

Co-op Shows Great Growth In Sixteen Years

It was back in April, 1948, that Joe Farr, owner of the feed mill and store in Claremont, let it be known that he wished to sell his business. He threw out suggestions to some of his patrons that they form a Co-operative and buy his business. The writer who had recently become a member of Stouffville Co-op, was one of them. The writer, knowing something of the advantages of a Co-op, spoke to several neighbors including Edgar Ward, Walter Symes, Lewis Jones, Frank Chapman, Ralph Faulkner and others and found them interested. Then the United Co-operatives of Ontario was invited to send out a Field man for further information. As a result the Hall at Brougham was rented and a meeting advertised for all interested in forming a Co-op, to take over Mr. Farr's business.

At this first meeting held on May 31st, 1948, a fair number attended and were addressed by Dan White and Art Musgrave of the U.C.O. It was decided to apply for a Charter and to form a Co-op. A Provisional Board of Directors was formed, consisting of: Frank Chapman, Ernest Crossland, Edgar Ward, Lewis Jones, Walter Symes, Allan Elliott, Robert Malcolm with Ralph Faulkner as Secretary and Milton Pegg as Chairman.

There followed busy months of meetings and of canvassing for members and for loans. Mr. Manfred Horne of Orillia and Mr. Roy Mowbray were engaged to help the Directors with the canvass, and they did good work. There were meetings to draw up by-laws, as there were no standard Co-op. by-laws at that time. A lawyer had to be engaged, the property surveyed, the titles searched, and necessary agreements drawn up. The meetings were held mostly in the homes of the Directors.

On July 23rd, a meeting in the hall at Claremont was held for the 152 members who had paid the \$5.00 membership fee up till that time. They received the Charter and accepted the by-laws then drawn up. Also they

elect a regular Board of Directors as follows: Edgar Ward, Joe Farr, Frank Chapman, Lewis Jones, Ernest Crossland, Heber Down, Roy Mowbray, Ralph Faulkner and Milton Pegg. At the following Directors meeting Ralph Faulkner was elected Secretary-Treasurer, and Milton Pegg President.

By October there were some 200 members and \$20,000 had been received as loans. The total price of the business was \$60,000, which proved to be the highest price ever assumed as an obligation by a Co-op. up to that time in Ontario.

Mr. Farr agreed to accept \$20,000 as a down payment and let the Co-op. take over on Nov. 1st, provided they paid \$10,000 more in one year and annual payments thereafter. The Co-op. Directors accepted these terms and were fortunate enough to meet all payments until Mr. Farr was paid in full in November, 1957. The story of Claremont Co-op during the last 13 years has been one of almost continuous change and improvement. The first change was from Diesel to Electric Power in 1950 when an Electric Grinder with two 30 h.p. motors, each driving a plate in opposite directions, was installed. The big one cylinder diesel that it replaced had frequently given trouble and lacked power. In 1953 a larger and better feed-mixer was installed.

Then new hardwood flooring was put in the mill and in the office. The store was enlarged and improved in 1956. A larger and better Oat Roller was installed with necessary power, shafting and bins. In 1957 a new Storage Building was added to the west end of the mill. About the same time a large overhanging shelter was built along the whole north side of the mill and part of the south side to protect loading and unloading operations from rain and snow. In 1959 the Co-op. started in the Petroleum business. Large storage tanks were installed with a total capacity of 31,000 gallons. A tank truck for delivery of

gasoline and fuel oil was purchased. Two grades of gasoline and three of fuel oil are handled. In 1961 a new and larger tank truck was purchased with a capacity of 1400 gallons. In 1960 new aluminum siding was put over the mill adding to its appearance and protection. Both large and small trucks were bought as needed over the years. Also a large fire-proof safe was purchased mainly to preserve the books and records in case of fire or theft. Accounting machines to greatly assist in accurate bookkeeping were installed. The last and biggest achievement has been the building of the new store which opens Feb. 9th and 10th, 1962.

Claremont Co-op. has been singularly fortunate in having good Managers. Al Robertson, with Ken Woods as bookkeeper and Assistant Manager, was the first Manager. Having worked for Joe Farr for some years, he was a valuable help in keeping the business running smoothly during the transition period. Arnold McIntyre became the next manager from June 1951 to September 1952. Robert McDonald, who was bookkeeper and clerk under Arnold McIntyre, was the next manager from Sept. 1952 to April 1955. He was followed by Herb Arbuckle who stayed until September 1958.

John McIntyre came next and stayed until September 1961. The above four managers, although each quite different in their ways, were excellent managers and the Co-op. grew steadily under their management. Each was promoted to a bigger job with much higher salary, which prompted some of the Directors to say that Claremont Co-op. must be a good training school. Mr. George Pearsall, the present manager shows promise of being equally successful.

In 1955 the Co-op. entered into a Management agreement with U.C.O. whereby, for the sum of \$300 per annum the U.C.O. endeavours to supply the Co-op. with competent managers when necessary. The Co-op. also receives the services of an Area

Supervisor who has the oversight of about 15 Co-ops. He attends each monthly meeting of the Board of Directors and examines with the Directors each monthly Operating Statement. Through his knowledge and experience he is often able to give valuable advice and suggestions on policies, trends, salesmanship, business arrangements and management. Claremont Co-op. has had four Area Supervisors: Claude Brillinger, Cliff Salmon, Lloyd Ackert and Frank Tumbon, and they have had, in the writer's opinion, an important part in the success of Claremont Co-op.

The first bookkeeper at Claremont Co-op was Ken Woods who served until June 1951. Mrs. Al Robertson relieved him on two occasions when he was on holidays. Robert McDonald was the next bookkeeper until he became manager in September 1952. William Welsh kept books and acted as clerk for some years. Mrs. Jack Ward was bookkeeper from 1957 to 1959 when Mrs. Ray McCleod was employed, and has continued to the present time. Although there has been the odd error from time to time,

the bookkeeping has been remarkably accurate and efficient. Complete records are kept of every transaction, so that they can be quickly traced back and reviewed if necessary.

The men on the Staff, numbering 7 at present, are all local men. Al Robertson has been with the Co-op. since its beginning over 13 years ago. Owing to his mechanical and carpentering ability he has been a valuable help when repair work or carpentry work was needed. He and Gordon Symes have also been in charge of furnace installations. Frank Collins who is in his 11th year at the Co-op., has mostly worked at the grinding and mixing of feeds, a job requiring constant care and watchfulness. Gordon Symes, also in his 11th year at the Co-op., has served in the mill, on trucks, as clerk in the store, and is now in charge of the Petroleum business which he is endeavoring to expand. Gordon (Chub) Spenceley now in his 8th year with the Co-op., has been the driver of the big truck, making the longer trips with feeds, fertilizers and supplies. He is known for his skill and

carefulness in handling the big truck, and for his willingness to oblige. Allan Redshaw, in his 7th year with the Co-op., has served in the mill, on the small truck, and is now clerk in the store doing his best to satisfy the customers. Jan Bucking and Don Benson who were more recently employed, work in the mill and make local deliveries with the smaller truck. Former Staff employees who served for varying periods of time have been Alvin Redshaw, Mel Norrish, Karl Norton, Joe Morley, George Beare and Aylmer Hood. The Staff, on the whole, have worked together as a well-knit team, loyal to the best interests of the Co-op.

With all due respect to the Managers, the Staff and U.C.O. services, a great deal of the success of the Co-op lies in the hands of the Directors. Their decisions regarding policies to be followed, whether to stand or to go forward, their watchfulness over Bills Receivable and the Operating Statements; their confidence in, and backing up of, the Manager, all play a very important part in the Co-op.

It is therefore essential that the members do their best to elect good Directors, men of good judgment who have shown financial responsibility and good judgment in their own business. In this respect Claremont Co-op. has been fortunate so far. In addition, the following have served or are serving at present: Alex Schneider, Lloyd Wilson, Raymond Stickwood, Ken Halliday, Lloyd Pugh, Percy Jones, Aylmer Hood, Ralph Jones, Cecil Disney, Reg. Hoskins, John Hamer and Edgar Evans.

The financial progress of Claremont Co-op. can best be shown by a comparison of the first Annual Financial Statement, July 31st, 1949, with the Financial Statement of July 31st 1961:

	July '49	July '61
Net Sales	\$169,574	\$416,559
Net Savings	3,429	19,339
Patronage refund	2%	4%
Total Assets	70,758	180,585

It is a far cry from the time the first Directors used to meet in the old store, sitting around a stove under a dim light on nail kegs, or on bags of feed or

seed, according to the season, to the present time when the Directors sit in comfort around a table in a well lighted and well heated room. Nor will the Directors now be required to sign a Bond to establish credit at the Bank, making the Directors "each and severally" responsible to the extent of \$10,000. Nor will it probably ever happen that the Directors will be called upon to dig down in their pockets and put up a loan of \$100 each as a guarantee of good faith, as happened when Hydro power was installed in 1950. Many changes have taken place gradually through the years in the business of the Co-op. The coal business has declined but the oil business grown. The feed busi-

ness has also declined because of fewer farmers but the hardware and general merchandise has increased. Changing trends are to be expected and the Co-op must be aware of and ready to meet them.

In these days when farmers and small business men are being squeezed more and more between ruthless and powerful Big Interests, Co-operatives offer the best way towards real democratic free enterprise. We are solving our buying problems. We must now solve our selling problems. The writer hopes to live to see the day when farmers will process and sell their own meat and milk products through their own Co-operatives.

—Milton N. Pegg

How 70,000 Farmers Own and Control Ontario Co-op

Seventy thousand Ontario farmers are members of and own and control 150 local farm supply and marketing co-ops. These local co-ops sell to farmers annually about \$35 million in farm supplies, mainly feed, seed, fertilizer, hardware and petroleum products.

They also sell for their farmer members annually about \$90 million of dairy products, eggs and poultry products, grains and seeds, fruits, vegetables and livestock. These 70,000 farmers own their local co-ops by reason of the \$1 million put up by them to finance the local operations. The local operations alone represent \$8 million in plants, mills, warehouses and stores.

In turn, these 150 local co-ops own and control the central provincial co-operative — United Co-operatives of Ontario. This organization, in its last balance sheet, reported total assets of over \$15 million.

Total volume of business reported by United Co-operatives for the year ending September 30, 1961, was about \$76 million. Ownership and control of local co-ops is exercised by farmer-members at their local annual meeting. It is estimated that at least 15,000 farm people attend annual co-op meetings in Ontario.

Each year in December, local co-ops send delegates to the UCO annual meeting. Attendance of at least 700 voting delegates is usual at these meetings. In other words, control of Ontario co-ops works right down the line from the farmer to the local, to the central co-op wholesale. Mr. Ontario farmer is the boss!

GLASGOW

Congratulations to newlyweds Mr. and Mrs. Neil LaGrandeur (nee Beverley Dyck) and Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Evans (nee Eva Francis). A miscellaneous shower will be held on Monday evening, Feb. 12th at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Francis in honour of both couples. This is your invitation to attend. Glasgow residents welcome Mr. and Mrs. James Salvage and family to the community.

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