Johnston, nee Miss Josephine Petch, who succeeded Mrs. Motherwell as teacher at Crowstand Mission, was also living in the home at the same time.

The writer and his wife enjoyed a short visit with these two fine old ladies while there and recalled many interesting experiences among the Indian people. During the five years (1942-47) when we were in charge of File Hills Indian Residential School, where Mrs. Motherwell had occupied a similar position, we



met her frequently on her visits to the school and had the pleasure of entertaining her in our home there. We also enjoyed the hospitality of her farm home and her home in Abernethy, and found her truly a charming personality and 'every inch a lady.'

Mrs. Motherwell passed away suddenly on July 6, 1952 while on a visit to Abernethy. She was 86 years old. The following personal tribute by Dr. F. H. Auld, former Deputy Minister of Agriculture, appeared in the *Regina Leader-Post* shortly afterward:

"When I first met Mrs. Motherwell in 1902 she was Miss Kate Gillespie, principal of a school for Indian children of the File Hills reserve, some miles north-east of Balcarres post office. She was then a physically mature woman, possessed of all the feminine grace and charm which so richly characterized her through life. The quick smile, the kindly word and the constant poise revealed a rare soul; her choice of vocation and her devotion confirmed it. Miss Gillespie's interest and concern for the Indian children was genuine and deep, and she inspired in them a lasting devotion. Nothing pleased her more than to learn of the development and progress of her pupils in their maturity.

.....

Perhaps the greatest tribute any woman can earn is the respect and affection of the children of a former marriage to whom through a later alliance she becomes a second mother. In this regard Mrs. MacKenzie—nee Alma Motherwell—voiced to me the gratitude she feels for Mrs. Motherwell's tactful and devoted guidance in adolescent years for which she had the highest praise.

A member of the Presbyterian Church and later a staunch supporter of Church union which became a reality at Abernethy before it was accomplished on a national scale, Mrs. Motherwell was sustained and inspired throughout her lifetime by a profound faith in a beneficent Providence. Hers was not a mere formal acceptance of the Christian ethic—it was something that enabled her to 'face the future with a smile and greet the unseen with a cheer.' Here was 'a faith that shines more bright and clear when tempests rage without; that when in danger knows no fear, in darkness feels no doubt.' "

The following warm tribute was paid to Mrs. Motherwell by one of her Indian friends:

"Mrs. Motherwell was a gentlewoman of the highest type. Her success in gaining the confidence of the Indian people was due to her genuine interest in their general welfare. She spared neither time nor effort in her missionary work on the reserves. She was an excellent horse-woman and drove a spirited team of horses in all kinds of weather, through blizzards and muddy roads to bring the Gospel of love to her flock and lead them to a higher standard of life.

When possible we held three services on Sundays. Most of the older people were willing to accept the new teaching, with the exception of one old chief who did not want the white man's way of life for himself, his children and grand-

children. He tried to frighten Mrs. Motherwell by thrusting live coals into his mouth, but she did not frighten easily so his efforts were in vain. He never accepted the Christian faith himself.

The school at that time was a home to the ex-pupils. Some of them had their weddings there. Mrs. Motherwell supervised in making their wedding gowns and cakes, and took a motherly interest in them generally, constantly visiting and advising them in their new homes after they were married.

As time went on, her own marriage took place, when most of the attendants were Indians.

My husband and myself have had many conversations with Mrs. Motherwell concerning the welfare of our people.

At their farm home south of Abernethy, Mr. and Mrs. Motherwell always had an open door for their Indian friends. They adopted and raised a motherless Indian girl. I often visited in the home and was treated like a member of the family. On Sunday mornings we had family worship by the bedside of Mr. Motherwell. I always looked forward to these visits, as they built my morale and furnished me with new ideas and a brighter outlook for the future of my people.

Even if they were busy entertaining cabinet ministers or friends from Ottawa and elsewhere, their Indian friends were still as welcome as the others. On one occasion the Indian friend was very primitive, could not speak English and wore his hair on each side of his head in two long braids. He was placed at the same table as the cabinet minister and treated just as royally. Such acts as these and many others performed by our departed friends, the late Hon. and Mrs. Motherwell, indicated a genuine Christian spirit which endeared them to a host of friends regardless of race or color.

Yes, they will live long in the memories of their Indian friends."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> (Mrs. A. H.) Eleanor Brass "A Friend of the Canadian Indians" *The Missionary Monthly*, November 1952.



# The Germania Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Langenburg

By GILBERT JOHNSON

Mutual aid has always been a characteristic of pioneer communities, and the early history of Saskatchewan furnishes many examples of co-operative effort. These range from a neighborly exchange of work, tools and skills to organizations formed to meet some local or regional need. Under changing conditions many of the co-operative institutions created in the early days of prairie settlement have disappeared, while others have expanded or merged into giant concerns represented throughout the West. An exception is the Germania Mutual Fire Insurance Company of Langenburg, which for a period of fifty years has retained its identity and still serves the area and fulfils the purpose for which it was formed.

In the early years of the century several fires occurred in the German-Lutheran parish of Hoffenthal, northeast of Langenburg. On May 17, 1902, the barn of Jacob Loewenberger was struck by lightning and the building, together with a number of valuable horses, was destroyed by fire. There was no insurance, but a fund was raised by subscription among members of the congregation and other settlers in the neighborhood to alleviate the loss. At that time not many buildings and practically no livestock were insured, as there were few agencies in the area to encourage farmers to avail themselves of fire insurance. Nevertheless, the need for some protection in the event of such disasters was felt by many settlers in the district, but the idea of an organized form of mutual aid against loss by fire and storm was first advocated by George Haas, a prominent farmer in the Hoffenthal district.

As a young man Mr. Haas had worked for a farmer at Menno, South Dakota, where a very successful mutual fire insurance company was then in operation. In conversation with his neighbors, Mr. Haas pointed out the advantages to be gained by forming such an organization, and finally in the spring of 1909 the signatures of 30 persons, the minimum required by the Mutual Fire Insurance Act of 1903, were affixed to an application for a charter. There is no record of an organization meeting available, but the charter members were as follows: Alfred Hartung, Frederick Nerbas, Franz Becker, Herman Tatz, J. G. Haas, George Neumier, Karl Remus, Jacob Loewenberger, Rudolf Baumung, Philip Bahsler, Valentine Mack, Adolf Kitch, George Andres, Philip Wagner, Fred Haas, Carl Schultz, Fritz Suehsschlaf, Johann Schappert, Wilhelm Zenter, Jacob Bahsler, Jacob Schmidt, Philip Hautz, Carl Hartung, Ferdinand Becher, Philip Muller, Adam Wagner, August Remus Jr., John Gimmer, Adam Kitz and Jacob Baumung.

The provisional directors were: Adam Kitz, Philip Hautz, Jacob Loewenberger, August Remus Jr., Alfred Hartung, George Haas and Alfred Kendel.

The *Saskatchewan Gazette* of April 30, 1909 (Vol. V, No. 8) published notice of the incorporation of The Germania Mutual Fire Insurance Company, with head office in the village of Langenburg, under the date of April 20, 1909.

The first general meeting of the newly organized company was held in the lobby of the Imperial Hotel in Langenburg on May 1, 1909. At that meeting there were 16 persons present, and the provisional directors were all re-elected to serve for the remainder of the year. At the board meeting which followed, the officers elected were: President, George Haas; Vice-President, Jacob Loewenberger; Secretary, Alfred Hartung, at a salary of \$25.00 for the remainder of the year. Fritz Suehsschlag was elected Treasurer at a salary of \$30.00. The Treasurer was bonded for \$2,000.00.

The initial premium adopted by the company was  $33\frac{1}{3}$  cents per one hundred dollars per annum, that being the minimum rate allowed under the Mutual Fire Insurance act at that time. Each applicant was also required to pay a membership fee of one dollar and to sign a demand note for five dollars.

At a general meeting held on July 9, 1909, John Kuehne was elected to serve as agent for the company, and was allowed one dollar for each new application written. At a board meeting on the same date, Mr. Kuehne was appointed to go to Regina for the purpose of having a policy drawn up to conform with legal requirements. At a board meeting held on August 5, 1909, a resolution was passed that Mr. Kuehne be paid \$12.00 for his trip to Regina. John Kuehne is said to have been a well educated German with previous business experience in the United States, and he seems to have been of considerable assistance to the company during its formative stage. In 1910 Kuehne became secretary of the association at a salary of \$50.00 per annum.

The first claims were dealt with at a board meeting held on July 30, 1910. These consisted of \$5.00 by P. Goetzing for damage by lightning and a claim of \$25.00 by George Hertlein for loss by storm.

Heretofore, all policies had been printed in the German language. Many of the original settlers in the district were unable to read English, hence, a document in German created a more favorable attitude and inspired greater confidence than would an instrument worded in a language they could not read. Nevertheless, at the annual meeting of February 11, 1911, it was suggested that the policies be printed in both English and German. This matter was left to the discretion of the board. At that meeting the treasurer's report showed receipts of \$824.30 and disbursements of \$295.40.

In the minutes of the annual meeting of February 10, 1912, British names appear on the list of directors for the first time. On that occasion, R. C. Patterson and Herbert Scott were elected to the board. This may have been the reason for bringing the language question to the fore again. At that meeting the treasurer read his report in German as usual, but it is recorded that the secretary was requested to translate and repeat the report in the English language. On the date of that meeting the company had \$305,405.00 insurance in force.

A resolution was passed at the annual meeting of March 21, 1914, that all officers, directors and auditors of the organization be elected by ballot at the annual meeting.



A disastrous storm on August 25, 1916, was a heavy drain on the finances of the little company. Nevertheless, at a board meeting held on September 9, 1916, a resolution was passed that all claims, total \$2,907.90, be paid.

Up to 1921 the minutes of the company were written in the German language, but from that year on the minutes are in English. However, as late as 1928 all reports at the annual meetings were translated into German.

An effort by the company to expand is indicated in the records of 1927, as in that year agents were appointed at Leader and Springside and later at Salter and Ebenezer. These outposts do not seem to have been very successful, and the company remained, as originally designed, a local organization centered on Langenburg.

Results of the depression show up in the records of 1931, when the respective salaries of the secretary and of the treasurer were reduced by 10%. In 1932 the secretary's salary was reduced from \$180.00 to \$175.00 and that of the treasurer to \$75.00. In 1939 the offices of secretary and treasurer were combined at a salary of \$250.00 per annum. In 1935 the president of the company was awarded a yearly honorarium of \$50.00.

Owing to the excellent financial standing of the company, the use of demand notes was discontinued in 1948 and all outstanding notes were also cancelled. These demand notes, for varying amounts, had been in continuous use by the organization since its inception, but at no time had the company been required to realize on these assets.

Two veterans of the association were honored at the annual meeting of 1954. A letter expressing a vote of thanks for his valuable work in various capacities was sent to Alfred Hartung, and Wm. Welke was elected honorary president and awarded a gratuity of \$50.00 in recognition of his many years of service as president of the company.

From a small core of prudent pioneers, the Germania Mutual Fire Insurance Company has developed into a compact organization deeply rooted in its native soil. After a half century of successful operation, with substantial reserves in the form of government bonds, debentures and cash in the bank, the members of the association look with confidence to the future.

The German people of the Langenburg district have shown but little interest in other branches of co-operative enterprise. Why then has the Germania company survived and prospered for half a century? The answer is probably to be found in the deep sense of racial solidarity which exists among many of the ethnic groups who settled in the West. Here was an institution with the racial origin of its founders proudly proclaimed in its title. For many years its documents were printed, its records kept and its deliberations conducted in the mother tongue of the majority of its members. People of other nationalities joined the company from time to time, but after fifty years it remains, as it was at the beginning, a predominantly German association.

## Newspaper Scrapbook

### BUCKING THE BEAUTIFUL

#### Snow Bound on the Prince Albert Branch—the Singular Adventures of a Journalist

For some time past the subject of the snow blockade on the Prince Albert Branch has been prominent in the public mind. Many of the newspapers in Manitoba and the North-West have sympathized with the inhabitants of Prince Albert in being cut off from communication with the world, and not a few eastern papers with the assurance born of ignorance, have taken upon themselves to call the C.P.R. to task.

Early last week the regular passenger train left Moose Jaw, picking up thirty odd passengers at Regina. That same evening the train was reported "stuck." A relief train was made up on Tuesday night, and this afforded the writer an opportunity to see this snow bound region, to ascertain the truth or falsity of the reports regarding it, and to witness the operation known in railroad parlance as "bucking snow."

When I woke next morning we were passing through the Qu'Appelle valley. The morning sun was shining brightly. There was little snow, except here and there in the ravines; yet mile after mile of snow fences could be seen and they were certainly not there for ornament. We were moving along at a lively pace, having what engineers call "a good rail," and I reflected upon the frailty of human nature and the extent to which the wicked habit of lying had grown in this country. Why, this was a summer excursion—a pic-nic!

Shortly after leaving Lumsden I visited the caboose. I learned from Conductor Card that "Con. Leary was pulling us" and that "Bedford was ahead with the plow on engine 86' . . ." As we proceeded further north the snow became deeper but not sufficient to impede the progress of the train. The snow plow left an avenue through every drift and the fresh snow was thrown on either side of the rail clear of the telegraph poles.

We reached the delayed passenger train at Finsbury, when engine 86 was sent ahead; our train with gang of shovellers followed; and the passenger train brought up the rear. After we left this point the drifts became more frequent and also more formidable. Sometimes the view from the car window was obstructed as we passed through the avenues of snow, and it was evident that there was trouble in store for us. From the cupola I obtained a good view of the advance engine at work. It was marvellous to see her rush at full speed into a drift, disappear in the cloud of flying snow, and re-appear on the other side, leaving a clear tunnel behind. On one of these occasions she did not reappear and when the snow settled she was in the centre of the drift and black smoke was issuing from her smokestack. Our train moved forward to the edge of the drift and the shovellers, thirty-one in number, swarmed into the cut and the work of digging her out commenced.



All was bustle and activity. It was no small task, as the snow had to be thrown clear of the top of the drift which was about ten feet high. The men were spurred to their utmost exertions by the foreman, whose vocabulary was made up of words never learned in a Sunday School. As soon as the rail was cleared, our engine was coupled to the 86 and, after various churnings to and fro, the engineers got "a grip of the rail" and backed out. The engines and train were backed for a quarter of a mile to give the 86 another run at the drift. Warned by a whistle from the engine the shovellers scrambled out of the cut. This time she was on a business trip and she went through, although the shock was so severe as to bring nearly a half ton of coal from the tender down into the cab.

This operation was repeated so many times that it ceased to be novel. At Moose Jaw the snow had gone, save where a clump of scrub in a ravine held a stray drift. Clamorous files of geese had been winging northward and already local sportsmen were on *qui vive*. Nature was expanding. But here, not a hundred miles to the northward, all was winter. In all the stretch of country from Craik to within a few miles of the Saskatchewan, nothing relieved the dreary monotony of the plain which undulated to infinity. "Monotony," says Kingsley, "is pleasant and morally useful." He may be right; but, as for me, I fail to perceive the moral usefulness of the monotony of a scene such as this. Here is a vast stretch of plain pronounced by all who know it to be absolutely useless, characterized only by negative possessions—an arid waste, without water—without vegetation. Once, indeed, I saw a gopher and a hawk, and the hawk was after the gopher.

Some idea of the heavy and serious difficulties which have to be encountered on this road may be gained by the fact that I counted one hundred and ninety-five of these "snow tunnels" between Craik and Saskatoon. They ranged in length two hundred yards to half a mile. I stood more than once on the top of a drift and stepped across to the roof of the locomotive cab. In another cut a shovel five feet long, held upright on the head of a man six foot high did not reach the top of the snow by four feet. The engine struck this drift with such force as to throw to a distance of fifty feet a block of snow that the combined strength of three men could not move.

We "tied up" on Wednesday night at Bonnington. On Thursday we reached Blackstrap Coulee, a distance of seventeen miles, which was a continuous tunnel. On Friday night we made Saskatoon. As we neared the river the plain gave place to scrubby land and the drifts were less frequent. On Saturday engines 86 and 91, with the shovel brigade, were sent north; engine 82, with caboose and official car, went south for freight which had been left at Craik. Nothing of interest occurred on this trip. On reaching Saskatoon at 15 o'clock we received the gratifying news that the road was clear, that the 86 had been sent north to Prince Albert, and that the 91 was returning south with flanger to take the passenger train north. Our joy was of short duration, for very shortly we received the intelligence that the 91 had encountered a severe storm and had become disabled in a huge drift near Osler. A subsequent report stated that engine 86 had reached Prince Albert in a disabled condition having "broken her guide-bar block." There being no storm at Saskatoon we started north to go to 91's assistance but before

we had travelled five miles the storm struck us. We stuck fast in the middle of a drift and decided to camp for the night.

Early next morning all hands turned out and we devoted the Sabbath to shovelling our way back to Saskatoon.

On arriving Supt. Milestone at once set about getting together another relief gang. The prospect was far from encouraging. He was informed that, while he might find seven or eight men who would be willing to go out, there were not half a dozen shovels in the place. Nevertheless, at four o'clock next morning, a gang of twenty-one men, equipped 'tis true with all sorts and conditions of shovels, left Saskatoon aboard our train.

On Monday we were successful in reaching the 91 after having shovelled and "bucked" our way through forty-four drifts. We resumed bucking at four o'clock on Tuesday morning. Engine 86 had in the meanwhile been repaired, and left Prince Albert at one o'clock that morning and started south to buck snow from the other side. The trains met south of Rosthern at 13.30, the road being clear. The passenger train proceeded north, and we, nothing loth, started for home.

The men who were engaged in this battle against the "winds and the weather" deserved great credit for their heroic exertions. Their hours were long and few would credit the stupendous nature of the task allotted to them. Asst.-Superintendent Milestone was not by any means out on a pleasure trip. From morning till night he stayed with his men, directing operations generally, and at times, tramping for miles to see what work there was ahead. If determination, coolness and an ox-like constitution are requisite qualifications of an Assistant-Superintendent, the C.P.R. has a jewel in the one who generalled this trip.

It is indisputable that the people of Prince Albert have suffered in many ways from the irregular train service. It is alike indisputable that an erroneous opinion regarding that excellent agricultural district will be circulated. To accuse the C.P.R., however, of indifference and neglect, is as absurd as it is childish. The Company have spent a vast amount of money in trying to keep the road in running order; but there comes a time, in railroading as in everything else, when men who try to cope with the impossible, must fail.

The trip homeward bound passed without incident of interest. When we left Lumsden I went to bed. Next morning we were in the Moose Jaw yard. I stepped from the car, and although the west was north and the north was east I feasted my eyes on the sight of bare ground.

ESTA MAZA

—*The Times* (Moose Jaw)  
April 28, 1893.



## Book Reviews

CANADIANS IN THE MAKING. By Arthur R. M. Lower. Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958. Pp. xxiv, 475. Illustrations and Diagrams. \$6.00.

THE STORY OF CANADA. By Donald Creighton. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1959. Pp. 291. Illustrations. \$3.50.

CANADA, A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY. By Edgar McInnis. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Co. Ltd., 1959. Pp. xvi, 619. Illustrations and maps. \$9.75.

THE number of one volume surveys of Canadian history grows year by year and there is no sign that the steady trickle—"flood" is not a word one would use about Canadian publications—is likely to diminish. Most of them appear to be written with one eye on the general reader and the other on the undergraduate embarking upon the study of Canadian history. In spite of the attractions presented by the rapid expansion of the latter audience, Canadian publishers have resisted the temptation to produce anything resembling the American college textbook in the field of history. Whether this results from their doubts as to the marketability of such a product, from their knowledge of the reluctance of university teachers to accept the dismal conclusion that the undergraduate needs this kind of historical pabulum or from innate Canadian caution, they have certainly been generous in providing an opportunity for the Canadian scholar to present his own interpretation of Canadian history in a form adaptable to the needs of the classroom as well as to those of the private fireside.

The volumes under consideration are all by well-known Canadian historians, perhaps those best known to the Canadian public. Of the three, Edgar McInnis' *Canada, A Political and Social History* (or, as the dust-jacket has it, *Canada, Revised and Enlarged*) is the most obvious entry in the textbook stakes. First published in 1947 it has been widely used in Canadian university courses. Lucidly written, admirably organized and with no obvious bias, it is an eminently safe book to put into undergraduate hands. Its recent revision reflects the changing climate of Canadian historiography. Frontenac, for example, has been downgraded. His council with the Iroquois (p. 88) is no longer the "personal triumph for Frontenac" it was in the 1947 edition (p. 88). He no longer returns in 1689 to retrieve the situation; he is simply confronted by it. When he dies, he is, in the new edition, no longer "the fighting governor." The most noticeable change is the addition of a new chapter that discusses Canadian development in the period from the end of the war to the election of 1958, an election whose outcome Professor McInnis discusses without direct reference to Canada's external relations, though elsewhere he does describe the mounting dissatisfaction of Canadians with their country's position in relation to the United States.

The general reader could scarcely hope for a more attractive introduction to Canadian history than *The Story of Canada*. Professor Creighton remains the supreme stylist among Canadian historians; one cannot imagine any other writing, for example, the passage describing Durham's arrival at Quebec. He makes no secret of his views; Creighton the Commonwealth man is very much in

the ascendant and there are some shrewd blows at those who fail or failed to see the light, among them "those two pious demagogues, Richard Cobden and John Bright . . . earnestly sapping the economic foundations of the Old Colonial System." Mackenzie King's policies of "indefiniteness and ambiguity" make as little appeal to the author as the personality of this "ordinary yet curiously unusual man, courteous but friendless, unobtrusive but dominating, with odd dark complexities beneath his correctly commonplace exterior." Creighton's view of the federal elections of 1957 and 1958 is very different from that of McInnis. The Conservative victory is for him an endorsement of the Canadian desire for "survival as a separate and independent nation on the North American continent," a manifestation of a "vigorous new national spirit . . . only feebly and unimaginatively represented by the Liberal government." Creighton has moved a long way from the old preoccupation with the struggle for Canadian autonomy within the British system that so long engrossed Canadian historians. *The Story of Canada* embodies the reassessment of Canadian history that still continues and to which his earlier works so brilliantly contributed.

Professor Lower has not always seen eye to eye with Professor Creighton and *Canadians in the Making* illuminates some of the areas of disagreement between them. Professor Lower still rides his hobby horses with great dash and vigor but there is a certain evening quality about the latest of his books. His scathing description of the contemporary Canadian social scene may make his reader wonder whether he does not, in his heart of hearts, look back nostalgically at the values associated with the conception of society he most vigorously deplors. It seems unlikely that Professor Lower will ever find an acceptable father figure in Bishop Strachan but his readers may feel that the angry old historian takes a mellower view of the past as he indignantly contemplates the disheartening present.

The publishers of *Canadians in the Making* stress the provocative and controversial side of Professor Lower's writing and even the most uncommitted reader will be startled, if not by the nature of his generalizations, by the fact that he sometimes seems to make them on the slenderest basis. No one has elsewhere attempted quite what is attempted here for it is, as the author claims at the beginning of his preface, experimental, a pioneering effort. Social history has sometimes been dull stuff; histories of refrigeration and the ice industry can be less than gripping. No one can say this of *Canadians in the Making*. Professor Lower may irritate, even infuriate, but his books will always be exciting, not only for the student of Canadian history but also for those who study the Canadian historian.

L. G. THOMAS

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PRAIRIE HARVEST. By Arthur G. Storey. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1959. Pp. 210. \$4.00.

This, according to the information on the dust-jacket is the story of a homesteading family in Saskatchewan and was the prize-winning novel of the Ryerson Fiction Award for 1959.



Further to tempt the potential reader, he is told, if he looks at the blurb at all, that "the book abounds in authentic details of western farming and in absorbing character sketches of varied types of settlers and individuals." It does nothing of the sort. Here is a good example of the misrepresentation which is so disastrously common today. Whether such irresponsible blurbs, devoid of any semblance of critical value or truth, come into being with the advent of the dust-jacket itself or are the result of a mystical belief in the selling power of a "blurb," is a matter for sober speculation. But it is a melancholy fact that most of the stuff found on the dust-jackets of present-day fiction is worthless.

If a novel is, as Walter Allen believes, the work of a man who is "making an imitation, an imitation of the life of man on earth"—one who "is making a working model of life as he sees it and feels it, his conclusions about it being expressed in the characters he invents, the situations in which he places them, and in the very words he chooses for those purposes"—then, whatever else *Prairie Harvest* may be, it is not a novel. For the "imitation of life" must be a close one and show the web and texture of society as it really is. It must not be a puppet-show, wherein the showman never for a moment loses control of the mechanism by which he manipulates his dolls, but into whom he cannot breathe anything of his own personality or convictions.

*Prairie Harvest* is a compound of stock characters and a handbook of useful hints for those contemplating taking up a homestead on poor land, in a dry area, without capital or experience. (Period 1910).

We are invited to follow the fortunes of two Ontario men who, when the lumber business was petering out in their native locality, yielded to a "hankering for a piece of land" and decided to come out to the golden west at a point a few miles south of Saskatoon. It might be as well to describe these two men in the author's own words. "Henry was six feet of bone and muscle. He weighed one hundred and eighty pounds and was an efficient and tireless machine capable of vast quantities of work. He was an introverted, individualistic type of person, a law unto himself." (His young wife, by the way, was different. "She was a warm socially-oriented person dependent on others for her well-being. Her life had been sheltered; that of her husband had been carved of pure granite. Her education had taken thirteen years, ending in a girls' finishing school.")

Bill, the other pioneer, "was a nervous, wiry little man who chewed tobacco incessantly. He had little to say and always spat before he said it. When he spoke it was in short staccato phrases."

The above quotations are an indication of this author's style of writing. He seems to mistrust his ability to control a sentence of more than three dozen words and the cumulative effect on the reader is as bad as Bill's expectorating.

The two families arrive on their homesteads and we are dragged through the years as Henry fights his way to the ownership of sixteen quarter-sections (only to go broke in the "hungry thirties") and Bill gets into one mess after another.

We meet the neighbours not one of whom comes to life for a moment—a stage Englishman, a Ukrainian railway worker and his wife, a Mountie and two “bad” men, Al and Jake, who come straight out of Pantages’ melodrama, and a useful woman who is invaluable as mid-wife to the community. Henry and his wife prove to be very fertile and the education of their children is a great worry to the wife but not to strong, silent Henry who is pretty near illiterate. The way in which we are asked to believe that David, one of the sons, got an education, is either a libel on Saskatchewan’s Department of Education or a grudging tribute to young David’s cunning and opportunism. This David is simply incredible. He has all the makings of a sadist or a confidence man, and he is credited by Mr. Storey at the age of 13 with philosophic musings on life which might well be found in the pages of Henry James.

There are also some evil characters, first described as “land scavengers” who take over deserted farm buildings without let or hindrance, and whose origin is a complete mystery. They are variously described as low Germans, Russian-Polish-Germans, Indian Gypsy and even Mennonite, but they keep their secret still, like Chesterton’s “Donkey.” At last they are labelled “the Klassens” and there we will leave them.

To return to the blurb. We are assured that the tale comes to a “notable conclusion.” Henry and his wife are living in Saskatoon. They have just managed to keep off relief but they find complete consolation in contemplating their children, none of whom has as yet landed in jail. “They are like our first wheat in shotblade,” says Henry. “Yes,” says the wife, “and there will be no drought or other ills that wheat is heir to.” “I was blind,” the man continued, “not to have seen that our children were the real harvest, and that the wheat didn’t really matter.” “Yes,” he goes on, “the harvest will be good, and the grade will be Number one Northern!”

Well, it is true that one of their daughters has married a clergyman.

If, of all the manuscripts submitted in the Ryerson Award Contest, this was the pick of the bunch for 1959, what must the rest have been like?

J. S. WOOD

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CONTEMPORARY SASKATCHEWAN I: THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY. By Charles Schwartz. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1959. Pp. xii, 252.

*The Search for Stability* should do much to destroy the stereotype of the constantly complaining prairie wheat farmer periodically descending upon Ottawa seeking assistance from government rather than facing and solving his own economic problems as do, presumably, other occupational groups. Encouraged by national policy to settle the west, the farmer has since struggled against the hazards of nature, heavy seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in prices typical of primary agricultural products, and the disadvantages arising from the inferior bargaining position of the small competitive producer in an economy characterized by tariff-protected corporate enterprise. The struggle has taken the form of



a search for stability and enhancement of income through both marketing and production, in which search the farmer has relied on his own organizations, and when these proved insufficient, government.

Setting the problem as it affects the Saskatchewan farmer in the context of both the provincial and national economies, Mr. Schwartz leads the reader with a sure hand through the course this search has taken. After the pools had failed to overcome the inherent instability of prices as determined in the grain exchanges, the farmer has turned to reliance on government marketing boards operating more and more through international wheat agreements. Meanwhile, instability in production has been partially overcome through improved farming methods and the embryonic crop insurance provisions embodied in the P.F.A.A. and P.F.R.A. To-day a measure of stability has thus been achieved, but the continued surpluses and the gradual decline in world wheat prices in the face of increasing domestic costs leaves the farmer in as precarious a position as any faced in the past.

Since no ready-made solution through diversification of production or improved markets is foreseen and further improvement in productivity can at best only alleviate the problem, the author concludes that a positive new approach at the national level is required. It is difficult to disagree with him. Even were wheat production allowed to decline to the level of national demand and what can readily be sold abroad the social and economic adjustment would be of such magnitude as to require the utmost in national planning. Such a drastic solution is unthinkable in the light of world food requirements and, fortunately, unnecessary. An imaginative combination of parity price and deficiency payment schemes, possibly integrated with a food-allotment plan, might secure to the farmer that fair share of the national income which the small competitive producer cannot hope to gain of his own initiative.

This provocative and pertinent study is a valuable contribution to the growing volume of writings on current Canadian problems, much broader in applicability than the Province of Saskatchewan to which it is directed. It is doubly fortunate, therefore, that it is so ably written and produced. It is clear in style, comprehensive and concise in treatment, and amply supplemented with statistical tables and bibliography. It is regrettable, however, that footnotes have been relegated to the end of the text, rather than included at the foot of the relevant pages—the serious reader is unduly interrupted. This is a minor quibble, however, for on the whole *The Search for Stability* augurs well for the series on contemporary Saskatchewan of which it is the first volume. Other proposed studies are to include fields such as conservation, industry, and a social survey of the province.

DANIEL B. CLIMENHAGA

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THE SOCIAL CREDIT MOVEMENT IN ALBERTA. *By John A. Irving.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959. Pp. xi, 369. \$6.00.

This is the tenth volume in the series on Social Credit in Alberta, sponsored by the Canadian Social Science Research Council under the editorship of Pro-

fessor S. D. Clark of Toronto. Previous volumes have provided a broad general background of politics and protest in Alberta and in other sections of the country. In this book Professor Irving traces the growth of the Social Credit movement to August 22, 1935, when Canadians learned "with amazement and incredulity" that Alberta voters had brought to power the first Social Credit government in the world.

The establishment of the religious organization which was to become the vehicle for the dissemination of William Aberhart's particular brand of Social Credit theory is admirably described. Aberhart's religious interests led him into active church work in his native Ontario and in Calgary after his arrival there in 1910. His desire to dominate led to friction in each of the churches with which he successively was associated. Finally, after dissension and manipulation, Aberhart in 1929 emerged in undisputed control of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute, which had been opened two years earlier and of which he was President and Dean. The Institute provided regular courses of religious instruction and carried out various activities of religious dissemination. Aberhart's Sunday afternoon radio broadcasts already were firmly established and well known; he organized Bible study groups throughout southern Alberta and developed such new techniques as the presentation of religious plays. By 1932 therefore, when Aberhart became persuaded that Social Credit was what the people of Alberta needed, a following ready to accept his views already existed.

Aberhart first introduced Social Credit as a religious concept, insisting that it offered a fulfilment of fundamentalist and prophetic Christianity. Gradually he turned to the economic aspect, advocating Social Credit as the solution for the pressing economic problems of the thirties, and it was not until 1934 that there was any intimation of political action. Even then, and throughout the course of a tumultuous election campaign, with candidates nominated in every constituency and detailed political organization in operation, Aberhart consistently disclaimed any political intentions or ambitions. In tracing these developments, the author points up the illusion of the seemingly incredible speed with which the movement swept to power, whereas it really owed its impetus to the much longer-standing personal religious following which Aberhart had built up over the years.

The latter half of the book, in which the author attempts to portray the various groups and factors important in the growth of the movement, is less successful than the first part. The thumbnail sketches which he presents of secondary leaders of the movement, and the testimonies of those who came to support it, are repetitious and might have been more skilfully incorporated into the whole, although they are not without interest.

In his final chapter, "Interpretations of the Movement," Professor Irving raises the speculative question whether Aberhart might have been equally successful as the leader of some other movement, such as socialism. He concluded that, "In the light . . . of the conditions that existed in Alberta, as well as of Aberhart's actual capacities and personality, it was inevitable that a Social



Credit rather than a socialist movement would prevail." (p. 345). This conclusion contradicts the evidence which he presented earlier for the success of Social Credit. His argument may be granted that Social Credit appealed to Aberhart's conservative temperament whereas socialism repelled him. Beyond that the author presents little convincing evidence of the inevitability of Social Credit. What attracted the voters was not any inherent quality in Social Credit itself which, as the book points out, neither the people nor Aberhart understood. If Aberhart *had* accepted socialism, or any philosophy which he could represent as offering economic hope, there is every reason to suppose that the same factors which brought Social Credit to power would have operated as effectively for an alternative movement; the desperate economic situation of the people, Aberhart's qualities as a prophetic leader and a meticulous organizer, and the discredited position of the existing government. Mr. Irving cites the failure of socialism to dislodge Social Credit in later years as justifying his view "that not even Aberhart could have led a socialist movement to victory in 1935." (p. 346). But after 1935 any movement challenging Social Credit had against it the very forces which in 1935 would have been its major strength.

EVELYN EAGER

## Notes and Correspondence

MR. Ernest E. Brooks of Sherborn, Massachusetts wrote recently in response to the article in the last issue on steambating on Last Mountain Lake and an earlier article on pioneer church life. Mr. Brooks is a son of the late Edwin J. Brooks, a pioneer settler of the Indian Head area, some of whose letters were published in *Saskatchewan History* some time ago. Mr. Brooks sent pictures and newspaper clippings concerning the Indian Head Methodist Church which was first built in 1898. He also recalled church summer camps held at Lumsden beach and the Last Mountain Lake steamer "Qu'Appelle."

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The Wolverine Hobby and Historical Association in co-operation with the local Legion branch has built club rooms in Spy Hill. The building, which will be used for meetings and a place to house a museum and library, will be officially opened on January 16, 1961. The building will be called the Legion-Wolverine Club Rooms.

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The Rural Municipality of Prairie Rose, Number 309 recently observed the 50th anniversary of the founding of the municipality. To mark the anniversary the municipality has published an excellent booklet called *The Prairie Rose Story* written by Mrs. E. J. Buckaway. Copies may be obtained for \$1.00 by writing the Secretary-Treasurer of the Municipality.

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*Saskatchewan History* is now prepared to accept a limited number of advertisements from publishers of historical works. Rates, copy deadlines and space reservations may be obtained by writing the Business Manager.

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## Contributors

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