AN IMMIGRANT'S LIFE AS A FARMER IN SASKATCHEWAN AND APARTMENT HOUSE BUILDER IN LOS ANGELES

ILLUSTRATED

Struggle for Justice

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF

ABE L. PLOTKIN

Foreword by OAKLAND W. VALLEAU, *Chairman of Saskatchewan Workman's Compensation Board and the First Minister of the Social Welfare Department in the First C.C.F. Government of the Province of Saskatchewan in the year 1944*

Illustrated $4.00

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The Autobiography of Abe L. Plotkin

FOREWORD BY OAKLAND W. VALLEAU

"I THINK," writes Abe L. Plotkin in this inspiring autobiography—which contains his informative and thought-provoking opinions on a wide variety of subjects as well as his life story—"that there is no better way to immortalize our ideas and the contributions of a lifetime of hard work than to write a book which tells of our accomplishments and the joys and tribulations we have experienced over the years."

Mr. Plotkin's "lifetime of hard work" began on a farm in New York State after he had been brought to this country at an early age from his native Russia, continued when he farmed in Saskatchewan, and became somewhat easier when he built and rented apartment houses in Los Angeles.

The scope of some of his "contributions" may be indicated by the words of Oakland W. Valleau, chairman of the Saskatchewan Workman's Compensation Board, who writes in his Foreword to the book: "I first met Abe L. Plotkin in 1937 through our mutual interest in a political organization known as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. At that time

(continued on back flap)

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MY SINCERE THANKS TO ETHEL DAVIS

for her sympathetic and kind words of encouragement to have this book published despite the advice of my friends to the contrary.

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STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

Dedicated to

MY MOTHER

who has instilled the merits

of learning in me while young

FOREWORD

I first met Abe L. Plotkin in 1937 through our mutual interest in a political organization known as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. At that time the proposals of this organization were treated with scorn by many. It required courage and perseverance to advocate ideas that were ahead of their time. Today many of the more important proposals of this group are accepted in principle by Canadian politicians in all parties. They include universal hospital insurance, old-age pensions without a means test, public ownership of the Bank of Canada, advanced labor legislation, protection of farm debtors in crop failure years, and other measures for social improvement.

My association with Mr. Plotkin became much closer in 1938 when I was nominated by the C.C.F. party as a candidate for the election to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. Mr. Plotkin was secretary-treasurer of our organization, and undertook the responsibility of organizing the campaign. I have always felt that the resulting victory was not only due to the soundness of our platform, but was also a tribute to the work of Mr. Plotkin. For this he received no financial remuneration whatsoever, his only reward being the joy of fighting a good fight on worthwhile issues.

During this campaign I was more than ever impressed not only with the soundness of his social thinking, but also with the enthusiasm and industry with which he prepared to support his thinking. Many people become enthusiastic about a new problem or a new cause, but not too many of them are prepared to support their enthusiasm with hard work. Abe accepted the difficult and monotonous task of organizing each poll in a rural constituency and of arranging the party machinery not only for the election campaign but also for election day, as part of his contribution, and he never faltered nor hesitated in making available his time, although he was under the necessity (as in fact we all were) of

looking after his own personal affairs at the same time. I still have a vivid recollection of Abe coming in from his field work, hurrying through the necessary chores and then settling down to tap out letters on his typewriter or climbing into a car for a visit to a distant poll, returning late at night with another full day's work on the farm facing him.

Following the election our personal friendship did not die out, as so often happens in associations arising in a political organization. Rather I had become so much impressed with the man's sound judgment and his ability to judge public reaction, that I continued to rely to a very marked extent upon these qualities. When he finally decided to leave our district, first for Manitoba, and later to make his permanent home in Southern California, not only I but all of the members of our executive felt that we not only lost a hard-working member, but we also lost a very good friend and counsellor in political and economic affairs. We have all been very pleased to know that financially he has not done too badly in his new area of endeavor. From our knowledge of his character, we are quite certain that he will continue to exert his influence in the field of social justice and equity.

This book represents not only personal history, but also personal thinking in social and economic affairs of a man who has every right to be termed one of our people.

OAKLAND W. VALLEAU
Chairman of Saskatchewan Workman's Compensation Board and the First Minister of the Social Welfare Department in the First C.C.F. Government of the Province of Saskatchewan in the year 1944.

Regina, Sask.
June 3, 1959

PREFACE

There are two main factors that have inspired me to write the following pages: love of life in general, and the ever-controversial question of religion which will be discussed later.

When you wake up in the morning and look out the window and see the golden sun rising in the east and filling the earth with warmth and brightness, and when you hear the birds singing in the trees and feel the soft morning breezes on your face, it delights your heart and makes you feel like doing things. When you are very young, you have your breakfast and go to school to learn the three R's. Of course this is a sort of a monotonous effort for a youngster, but when a thoughtful mother explains to him how important and also how nice it will be to know how to read and write when he gets older, it impresses the young mind and he accepts the daily routine of going to school. Soon he gets acquainted with other little boys and girls at school and they play together at recess time. They become interested in their play and work and school gradually becomes a habit. Later we realize that we don't stop learning when we leave school, for life itself is one continuous school: we keep on exploring and we learn something new almost every day.

And so life is beautiful, interesting and joyful. We do everything to keep this life and to protect ourselves from danger and from being hurt, and we protect our friends and our loved ones, too.

The teens and the years of early adulthood are of course the most interesting and enjoyable part of our life, when we are bubbling over with love and affection for the opposite sex. When we get married, it is full of excitement and new experiences and our hopes and expectations for our children. I believe a child is most fortunate if he is raised on a farm, where he takes part in feeding the chickens, ducks, calves, lambs, kittens and puppies, and helps

to take care of them with shelter and water and watches them grow to maturity. There is so much satisfaction and pleasure in seeing the young birds and animals play and sometimes fight for food—either because it appears to them that there is not enough for them all, or perhaps their instinct of greed tells them to want everything for themselves. And so the child becomes accustomed to helping helpless living creatures with no thought of reward for services rendered other than the satisfaction of seeing the birds and animals content after the feed, and to watch them leisurely stretched out in the sun's rays or at play. As the child develops and grows up, there is an urge to become mature and to compete with others in learning, in stature, and in importance to society. And so there is drive and interest in the life of the adult. After raising his own family, he looks forward to seeing and enjoying the pleasures of having grandchildren, to playing with them and telling them stories and to be called grandpa or grandma.

When we have arrived at the stage of life when we are called grandparents, we naturally look back at the joys and sorrows we had in life and the contributions we have rendered to society. We evaluate the present and try to visualize the future. And we remind ourselves of the fact that one does not live forever. After we have accomplished just so much in a lifetime we will pass away and be forgotten. But that must not be! These thoughts come to the mind of every thinking person, and indeed people felt this way even thousands of years ago—ever since the human being first applied his reasoning powers and started to ponder his existence on a logical basis. The human being does not want to die, with the exception of the few who take their own lives. We know that thousands of years ago people tried to preserve their dead in caves and place food beside them in the expectation that life would come back. In our present age those who can afford it try to preserve their dead from decay by embalming them, and those who cannot, bury them in the ground and place a monument on their grave. The wish and thought not to die has invented the idea of the *hereafter*—the idea that the body fades away, but the spirit lives forever. We are all remembered by our children and grandchildren, and those of us who were able to achieve something

outstanding during our lifetime are remembered by future generation in proportion to the importance of our accomplishment.

The spirit and the ideas of such men as Moses, who introduced the one-God idea, so as to eliminate the friction and the continuous battles among all the different tribes who had so many gods, with each tribe contending that their particular god was better and stronger than their neighbor's god, this new and great idea had an outstanding effect on the human race which was just coming out of its cave age. Whether Buddha, Confucius, Moses, Jesus, Shinto or Zoroaster was the first to introduce the idea of one God does not matter to us to-day, but the fact remains that for thousands of years that idea was developing among the human race until it was gradually accepted and has since kept the people in a more or less peaceful state. Necessity is the mother of invention is as true to-day as it was thousands of years ago. James Watt who invented the steam engine, Thomas Edison who invented the electric lamp, Guglielmo Marconi who invented the radio and wireless transmission, Alexander Graham Bell who invented the telephone and many others have contributed to their utmost abilities to help the human race to live better in every conceivable way possible. To-day we certainly are living in an age of comfort and luxury never dreamed of before. Of course not everywhere do people live in this manner, and this is our problem to-day: to make the high standard of living we enjoy available to all the people in the world. All these great statesmen of spirit, thought and vision are still alive to-day; they are remembered and discussed among thinking people everywhere.

But what about those of us who have contributed to a lesser degree to make this a better world? The tombstone does not appeal to me in our present age; we are no longer ancestor worshipers. I think that there is no better way to immortalize our ideas and the contributions of a lifetime of hard work than to write a book which tells of our accomplishments and the joys and tribulations we have experienced over the years. And so I have hoped for many years that some day, if I lived long enough, and after I would have my affairs straightened out and had settled down, I should do just that. I have always kept important records per-

taining to social or community problems as well as to personal problems stored away. Now it seems that the time has come for me to set forth to do the job I have always dreamed about.

However, I feel that I have lived a full life. I have realized my ambitions and carried out the mission of my life in this world, despite our ruthless capitalist system which has evolved a new religion of which most of our people are not conscious: the golden calf—money and power—is their main goal in life. The principle of humanity, justice and the brotherhood of mankind, is ignored or forgotten.

People do not want to realize and accept that each of us is his brother's keeper—in the neighborhood, in city, state and the world. Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in one of his speeches, "It is the recognition that our civilization cannot endure unless we as individuals realize our personal responsibility to and dependency on the rest of the world." We are very fortunate to live in a country and in an age where we have an abundance of the good things in life for everybody, but we have so far failed to make it possible for all the people in our country and the world over to live in comfort, security, happiness and peace.

Despite the many obstacles that were in my path during my lifetime, I have succeeded towards the eve of my life to live in my own home in southern California and enjoy this state's balmy climate and to be independent and not to become a public charge on our society.

I am leaving a record of my endeavors and accomplishments which I hope may be an inspiration to someone. Now it is up to the younger generation to continue the work where we elders have left off to make this a better world for people everywhere to live in security, happiness and peace.

A.L.P.

CONTENTS

	Foreword	7
	Preface	9
1.	My Early Life in Russia	17
2.	Arrival in New York City	24
3.	A Farm in the Catskills	25
4.	Back to the City	28
5.	Romance and a Time of Waiting	31
6.	A Long Journey to Winnipeg	32
7.	A Winter in Moose Jaw	36
8.	Search for a Homestead	41
9.	Mosquitoes and Other Pioneering Problems	46
10.	Becoming a Homesteader	49
11.	Loneliness and the Neighbor's Daughter	51
12.	Disappointment in Marriage	55
13.	The Fight for the Wheat Pool	58
14.	Family Trouble	80
15.	A New Home and a New Leaf Is Turned	85
16.	The Depression Begins	88
17.	Political Campaigns	100
18.	My Family Breaks Up	103
19.	A Vacation Trip Through the United States	115
20.	Back to the Farm as a Visitor	117
21.	Sojourn in Winnipeg	123
22.	I Make My Home in Los Angeles	131
23.	The Rosenbergs	136
24.	A Long Trip With a New Bride	140
25.	Injustice in California	147
26.	My Philosophy of Life and Economics	157
27.	Conclusion	185

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE

CHAPTER 1

MY EARLY LIFE IN RUSSIA

I was born and raised in a little village called Kazekeve, which was located about twenty-five miles north of the city of Minsk in a rolling country of fairly productive soil. There were about one hundred peasant families living in that village, whose homes were built on both sides of the road which ran from east to west.

At the western end of the village there was another road which ran from north to south and led to the city of Minsk. On the southeast corner of these crossroads my father had built the house in which we lived. It was constructed of logs about twelve inches in diameter which were hewed flat on the inside to make it possible to have the walls plastered.

On the northwest corner of these crossroads there was a big house with many side buildings in which my grandfather on my father's side lived with his family of two uncles and one aunt. By the way, my father was the oldest in his family, and my mother was the oldest in her family. Mother's family lived in a city called Gorodok about thirty or forty miles west from where we lived. I remember that the in-laws did not get along very well, the main bone of contention being that the dowry my mother's father had promised to pay had not been fully carried out, and the reason for this was easily apparent, because mother had four younger sisters who were getting near the marriageable age, and their father had to provide dowries for them all, or else he would have old maids on his hands which was unthinkable in those days.

I was the oldest of our family; next to me was Fannie, then came Joe, Ida, Harris and Sara—all about eighteen months to two years apart. As soon as I was physically able, I helped mother in her work and responsibilities to look after the younger children and also the chickens and the cows. Most of the dwellings in the

village had only one room and they were mud-plastered and thatch-roofed. The various buildings belonging to each family were built in a row, like one long building because of the very narrow strip of land the people owned. The living section was facing the street, next was the horse stable, because the horses were the most prized possessions, and in this way the stable door could be locked from the inside of the house with a heavy iron bar, for too often the horses were stolen. Next came a storage room which was followed by the cow stable and the enclosure for the sheep and pigs. The outhouse was generally at the back of the buildings and was kept sanitary by the pigs roaming loose. A little farther away down the line was the barn where all the harvested crops were kept and threshed with a flail during the winter months, and still farther down was the hay barn. The yard, small as it was, contained many apple trees, some pear, cherry, and plum trees, and gooseberry bushes alongside the property line.

On the northeast corner of these crossroads there was a public pasture about twenty rods wide and two hundred rods long, where the peasants pastured their horses and other animals. The horses were always hobbled so that they would not go too far and were easier to catch when needed. One day when I happened to be in the mood for mischief—I must have been between four and five—I found myself a stick and went across the road to chase those horses. One of them did not like to have me poking at him with my stick; he stopped and kicked back at me, and as a result I was suddenly minus two upper front teeth. My Aunt Rebecca carried me into the house and with mother's assistance doctored me up, and I survived what possibly may have been a fatal experience for me.

There was no school or church in that village. These institutions were found only in large towns. The only public building in Kazekeve was a granary built on that pasture land which was locked with three padlocks the keys to which were held by three different persons. This granary contained seed originally loaned by the government to be given to people who were so unfortunate as not to have their own seed in the spring of the year, and they had to repay this loan in the fall, after harvest. The only other

public place in our village was the wooden cross placed alongside the road in front of that granary. I had noticed that every time anyone passed it he would stop, cross himself and pray.

The large tracts of land and forest in the thousands of acres which stretched for miles between villages, towns and cities were owned by the nobility and the Czar's friends and high officials who during the summer lived in palaces on their estates, surrounded by beautiful flower gardens and lawns and fruit orchards, and who spent the winters in the luxurious resorts on the shores of the Black Sea.

It would seem that the villages had been planned originally at strategic points so as to have a ready labor supply available when needed for seeding, weeding and harvesting the crops of the rich and for other jobs, such as road building, etc.

The people in these villages lived in extreme poverty and were glad to go to work at very low wages when called upon by the superintendents or foremen of those estates. They produced their own food, weaved their own clothes, and made warm garments out of the sheepskins they produced for winter wear; in summer they were barefooted and in winter they made and wore bark sandals over the cloth or sheepskin footwear.

To illuminate the dark nights, kerosene lamps were used by those who could afford them; but the poor peasants had to be content with using pine laths, or flat strips of wood, of which one end was stuck in the wall between the building logs and the other end lit up.

Our house was rather large and modern compared with the others in the village. The living area was a square of about 26 feet each way. It was subdivided into four rooms, with a huge oven (about 4′ x 6′) forming the partition between the kitchen and the bedroom. The top of the big oven made a cozy place to stretch out on or even sleep on during those cold winter nights. The oven was built about two feet above the floor and this space was closed in, with an opening in the kitchen, and served as a warm hen coop for the winter months. We children used to crawl in and hunt for eggs. The living room was separated from the bedroom by a wardrobe and a chest of drawers, and the dining room

was separated from the living room with boards and a door. The dining-room furniture consisted of a good-sized table and two long benches of smoothened rough boards, but the living room had a sofa and four chairs—all cushioned and of polished mahogany.

On many occasions our house would serve as a court house for the law authorities to make investigations over some disputes or fights among the peasants, and it was very interesting for me to watch the officers in their uniforms, with badges on their caps and lapels, and their swords hanging from their belts. Of course, the reason our house was chosen for these occasions was because the officers had a soft seat to sit on and a room with privacy to hear the plaintiffs and defendents.

There was also a root or vegetable building with a cellar to hold potatoes. Between this and the house there was a sort of store room, which served as a woodshed and a chicken house for the summer. There we also kept the water barrel during the summer, but in winter it had to be kept in the kitchen to keep it from freezing. Next to the vegetable building was the cow stable where we usually kept four cows. Mother milked them twice a day, and I helped her look after them and took them to the pasture in the morning and brought them home again in the evening. We kept our water barrel full all the time by bringing the water from the community well which was about two blocks away. It was carried in two buckets by means of a shoulder yoke with two hooks fastened on both ends to hold the buckets up. This was some job!

Mother certainly had many responsibilities and plenty of hard work to look after us half a dozen children as well as the cows and chickens. She had to keep the milk sanitary and take the cream off every morning after it had risen to the top, then churn the butter and make cheese out of the skimmed milk and get it ready to take it to the market once a week. As though this was yet not enough, she even brought back merchandise from the market which was in demand in our village and sold it. Some of it was sold on credit, so she had the job of calling on her customers to collect the bills. At times she would hire a girl to help her in her work but she would rather do it herself. Every Thursday night mother would give us all a bath. She kept us tidy: the girls had

their hair done up in braids, and she gave the boys their haircuts when they needed them.

One day I got into mischief again because I was trying to imitate mother's daily task of making a fire in that big oven. She used to take about a dozen sticks of wood and place them in the oven together with some kindling wood and start the fire with a match. One nice, sunny afternoon I got the idea to make a fire near the wall of the house. I took some small sticks of wood and chips and straw and struck a match to light up the works. Fortunately my sister saw it; she got scared and ran and told mother, who came and put out the fire and gave me my well-deserved punishment.

Father was a scholarly type of a man, inclined to be artistic; he used to draw pictures of birds and animals and had a lovely handwriting which I much admired. He was well-learned in the Scriptures and knew parts of the Bible by heart.

He was also reserved and stubborn and always wanted to satisfy his customers, without regard to the financial consequences to himself. He would contract with one of the superintendents of those big landowners for a chunk of land to clear off the timber, wood etc., and bring the land under cultivation for a specific amount. He would hire the labor to do it and sold the logs and firewood therefrom. But when he was finished with his undertaking, he only too often found himself in the red.

He always looked for greener pastures and at one time found one of his acquaintances who had some experience in the business of buying grain and other products from the farmers, storing them in some warehouse in the nearby town where there were railway connections, and then selling them in carload lots to millers and other buyers. But after a few years of this kind of business he found that it was not profitable either. As a consequence, he lost most of the dowry that he had received from mother's father, and naturally there were frequent disagreements and quarrels between father and mother. Mother, instead, was raising a family and carried on with her work and with her little business and had more financial success all by herself.

However, after considerable planning and many discussions

and heated arguments, it was finally decided that father migrate to America, because we had heard such glowing reports that anyone there gets a good job and makes money, and that, especially if one sends the money back home, it amounts to twice as much. So one day father left for America.

At home mother carried on as before. She looked after her cows and chickens, her little business, and us half a dozen children. She was used to it, for she very seldom got any help from father anyway, whether it was physically or financially. Nearly a year went by before mother received a money order for fifty dollars. This meant a hundred rubles, and helped her considerably.

Mother had been teaching me a little to read and write, but then she decided to take me to her parents in the city where I would have a better chance to get an education. So one day, when we all went to the wedding of one of mother's sisters in the city, I was left with my grandparents, and mother and the other children went back home without me.

Grandpa or aunty had the job of taking me to school every day, and sometimes, when it was raining, or the streets were muddy, grandpa would come after me and carry me home on his back.

After a few years, when Fannie and Joe were old enough to go to school, mother decided that I come home, and she hired a tutor to give us our education right in our own house. Poor mother—she worked so hard to give us an education, to look after the cows and keep the little business going. Of course, I, being the oldest of the family, worked hard too to help her to make ends meet.

My smallest sister Sara was a weakly infant and mother was always worried about her. One day, as usual, she had to go to the village to collect her outstanding accounts, and left me in charge at home. After a while Sara started to cry. I gave her the bottle, but she refused to take it. I rocked her but she would not stop crying. All of a sudden, however, she stopped crying. She lay there so still that I got scared and wanted to run for mother, but on second thought I decided to better make sure and see whether she was breathing. I bent over and listened, and to my

great relief she was all right. How glad was I when mother came home and assured me that Sara was sleeping and well.

We struggled along for a number of years, and finally mother resolved to go to America, too. We planned and prepared our journey for months. The main item to take along was food for the seven of us for the long trip that would take nearly a month. The food consisted of sweetened, dried bread, cookies, pickled herring and fish, and dried cottage cheese.

Finally the day of our departure came, and with it the exciting experience of saying farewell to our grandparents, uncles, aunts and friends. With tears in their eyes, they gave us their good wishes for a safe journey and a happy future in the new land. To us youngsters the trip was a marvelous experience. For the first time in our lives we rode on a train. When the train stopped for a short time in Hamburg, we got off and walked on paved streets and cement sidewalks that were smoother than the floor of our house had been.

The big steamship—a floating city on water—was a marvel. But after a few days on the liner, the excitement and interest subdued with the gradual approach of seasickness which kept us all in a low mood for the rest of the voyage, until the last day, when land came in sight. Someone shouted, "See: there is America," and then everybody crowded to the rails. At last, when we arrived at the port, we were taken to a big waiting room where our names were called to be questioned by the immigration authorities. Mother sent a telegram to father to tell him that we had arrived. When father came, mother saw him in the waiting room and pointed him out to us saying, "There is father." We took it for granted that was him, for none of us could remember him after five years. He had a big bag of oranges for us. We wanted to try these beautiful, strange fruits right away, but what a disappointment when we put our teeth into them! Father laughed and showed us how to peel them first.

CHAPTER 2

ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK CITY

It was in June of 1904, when we arrived in the great city of New York. Father had a four-room apartment on Sheriff Street for us. It was on the third floor. The front room had a window facing the street and the kitchen-dinette had a window facing the yard, but the two bedrooms in between had no windows—only transoms above the doors. The toilet was in the hall and was shared by the next-door neighbor. We had a kitchen sink with cold running water. When we wanted to take a bath, we would use the public bathhouse. The lighting for the rooms was provided by gas jets, and the cookstove was fired with coal.

Now we were in a new world, and new problems were facing us. Of course, there were no cows to milk and feed here, and there was no water to be pulled up from the well and carried in buckets to the house. Water now was handy at the tap; milk, bread, eggs, meat and everything else you could wish for was readily available at the corner store, but all these things required money to pay for them, and this article was scarce here, too. By no means was it as plentiful as we had been led to believe.

Father worked as a tailor, but he was slow in his sewing, being naturally of a slow, reserved disposition, and so his wages were not very high, about half of the wages of a fast worker. And so mother started to think how she could help to augment the family income, for there were eight of us to be provided with the necessities of life, and that was quite a problem. I should have still gone to school, but mother thought that I was big enough to earn a few dollars and thereby help the weekly budget. So one day she took me to an old acquaintance from the old country who had a cloak manufacturing plant and asked him to give me a job. I understood from the conversation that he had no vacancy, but

when mother insisted that he must do her a favor and provide me with a job, he finally agreed to employ me at three dollars a week. Now I had to get up at six in the morning, eat my breakfast, take my lunch along which mother had prepared, and walk to the shop to be there at 7:00 A.M. The work was not hard in comparison with the work I used to do in the old country; here I was only running errands and sweeping up the floors, but to be on my feet all day long till I came home at 7:00 P.M. was tiresome and exhausting.

I realized that I was handicapped on my job by not knowing the English language and told this to my parents. After some discussion, it was decided that I should go to night school after supper, from eight to ten. I went there one week and was completely discouraged. Instead of examining me and putting me in the right grade, they put me into the A-B-C class. I thought I was wasting my time. Besides, when I got home, I was exhausted, and with getting up at six the next morning and going to work again it was beyond my strength. So I quit the night school, bought a few readers and a dictionary, and started to study by myself at home at every opportunity. I progressed nicely and was also able to rest my feet, which needed it badly.

CHAPTER 3

A FARM IN THE CATSKILLS

And so time was passing and life was dragging on rather uneventfully in the city, with everybody working and trying to earn more money in order to live in a nicer and roomier apartment and to wear better clothes, or perhaps to save a few dollars for a rainy day or some kind of a business where one would not have to work so hard.

After a few years, the monotonous factory work got very tiresome, with apparently no chances for improvement, so father and

mother decided to make a change. They bought a farm one hundred miles upstate in Glenwild, Sullivan County, near the Catskill Mountains. It consisted of a house, a barn and a well and about one hundred acres of land covered with small birches and poplars—and lots of stones. My parents tried to make a summer resort out of the farm. Here we were back to something like our old environment again. We had a horse, a wagon, a buggy, and a number of cows and chickens, but the land was very rocky and hilly and did not even grow enough feed for our own stock. There were several hayfields from two to six acres, which were surrounded by stone fences about four feet high and just as wide. These stones had been picked up from the ground by the first pioneers who settled there and made the farm their home. In a wet summer the land grew a fair crop of hay, but in a dry season we had to buy hay as well as the grain feed which everybody bought to keep the stock in fair conditon. One plot of about four acres we used to plow and fertilize every spring and then we would try to grow vegetables for the house and some oats or buckwheat on it, but the land was awfully stony to work. One spring we decided to pick all the stones off it. We all worked hard at it and did a fair job, but we were greatly amazed and very disappointed the following spring to see just as many stones in that field as there had been a year ago. Result: no more stone picking. There were half a dozen apple trees, some of which had good apples. There were also some blackberry bushes and chestnut trees with lots of chestnuts and firewood for the cookstove. We remodeled the small house somewhat to accommodate the vacationists. Still, a stay with us meant real farm life for our summer guests: the water had to be pulled up with a bucket from the nearby well, there was no sewer, and the outhouse was at least a hundred feet away from the house. Naturally, the prices had to be low to attract guests. There were many other places which had better accommodations, with modern plumbing, etc. They attracted more people who wanted to come to the country for their vacation, and so, because of this competition, our business was not profitable. However, we had our own home for which we made payments only once a year, we had our own milk, eggs, chickens, etc., and so we were content for the time being.

When the boarders left for the city, I started to go to the nearby public school with my brothers and sisters—all six of us. I liked it very much. The teacher, Miss Alice Rice, put me in grade four for reading, and grade six for arithmetic and other subjects, and I sailed right along and learned to speak the English language. The next summer brought back our guests, and when the season was over I went back to school and learned as much as I could absorb, although occasionally I had to stop going to school to help put up the firewood for the next year. It had to be well-seasoned when used, for green wood is useless to cook or heat anything with.

Besides work we had fun, too. One of our neighbors, Fred Rumsey, used to organize square dances in the winter months, which were held on weekends in one of the farmers' houses. He would hire a fiddler to play and call off the dances, and all the boys would pitch in to pay the fiddler. We would gather all the girls from the surrounding district who had no means of transportation and would take them back home again after the dance. We used to have a good time considering the circumstances and conditions of those days. On Halloween nights, our gang, with Fred Rumsey as the leader. Fred Hamilton and his brother Bill, George and John Merrit, and I, would go out and play tricks on our neighbors, like putting a buggy upside down on a top of a roof, and other such mischief. One time I got a surprise the next morning, when mother started the fire in the cookstove to make breakfast and found that it was smoking. Mother called on me to see what was the matter, and upon investigation I found a washtub on top of the chimney. Evidently, while we were playing tricks on others, someone had done the same thing to us. In the summer time we would organize hay rides in the evenings. One of the boys would hitch his team to a wagon with a big hay rack and cover it about a foot thick with freshly cut, sweet-smelling hay. Then we would all pile in; boys and girls, men and women, and sing and tell jokes and drive around till the early morning hours.

Quite often we used to go out to the lake which was only about a mile away. We would fish or go swimming if it was warm, or we would hire a boat and ride around in the lake. I was a poor swimmer but I did my best to learn, and was a good rower.

I used to envy Bill Hamilton to see him sit in about twenty feet of water just like he'd be sitting on a chair. I have never seen anyone else doing a stunt like that. One time we were on the lake on a hot afternoon having fun, when all of a sudden a black cloud came up from the northwest. I warned all the guests that we were going to have an awful storm, and asked them to get dressed and go home quickly. However, another fellow and I were not scared of getting wet, so we took our time making the boat fast and putting the fishing lines in order. By this time it had started to rain, so we got under a big chestnut tree, but not too close to the trunk because of the danger of lightning. The rain was heavy and gradually became hail, until, finally, the hailstones were as big as walnuts, and some even bigger. When the storm subsided, the trees were all stripped of their leaves, and when we got home, the garden with the vegetables, potatoes, and the field of oats was all white and covered with over an inch of hail. When the hailstones melted, the ground was all black, as if it had been cultivated. All our garden crops were destroyed: apples, berries, even some of the hay which was not cut. It was the worst hailstorm I have ever seen.

CHAPTER 4

BACK TO THE CITY

After the vacation season was over—I think it was in 1907—we had a family consultation, and it was decided that I better go to New York and get a job, like father, who used to go there every winter to work at his tailoring job.

When I arrived in the city, it did not take me long to find a job as a delivery boy in a store. I drove one of the single-horse delivery wagons. In the late afternoons, when the deliveries were over, I would work as a clerk. I worked there for two years.

I also managed to have some recreation and a bit of fun on

Sundays. My brother Joe came to the city, too. He got a job as a watchmaker apprentice, and we used to go out together, to Central Park or to the Bronx Park, and sometimes we would have girl companions along. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves one day a week—providing the weather was nice. Otherwise we'd stay in our room and do a little reading. I remember one time when we went to Coney Island with our friend Moe Taylor to spend our Sunday and have a good time there. The three of us hired a rowboat and off we went. I sat in the middle and handled the oars, while Joe and Moe were sitting each at one end, and we rowed away from the shore. All of a sudden the shore disappeared from sight. I was frightened, but then I realized that we were between two big waves. Then we found ourselves on top of a wave; I could see the shore again. I lost no time in turning the boat around and heading straight for the shore. I decided from that time on: No more boat rides on the ocean for me.

At that time the chain stores started to expand on a large scale, and so naturally swallowed up the business of some of the smaller stores, like the one I worked in. It eventually had to close up and I lost my job. I had a good reference from my employer and succeded in getting a job in one of the chain stores, but I could not keep up with the speed required by the management. It was simply beyond my ability, and so I quit. I spent the next two weeks looking for another job. Every morning I got the newspapers and saw a few openings advertised, but by the time I got to a place, there were usually about forty to fifty boys of my age already waiting in line for the doors to open. After about half a dozen had been interviewed, somebody was chosen for the job, and the rest of us were turned away and had to go and look for another opportunity. I finally got a job, where I was required to be at work at 6 A.M. and keep going until 9 P.M. I stuck it out for a week but then could not stand such slavery any longer and quit again.

One day, when I was sitting in a restaurant having my meal and talking to the waiter, he showed me an article in a newspaper entitled, "The last best west," which stated that the Canadian government was giving away 160 acres of good, fertile land,

without stones, for an application fee of ten dollars, provided a man makes his homestead there and lives there for six months in each of three years, plows up thirty acres for cultivation, builds a habitable house and digs a well, and that after these stipulations had been fulfilled, the government would issue a certificate of title of ownership to the land. If one did not wish to live there he had the absolute right to sell it.

This proposition sounded very good to me and I decided it was worth investigating. I wrote to the Canadian government, asking for more information, and soon I received maps and testimonial statements from bona-fide farmers as to the potentiality of the proposition. At the same time I wrote to the United States Agricultural Department as to available homesteads, and the reply was that all good land for agricultural purposes had been taken up long ago and that there was a lot of land still available but it was not fit for agriculture. This happened in the early spring of 1910.

My younger brother Joe had been in the city for the last two years, working as an apprentice watchmaker in one of the stores on Eighth Avenue. Joe and I lived together and we occupied a single furnished room on Thirty-third Street. Joe liked his job and stayed on. I could not get a decent job so I went home to the farm in Glenwild.

All summer long on the farm I kept busy as usual. First I plowed up the plot for the garden vegetables, seeded the rest with oats, and split up some wood for the stove. Then I got the few rooms ready for the summer guests. I drove to Mountaindale to meet them at the station and after a few weeks' stay would take them back to the station and bring new guests. All this time I kept corresponding with the Agricultural Department in Washington and the Canadian Immigration Department in Winnipeg to make the best possible choice as to where to settle on a farm. I felt that farm life was still and would always be the most independent, secure and peaceful way of life.

CHAPTER 5

ROMANCE AND A TIME OF WAITING

At this time I was considering myself pretty lucky that I did not commit the same blunder which many boys of my age get into, namely, to get married. About a year ago I got acquainted with a lovely girl, and we became devoted friends to each other. It was the wise counsel of Mrs. Crawford, who lived about half a mile away from our place and at whose home this girl was visiting for the summer, that prevented me from making the mistake. One day, while I was passing her place, she called me into the house She said, "Annie is not in the house just now; I sent her with an errand to Rumsey's, and I thought this was a good time to ask you this question: Are you as serious as Annie is about getting married?" My reply was: "Well, the fact is, I love Annie, she is a dear girl; but I do not think it would be practical for us to think of getting married now, for I believe that a man must have some economic security before venturing into married life. I feel that it would not be right for me to get married now, and it would not be fair to Annie to make her wait for me."

Mrs. Crawford said, "I appreciate your frankness, and I hope that you will act accordingly, for I don't want to see the poor girl's heart broken. So please cool down your meetings with her gradually, and things will become normal again. She will soon go back home and will forget about it." And so it was.

All summer long, while working on the farm, I kept thinking, planning and visualizing in my mind the black, level, good soil that I would find in the fortunate spot in Canada, and the prospects and hope that, perhaps, some day I would become a real agriculturalist. After all, I had nothing to lose; I was young,

strong and able: why should I not go out and explore and see—maybe I could find greener pastures.

The whole family discussed the idea frequently, and it was decided that, if I did find some good land, and the prospects were favorable, they all would emigrate to Canada.

CHAPTER 6

A LONG JOURNEY TO WINNIPEG

On October 8 of 1910 I started out on the long journey to Winnipeg. Going out to the far northwest all by myself, to look for my uncharted future, I was a bit nervous. I read the magazines I had taken with me and looked out the train windows, observing the fall scenery. The land was dotted with small fields, orchards and woodlots. Most of the land on the way to Buffalo was quite hilly and often stony.

As I was sitting there all by myself and looking out the train window one day, a well-dressed, middle-aged man entered the coach and sat down opposite me. He started to talk to me about the weather and the towns and cities we were passing by. Finally he suggested we while away the time in a game of cards. I consented and we went to the next coach to find two other men who might be interested in a game of cards. He soon found two fellows who it appeared he knew, and we all went to the smoking room where the porter fixed up a table for us. The other two men sat on one side, and my new friend was right behind me and asked me to go in first and sit near the window and he would sit next to me. I sensed something fishy about the whole thing, and refused to take his hint and told him to go in first and I would sit on the outside. He refused. I stopped right there and told them that I wasn't playing and the game broke up before it had started. I thought afterwards that I was pretty lucky as it happened, for I might have been fleeced of the few dollars that I had for my

expenses. The journey from Buffalo across Lake Ontario to Toronto on the boat was most enjoyable. I learned what takes place at the boundary and about the red tape one has to go through with the immigration officials.

It was a long trip from Toronto to Winnipeg. The scenery along the road the first day was quite interesting: nice fields of freshly harvested grain and many fruit orchards bordering well established farms, but farther west the countryside became rough and hilly, until we crossed the Manitoba boundary when the land was again fairly level and the soil looked productive.

Upon my arrival in Winnipeg I went to the immigration commissioner with whom I had corresponded and informed him that I was going to find a homestead for myself, but that until then I would like to get a job with some farmer to get acquainted with the country and its farming methods.

He was very sympathetic and helpful. He gave me more maps and showed me where homesteads of 160 acres were available, and where there were districts on the prairie where one could get a half section of land consisting of 320 acres. He also showed me where different nationalities were settled, and sections where the land was bald prairie or others where the land was wooded with small trees, and others again where there were big forests.

The commissioner informed me that I came a little too late in the season to get a job on a farm but he promised to call up a few farmers who made applications for help and find out if there still was a vacancy. I called back later in the afternoon and he told me that one farmer needed a man about seventy-five miles west of Winnipeg and that I could take the train the next morning and would get there in a few hours. I surely was glad to hear this, and he instructed me how to get to my destination. The next day I boarded the train for Bagot, Manitoba, and from the train I could see the big, level fields as far as the horizon, with no hills of any kind. As it was just after harvest, one could see the heavy stubble all along, and in places where the land was fallow or where fall plowing had been started, one could see the heavy, black soil—no stones. Gee! I thought. This sure is a great farming country. On arrival at the siding I telephoned the farmer, Mr.

McLacklin, and told him that I was sent to work for him, and his answer was that he would come after me as soon as he could get around. I waited quite impatiently, and the farmer did come with a nice driving team of horses and buggy. I went along with him, thinking I was pretty lucky at that. I noticed the well-graded roads, how straight and smooth they were, without a stone or a pebble to be seen anywhere. This, I thought, really was a wonderful country. After an hour's drive or so, we arrived at the farm. I helped him to unhitch the team of horses, unharnessed them, and fed them, and he took me into the house. It was a little while before supper.

After a hearty, good meal which I enjoyed, Mr. McLacklin told me that he would pay me a dollar a day for every day I worked as long as the field work lasted, and showed me around the place and my room which I would share with another hired man.

At five in the morning the alarm clock rang. My roommate rolled out of bed, and I followed him. He lit the lantern and we went to the horse stable. We fed the horses, cleaned the stable, then cleaned the horses and harnessed them. There were two four-horse teams, and one driving team that we looked after, and there was a number of old and young horses with mares and colts running out in the pasture. The boss and his eighteen-year-old son looked after the cows and milked them. At 6 A.M. the breakfast call was sounded, and we all came in and had breakfast together with the family. There was the mistress, a twenty-year-old daughter, and a little boy about ten—seven of us in all. After breakfast I was helped by my boss to get my four-horse team hooked up to the harrow in a half-mile-long field and then walked behind it till noon. I unhitched the horses for dinner for an hour and a half and then worked until supper time at 6 P.M. After supper there were the usual chores again; then I would read a newspaper or one of the magazines which were in the bookrack, and went upstairs to sleep.

This farm contained five quarter sections of land, or eight hundred acres of good black soil, without hills or stones; I harrowed on one side of the quarter section, while the other hired man was finishing the plowing on the other side. The son was

plowing with a huge mogul tractor which pulled five plows on the next quarter, and the father drove around with his driving team to see if everybody was doing his job well. There was also a good herd of cattle, as well as pigs, chickens, and bees on this farm, and all the work was done daily, like clockwork. Everyone was assigned to a job, and each accomplished it efficiently. I was a little jealous of the other man because he was riding on the gang plow and I had to walk all day behind the harrow, but since he was the older man on the job, I realized that it could not be the other way around, and was content.

The food at the table was plenty and tasty at all times and of a variety to fill a young man's stomach to his heart's content, and this was a great improvement over the meals I used to get in the New York restaurants or even at home, where mother had always been economical and sometimes a little skimpy; but here was so much of everything. Of course, I wrote home and told them of all the experiences I had and the conditions as I found them. On Monday after dinner, before I went into the field, the mistress asked me for my laundry for they were washing and they wanted everything clean. I went upstairs and got my wash which I had packed away in a bag ready for the laundry, and handed it over to her. On Thursday, I found my laundry all clean and pressed on my side of the bed, and my mate's clothes were on his side, and of course our beds were cleaned and made up every day. Considering my present environment and surroundings in comparison to my past, I felt I was in paradise. To think that I was getting six dollars a week including my food, lodging and laundry! Why, in New York it took nearly all my earnings of nine dollars a week to pay for my living expenses—which I received free here. My one-month stay on this farm made a great impression on my conduct and my outlook on my future life. I did not form the senseless habit of smoking or drinking or gambling, as some other boys did. I do take a drink or smoke a cigarette or play a game of cards occasionally, but only for company's sake or for my own enjoyment; never for gain or to make a fool out of myself.

On Sundays I would go over my maps and plan my next move

after this job was over. I decided that my next destination would be Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan.

One Monday morning Mr. McLacklin took me over to the railroad station and I boarded the train for Moose Jaw where I hoped to get a job with some farmer to at least earn my board and lodging and be nearer to a district where homesteads were still available.

CHAPTER 7

A WINTER IN MOOSE JAW

Upon my arrival in Moose Jaw I found the ground frozen and covered with a light blanket of snow. I stopped over at a hotel and the next day went to a livery stable to inquire if there were any prospects of getting some kind of a job with a farmer over winter in the nearby district. The reply was that chances were slim for the winter, and as far as the district was concerned, it was very large, the man said, and farmers were coming there from as far as eighty miles to the south with wheat and mostly with flax.

This man was very considerate and sympathetic and advised me under the circumstances—since I was heading south to look for a homestead—to walk in that direction and stop at every farmhouse and inquire for a job and perhaps I might find one. I checked my suit case at the railroad station and started off the next morning.

I walked all the day and stopped at every farmhouse and inquired for a job, but without luck. It was getting dark, so I stopped at the first house I came to and told them my story and asked them if I could spend the night there. They gladly invited me in and served me supper and we talked a while before going to bed. The man then remembered that his neighbor, Joshua Annable, who lives about five miles farther south, had told him that he would like to get a man to help him do the chores over winter.

This was just what I was looking for. I would get acquainted with the Saskatchewan winters and find out what prospects there were to locate a homestead in the southern part of the province.

During supper, this man told me something of himself: About ten years ago he came there from Sweden and worked with a railroad construction gang for a few years. Then he got a homestead and a pre-emption (another 160 acres of land which the government made available in certain districts). He built himself a shack and a stable, bought a team of oxen and, together with his neighbor who also had a team of oxen, he bought the necessary plow and other machinery. They broke up quite a bit of land on both farms and succeeded in getting most of the land under cultivation. They were getting established now, each on his own farm. He told me all about homesteading and farming in that district, the kind of grain they grew and the kind of machinery and power they used, and the methods of cultivation they adopted. All this information was of great interest to me.

The next morning, after breakfast, I offered to pay him for my lodging and meals but he refused to accept, saying, "This is a human obligation to one's fellow man." I thanked him warmly for his kindness. After he had instructed me how to get to his neighbor, I started again on my tramping journey and finally got to my destination.

When I entered the yard, I met an old gentleman and told him that I was looking for a job for the winter and that his neighbor had sent me here. "Yes," he said, "I can have you to do the chores but I can't pay you much; the best I can do is pay you nine dollars a month including your board and lodging and laundry." To this I agreed.

He invited me into the house and we had dinner. After the meal was over, his daughter showed me my room and Mr. Joshua Annable showed me around the yard and the stable and instructed me about my daily work and responsibilities.

The house was newly built with a full basement, which contained a furnace, and lots of room for vegetables, coal, wood, etc. The old homestead shack had been converted into a hen house, and the stable was still the same old shack which he built

when he first homesteaded this land. This farm was situated about twelve miles south of Moose Jaw and comprised a section of land (640 acres), about half of which was under cultivation; the rest was still wild prairie. The livestock on this farm consisted only of eight old work horses and one saddle horse, three cows and a flock of hens (which I was told a skunk was reducing every night). There wasn't much to do with that much stock, but Joshua kept me busy out of doors all day and every day. If there was not much of importance to do, he kept me busy shoveling snow in the yard. The old gentleman was over sixty and looked worn out, but he still had lots of spunk and will power. His wife was an invalid on crutches and he had three grown daughters. The eldest of them, who was unmarried, was the housekeeper. The second one was married and had two small children but was not well; she had just come back from a sanatorium when I got there. Her husband, Bill, an ex-soldier, lived by himself on his homestead about sixty miles further south and came to see her and the children occasionally, when he took a load of wheat or flax to the market at Moose Jaw. From conversations with the farmer I learned that his daughter loved her husband very much and had tried to stop him from excessive drinking, but without success, and this worry upset her nerves and made her mentally ill. The youngest daughter was nice looking and had a good figure but she was deaf and used hearing aids and talked very little.

The contrast between the McLacklin farm and family in Manitoba, and this farm here was immense. There the whole family was well, highly intelligent, well organized and well established. They had plenty of everything, especially food. But here was little organization, the members of the family were crippled, sick, and deaf. There were small children and everything was lacking. In Bagot, Manitoba, I had thought I was in paradise, but here—what a difference! And I had to put up with it all winter. It was pathetic.

It was the month of December, and the Christmas atmosphere was slowly coming over us. There was talk that the son-in-law was to spend the holidays with the family. We hauled some wheat to market and it was graded No. 2 and so was worth seventy-five

cents per bushel. An acre of fair land produced from twenty to forty bushels per acre; it depended on whether it got the right amount of moisture—not too little and not too much. The yield was about the same in Manitoba. The financial part of the transaction looked to me encouraging to farming. The coming of the son-in-law for the holidays was of importance to me, too, for I would meet a man from the homestead district, who I hoped would give me firsthand information about the homesteads available in that district, and perhaps I would be able to go along with him when he returned to his homestead after New Year.

The boss and I made several trips to town with loads of wheat and on the last trip before Christmas he bought a dresser as a present for one of his daughters. When we came home and after we had our supper, he went out to help me with the chores and after we got through he asked me to help him place the dresser in one of the granaries and not to say anything about it in the house, for it was going to stay in the granary until Christmas Eve.

The day before Christmas the son-in-law arrived with a load of flax, which he had to take to market after the holiday. There was quite a happy atmosphere in the house when he arrived. He surely was a handsome man, well-built and good-looking, a real soldier; no wonder they all thought a lot of him. There was a Christmas tree and presents for everybody. I got a tie and handkerchiefs. For dinner, there was turkey with all the trimmings and pudding, cakes and candy. Everybody seemed happy; even the crippled mother and the sick daughter, because of the welcome visitor and the holiday spirit.

After the holidays, the son-in-law, after selling his loads of flax, prepared to return to his homestead. He was taking back with him hardware, machinery and lumber. I asked Mr. Annable for leave, to go south with him to investigate the land that was available for homesteading. He granted my request and I joined Bill and went south with him. It took us two long days to get there. We stopped at noon at a place which provided feed and water for the horses as well as a restaurant for the people to eat. At night we stayed at another stopping place, and the next morning, after breakfast, we hit the road again. We traveled by sleigh, since

there was about a foot of snow on the ground, but we could not ride because it was too cold. We had to walk behind the sleigh to keep warm. Finally, when we got to our destination, Bill's homestead, I was all tired out, and the next day when I got up I was so sore all over that I could hardly move about, but after a few days' rest I got limbered up again and was all right.

Looking around this district and all along on the way over, though the ground was covered with snow, from the information I received I could have picked up some good land, but somehow I didn't feel happy about making my home here. The scenery, now covered with snow, was all flat and bald, without a tree in sight anywhere. The only interruption in this desolate landscape were the homestead shacks sticking up here and there—it seemed like the middle of the ocean, with only a boat floating here and there and made me feel terribly lonely and depressed. I was also told that in the event of a snow storm, if you were caught outside—even in the middle of the day—when the roads get drifted over, there were no fences or trees to guide one along and one was just out of luck and would get lost, sometimes with very serious consequences. I remembered how while I was working with the Annabels that winter, one stormy day in January I walked from the stable to the house but got to the well instead. I stopped and figured out where the house should be and made a quick dash to the house. Another objection I had was that there were no streams or rivers of any kind in the district, for I had always liked boating, fishing and swimming whenever I had a chance in the summer.

After a few days of rest and prospecting, I returned to my job on the farm, and as usual I studied my maps in the evenings and found that in the Melfort district, which was called the park country, there was still some land available for homesteading, and there were lots of streams and trees. I decided to go there in the spring to investigate. On the farm I drudged along as usual doing my daily chores and in the evening I watched one time how the youngest daughter was developing some pictures she had taken by the lamp light, one picture at a time, on a wire rack. I thought that was too slow a process; if she had a rack all around the lamp she could develop the whole batch of pictures at one time, instead

of working at it a whole evening. So I got busy the next day and found a piece of wire and made the contraption I had in mind, and it worked, too, after some adjustments. She thanked me for it, and they were all amazed what a genius I was.

One day, I went for a load of straw in the field. It was nice and sunny and cold, but I did not think it was colder than any other day, since we had no thermometer. When I got to the straw pile which was nearly a mile away, I was real cold. I got busy quickly and started loading the straw with the utmost speed to warm up. I did feel a little warmer generally, but my feet and hands were cold like ice. I finally got some straw on the rack and went home, unhitched the horses and put them in the stable and went into the house to warm up. After I had been in the house for about five minutes, my toes started to prick and hurt something awful. I jumped around and thought it would drive me crazy; however, after a few hours of agony, the pain lessened down a little. I had sore toes for over a month and the nails finally came off. This was my initiation in becoming a Canadian; it taught me a lesson of what kind of footwear to use when it was forty degrees below zero.

CHAPTER 8

SEARCH FOR A HOMESTEAD

In the spring of 1911, after a five months' stay with the Annabels, I told my boss that I intended to go north to see if I could locate a homestead more suitable to my aspirations. He did not like my announcement, for he said, "If you want to stay on for the summer, we will give you a chance." I thanked him kindly for considering my services satisfactory but informed him that it was not a job that I was after, but the locating of my future home. On the final day he paid me the whole sum of forty-five dollars for the five months and took me to the railway station at Moose

Jaw, which was a little over ten miles away. The snow was all gone by now, and the roads were starting to dry up. In the lower, moist places, the green grass was starting to come up. Spring was in the air, the birds were already singing and flying about, and the black crows were busy in their feeding and breeding grounds.

I felt quite prosperous then, for I still had some of the wages from my job in Manitoba, and together with the amount I had received now it was more money than I had ever possessed in my life. I purchased my ticket to Star City, and there I found the scenery more to my liking. There were lots of trees, and lots of mud, too, and there was still some snow in places where it was sheltered from the sun and wind.

I inquired where homesteads were still available and was directed to go with one of the farmers who was in town, and he would show me where they were. The farmer invited me to come along with him and stay with his brother, who also was a homesteader and from whose place I would be able to locate a homestead. I climbed into the farmer's wagon, which was loaded with supplies for the farm and driven by a team of horses. Many farmers in those pioneering days were using oxen for their motive power, which I thought was too slow a method of getting things done, but it all depended on one's financial means, and since this farmer was driving a team of horses, I considered he must be well off.

The snow had just about melted, and the road was wet and muddy; the melted snow had formed pools all over, and many wild ducks were swimming about. The farmer told me that there were a lot of prairie chickens and partridges, too, which made pretty good eating. Well, I thought that sounded good; I'd have to get myself a shotgun and supply myself with meat this way. The homesteaders here, many of them with families, lived in small shacks and were just getting established.

I stayed with the farmer's brother for a few weeks and kept prospecting nearly every day until I finally located my homestead on a quarter through which the Carrot River was running. Here I'd have boating, fishing and swimming to my heart's content, and besides plenty of water for livestock, lots of wood for fuel

and poles for fencing. The soil was good, without stones, and it was only fourteen miles to the railway station. The many trees, in contrast to the bald prairie, made me feel at home right away; I didn't feel at all lonely, for there were signs of life, like birds in the trees and rabbits, everywhere. The biggest problem was that there were too many trees and they had to be cleared away before one could break up the land and bring it under cultivation. But then again the trees gave you wood for building and firewood, so one's work was immediately profitable.

I considered this part of the country a fit place for a home. I wrote and described everything to my folks back home in Glenwild, and suggested to them that if they would like me to I would locate homesteads also for my father and both my brothers. I received a reply to go ahead with my plans. And so I filed applications on three more quarters of land nearby, which made a total of six hundred and forty acres for future development. Although the four farms were not together to make a convenient farm unit, I calculated that once we got established we would be able to sell some land and buy other farms so as to make it possible to have all our land together. Besides, there was a whole section which belonged to the Hudson Bay Company which could be bought later on, which was situated right across the road from my homestead. I wanted the four of us to farm on a large scale, like on the farm I had worked on last fall in Manitoba.

Those were magnfiicent and pleasant dreams. I had always felt that our family should be together—working together and playing together, the way it used to be in our childhood days. Above all, we would be independent, doing really useful work producing food, not only for ourselves, but for others as well, and would not depend on employers to give us a job. Somehow I hated the business of the unnecessary middleman, the speculator and the gambler, and the whole big army of parasites who live on the other fellow's sweat and toil.

But there is a saying, "Man proposes and unforeseen power disposes." Yes, powers beyond my control were always putting the brakes on things and destroying my nicely worked-out plans. At this time the town of Melfort, which was situated about twenty-

five miles southwest of my homestead, was on a building spree. There was a great demand for carpenters, and being handy with hammer and saw, I went there and got a job at $2.50 a day. My expenses were only about $5.00 a week, so I was financially well on the way.

When harvest time came, I quit my job and worked with a farmer near Star City, in order to get some practical experience of how grain was harvested with a binder and threshed right in the open field with a thresher that had a self-feeder and a straw blower which blew the straw far away into a big stack—an operation that I had never seen before in my life. The grain came out of the machine clean and was weighed into a grain box or granary. I thought this was a marvelous way of doing this kind of work as compared with the method we had used in the old country. And such good grain, and good yields, too.

I wrote all this home and advised father that, instead of going to New York City to work for the winter, where he would earn little more than his living, he better come to Canada; if he were short of funds I would send him his fare—which I did. Father came, and in order that we should stay together and work, I made a deal with the farmer I worked for at harvest time to clear off some light brush and some trees from a fifty-acre field. There was a small, vacant old house on that farm, and we lived in it and worked on that field till the snow covered it. We stayed in that house through the winter and finished the job the following spring. The farmer did not charge us rent for the use of the house, and he even gave us the use of a team of horses to haul some of the wood close up to the house, with no charge for wood or team. We sawed the wood ourselves and kept quite warm all winter, with no rent or fuel bills to pay. I thought that was a good start and father was quite satisfied, too.

For three months during the winter I worked in one of the logging camps in the big forest which was about fifty miles away. Life in the logging camp was quite an experience for me. Logging operations were carried on during the winter only, and for two reasons: First, the logs had to be skidded into a pile after being cut, from where they were hauled on sleighs to the sawmill. This

operation was easily and economically done on the snow once the ground was frozen hard, for skidding a heavy log on soft ground in summer is almost impossible. Secondly, men to do the work were easily recruited from the homesteads, for they had not much work on their homesteads in the winter and they didn't expect high wages. I did not hear of any talk for strikes for higher wages.

There were two main buildings for the accommodation of the loggers, each about 25 by 50 feet long and built of logs, with no ceiling or partitions. There were two doors in each building, one in each end, and a window each over the door in the gable end and another window on each side in the middle of the wall. A big stove, made out of an old steam boiler, was placed in the center of the building for heating this large room. There was plenty of dry firewood, and it gave lots of heat—even at thirty degrees below zero it was nice and comfortable inside. One of the buildings was equipped with a kitchen where the meals were cooked and bread and pies baked. There were two long tables for the men to eat at, and long benches on each side to sit on, and in one corner there was a small office where necessary supplies were kept under lock. We had one cook and two assistants, who were called cookies, and who acted as waiters at mealtime. The food was well prepared and plentiful. The other building was the bunkhouse. Lower and upper bunks were built on both sides of this huge room, bedded with hay or straw, and the men supplied their own blankets and pillows. This house was the sleeping quarters for about forty men.

The foreman had an alarm clock which would wake us up at 5 A.M., and if someone overslept, the foreman would come and poke him in the ribs. One hour later, breakfast was called, and we all went to the next building and had our breakfast and at 7 A.M. we were on our way into the forest. At this hour in December and January, one could see the horizon in the east just starting to brighten up, and by the time we arrived at our destination, which was about a mile away, it was light enough to see what we were doing. There were several gangs of men, or divisions, and each had one experienced man with them who would go first and

notch the trees with an ax, showing which way to fell them, so that the tree would fall in the right direction. Sometimes the wind would change and the tree would fall the wrong way and would get entangled in another tree. This meant serious trouble, for it was dangerous to cut the other tree down, since they both might fall and crush the men working under them. After the sawyers came the trimmers, two or three men who cut all the limbs off the tree and had to make a clear road for the skidder with his horses. Next came two more sawyers who cut the tree into the right lengths. Then the skidder with his team of horses pulled the logs into a big pile, from where they were loaded onto sleighs and hauled to the sawmill. The sawmill operated in summer only.

At times, when the weather would get real cold, to thirty or forty below zero, some men would play sick and stay in bed, but the foreman did not like this at all. The working hours were from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M., with one or two hours for lunch—it depended on how far we were from the house. In the evenings, some of the boys who were not too tired would play a musical instrument or a game of cards or chat and tell jokes which kept us amused. And so life went on in the logging camp till spring, when the snow started to become slushy and wet and the men got their pay and went back to their homesteads.

CHAPTER 9

MOSQUITOES AND OTHER PIONEERING PROBLEMS

After dad and I had finished the job of clearing that land in the spring of 1912 and had gotten paid for our work, we moved to my homestead and set up a tent and started clearing our own land. Our biggest problem was mosquitoes. In the morning and at night and on cloudy days they were swarming all over. They would keep following us wherever we went, but when the sun was shining, they disappeared. We could not work with our

sleeves rolled up; we even had to wear a kerchief over our heads so as to cover our ears and neck. The mosquitoes were bad here because the grass was high and it rained quite often, and because of the brush and the trees there was no wind to chase them away, for the previous summer, when I had worked in Melfort and on the farm near Star City, there were hardly any, for the fields were open and there was a good breeze. This was the toughest pioneering experience that I ever tackled in my life. But I was no coward. I knew there was no going back. If others could do it, so could I. There was no alternative: if we wanted to get ahead, we had to go through with it. I remember those days well, living in that tent and using an old cookstove that I had bought for five dollars and which had already served many pioneers before me. The wild grass was hip-high and nearly all the time wet with dew and therefore a constant breeding place for the mosquitoes. They were just terrible, a continuous annoyance, and smoke was the only remedy which would drive them away. But a constant atmosphere of smoke was also unbearable and still, it was the lesser of two evils. We had to build a frame over our bed and cover it with mosquito netting, so we were able to sleep.

I always consoled myself with the thought that this miserable condition was not going to last very long, that it was only because the wild grass had never been disturbed by civilization and was damp all the time and the trees kept the breeze away, and that once the trees were cleared away and the virgin sod turned over, the swarming pests would disappear as they had in the older settlements. In the early spring and fall there were not mosquitoes, and it was pleasant to work then. With hope and confidence in the future, we stuck to it and kept on clearing our field of poplar trees and willow bushes, and getting it ready for the plow. At haying and harvest time we both worked out to earn a little money, and after the harvest we built a little house with a gable roof (the shacks had flat roofs) and we had our own home now.

In accordance with my paid receipts which I still have on record, I bought a team of horses from Dr. L. W. Brigham, who besides his practice was dealing with horses. I made a down payment on them of $150.00 and the balance of $220.00 was due

after harvest, with 8% interest till then and 10% if paid after due. I also bought an outfit of machinery from J. D. Healey, agent for the International Harvester Company, with no down payment because of my record as a good worker and because I would get title to my homestead in due course. And so I was all set with an outfit to work my land. I also rented a thirty-acre field which cornered my homestead from another homesteader, who had a title to his land already but wasn't living on it, and which I later purchased from him.

I remember an incident which happened a year later, when we went to father's homestead and set up our tent and started clearing a field there and getting it ready for the plow. It was early in the afternoon. The mosquitoes were frightfully bad, and a heavy, black storm cloud was coming up from the northwest. The wind was so strong that it nearly blew the tent down, and the thunder and lightning was terrible. The rain came pouring down, and we were trying to keep dry under the tent, with the horses tied up to the wagon. This storm frightened father to the extent that he broke down, weeping and crying, "What is this all? Why am I so cursed that I have to be in this wilderness?" I did my best to cheer him up in spite of my own not very cheery feelings, and he finally got over it. After a little while the storm was over and we hitched up our team and drove back to my homestead.

During all this time there was a continuous correspondence between us two and the folks at home in Glenwild, N. Y., telling them of the hardships we were experiencing and the glorious hopes we had for the future. The prospects of their coming here to live on our homesteads, or our going back to Glenwild, were a constant debate, and it was a fifty-fifty argument until finally my brother Joe came to verify things and to see for himself what prospects there were for the whole family. When he arrived, it was decided that he better carry on his watchmaker trade in town for there was a demand for this kind of service in the district. He set up shop for himself in a front window in Mr. Book's general store, and was doing a fair business, and every weekend he would come over on his bicycle to the homestead and fulfill

the requirements of living on his homestead. The fulfillment of his homestead duties did not appeal to Joe, and he abandoned it, for financially he was better off working at his trade than going through the hardships of homesteading and getting title to a farm some day, as he argued. Father abandoned his and took Joe's homestead instead, for he considered Joe's a better farm, and the quarter that I filed for Harris was abandoned too, for Joe told Harris it was not worth the trouble. After a year or so, Joe got tired of the little town and went to Winnipeg and got a job with one of the big jewelry stores. He did well and finally went back to New York.

CHAPTER 10

BECOMING A HOMESTEADER

Father and I stayed on and improved our homesteads and received from the government at Ottawa our certificates of title to our land, but the rest of the family did not come. I was debating in my mind for a long time whether to plan my future home here or go back to New York, too. After some strenuous thinking, I finally decided to remain on my homestead and become a farmer; perhaps some day I would be able to fulfill my dream that I visualized a few years back when I took a chance. I put my whole heart into my future hopes and employed all my energy and youthful vigor to make a success of it, for I was not afraid of work, long hours or hardship.

There was only one main road built by the government straight north for about twenty-five miles from Star City in those days. All the other roads which were surveyed every mile north and south and every two miles east and west were just paths or trails made by the surveyors. The trail that lead to my homestead from this main road was one mile away and the one to my father's homestead was another mile further east. They were thickly

covered with poplar trees and willow bushes and had many waterlogged places which were called "sloughs" for in dry weather some of them were dry. The local government which was formed at that time was called "Willow Creek Rural Municipality No. 458," which had the responsibility of building those roads so that the homesteaders could get to their farms. The only means of building them was that the municipal councilor would appoint a road boss, and this man in turn would hire those homesteaders who were most anxious to get their roads built. The council would set the wage rate per hour, and so the roads were built. The taxes charged to the settlers and the wages earned by them from road work would very often counterbalance one another, and so some of the settlers who wanted to work on the road did not actually pay their taxes with cash, which was a great help. The road building work was a great experience to me, too. On many occasions we had to fill in one of those sloughs which crossed the road and we had to drag brush knee-deep in water to corduroy the middle of the road so that we could place earth on it and build a grade across to make it possible to drive a wagon over it. (To-day, forty-five years later, all those roads are graded and kept smooth all summer long, which makes it possible to travel with our high-speed cars as on paved roads.)

The neighborhood gradually grew and the children population grew with it. At this time, there were enough children of school age (twelve were required by law), for the parents to make an application to the Board of Education for the organization and incorporation of a school district. This was done and the charter granted under the name of "Edenbridge School District." The newly elected school trustees called for tenders to build a schoolhouse. Another man and I succeeded in securing the tender, and this gave me a winter's job right across the road from my house, which I considered very fortunate. This was the winter of 1913. In the spring, before seeding, the building was about completed with a few final touches which were added after seeding, and the building was ready for the children to start school as soon as they got their teacher.

CHAPTER 11

LONELINESS AND THE NEIGHBOR'S DAUGHTER

In the cool summer evenings, when the mosquitoes were not active, I often sat outside on my rocking chair and gazed at the stars in the clear sky and listened to the whistle of the night bird which would occasionally dive down with the roar of an airplane and nearly touch the ground and just as quickly soar up again and fly away, which was quite amusing. And at those times I, being in a dreamland of my own, got a lonesome feeling and a deep longing for home. I sang to myself, and besides some of the old songs which came to my memory, I thought of my own version of a song. It went something like this:

"I long for home,
I long for home,
Oh, once more with my dear sisters and brothers be together;
When the sun shines bright or in rainy weather,
I long for home,
I long for home."

This became one of my favorite songs and I used to hum it at every opportunity when I was not occupied and was dreaming or perhaps thinking of the mystery of life and its strange ways.

My father was not good company. He lived in a world of his own with his own philosophy of life, which did not coincide with mine, and so I was feeling lonesome. Of course, I used to attend all public gatherings, whether they were social, economic or political, or concerned our community, and at all times I used to make my opinion known at the meeting. At this time it happened that the first man that I met when I came to this district, who also was a bachelor but quite a bit older than I, went to

Winnipeg and with the assistance of a matchmaker he got himself a wife and established himself in his own home. Up to then he had lived with his married sister. I noticed that he now had a good friend and companion, and his life had become worth while and suddenly more interesting.

I decided I would have to follow suit. But I thought I didn't have to go to Winnipeg to a matchmaker. There were a number of young girls in the district; perhaps one of them will make me a good companion. But I did not concentrate on this matter—I had time—my first obligation was to manage my farm right so that I would be able to meet my promissory notes when they were due. Another disadvantage was that the girls were living some distance away and my chances of meeting them were few.

At that time a man came from Montreal and located on the last homestead in the district. I met this man at one of my neighbor's and he asked me to write a letter for him to his wife who still lived in Montreal, because he couldn't write himself. It was his daughter who read and answered the letters for his wife at the other end. I wrote and read many letters for this man until his family of two girls and four boys came with his wife to the district in the summer of 1914.

This was the year that I completed my homestead duties and made the application for my certificate of title to my farm. Simultaneously, I had to make an application also to become a Canadian citizen so as to be eligible to receive the title to my farm. It was also the year of the beginning of World War I, and many boys were getting drafted. It was a time for me once again to make an important decision in my life. I was getting tired of "batching" and living alone, for a time father had secured a position as local tutor and I hardly saw him at all.

When my neighbor's family arrived from Montreal, they moved into a vacant house which was one mile from my place. Naturally I was anxious to know them and to meet the girl who used to write those letters. Her handwriting was nice and neat and the composition was fair. It wasn't very long before I had an opportunity and to get acquainted with this family. The girl, Dora, was the oldest of the children. She was fair-looking, of

small stature, but well-built and she looked healthy. When winter came and I had more leisure time, I used to visit them quite often and we played cards or other games to while away an evening. As time went on, this girl and I became intimate friends. She used to come to my place very often, even in cold weather and in deep snow, all by herself, without a chaperon. If I happened to be out or away—for we didn't have telephones in those days, so she didn't know whether or not I was home—she would come in and get the fire going, get lunch ready and clean up the house, and when I came home and found her I surely was glad to see her and the way she had tidied up things. We went together to public meetings and dances. She couldn't dance and wouldn't learn in public. I must confess I wasn't much of a dancer either, but I hopped along with the crowd. She watched me dancing with other girls and was quite happy and enjoying it all.

We naturally talked about getting married some day, but I was surprised when one day, while I was at their house, her mother said to me, "How long are you going to run around like that? You might as well get married and quit running around." My answer was, "Of course, it would be quite all right with me; but is Dora able and prepared to shoulder the task and responsibility of married life?" The mother's reply was, "Where there is a will there is a way." One day, when Dora was in my house and we discussed questions which were on our minds, I asked her, "Suppose it happened one day, while you were alone in the house, that a coyote came into the yard and helped himself to a chicken for his supper? Would you get scared, or would you be brave enough to grab the shotgun from the wall and shoot at him?" Her reply was, "Sure I can shoot if you'll teach me how." "All right," I said, "let's take the gun outside and see how well you can shoot." I instructed her how to use the gun and she shot twice at the haystack and seemed quite normal and unruffled.

I told my father of my plans to get married. He warned me that Dora was not the type of girl that I needed, that she would never make a farmer's wife, because she came from the city. My counterargument was that most of the women on the farms in this district came from the city and, of course, some were efficient

and some were not, and I repeated the old saying, "Where there is a will there is a way." Realizing that I was about to get married in spite of his objections, he got busy and built himself a small house on his own farm and moved there as soon as it was ready. Prairie chickens and partridges were quite numerous, and very often I would take my Remington and get a few and take them over to my in-laws, and Dora's mother would make an appetizing supper out of them, which we all enjoyed.

One evening in the early part of December, while visiting my girl friend, her father asked me if I would mind taking three of his calves which he had bought, and feed them on my straw-stack over winter, for he had no facilities to keep them on his own homestead yet. I naturally consented and added that I would see that they got a drink at the river every morning when I watered the horses. The next day he fetched the calves in a sleigh and we made them comfortable near the straw pile, on the southside where they could have the warmth of the sunshine. The calves seemed to feel quite at home, as there were no other animals to interfere with them in their new quarters.

During my conversations with Dora we often discussed the questions of religion, economics, politics, drinking, the bringing up of children, and human characteristics in general, and she agreed with me on all points. And so our plans to get married were progressing. I built a lean-to of two small rooms to the house, and on Sunday, March 14 of 1915, we were married by the local rabbi. The ceremony and reception, with a few friends in attendance, took place at the bride's home.

CHAPTER 12

DISAPPOINTMENT IN MARRIAGE

On the morning after our marriage, when I went out to feed and water the horses, I missed the calves; they were not around the straw stack as usual. I immediately reported to my father-in-law that the calves were gone. We all, including the boys, set out to look for them without success. The next day I went to my neighbor across the river and inquired if they had seen anything of the three calves. The reply was, "yes, there they are in the stable." I asked, "how come?" My neighbor's brother said they were his. I went and informed my in-laws about the matter. My father-in-law reported the matter to the police and my neighbor was arrested. At the trial my father-in-law produced a cheque with which he claimed he had paid the accused for those calves, but the cheque did not stipulate what it was for, and my neighbor claimed that the cheque was in payment for other goods my father-in-law had bought from him and that the calves were never sold to him. How those calves could have been away for three months without my neighbor's finding them till that morning was a question in which the judge was apparently not interested, and the case was dismissed because of insufficient evidence.

After this incident, I got busy to have my homestead fenced in, so that no one should have an excuse to pass through my yard because there was no fence or gate. One day I loaded some tools, fence posts, and some barbed wire on my wagon and took my brother-in-law to help me try to cross the river where the water was the lowest. But the water was deeper than I had contemplated, and as we drove in, the horses had to swim; the water lifted up the wagon box from the chassis, the reach which connects the front wheels with the rear ones broke, and the wagon box turned over and everything in it went to the bottom of the

river. The wagon box floated down the river and my brother-in-law hung on to it. I was holding on to the reins and the horses pulled me across. I tied them to a tree and then ran along the river's edge with a long stick and followed the box, and when it drifted close enough I reached out with my long stick and my brother-in-law got hold of it and I pulled him and the box to the shore. This was another great experience in my life, for we both could have drowned, but as it happened we are alive to tell the story.

I often ask myself, "Why did all this have to happen after I got married? It was not because I disobeyed my father and got married, for he was only looking out for his own interest, so that he would have not have to build a house on his farm, since it was much more convenient for him to live with me on mine. But so it was and this question will always remain unanswered. The incident happened on a nice, warm day, so we felt none the worse for it, except that we had a terrifying experience with our lives in danger. We eventually got home with the horses on a longer road which took us all around by the bridge and there was no fencing done on that day. Later in the summer, when the water got low, I fished out the rear wheels of the wagon with barbed wire. I planned to get that fence built as soon as I could, and eventually it was built.

My married life didn't start off too well, through no fault of mine. I was determined to defend my rights and was not depressed because of these incidents. During this summer I purchased the farm bordering mine which I had rented; and in order to finance the deal, I borrowed on the security of my homestead and made a cash payment on the farm and also increased my equipment to farm with. I now had three horses, machinery, two cows and some hens to start with. The grain crop grew well that summer and prospects were good for a bountiful harvest.

I worked harder than ever to meet my new responsibilities and financial obligations. Dora looked after the housework and went to see her mother several times a week. Her mother lived about three miles away and used to come and see her just as often. When harvest time came, I asked Dora to postpone her visits to

her mother till after the threshing and then she could make it up. She appeared to agree to my request, but then she anyhow continued visiting her mother, and there were many times that I had to make my own and the hired help's meals, for one must take in consideration that this was not a city where you could go into a restaurant and have a meal.

One evening, after supper, I asked her, politely and cool as always, for the reason why she was not trying to assist me when I needed her help so urgently now at harvest time. Her reply was, "Well I am lonesome for mother and I have things ready for you." But I insisted that it was not right—less than a year ago we agreed to help each other faithfully and loyally—and I reminded her that before we were married, when I did not expect her assistance in my house, I used to find her there and she would meet me with a big loving smile and a kiss, and would have everything ready for my comfort and contentment; but now, when I did expect her to welcome me in the house with a loving face and ready meals, she neglected her duty towards me. As a result of the talk, she became melancholy and gloomy and went to bed. I noticed it and went to speak to her and tried to explain that I was not angry at her because of my lecture, but she had her eyes closed and looked as though she had fainted. I got scared, and put cold water on her head and moved her about, but with no effect. Her behavior was so strange that I jumped on my horse and galloped to the nearest neighbor and told him of the incident and asked him to hurry over and ask her parents to come as soon as they could. Meanwhile, I galloped back home to see what I could do to revive her. I kept working on her till her mother came in about four hours later, for they came over with their team of oxen and it was a slow drive. As soon as her mother started to speak to her, asking her what was the matter, she turned and opened her eyes and said, "Nothing, I am all right, mother."

For about ten days after this incident, Dora walked around looking melancholy and she did not speak to me, but then she got over it and we were on good terms again. Of course, I did my best to avoid anything that would upset her nerves again. But

nevertheless, my feelings toward her since that incident changed somewhat. I felt that she was not dependable, just a grown-up child able to put on an act, though perhaps subconsciously.

The harvest was good that fall; it was a banner year that went into the history of the province. The war went on and prices for farm products kept on climbing, and I was, economically speaking, well satisfied. The next summer our first son David was born and of course Dora stayed home to look after the baby. When the weather was favorable and I could spare the time, we would drive over and see her folks, and they would come to see us, too, and life went along naturally and smoothly for some time.

In the year 1918 our second son, Isaac, was born. The war was still on, and prices for farm commodities were still good. I was working as hard as ever to clear more land and get it under cultivation in order to increase our income. This was a time of great expansion. I borrowed more money to increase our herd of cattle and bought a third farm which was situated across the road from my father's homestead. I also bought a threshing outfit, which consisted of a tractor and grain separator and a Model-T Ford car. It was a time of opportunities, so it seemed to me, and perhaps instinctively I was thinking of securing economic stability for my family. I wanted my boys, when they were grown up, to have their own established farms, so they didn't have to go through the hardships and tribulations I went through in my life.

CHAPTER 13

THE FIGHT FOR THE WHEAT POOL

The farmer organization called the Grain Growers Association was also expanding at that time, and many branches were organized in many parts of the province. In Melfort, a retail store was organized, the Melfort Co-op, and it is still a going concern to this day. At present, they are occupying an up-to-date department store,

equal or better than any in town. About the same time, a retail store was also organized in Star City as part of the activities of the Grain Growers Association. I bought two shares in it, but through lack of supervision and an unscrupulous manager the enterprise went bankrupt, and I lost my investment along with many farmers in our district. This failure in our local Co-op disappointed us all in our co-operative enterprise spirit, and there was no attempt to revive the co-op store there since.

There also was a farmers' grain elevator system in operation in the province at that time, which was known as The Co-operative Elevator Company. I was a shareholder, and this farmers' enterprise was expanding all over the province and paying dividends.

After the First World War was over, about 1919, the prices of the farm commodities which we had to sell started to go down, and economic conditions were getting bad. I bought ten calves for twenty-five dollars each, took care of them and fed them for two years, and sold them when they weighed about a thousand pounds for twenty dollars a head, and so everything else was going down too. Farmers were going bankrupt and auction sales took place all over the country. Farmers all over the province started to feel the depression in the worst way; everything they sold was at the lowest price, but everything they had to buy was still at the high level. Financial obligations incurred in the years of high prices stayed fixed; we could not pay our taxes or interest on debts.

The Grain Growers Association whose function was to protect the interest of the farmer was organizing the province as never before, and a meeting was called in our nearby community to discuss the agricultural depression and what we could do to rectify this unfortunate situation. I went there and listened to the speaker attentively. He was W. J. Orchard, a director of the G.G.A. His outstanding phrase was: "United we stand, divided we fall." These words are still fresh in my memory. At the conclusion of the meeting we got organized into a local of the G.G.A., with Max Raisin as chairman and me as secretary. When the question of electing a delegate came up to represent our local at the provincial convention in Moose Jaw, I was selected. The convention was held some time in November when the farmers could spare the time.

The experience and impressions I received as a representative of our community at such a huge convention, where about one thousand delegates gathered in one building to discuss the farmer's problems and endeavor to find some solution to his predicament, are beyond description. They ignited a burning flame in me to work for the betterment of the farmer's lot, to strive for organization and better education among my fellow men in our confused social system, which will be kept burning as long as I live.

Somehow I was always under the impression that premiers, cabinet ministers and other such men who are governing our country, are outstanding beyond reproach, but now for the first time in my life I actually heard some of them speak at the convention and I was forced to change my opinion about them.

While attending the convention one day, a resolution was discussed as to the cause of the farmer's plight, and in the heat of the debate one man rose up and spoke very fluently and with a fine, penetrating voice. Among other things he said, "Our biggest trouble is that there are too many horseless, cowless, sowless and henless farms in Saskatchewan." At that moment I asked a man sitting alongside of me if he knew the man who had just spoken. "Why yes," he said, "this was Premier Charley Dunning of Saskatchewan." Knowing that Premier Dunning's statement was as far from the truth as the North Pole was from us, I was amazed to hear a man in such a high office make such a statement, misleading the delegates and so throwing them in confusion so that they would not take any action. For a statement from Premier Dunning, who came as an immigrant from England and had homesteaded like most of us delegates, and who had driven a team of oxen himself (so it was said), goes a long way to impress the delegates. Of course, there were a lot of speakers who differed with him, but they did not have the gift of gab Dunning had and were much less able to impress people. In general, we must admit that there are few thinking people, and the masses are too busy working and have neither time nor the patience to study and think out matters for themselves. But when they hear a Dunning or read a well-written article in a newspaper, they believe it's gospel truth.

Another impresssion I got was that the officials of the Association were snobbish and considered themselves of the higher strata of our society once they got on the ladder in an official capacity. When I got back home I gave a full report on the convention at our local meeting and the impressions I got from the different speakers. Needless to say, the members listened to my report attentively and acknowledged it with thanks.

It appeared that other delegates who had gone to previous conventions as well as to the one at which I was present, must have received the same impression I did; for the other farmers' movement which had recently been organized started to gain more momentum in the province after this convention; it was called "The Farmers Union." Because of the inaction and the conservative attitude of the officers of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, who were tied down to the old, outworn traditions which were only a hindrance to progress, this budding, new organization fathered the idea of the new system of marketing our grain, "The Wheat Pool."

The existing farmers' grain gathering organization, the Co-operative Elevator Company, had been established some years before and did a lot of good in the early days, giving the farmers honest grades and honest weights for their grain. But as to the prices received for grain, that was not their function, and the officers of the company who were elected by the farmers managed to get re-elected annually to their well-paid offices, and were content with things as they were. Many farmers, however, were not satisfied to get a low price for their grain in the fall of the year, after harvest—at a time when the majority of them had to sell their grain to settle their financial obligations—while they watched the well-off farmers and the speculators who kept the grain till spring receiving a handsome reward for their farsightedness.

At that time I thought, as well as many others, "Why should we not make our own grain handling organization, of which I am a member, and do the marketing as well, so as to make it possible for us to receive the full value for our grain?" And so I wrote a letter to our local paper *The Melfort Moon* and to our head office, as follows:

August 1922

Editor,
Melfort Moon

Dear Sir,

I wish to express my views regarding the great problem of marketing our grain. The long waited-for decision from our Federal Government regarding the re-establishment of the Wheat Board is known at last, but with great disappointment to the farmers of the west. A movement may start now asking the Provincial Governments of the west to put a Wheat Board in force for the very same reasons outlined by Mr. E. L. Newcomb, Deputy Minister of Justice, to the members of Parliament, which was to the effect that the Federal Government at the time of war has passed legislation which made it a *law* that all wheat in Canada must be marketed through a Government-established Wheat Board, so as not to allow the price of wheat to go up too high. This has automatically established a stabilized price for wheat the year round and has eliminated the fluctuation price of ups and downs every day on the grain exchange, and the farmers have greatly benefited thereby, for they generally got low prices for grain after threshing, when they had to meet all their accumulated expense bills for the whole year, and higher prices in spring, just before seeding operations started. It seems now that the farmers will have to solve their own problems instead of depending on the Government to do it for them. The old saying, "God helps those who help themselves," will be a factor in this case. It seems a natural characteristic for people to feel a sort of burden and distrust when thinking about starting a new enterprise, especially of the co-operative character, but once they get started with a good system and the right sort of managers they generally succeed.

Now how about all of us farmers in every community in the west getting together through our local associations and insisting upon our Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company which is a pure farmers' organization and is already handling grain with a view toward giving us farmers a square deal under the present system, to handle our grain through a pooling method. In other words, to start a voluntary Wheat Pool for the three western provinces. There would be no difficulty or special strain on our Co-op Company to start the scheme in motion. Once our directors

have decided, all they would have to do is inform the farmers of their policy and advise them not to sell their grain locally, but to take their bills of lading, storage or special bin tickets, as the case may be, and consign them to the Co-op. In turn, the farmers shall receive an advance of, say, 60 per cent of the probable value of the grain and a receipt for the documents stating thereon that the Co-operative Elevator Company agrees to sell the grain by a certain date agreed upon by the Company.

This system has been recommended by Messrs. Stewart and Riddell, who were at the head of the Government Wheat Board in the time of war. Its success depends on the farmers' support. However, I have faith, and I believe and trust that all the farmers will support a voluntary Wheat Pool, and with still more enthusiasm than they have supported the political Progressive movement last December, when we sent sixty-five Progressive Members of Parliament to Ottawa. It is in our hands and all we have to do is to get busy and do it at once before it gets too late to market our 1922 crop.

A. L. Plotkin.

The subject of the voluntary wheat pool became a very interesting debate all over the province and I felt it was my duty to our community to stay with it until we succeeded, if at all possible, and so I wrote also to the *Grain Growers Guide* in Winnipeg and to the *Prince Albert Herald* in Saskatchewan, which letters here follow:

Editor
Grain Growers Guide

Dear Sir,

While it is understandable that the few people who handle the grain are opposing the Wheat Board proposition, which is naturally against their interest, and also a few men who may be producers, but are financially strong and likely engaged in gambling on the grain exchange in options, but the unfavorable stand of the western premiers toward a Wheat Board for which the majority of the people have expressed their desire seems rather inconceivable. If it is doubtful to the premiers and others that the organized farmers at the late conventions represented the majority of the farmers, was it not these organizations that put

the Progressives in the Parliament at Ottawa and the Governments in Alberta and Manitoba? These facts speak for themselves. The argument advanced, that Manitoba will have more to lose than gain through a Wheat Board, having the advantage of an earlier harvest and being closer to the market than either Saskatchewan or Alberta, is only to roughen the road to the Wheat Board. The Manitoba farmers will have no loss if the Wheat Board is in effect. If even there should be some disadvantage, it will be more than offset by the advantage of having a steady and regular price for their products. One fact I am sure of is, that if all those who are holding public offices in the western provinces who are not in favor of a Wheat Board, would try and farm an average quarter section with the usual financial means of the average farmer and endeavor to make ends meet, and at the same time not deprive their families of the comforts and happiness of life, which they are justly entitled to, they would sound their voices different to what they do in their present positions. However, it seems the usual thing that good homesteaders with wide vision and well informed on local and national conditions, once they are elevated to high positions and after they are there for a number of years change the doctrine of the old homesteader.

Now, taking in consideration that prices of all commodities are fixed by manufacturers and industrialists, while prices of farm products are practically fixed by the grain and livestock merchants, it is high time that the farmers shall have a say in the fixing of prices of their products, and in view of the fact that the great majority of farmers have demanded a compulsory Wheat Board, it should be the duty of the heads of the western provincial governments at the coming conference to do all in their power to fulfill the wishes of the majority of the people they represent and not consider the opposition from the grain dealers and speculators whatsoever, as the action of the Wheat Board will not deprive them of their living. There are still lots of vacant lands in the western provinces and they are at liberty to become grain producers, instead of grain dealers.

A. L. Plotkin.
April 18, 1923

The Editor,

I noticed the opposition to the formation of a Wheat Pool in the press by Mr. J. Kennedy, Vice President of the United Grain

Growers, R. W. Wood, Secretary of the United Farmers of Manitoba, and C. M. W. Emery, Director of Saskatchewan Grain Growers. Their main argument against it is, that a voluntary Wheat Pool will not have any effect on the world's wheat market price and therefore there is no use in tackling a job that will not increase the price of wheat for the farmer.

It is rather surprising that these men are supposed to know the farmers' thoughts and have their interest at heart, but they don't. The farmers don't intend to raise the price of the world's wheat market through a Wheat Pool, but what they desire is to get the world's average price for their wheat the year round, and cut out the sharks who are lurking for the cream of the farmers' labor.

An explosion of a howitzer in the aisles of the farmers' movement was sounded when farmer officials opposed a scheme through which the farmers are determined to get some relief by marketing their grain co-operatively.

It is true the management of the pool will have to be trusted to men who may not have all the necessary knowledge or experience to make the pool the first year a one hundred per cent success. But who ever the men may be, they will have considerable knowledge of the business with information of the world's crops and market conditions at hand, and with a considerable volume of grain to be marketed, will be in a position to market the grain direct to consumers and millers and eliminate excessive storage charges and the speculators' profits.

The action of opposing policies which are bound to bring relief, and good to the farming industry, and in fact to all those who depend on the farmer's business, by officials of farming organizations, is ridiculous, and it is surprising that they are kept in their positions. On the other hand, everyone who is interested in the welfare of agriculture should by all means encourage and support agricultural co-operative movements.

A. L. Plotkin, Brooksby, Sask.
July 30, 1923

The outstanding method of the Wheat Pool was and still is at present that the farmers, united together, create their own marketing organization and sell directly to the consumers here and abroad and so eliminate the speculators and the grain exchange facilities. This was a great forward step in the progressing methods

in the marketing of grain for the benefit of the grain producers. Needless to say, this was a great task for us laymen and our leaders to oppose the grain exchange and the big money interests behind it. But gradually we were gaining ground and eventually made it. But what a struggle we had! The Farmer's Union imported Aaron Shapiro from California, a lawyer who was sympathetic to producers' co-operative movements, to speak at many meetings in favor of the Wheat Pool in all three western provinces. Mr. Shapiro had a debate with the secretary of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange which was reported by many newspapers, and his speeches were published in booklet form and distributed all over the country. His arguments and reasoning were so effective and convincing that even Premier Dunning accepted to be chairman at one of his meetings with the result that the majority of the farmers voluntarily signed an ironclad contract to bind themselves together for their own good. I considered this victory of ours a great bloodless revolution in our economic field.

During the same winter it happened that the administrator for the J.C.A. (Jewish Colonization Association), who lived in Winnipeg, and was looking for a dirt farmer to accompany him on an inspection trip in the Prince Albert district, wired me if I would make the inspection trip with him. Presumably he read my letter published in the *Grain Growers Guide,* which must have impressed him, for I had never met him before. I accepted, for it was early in the spring and there was no pressing seasonal work. His letter follows:

Winnipeg, Man.
March 22, 1924

Mr. A. L. Plotkin

Dear Sir,

We have to-day wired you as follows: "Would you consider inspecting for us land, Prince Albert district about March thirtieth if traveling expenses paid. Wire reply collect. We trust that wire has reached you and that you have given us your reply already.

Yours very truly,
J.C.A. per M.C.E.

After I had gone on my trip and the news was broadcast in the neighborhood that I had been chosen by the J.C.A. as an assistant inspector, my close neighbors got jealous of me, especially the postmaster of Edenbridge, and the recently appointed justice of the peace of our district. Rumors went around that one of them should have had that appointment, not I, a newcomer, while they were old-established farmers. However, a coincidence happened at the same time. One of the district farmers applied for a loan to the J.C.A. and was turned down. Then a rumor got going again that because I was on the inspection trip with the administrator of the J.C.A., I was responsible for refusal of the loan. That was a terrible accusation, and they went even further when I came back from the inspection trip. I attended a local community meeting and this neighbor of mine accused me in public of interfering with the welfare of the settlers and made libelous statements against me, about which I took legal proceedings, with the results that the neighbor's false accusations cost him a few hundred dollars.

The confusion in the community was cleared up when the following letter was received by the local community secretary:

Winnipeg, Man.
April 24, 1924

Mr. A. L. Plotkin,

Dear Sir,

We were very sorry to hear from your letter of the unpleasantness which you have with some farmers in the colony. We are to-day writing as requested by you and as per copy attached. We may further state, that allegations made against you are absolutely without foundation and that if the farmers at Edenbridge would mind their own business, as you mind yours, there would have been no need of calling upon us so frequently for advice, guidance and help. Trusting that you will not be inconvenienced any further, we are,

Yours very truly,
J.C.A. per M.C.E.

This was the beginning of friction between these brothers and myself in the coming years, mostly on political and economic

grounds. They were loyal supporters of the powers that be, right or wrong, while I was a supporter of the new progressive movement which created the Wheat Pool and the political Progressive party.

Now we shall continue the story of getting the grain growers' marketing machinery in order that we should receive our fair share of the consumer's dollar. The outstanding surprise was that the farmer's own Co-operative Elevator Company sided with the grain exchange people and did everything to stop the Wheat Pool movement for marketing our grain.

The debates at meetings and in the press were very hot at times. I contributed my share to them, as follows:

Editor,
Progressive

Dear Sir,

It seems that it is useless to debate the Wheat Pool question any longer, for it is an accepted fact by every grain grower that the Wheat Pool system of marketing, if properly carried out, is the only possible way through which the grain growers will get one hundred cents out of the consumer's dollar. Now let us debate on the machine which is designed to do the work, in order to reach our objective. This is of course the officers and the manner in which they are elected. Sections 102, 103 and 105 of the articles of association provide that the shareholders of each district must vote for each of the ten delegates nominated for the district. Section 79 provides that the shareholders may vote by postcard ballot. Now let us analyze if this is a proper and possible way of electing the delegates. Assuming that the 16 districts represent the federal electoral districts, let us take the Prince Albert district, for instance. It is about 60 by 150 miles. All the shareholders of this large territory are expected to select ten of their best men to manage the business of marketing their wheat. This in the first place is impossible, for how many of the shareholders can afford the time and expense to attend a district meeting to select their best man? Should they use the postcard ballot, how will they know who are the best men to vote for? Consequently, the natural thing will happen: those who are nearest the place of meeting will attend and become the delegates and direc-

tors of the district, whether or not they are the desired men of the entire district, and here lies the foundation and success of our machine. The Wheat Pool system, to grow and succeed, must have the confidence of every grower, and to get this, every grower must be given an opportunity of selecting his delegate within easy reach and of no expense to him. To get this Wheat Pool machine as nearly perfect as possible, a request must be made by the Wheat Pool signers of all parts of the province to the provisional Board of Directors to amend the following sections of the articles of association:

Section 48 to be amended by adding: "If he is a director of any elevator or grain company, a director of any union or association of farmers, or a member of a provincial legislature, or a member of Parliament." Section 79 shall be amended by striking out the following sentence: "Including the election of delegates by postcard ballot to be provided for." Section 82 shall be amended by striking out the word "district" where it appears and substituting the word "Municipalities." Sections 102 and 103 shall be struck out and substituted by the following: "The shareholders of each municipality shall at their first meeting elect one delegate to represent the shareholders of that municipality for all purposes, and each delegate shall hold office for a period of one year." Sections 105 and 115 to be struck out and substituted by the following: "The delegates of each district shall elect one of their number a director to the Board of Directors of the Association to represent that district. That the district meeting shall be held at the most central point in the district for the convenience of the delegates." The provisional directors had the power of drafting the articles of association and making it law, they also should have the power of amending them in accordance with the request of the Wheat Pool signers of the Province of Saskatchewan.

A. L. Plotkin, Brooksby, Sask.
January 10, 1924

Editor
The Progressive

Dear Sir,

It is very interesting and rather amusing to read the controversy over the fathership of the Wheat Pool between the Farmers Union and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers officials, each crediting themselves with the great deed they have accomplished in

getting the project in actual working order. However, looking at it from a general farmer's point of view, it is the grain growers of the three prairie provinces that have sown the seed for the Wheat Pool and are actually to be credited for the great undertaking which they have accomplished. To the Farmers Union, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers and to *The Progressive* are due all respect and credit which they actually deserve for nursing, cultivating and taking care of the seed which the farmers have sown, and for developing it into a workable system which we all hope to be proud of. Now let us drop the petty differences, and forget who is father, mother or nurse of the Wheat Pool, and line up all our forces again with a fully united and co-operative spirit and carry on the work of this great undertaking of ours to its success.

We have another very important question which the farmers of this province must decide for themselves without any consideration of the views or propaganda of the officials of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company or the Farmers Union of Canada.

There appears to be an idea in some sections of the province that this Wheat Pool is going to be an experiment, and that therefore, the system shall not go to the risk of purchasing or constructing elevators, but work on a temporary basis, that is, to lease elevators or pay a commission for handling Pool grain. It must once and for all be driven out of our heads that the Wheat Pool is only temporary. The principal system of a centralized marketing agency, organized by producers and for the benefit of producers, has been demonstrated the world over with a record of success. Therefore, it is not an experiment any longer. The Wheat Pool system of marketing our products, created by the farmers here in the three prairie provinces, now is a permanent institution. We are organized on a concrete foundation and we will stay organized, just as labor, manufacturers, transportation and finance has been organized long before us and are still organized for their mutual economic problems and benefits.

We must be sole owners of our elevators, storage space and all machinery which is absolutely necessary to handle our grain, if possible, to accomplish the aim of our Wheat Pool.

Here is a subsidiary question. The farmers are the owners of The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the United Grain Growers elevator system. Shall we let these systems be run as they are, or shall they be absorbed by the Wheat Pool? This

makes two systems or fields that the farmers are owning, and operating under two different managements, which is actually one field, and for the farmers' welfare and economy there should be one management with several departments. There is no reason under the sun why the management shall be duplicated, when there should be only one organization to handle our grain from producer to consumer. This is one of our big questions for us farmers to decide without the interference of the officials of the institutions in question; and I would like to see everyone interested express his views on this vital point in these columns.

A. L. Plotkin,
July 24, 1924

During this controversial period; the name of The Progressive was changed to *The Western Producer.*

Editor,
The Western Producer

Dear Sir,

I am here again to voice my opinion how to make our Wheat Pool successful and to this end I have suggested in my last letter, of July 24, that all farmers grain handling concerns should become one. I did not say when. The Wheat Pool is centering my thought now because wheat is the principal product from which we derive our living, and it is absolutely our business to make wheat growing or farming a profitable occupation.

In the past, we have left to others to do our marketing for us and they have done us right. Now we have come to our senses and are going to do our marketing ourselves. Then let us do it right and make it a success. Here I wish to make my position clear to the readers. I am a dirt farmer, a member of the S. G. G. A. for the last eight years and am endeavoring to keep our local alive. I have helped to organize our local Co-operative Elevator Company and have five shares in it, and am an enthusiastic worker for our Wheat Pool.

Some readers have commented upon my suggestions in these columns, so let us analyze the essence of their arguments. Ben Peterson opposes the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company's being absorbed by the Wheat Pool, and puts up this question: "Will any line elevators pay operating costs this year?

I do not think so." I would like to ask Mr. Peterson, why then are more elevators built right along? We don't hear of any elevator company going broke, either, like most of the farmers today. And further, he said, "The Co-operative elevator is a howling success." Then why is he trying to make us believe that the elevator business is a failure? Again he said, "Reason tells me that the directors of the Pool cannot be expected to run a line of elevators; it takes men of experience to do that." Here again I would like to ask him what experience did the first directors of the Co-operative Elevator have in running a line of elevators when they were first elected? I am positive that the men elected to direct the business of the Wheat Pool have by far a harder and more strenuous task than running a line of elevators. In fact, the business of the Wheat Pool requires the knowledge of handling the wheat and most of all the merchandising of our product in a manner that the produced shall receive one hundred cents out of the consumer's dollar, less actual expenses involved.

The arguments advanced by "Co-operator" are not worth considering at all. The very fact that he did not back his arguments up with his signature shows his cowardly attitude of opposing a subject that he knows very little about. His arguments have no foundation whatsoever. Others claim that when the Wheat Pool will prove its ability and success, and not until then, shall we think about buying or leasing elevators. Now right here in the word "success" centers the whole question. What do we mean by success in the operation of the Wheat Pool? Is it when the Pool will get for us one or two dollars a bushel for our wheat? However, in fairness, we shall call the Wheat Pool a success when our Pool will receive one hundred cents out of the consumer's dollar, less actual expenses involved.

I would like to ask the readers of this column how many of us farmers would make a success of farming if we were to rent our farms, rent horses, machinery and so on. I could safely say there would be very few, if any. Now then, how can we expect the Wheat Pool to make a success if it will have to hire all facilities it requires? Of course, at the start it must hire. We all hired horses and machinery more or less when we first started farming, until we acquired our own. So must the Wheat Pool work. It must acquire its own facilities as soon as possible; then only can we expect it to succeed.

We shall consider the fundamental policies of the Wheat Pool and the Co-operative Elevator. The former is a nonprofit organization, while the latter is a profit-sharing one. Though we farmers have created and own them both to serve us, still, there is bound to be friction between the heads of these organizations, because they have different aims in view, and true enough, there is right now. The present arrangements made by the Pool with the line elevators—and it is the best they can do under present conditions —are not satisfactory at all. 5¼ to 6½ cents per bushel to handle grain by wagonloads, and in addition, the elevator companies are not going to deliver the actual grain by wagonloads, and in addition, the elevator companies are not going to deliver the actual grain to the Pool terminals, but will deliver the required grade and number of bushels out of their own terminals after taking all the cream and overages out of the Pool wheat for themselves. How many millions of dollars will this transaction take out of the pockets of us farmers? And shall we leave these arrangements to continue for four years and expect at the end of that time for the Wheat Pool to make a success? It is impossible under such conditions. The opposition launched recently by the directors of our Co-operative Elevator Company in different forms would make one believe that they are the sole owners of the whole system. I wonder if the delegates representing the 28,000 shareholders at the last convention empowered them to spend the shareholders' money for propaganda against themselves? I think not.

We, the 28,000 shareholders, own the Co-operative Elevator system, and the directors are elected to direct the business of the system and nothing else. They have no business in sending out such propaganda against ourselves as they did. All they have to say is their own personal opinion as shareholders and no more. Their action is ridiculous in saying that the Farmers' Union or anyone else is trying to bring about the destruction of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company. In reality we are endeavoring to make more efficient use of it for the benefit of all the farmers in the province; and more so, we will enlarge the system for future expanding requirements. If the directors have any shadow of doubt whether the Wheat Pool will be a success, it is they themselves who are trying to bring it about. I am safe in saying that 99 per cent of the shareholders of the Co-operative

Elevator Company are Wheat Pool contract signers who are in favor that the two organizations shall become one.

Also the enthusiastic spirit of the delegates toward the Pool at the last annual Co-operative Elevator convention would lead to the same conclusion. The farmers of Saskatchewan are the owners of both the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the Wheat Pool. The only obstacle in the way is that all the farmers have not an equal interest in both. This can easily be equalized. Since we have come to the conclusion that sooner or later the Wheat Pool must control its facilities in order to be a success, then let us make arrangements whereby the money accumulated in the Wheat Pool as provided for in the contract (Sec. 8 sub. sec. F, the deduction of 2 cents a bushel for constructing, purchasing, lease or otherwise providing facilities for handling grain) is used to repay the shareholders of the Co-operative Elevator Company their equity in a number of years.

Mr. Donald McRay has left his position with the Co-operative Elevator Company and has accepted the management of the Pool, because he is convinced that the pool method of control of our wheat is the only way by which farmers will get full value for their product. Considering all the foregoing, I would appeal to every farmer who wishes to see the Wheat Pool a success, through which we have the only hope of securing full returns for our labor which we are justly entitled to, and be able to live and enjoy life as nature intended, instead of living in misery, insecurity and worry all our lives. That at the annual conventions, which will be held soon, of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Wheat Producers Ltd., our delegates shall be instructed to do their outmost to merge the two institutions into one.

A. L. Plotkin
Oct. 2, 1924

Here is a copy of a letter from one of the Co-operative Elevator Company's field men:

Editor,
The Progressive

Dear Sir,

In reply to one of the 28,000, I would like to say that he has not given the subject he writes about the amount of thought

necessary to really understand the situation, nor has he by any means the true perspective.

The Pool has just been launched. An undertaking, the like of which has never been before, is about to be tried out. Opposing forces controlling vast wealth will be out to, if possible, give it its deathblow. Innumerable problems will have to be met and solved. Tremendous handicaps will have to be overcome. The steadfast loyalty of the farmer will have to be won. These things can be accomplished without the ownership of elevators. We have in this province a strong farmer-owned system of handling grain well able to give the Pool yeoman service in the handling of its grain, without any risk to itself. Just as the farmer values his connection with the Pool and his loyalty to it, just as soon will he be in a position to take over and operate all elevators and terminals. The child has to crawl before it can walk, and walk before it can run. To even attempt to take over, at this time, the Co-operative Elevator Company, would be utter folly; for, should anything go wrong with the Pool, after having absorbed the Elevator Company, the farmers of this province would just have turned back the hands of the clock some fourteen years, and there would be great glee in the camp of the Philistines. The Co-op has been a factor of untold worth during its lifetime. And until such time as the Pool demonstrates its ability to operate and control such an important part of our grain handling machinery, let us keep our hands off.

The life of the Pool contract can be well used in fostering a spirit of true co-operation, in strengthening and perfecting our organization, and the day will then come when we can with every confidence carry on the mechanical part of selling grain ourselves.

G. Pearson, Ridgedale

Editor,
Melfort Moon

Dear Sir,

In your issue of November 19, 1924, there is an advertisement from the Co-operative Elevator Company asking your readers, "Is *The Western Producer* fair and unbiased?" because of an article in *The Western Producer* of October 15, entitled, "No contract signed between Pool and Co-op." The Co-op further stated that this contract was signed on October 24. Now I wish to

state frankly that I am not writing this letter to defend *The Western Producer,* it can take its own part well, but to point out how the officers of the Co-operative are trying to create prejudice and misunderstandings between the farmers, so that when the delegates go to the Co-op convention, they would fight around for days and leave things as they are, in order to save their fat jobs and other influences to their advantage. I believe that the action of Mr. Riddell and Mr. Maharg is like a drowning man trying to catch a straw to save his life. Those who read *The Western Producer* know that the article in question was published in reply to the many inquiries who wanted to know what sort of arrangements were really made. Considering the situation from an unbiased position, I would think if there were any agreements to be made between the Co-op and the Pool they should have been signed at the beginning of the season, September 1. But apparently the Co-op officers didn't care to do so, until they realized that their business is suffering from not having signed an agreement with the Pool, so they concluded to sign it on October 24 and then trying to put the blame on *The Western Producer.* The actions of the Co-op officials is nothing else but drawing a red herring across the trail which leads to the success of the Wheat Pool. I would like to ask the readers, "If you had two outfits of horses that you could put to work under one driver, instead of two, to your advantage, would you do it?" Of course you would. Now this is what it really means of having the Co-op and the Pool serving us farmers as one unit under one management.

That the wheat pool system of marketing our grain is here to stay is evident from the fact that over seventy-five per cent of the farmers of Saskatchewan have signed an iron-clad contract. These contract signers, who are also shareholders of the Co-op, are convinced that to make the Pool what it should be it must control the physical handling of the grain as well as marketing from many points. Perhaps I better mention a few. There are over eight hundred shipping points in Saskatchewan with an army of about four thousand elevator agents (there are from one to eight elevators at a shipping point) who, owing to their position as employees of the line elevator companies whose principals are naturally antagonistic to the pool system of marketing, will do all they can to plant the seed of suspicion and prejudice against

the Wheat Pool in every farmer who brings a load of grain to the elevator. Therefore, the Wheat Pool as a practical system must have at least one representative with an elevator at each shipping point to counteract the opposition to co-operative marketing.

There are also the profits derived from unfair weighing or taking the break of the beam, which accumulate in the terminal elevators in hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain. The unfair grading and the mixing of different grades in the terminals means that all low grades from the producer become high grades to the consumer. All these summed up will easily mean ten cents a bushel back to the grower then all grain is put through Pool-controlled local and terminal elevators. In conclusion I would ask the delegates for the good of the Co-op shareholders (not mentioning the Pool members) to do all in their power not to let the interest of the Co-op officials or anyone else to stand in the way of making agriculture in Western Canada a paying proposition, and to merge the Co-op and the Pool into one unit at this coming convention on December 16, 1924.

A. L. Plotkin

During the same time that the Wheat Pool was being organized, the Farmers' Union and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association had voted that their respective conventions unite and become one strong organization instead of fighting each other. Mr. Shapiro gave a helping hand in this movement too, which speeded up the marriage of the two organizations. The speeches of Aaron Shapiro made a great and stirring impression throughout the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, the bread basket of Canada. With his brilliant oratorical talent and sound and logical arguments, he swayed even Mr. Dunning—who had said that the farmer's problem was "that there were too many horseless, cowless, sowless and henless farms in Saskatchewan"—became a supporter of the Wheat Pool idea, which helped immensely.

After the Wheat Pool was established and the organization was well functioning, about one hundred elevators were built at points where there was no Co-op elevator with the hope and intentions that the Co-op Elevator system and the Wheat Pool would become one united facility in the service of the farmers, because most of

the farmers were shareholders in both and we wanted to eliminate duplication, competition and waste, and probably friction and inefficiency between the two organizations. But we found resentment from the officials of the Co-op. They sent their fieldmen to try and be present at all Wheat Pool meetings and oppose any resolution for the Wheat Pool to buy the Co-op system, and at Co-op Elevator meetings to oppose resolutions to sell to the Wheat Pool. What a struggle it was!

I recollect we had a Wheat Pool meeting at our hamlet Brooksby where we had a Co-op elevator. I was the secretary of our local Board and noticed the Co-op fieldman was around and sensed what was going to happen, so I consulted my chairman and suggested that, since this was a Wheat Pool meeting that only members of the Wheat Pool be present and outsiders should not be allowed, to which he agreed, and we drafted a resolution to that effect and presented it to the meeting, first on the agenda. What a stormy debate broke out between the fieldman and a few of his friends and the chairman and me; the resolution was passed and the poor fieldman had to leave the room and one of his friends went with him.

These local meetings were held prior to the delegates' annual convention of both the Wheat Pool and the Co-op Elevator Company. I happened to be the delegate to the Co-op Elevator convention. The atmosphere in the convention hall was tense and strained with anxiety, all the delegates were thinking seriously of when that fatal resolution would be coming up for debate. All the officers and directors took part in the debate on the resolution *not to sell* to the Wheat Pool, and what pitiful appeals they made to save such a successful organization from going under. Of course, they were concerned about losing their fat jobs, rather than about the interest of the producers they represented. As evidence, here are the salaries they received in comparison with the salaries of the premier and his cabinet ministers of the Saskatchewan government —not to be compared with the average income of the farmers who deliver their grain to the Co-op, who make it possible for them to draw those fat salaries and be generous to their employees:

Saskatchewan Government	
Premier per annum plus indemnity	$7,500
Cabinet Ministers plus indemnity	6,000
Ministers without portfolio per day	12
plus indemnity	
Members of Legislative Assembly	1,800
Leader of Opposition plus indemnity	2,500
House Speaker plus indemnity	1,500

Co-op. Elevator Co.	
General Manager F. W. Riddell	$15,000
President Geo. Langley	12,000
Vice President John Maharg	9,000
Managing Director J. B. Musselman	6,000
Secretary W. C. Mills	5,000
Directors	3,000

On the other hand, the counterarguments were: that these two organizations should become one powerful economic unit which was going to be of real benefit to the agricultural industry of the three prairie provinces, and eliminate duplication, competition, friction and waste. The resolution for the Co-op Elevator Company to sell its facilities to the Wheat Pool was carried, in spite of the pleas from the officialdom and their employees. We sure were jubilant over our victory.

With the pressing farm problems now out of the way, the situation was that we were living in a state of hopefulness with prices of farm commodities making a turn upwards, with prospects for better times with better living conditions and some economic security.

CHAPTER 14

FAMILY TROUBLE

In the meantime, my two boys were growing up and were going to school, which was across the road. I had to fight to retain the schoolhouse where it was, for a movement on the westside was organized to have it moved west, closer to them. However, I succeeded to defeat that move, on the grounds that the place where the schoolhouse was situated was in the centre of the school district, and that it might be possible that in a number of years the majority of the children would be living on the eastside of the district, and then we would have to move it back again. The incident cost me the friendship of a few neighbors, but I could not help it, for I considered I was justified in my stand from a general point of view while the people on the westside were thinking only of their own selfishness.

Since the boys had grown up a bit now and were able to get around, Dora took advantage of their ability to walk long distances and again started to visit her parents as often as she felt like, without regard to her obligations to her home, and thereby again caused friction in our family life. To be frank, our relationship was not too good since that first incident, but I tried my level best to get along and make the best out of a difficult situation. During the last few years, a railway branch line was built from Melfort in a northeasterly direction, which passed about three miles south of my homestead, and I could now haul a load of grain to the elevator in a few hours, whereas before it had taken a long day.

The new hamlet of Brooksby near the farm made things more convenient in many ways; better roads were built and one could travel with more comfort and receive mail three times a week instead of only once a week.

While hauling grain to the elevator, which did not take very

long now, I quite often stopped on the way to talk with my neighbor, Mr. McKee. He would occasionally tell me about his farming experiences in old Ontario and how he came out west with his four boys and how they all got homesteads; some of them were doing well and others not so good. He was living on his homestead with his aged wife, who was a semi-invalid, and he had to look after her. His youngest son Fred had his homestead with some buildings on it across the line, but Fred was living with them since he was still single. He was in the early thirties. The trouble was, my neighbor told me, that this boy wouldn't listen to him, and he was afraid that he would lose his shirt. He had bought another farm for eight thousand dollars (that was a big price in those days) and he had mortgaged his homestead to make the down payment; then he had bought a tractor and a threshing machine and had given the bank a second mortgage on his farms to make the down payment. Now it seemed he could not keep up the payments, interest and taxes, and there was danger that he was going to lose the whole thing. But there was one consolation—he had no family that was depending on him. He could always work out and make his living, but it would be too bad if he should lose it all. (Three years later it did happen, what the father was afraid of.)

And so, while discussing these things with the kind old gentleman, he mentioned that he saw Dora with the boys walking by his house to her folks quite often, and he was wondering who was looking after the house and the yard while she was gone, with me out in the field all day. Naturally I told him some of my troubles, too, and after he had listened to my story, he said, "Well, that is too bad, but you know, there is a remedy for this; it has been tried out and it works. I'll tell you what it is: keep her full; as long as she has little ones to look after, she will stay home." I said, "But this is not the solution to my problem, for I do not want a big family; this remedy of yours might have worked in the old days, but not now." He said, "Well, you'll have to put up with it." And it seemed there was a lot of truth in what he said.

At times I thought the reason for my unhappy married life was all my fault, because I did not spend enough time to play with

my young wife, as she probably would like me to, and neither did I take sufficient time off for the extra attention that my two little boys required, to play with them occasionally. For I was always busy working; there was no time to rest or play, not even time to read a newspaper, except during meals or a few minutes before going to bed. It would seem that I was part of the land, machinery, horses, cows, prices of grain and meetings—not a human being at all; and no wonder that I had no sympathy from my family.

But, on the other hand: How could I spare the time when I had no one to help me, not even my wife who could if she wanted to. She did have a lot of virtues. She could cook well if she wanted to; she could sew dresses or garments of any kind; she could cut my hair well if she wanted to and thereby save me time and money going to a barber; and she could keep the house tidy and have meals on time *if* she wanted to. The chores on the farm I had to do after a day's work in the field were almost unbelievable: to unharness the horses, water them and feed them, get the cows from the pasture, milk them and separate the milk from the cream when there was a cream separator, make supper and wash the dishes and the cream separator. By the time I got through I surely did not feel like playing with anyone, but would just fall on the bed and fall asleep. The only time I did have some rest was on a rainy day, but even then there was always something to fix or something to adjust on the machinery, or to catch up with the current events in the newspapers.

But above it all, it was always in my mind that I must succeed in my life venture; I must work unceasingly to have an income greater than my expenditures in order to pay up my obligations. I did not want to become bankrupt like Fred McKee, and I had a family to support. These were the conflicting circumstances in my family life. If I had taken time off to play with my wife and children to gain their sympathy and friendship, which was very questionable under those circumstances, I would have neglected my work, and in the end I was bound to fail in both, home and farm, for when poverty creeps in the window, happiness walks out through the door. Moreover, if my family did not have the

loyalty and devotion to their hard-working husband and father to sympathize and help him in his endeavors to establish economic security for the family, the whole principle of married life was lost, and I could do nothing about it alone.

I tried to discuss this very important question of family life with Dora a few times, but without success, except that one time she listened coolly to my arguments and then broke down and cried and said, "But what can I do, I can't help it." Then she fell on the floor and became speechless. But her memory was short. After she met her folks again, she could not visualize what might happen in the future as a result of her conduct.

I recollect one day in the middle of the summer. We sat down to dinner. There was not much to eat, just bread, tea, and a bit of milk. I asked her what happened. Her reply was, "I've told you to bring some canned tomatoes and salmon yesterday, when you went to town, so you'd have something to eat." "Yes," I said, "but what of the potatoes, butter, eggs, cream, cheese, and a bunch of hens running around in the yard?" No reply. I went down in the basement and found eggs that were stale, one crock of cream that smelled bad and another that had worms crawling all over. She used to tell her mother that there was nothing to eat, but of course not in my presence. But apparently she had never been instructed how to look after her own garden produce, poultry, eggs and milk, and the cream and cheese which was produced on our own farm.

One day in the spring of 1925, she took the boys, with a few things under her arm, and went to live with her parents. At the same time it happened that a farmer who lived a half a mile from us and who had bought a farm and equipment in the time of high prices was about to lose it all. He came to me one morning and told me his hard luck story, and begged me with tears in his eyes if perhaps I could advise him somehow to save something out of his whole life's work which he had invested in that farm. This man was a good worker and had a good, hard-working, faithful wife with three little boys, two of school age. My advice to him was that he better let his equipment go because, after the years of wear and tear, it was not worth what he still owed on it. To save

his land, I would borrow in the bank an amount equal to what was against it and take it over in my name to resell to him for the same figure I put up, without any bonus whatsoever, and to give him as much time as he thought would be necessary to repay it; further, since I had to hire help anyway, he could work with me on an agreed wage basis and I would rent the land from him on the regular rent basis, so he would have one third clear share from his land plus his wages. He'd be sure of making his payments and eventually have his land back in his own name. He talked the proposition over with his wife and they were overjoyed about it.

He moved his little house over on my place, so that he was near the job; also his children would be near the school. This arrangement pleased me, too, for I would not have to worry about boarding a hired man, milking the cows, and looking after the garden, for his wife took charge of all this. This was a great relief to me. We drew up our agreement as planned, and everything worked smoothly.

However, one day in the month of May, an officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police visited me and asked quite a few questions and looked around in the cupboards and closets. I asked him what was his charge. His reply was that their head office in Regina had received a complaint from my wife that I was starving my family and had gone away. I learned later that he had visited some of my neighbors and had received information regarding the matter. The following week I received a letter from the Melfort detachment that I should call in and see the officer at my earliest convenience. The Officer informed me of the charge laid against me by my wife, but that his man upon his investigation could not find any evidence to substantiate the charge, and advised me to be careful if she did come back, for she would likely try again to put me in trouble. I thanked him heartily for the information and advice and went back home worrying over my unfortunate married life.

Early in July, I received a letter from Dora, stating that she could not go back to stay with me and that she was entitled to at least ten dollars a week and that I better come across with it and save myself expenses before she took it to court. Of course I

ignored the threat. In the latter part of July, my close neighbor sent me a note inviting me for supper, as they had an important matter to discuss with me. After I came in, supper was served, and as soon as we got started, Dora came in all by herself and joined in. After supper the discussion gradually shifted over to Dora and me. When I pointed out Dora's behavior before we got married, and how she conducted herself from six months after we got married up till now, she became hysterical again and collapsed right there in Vickar's house.

She lay there a couple of hours and with the help of Mrs. Vickar she got over it, and the hosts finally coaxed her to go home with me somehow, I was foolish and consented and we drove home. After she had stayed two days, she went back to her parents again. A while later she came with her sister in their democrat buggy and gathered up all her belongings and went back to her parents.

Things were quiet all winter. Sometimes I had my meals at the hired man's house, and life and the farm work went about as usual.

CHAPTER 15

A NEW HOME AND A NEW LEAF IS TURNED

One nice, sunny morning in the early summer of 1926, Dora and her father drove in the yard. While he was tying up his horses, she came in the house and started to talk to me with kindness, hugged me, cried and with tears in her eyes begged me to forgive her for her past actions. She promised that she would do everything in her power to make our married life happy and that she would never leave me again. Her father was in the house now watching the performance and said, "From now on, turn a new leaf over in your life and start it all over again and make a success of it this time." "I hope so," I said. After the excitement calmed

down, her father drove back home alone. Dora got busy getting the house in order to her liking and I went about my usual farm work. The next day we drove to her parents' place and got the boys and her belongings and came home, and things went along smoothly until our boys got into a fight with the boys of the hired man and they were calling each other nasty names. The hired man's house was about twenty rods or more away from our house and there was lots of space for the children to play and so avoid friction, but somehow there was always a reason for them to call each other dirty names.

And one day the cursed old days came back again. Dora gave me an ultimatum that this hired man and his family must leave the place, and that she did not want to see them around her home. I had nothing against this man and his family; he had been working for me for over a year now and was doing his work faithfully, and he had a family to support; why should I discharge him in the middle of the season just because of a children's quarrel? I tried my best to keep the peace, but of no avail. She kept on working through the children and made that family feel so degraded and miserable that finally this man, being of a high-strung temper, ordered me under threat of a pitchfork, that I stop my wife and children from making their lives miserable, or else. This action on the part of my hired man I considered too far and serious. After all I did for him to save his farm. He knew very well that I had no control over my wife and children, because when it comes to a decision of the law, the wife and children always have the sympathy of the law. I reluctantly ordered him to go, and they went away. Dora got her way this time by methods that I did not approve of, but she was satisfied she had got her way, and things went along smoothly again for a while.

At this time farming conditions were somewhat improving, prices of farm products were gradually climbing, the Wheat Pool organization was progressing very favorably, and our daughter Sylvia was born. A feeling of new hope arose in me. I got to thinking that perhaps it was because of the old, cramped house we were living in that Dora found it difficult to keep things clean and in order and free of flies, and so I started planning to build

a new house which was to include all modern conveniences, a full basement with a large soft-water cistern, a vegetable room, a fuel room, a furnace room for heat in the winter, and a general storage room. It also provided for a sewer system to be completed when funds were available.

The first floor was to include a living room, a spacious dining room, one bedroom, a porch and a small kitchen with a hot-water tank and a sink with running hot and cold water and a sewer. The second floor which would be partly attic was to include a bathroom and four bedrooms and a hall with a staircase. It also provided for plumbing in the bath room and electric wiring throughout the building, with the expectations that some day I could provide our own electricity.

Although I had considerable financial obligation at that time, my financial statement and credit in the bank was good, and so I consulted my bank manager and informed him of my urgent need for building a new house, and that I would require financial assistance to accomplish my plans. He assured me that it would be provided as my needs required them.

The basement was built with concrete in the fall of 1927, and I started the framework in the spring of 1928 as soon as the weather permitted and worked on it until seeding time and all throughout the summer on and off, when the work on the land was not pressing. Finally, in the fall, the building was closed in from the outside and during the winter I worked inside, and as the finishing work was progressing inside, we gradually moved into it and found our new house very comfortable and roomy. Of course it was not completely finished. Whenever I had time, I would work in the building, finishing one room after the other. It was over two years before I had it all finished and painted, for I practically did all the work myself, with some help for the foundation, framing and the roof.

CHAPTER 16

THE DEPRESSION BEGINS

During this time I managed to clear all the bush and the trees from the three-quarter section of my land and had it all plowed and under cultivation and thereby accomplished one of my dreams that I had when I first came to Canada, when I worked for Mr. McLacklin in Bagot, Manitoba: that some day I would be plowing with my own tractor on my own farm on a half-mile furrow. This was now a reality. The buildings were all on the homestead, and the Carrot River with a good supply of water in summer and lots of ice in winter was running a little ways north of the barn, and this rounded out a complete, established farm of which I was *proud.*

The size of my family was just right, two boys and a girl, all bright and efficient, which gave me hope and enthusiasm to carry on my farming operations. This was a time of my life when I considered myself fortunate—to succeed as I had with all the obstacles and drawbacks in my road, from my neighbors, my father, my wife, and mosquitoes for good measure.

The year 1929 rolled in, the crops were fair and the prices for wheat were very good on the open market, close to a dollar and a half for a bushel of wheat, and other grains and livestock in proportion. But members under contract to the Wheat Pool were only getting an advance of about seventy cents a bushel, and of course I was a member of our Wheat Pool, so I was in this low bracket, and I naturally hoped with all the other members that we would get the difference between the advanced payment and the final payment as always at the end of the crop year which was generally in July of the following year.

We all know what happened to the stock and grain markets in the winter of 1929-1930, when the severest depression ever

recorded in history befell us. It stunned nearly everybody who was affected by it, even those responsible for bringing it about were shocked. The following summer it was disclosed that the advance payment of seventy cents we had received on our wheat had been overpaid by our Wheat Pool by some fifteen cents a bushel, and as a result I was quite behind financially. Of course, all we farmers were in the same boat. In the late fall of the year 1930, things were getting desperate financially, and I went to my bank manager to settle my accounts which could not be done with the reduced income and asked him to renew my note for another year, to which he consented, but he had to take a new statement of my financial standing, which disclosed that my assets were now about half of what they had been a year ago, but the amount of the debt was still the same, and that he must have security by way of a second mortgage on my land which I reluctantly signed. There was no justice or fair play in this transaction.

The following year, 1931, Providence was good to us, with favorable weather, and the land produced a good crop of all grains. I threshed over five thousand bushels of good wheat, but it was worth only about twenty cents a bushel. This price did not even begin to cover the actual cost of production, and as a result I could not pay my taxes, the interest on my debts, and accumulated store bills. The same conditions applied to all the farmers in all the prairie provinces.

Mass meetings were called by the United Farmers of Canada to discuss the seriousness of the situation the farmers found themselves in. The meetings were attended by huge crowds. We had to have them in skating rinks, for an ordinary hall could not accommodate them. Resolutions were passed calling for moratoriums, condemning the grain exchanges and stock exchanges and the governments, both Provincial and federal, who were idly watching a man-made catastrophe and were doing nothing about it.

At the Annual Provincial Convention of The United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan section, the delegates decided to go into the business of politics as never before, and elected a committee with full powers to take action and to endeavor to co-operate with the labor unions of the cities and towns to form a political party,

which was eventually created and called "Farmer Labor Party." The province was organized on a constituency basis, public meetings were held in every provincial constituency, and committees with executives were set up in each, with the purpose of educating the electorate to the necessity of selecting and electing representatives to our governing bodies—such men that would truly represent the workingman on the farm and in the cities, and not the financial and industrial capitalists.

Our constituency of Melfort was organized along with the others, and at this organization meeting the audience was enthusiastic about this new movement and elected a committee to proceed with the work at hand. The committee elected an executive board to which I belonged, with a chairman and secretary. Everyone went home with great hopes for the future and expected immediate action; at least I did.

This was the year 1932. Being a member of the executive board, I was expecting word from our constituency secretary regarding activities, but months went by without a word. I took the initiative and wrote to our secretary, asking what was being done and what there was to do. He replied that there was no money and that everybody was broke, and that we could do nothing without money. The powers to call a meeting lay in the hands of the chairman and secretary, and the men who were on the board were scattered in all corners of the constituency, many miles apart, with bad roads and slow team transportation.

I took the courage and wrote to our head office in Saskatoon and explained to them our problem. After some correspondence with our head office I suggested that a series of meetings should be held in our constituency and that I would take the responsibility for advertising our meetings and for arranging a hall to meet in. I also named three other persons to whom our head office should write and instruct them to do what I had undertaken to do in my district, namely, to provide a meeting place and to arrange for accommodations for the speaker and transportation to the next meeting on the following day, to which our head office agreed, and they provided a speaker for us, a young man by the name of Joe L. Phelps, who farmed in the Wilkie district (and who in

1944 became the Minister of Natural Resources in the first Socialist C.C.F. government in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Phelps had successful meetings right along; in fact, I know of some farmers who drove many miles, and on snow-drifted roads, to listen to him twice, of the message he delivered to us farmers, with the exception of the district where our secretary was in charge. I still remember vividly how, when I took Mr. Phelps to the next meeting where our secretary was in charge and he phoned and asked the secretary if everything was arranged in his district, and the reply was that he was sorry, but that there would be no meeting because there was no money to pay the hall rent; lo and behold, did Mr. Phelps get mad, and he sure told him off. The following summer we had our second annual convention in Melfort, but our chairman and secretary never showed up to give us the report of our past activities. However, I was called upon to give the report, which I did to the best of my abilities and was appreciated by the audience present.

After the usual procedure of the convention, at which there was a representative from our provincial executive, a committee was elected which in turn elected the executive board of which I was the secretary campaign manager, and we all went to work and organized our constituency for the election campaign proper, which was to be held in the near future. Mr. Phelps again addressed another series of meetings and it seemed from reports gathered that his message was well received. He displayed an unusual method of addressing his audiences, which kept his listeners spellbound and eager to hear; many people present when they were informed where the next meeting would be held made it a point to get their neighbors and go to hear him again. He had a big chart which he would tack on the wall, on which was the blueprint of the future plan of our economic system which this new political party would put into practice and make it possible that each one who toils should get his proper share of the total production of our nation.

In due course, our nominating convention was called, at which Mr. Phelps, who was not present, was the choice from the names submitted to the slate to become the banner carrier for the new Farmer Labor party in the constituency of Melfort.

In accepting the office of campaign manager, I felt I had a great responsibility, to see that our electorate got the right information pertaining to our program so that we should get the votes on election day, and to help introduce our policy to the public. And so I wrote a few letters to our local newspaper which follow, also a letter criticizing the representative of the Searl Grain Company who gave us a lecture in which he tried to put the blame for the low prices of grain on everything but the grain merchants, and his reply in part:

December 15, 1932

Editor,
Melfort Moon

We are living in a very interesting and critical stage of civilization, a time when the problem of production has been solved, and the problem of distribution is to be solved. A time and system that makes it possible for a comparatively small number of men to possess and control practically all the wealth and the destiny of the vast majority of the people.

A time when nearly the whole world is living in a state of depression, gloom, uncertainty and disappointment, a crisis that is unlike others in the last century or more. In former depressions, when an expansion took place, with an overproduction of commodities, markets were found in new, undeveloped countries like India, China, Russia, etc., who received the overproduction of the industrial world, and paid for them with their raw material and natural resources. At present, these countries are becoming independent and are putting up tariff barriers to keep out foreign commodities and are developing their own industries and natural resources. Therefore the markets for our farm products and the goods of industries are gradually diminishing. The result is that we have too much of everything and no buyers. Prices of uncontrolled commodities, such as agriculture, are going down, down, and are nearly at the bottom. We as agriculturalists are not receiving the cost of production, and this, because we have no purchasing power, coupled with the increased efficiency of machinery, has created unemployment, want and demoralization of our civilization.

To rectify the conditions we had recently commissions and conferences of various complexions, but it did not do any good. Our governments are getting into debt deeper by borrowing money to pay interest on borrowed money and to pay a bonus to the Canadian Pacific Railway to keep their trains moving and their workshops open and they have to keep the people from starvation.

How long can our governments keep borrowing? Our politicians, who will not see the real cause and apply the proper remedy, are trying to make us believe that there are no real hard times, that prosperity is around the corner, that this is a world crisis and Canadian conditions cannot improve before world conditions will improve. If so, let us suppose that by some unfortunate, unnatural catastrophe, Canada were cut off from the rest of the world. Should the majority of the people on this island of Canada perish, because we have too much wheat, lumber, meat, aluminum and all kinds of machines, etc., and no foreign country to sell them to? Of course not, knowing as we do, that Canada can feed clothe and shelter not only our own population, but ten times that number.

On these grounds the Farmer Labor group has laid its policy, that all the people of Canada shall live in comfort and plenty when we are fortunate to live in a land of abundance. The question arises, how are we going to do it? We believe that the production problem has been solved, but the distributory system has failed miserably. We recognize that the means and only agent of distribution in a civilized world is money, money based not on gold or silver standards, but on a wealth standard, and this money shall be used as a medium of exchange and not as a commodity, and therefore it must be socialized. We must remember that we have several socialistic systems functioning efficiently right now and we are proud of them. The most outstanding are: our schools, roads, post office, water, sewer, telephone, electric power and our police force to maintain peace and order among our citizens. Who will discard these socialistic institutions that we maintain for our use and service and not for profit? Very few, if any.

Briefly, we propose to add to the social systems we already have the socialization of our natural resources, health institutions, the big industries and manufacture, who, by interlocking their

directorate with our financial institutions, control our national economy. Political democracy without economic democracy does not work, we all feel it and suffer.

Therefore, let us think, work and unite our forces to make a better Canada.

A. L. Plotkin

Jan. 12, 1933

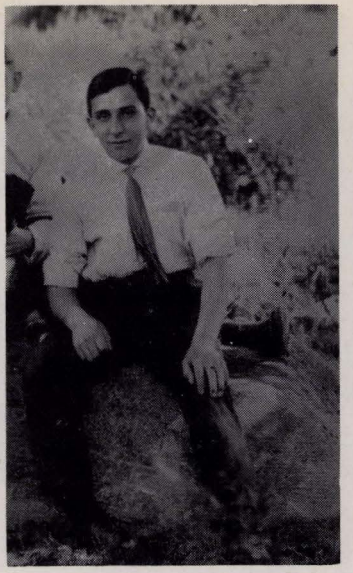
The Melfort Moon

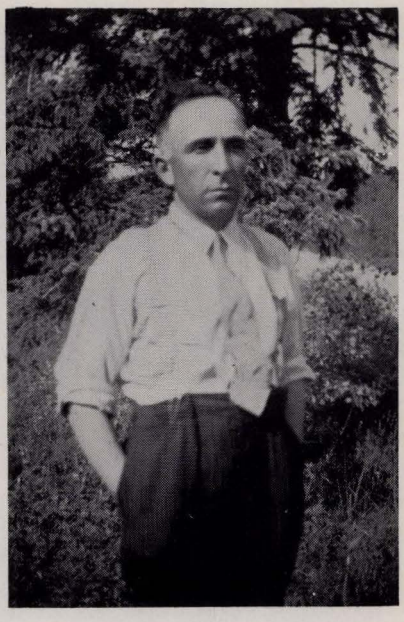
Three Doctors by A. L. Plotkin

Conditions in our economic life are getting so unbearable that many people are beginning to believe that, unless there is a war somewhere in the world to destroy the so-called overproduction and kill off the unemployed, economic conditions will not improve.

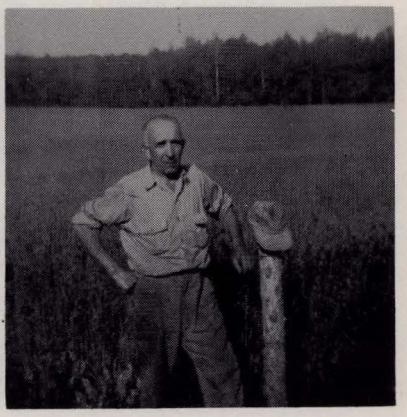
However, there are three doctors, namely, the Capitalist, the Communist and the Socialist, who are prescribing a remedy without going to the surgical, dreadful and insane operation of war. The Capitalist doctor claims that capital is supreme and must rule, because those who have accumulated wealth show their superior management ability and therefore the wealthy only are qualified to manage the nation's affairs. Capitalism which is based on production for profit made possible the creation of enormous wealth in our country and the high standard of living. The depression, like others in the past, is natural, the road of people's lives are always bumpy and the present bumps are a little bigger, presumably because we spent a little too much and lived a little too high. There will always be the rich and the poor, and the ordinary man will remain poor. With a little patience and living within one's means, conditions will gradually improve and prosperity will be here with us again, like in the good old days.

The Communist doctor's analogy is that this crisis is brought about by the capitalists and by big money interest dictatorship. In fact, there are no hard times among the capitalists, but, on the contrary, enormous wealth is rolling into their laps and nearly the whole world is coming under their control. They are enslaving the masses by mean of wages, profit, interest, rent and private property to work for them perpetually under conditions which are worse than those of good masters working their ani-









Upper Left: Author's photo taken in Glen Wild, N. Y., in 1908.

Upper right: The author on the farm in Brooksby, Saskatchewan, in 1933. (Garden is seen in background.)

Lower left: The author in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in 1945.

Lower right: On the farm in Brooksby in 1951.









Upper left: On the farm in 1919 on a warm day in March in front of the barn.

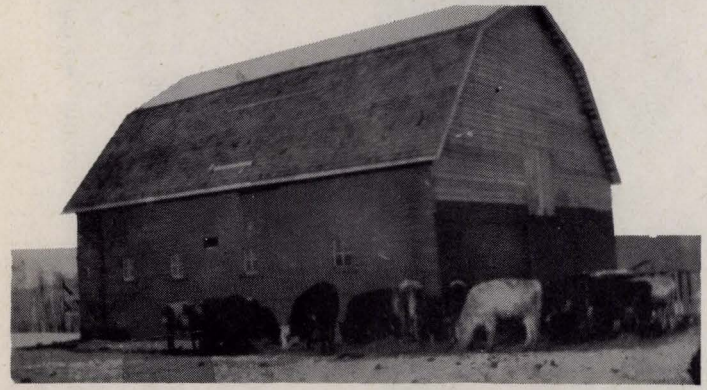
Upper right: The author on a nice day in July with the family in good spirits.

Lower left: Sylvia, age 17, in 1943.

Lower right: David, age 13, Isaac, age 11, and little Sylvia, age 3, in 1929.









Upper left: Photo taken in Glen Wild, N. Y., in 1917. The Model T Ford with Sara at the wheel, Eva beside her and Ida in the rear seat with her admirers.

Upper right: In Brooksby, Sask., in 1919, in another Model T Ford, with the author at the wheel, David and Isaac beside him and Dora in rear seat, with her brother Isidor and mother.

Lower left: In 1919 on a warm day in September—herd of cattle feeding in front of the barn.

Lower right: Digging a trench silo by hand, with hired man and one of the youngsters visiting.



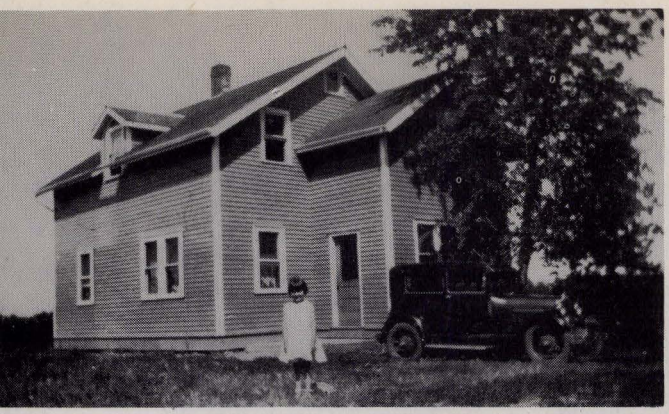




Top: Haying time in Glen Wild, N. Y., in 1916. Harris holding the reins and Joe supporting himself with the pitchforks.

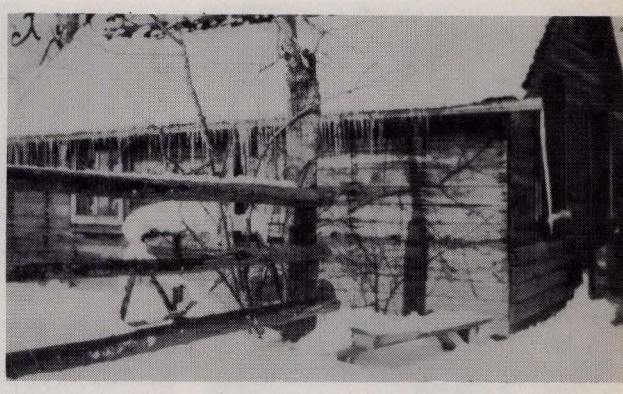
Lower left: Haying on the farm in Brooksby in 1921. The author is at the right, his father next to him looking down on the boys, David and Isaac, with Paul Shores at his right.

Lower right: The author's father carrying two oat sheaves from field to feed his horses in front of his house.









Upper left: On the farm in 1931. Sylvia and Model A Ford in front of the new house.

Upper right: The north side of the house after a strong wind blew the tree down.

Lower left: Dora and David in 1917 in front of the east side of the first homestead house.

Lower right: The south side of the house on a warm day, with the icicles hanging down the roof.







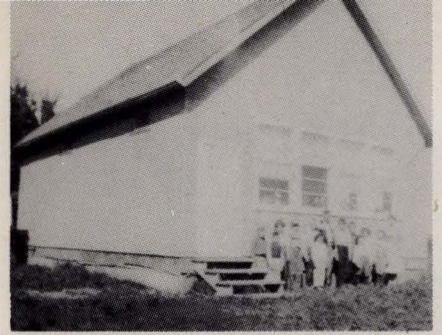


Upper left: The author in 1919 plowing with the I H C Titan tractor.

Upper right: The same tractor operating a threshing machine.

Lower left: Pulling a binder harvesting a field of wheat with a John Deere tractor.

Lower right: In 1936—pulling three binders with the one tractor, trying to beat the Depression.









Upper left: The Edenbridge schoolhouse, which Geo. Chisolm and the author built in 1914. (Picture taken in 1957.)

Lower left: The house the author built on the farm in 1929. (Picture taken in 1957.) Standing in front are: the author is in the center, with Anna Kopachewsky and Nick Laskofsky at his right and a lady visitor and Kost Kopachewsky at his left.

Upper right: The southwest corner of the apartment house which the author built in 1954.

Lower right: The northeast corner of the house the author built in 1950 in Los Angeles, Cal. (Picture taken in 1959.)



The author and his wife.

mals. The workers feel that the capitalist class has been on their backs, like parasites, sucking their lifeblood out of them long enough, and it is time they were kicked off and a workers' rule established. The capitalistic system must be overthrown and destroyed and upon its ashes a system built in which the workers will live in comfort and enjoy the fruits of their labor. A system that will eliminate wages, and all the rest of the evils, where all work for the community and give to it all they have, and receive from the community all they need. This workers' rule cannot be established by peaceful methods or by ballot (the worker who thinks it can be done must be educated) for the capitalists dictate the ballots with their money every time.

Therefore, communism must be established by force and dictatorship by the proletariat and not until then will prosperity for the workers be a reality.

The Socialist doctor believes that the present crisis is a natural outcome of a system that has outlived its usefulness. It's a natural law of evolution. Looking over history, we find that men went through various stages, from cave dwellers to tribes, then to organized nations with kings at the head, on to a system of feudalism, and then to industrial capitalism, and now we are going through the transition period to a stage of socialism. We realize that every transition is painful, and therefore we take it as a matter of course and do not blame anyone. We consider that industrial capitalism has solved the problem of production and has created conditions in our economy unconsciously that are increasing unemployment and debts and inflation to an extent that will crush the very system which is based on production and service for profit. The methods tried by those who believe that this system can still function are futile. If it does, it is only for a short duration and then it collapses again. We believe to make conditions normal and to solve the problem of distribution, the purchasing power of consumers must be about equal to the total price of consumable commodities in a given period of time, and this can only be done by a system of production for use and not for profit, which is called socialism. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation movement is based on the principles of socialism a policy that currency and credit, which is the lifeblood of present civilization, shall be socialized and taken out of private individuals or private corporations and used as a medium of

exchange only and not as a commodity. That all natural resources shall be socialized, developed and operated for the good of all. Health, education and transportation should be socialized for the benefit of all. We propose to guard and exercise our precious gem of democracy for which our forefathers paid so dearly. By peaceful and constitutional methods through the ballot, to elect men who will be committed to amend our constitution in such a manner that it will make possible for all to live in comfort, security and to enjoy the fruits of an age of plenty.

A. L. Plotkin

Harris Turner, who for many years was a contributor to *The Western Producer* in the S. E. corner of the editorial page wrote the following at the time: "There is danger in oversimplification. When one says, 'All men are liars,' or 'All Saskatchewan farmers go to California for the winter,' or 'All people who go to church are good people,' one indulges in oversimplification. It is obviously wrong, perhaps dangerous, to make sweeping statements, to utter broad generalities."

As this is a wrong and dangerous age, I propose to make some plunges into the realm of oversimplification in an endeavor to find an acceptable definition for the current political groups which seek to stir the economic pie with their clumsy fingers. A Conservative is a man with an income of over $5000. A Liberal is a man whose income ranges between $3500 and $5000. A Socialist is a man who has over $1500 and less than $3500. A Communist is one who avoids the contamination associated with a regular income.

A Conservative believes that all men are born equal, but that the stupid arrangement naturally does not last for more than five minutes after delivery. A Liberal believes that all men are born free and equal, but some are smarter than others and so should not be too seriously interfered with in preying on their duller fellows. A Socialist believes that all men are born free and equal and should be required to stick to it. A Communist believes that all men are born free and equal and should not be born at all unless they are.

A Conservative believes in government by the proper people who can be guaranteed to do the right thing according to the Conservative point of view. A Liberal believes in government by all the people provided they use their intelligence and reach about the same conclusions as the Conservatives. A Socialist believes in government by all the people even if some of the conclusions reached couldn't pass an intelligence test. A Communist believes in government by the proper people who can be guaranteed to do the right thing from the point of view of Communists.

A Conservative believes that because his grandfather started a brewery he should be privileged to drink champagne, own polo ponies and have a seat in the senate. A Liberal believes that even though his grandfather did not start a brewery he should build one so that his grandchildren could drink champagne, own polo ponies, sit in the senate and become Conservatives. A Socialist believes that the state should brew all the beer and that it should not be made the foundation for fortunes, senate seats and Conservatism. A Communist believes that vodka is better stuff than beer and that it should be consumed only by those who have read Karl Marx and have made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Lenin.

Conservatives believe that breeding tells. Liberals believe that money talks. Socialists believe that majority rules. Communists believe that the hand that holds the hammer holds the keys to power.

It should be said, to bring this discussion to a close, that there are good Conservatives, good Liberals, good Socialists and good Communists, men of the greatest integrity and imbued with the most sincere desire to bring about a state of affairs which will bestow the greatest amount of good upon the greatest number. There have been times in the past and a time may come again when a Conservative government was the best kind of government in view of prevailing conditions. The same can be said of Liberal and Socialist governments. It might even be possible, some day, to say the same thing concerning a Communist government. The human race, only a million or so years old, is still very young and its experiments in governing itself have not yet been outstandingly successful.

Editor,
The Melfort Moon

The man behind the research department of the Searle Grain Company who gave us lessons on the gold standard and how to use fertilizer to increase the bushels per acre and improve the quality of our grain so as to be able to compete with, and put other growers from other countries out of the world market. and so bring prosperity to Canadian agriculture, has turned now to criticize technocracy. It is immaterial whether the idea of technocracy is new or old. But the fact that inventions and machinery have come to help man and relieve him of hard back-breaking work cannot be denied, and under the present system of the gold standard, sound money, profit and interest which the Searle Grain Company upholds, man must go back a generation or two and leave these useful machines idle and at the same time keep on paying dividends and interest to the owners of them. He cites conditions and unemployment in 1888 and lays the blame of all to wars.

And he goes on to say that new inventions are already on the way which will create employment on a scale that we do not even dream of today. May he tell us what kind of employment that may be? I would presume that, since the steam shovel must be idle and there are too many unemployed even with the use of the pick and shovel, the new invention would likely be to put men to work with fork and spoon to dig ditches with. He goes on further and says, "Today over the Canadian prairies can be seen numbers of tractors lying idle, whilst men and horse which once were displaced by the tractor, are back at work again. Large flour mills are working part time only, whilst small grist mills, with a high labor power per barrel of flour, are working overtime." Should we be proud of such economic conditions, to let our machinery rust and work with the old back-breaking methods? All his stories and arguments are only to create confusion among us farmers. Let us do some clear thinking and plan that the efficient machinery and large, modern mills which are here to help us shall continue to work and satisfy the needs and comforts of humanity.

A. L. Plotkin
Feb. 9, 1933

Searl Grain Co. field man's comment:

A. L. Plotkin, Brooksby Winnipeg, March 14, 1933

I was very interested in your very good letter to *The Melfort Moon* of February 9. But I learn from your letter that I have not made my thought clear, and would like the liberty of writing to you to explain a little better. I find that the Australian and the Argentine wheat grower can much easier put his land into production of livestock than can the Canadian. He has a better climate—practically no winter—and succulent grasses grow better than they do in this country. In addition, his stock, either alive, frozen or chilled, is shipped at a cheaper rate to Great Britain than we can do from Western Canada. We have seventeen million acres in Western Canada that can only grow wheat, practically nothing else, but it does grow the best wheat in the world; that is why I have always felt we should concentrate on this and try to grow the highest quality and the most bushels to the acre, so our wheat-growing operations become profitable.

Great economic disturbances have always occurred after wars. Our system seems to run along quite smoothly in normal times, and has the effect of gradually increasing the scale of living of the masses of the people. Wars, however, cause all classes and all people to become very seriously harmed. Personally, I am quite optimistic over the future. I am sure that adjustments are slowly taking place to the advantage of the farmer, and that while prices of wheat and other things will never go back to the wartime levels, yet I believe wheat will rise again to the 1914 level, which was sixty-six cents a bushel at the average local country elevator, and I believe the price of things farmers buy will come down to the 1914 level. When these things occur I believe we shall be well away to prosperity again, and that there will be employment eventually for all.

Sincerely yours,
H. G. L. Strange, Searl Grain Co.

CHAPTER 17

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

The provincial election was to be held early in the summer of 1934 and we all worked hard to make our candidate known to our electorate, and above all, our new economic policy which would do away with unemployment, stabilize prices of farm products and all other commodities, and eventually do away with war itself.

The whole campaign went fine until nomination day. While I was in charge of the general election campaign, another man was appointed to look after the nomination papers, to present them to the Returning Officer on nomination day. Mr. Phelps and I, having full confidence that the man we left in charge of the nomination papers was capable and competent to look after the job, went about our business of organizing meetings and meeting people.

We were in Nipawin, about fifty miles north of Melfort on nomination day, when I got a long-distance call from our Fred Gray in Melfort that there was a technical error in our nomination papers and that the attorney had ruled that our papers would not be accepted, and so the name of our candidate would not appear on the ballot on election day. I got in touch with Mr. Phelps, and we were both confounded and didn't know what to do. After considerable deliberations we decided that, since Mr. Phelps had to address meetings every day, and could not spare the time, I should drive to Melfort and meet our chairman and the others on the committee and see what could be done.

I jumped into my car and drove as fast as I could, within the safety limits. Suddenly, in the Carrot River hills I found that my brakes did not function, but luckily, there was no traffic on the road, for the car was going downhill faster than it was safe to go. Fortunately, I got to the hill across the river going up at a controllable speed and drove on till I got to a garage where I left my

car and hired another one and drove on to Melfort. This was a very dangerous experience and I consider myself very fortunate that no accident—which might have been fatal—happened.

We got in touch with our attorney in Prince Albert and there was nothing we could do about it. This incident struck our whole organization like a thunderbolt and we were all furious. There were all kinds of rumors going around—that we sold out to our enemies and that someone must have received a good stake out of it, etc. However, our committee was satisfied that we were deliberately deprived of our democratic rights by the capitalists' representatives over a slight technical error which did not affect the nomination papers in principle. Later in the summer, at our convention, the whole story was aired and disappointment was expressed for our not having had a chance to go to bat with the opposition parties. But there was no sign of discouragement among the delegates; in fact, in many quarters the political fire blazed up more than ever, because the old parties did not play fair and were cowards, afraid to go to battle with us.

As a result of this election we did gain a beach head in the legislature of Saskatchewan by electing five of our candidates as farmer labor representatives.

The federal election was next on our political program in 1935 and we got reorganized again on a federal constituency basis, and at the nominating convention there were five names presented on the slate from which to select our candidate, four men and one woman. The lady happened to receive the majority of votes and she was elected to be our candidate. Somehow one of the men who lost out thought that a woman's place was in the home, cooking meals and minding babies, and not representing our constituency in the House of Commons at Ottawa. This man started a whispering campaign against our candidate, and especially, since she was a woman, there were all kinds of rumors against her character.

In addition to this problem, the campaign manager who was in charge of her election campaign did not comply with the proper financial accounting of receipts and expenditures; necessitating the calling of a special convention to make him give a proper account

of the moneys received, and he admitted using some of the funds received for personal matters. He was put under the control of the executive board and responsible to them, instead of to the convention at large. He was finally eliminated from our services, and to spite us he helped the opposition and confused the public with various stories that were untrue. We had another special meeting to see if we could patch up some of the damage, and I was appointed campaign manager again, but we could not do much to revive the confidence of the electorate in our woman candidate. We fought a losing battle in the federal election of 1936. We naturally were disappointed when the ballots were counted, but we did have a good percentage of the votes, so we were not discouraged.

However, our next political fight was going to be within two years in the provincial field again, and at our annual provincial convention we overhauled our organization and got it in shape for the next campaign. A few months later we called a provincial constituency convention at which we carefully worked out our plans for the next nominating convention which was to be called when our head office would send us word to do so.

We had the experience of two losing campaigns and we surely learned a lot the hard way. We elected our committee and executive board and I was again selected for the position of secretary and campaign manager. My first job was to circularize all our local committees and ask them if they knew of anyone in their neighborhood who could be a possible candidate in our next provincial election. I received one reply with the recommendation that Mr. O. W. Valleau of Aylsham had the ability and the respect of his neighbors. I immediately advised him to go to Regina at our expense and to attend an educational session there which was held for the purpose of grooming for office any prospective candidates in our movement. To make a long story short, this fine gentleman was elected in our election in 1938 with a large majority over his two opponents, the liberal and the conservative candidates. In this election our representatives were increased from five to eleven, and we then formed the opposition party in the provincial legislature at Regina. I certainly was jubilant over our success after so

many years of hard work and disappointments, and this experience convinced me that, if one had a *just* cause, a cause that was right and for the good of the vast majority of our people, to stay with it and fight for it until you get it.

In the next provincial election, which was held in 1944, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation party swept the province and took charge of the government in which Mr. Valleau was appointed Provincial Secretary and Minister of Social Services. After the election of Mr. Valleau to the legislature I continued in my capacity as secretary for a while, but then resigned because of pressure to give my full time to my own private matters and my family and economic problems.

CHAPTER 18

MY FAMILY BREAKS UP

Now let's go back to 1932. The depression was at its worst; I could make no payments on my debts, got behind in my taxes and interest on my liabilities, and my father who was getting quite old, and who was still clinging to his old-fashioned methods of farming was even worse off than I, for the mortgage company threatened to foreclose if he didn't make an attempt at least to work his land right. One day the mortgage company's fieldman came over to see me and asked me if I would take over my father's mortgage. I told him that I could not, for I had too much land of my own; the only thing that I could do was to help him work the land in a proper method, so that, when economic conditions improved he would have a crop of grain instead of weeds, and only on the condition that he sign an agreement concerning the three parties, to the effect, that I should have the full authority to work his land without his interference and in return I would guarantee his livelihood and endeavor to make payments on his liabilities from the surplus income of his land. The company drew

up the agreement but father refused to sign it; so they foreclosed and sold the farm to a neighbor for more than twice the amount that father owed on it.

He had the privilege of living in his old house for five years. I knew that he would get squeezed out of his house by the new owner, and built a small house on my land for him and told him that whenever he was ready I would come and move him over to me, but he refused to come. After a year had passed, he came over one day and asked me if I had really built the house for him. "Of course," I told him: "Well, then come and move me over," he said. So I did.

Because of pressure from many organizations, the government created a Farmer's Creditor Arrangement Board to whom a farmer might make an application to have his inflated debt reduced and order such payments to be made which the farmer could comply with. I also made an application to that Board to have my debts reduced. It took months to go through the procedure and I finally received the verdict from the Board that I was solvent and that no reductions on my debts were allowed. Well, I was disappointed and discouraged: *What should I do now, quit farming and lose the many years of hard work I put into it? Why, here on this farm I invested the best part of my life and energy, and now I was to lose it all? And where would I go with a family, with unemployment everywhere?* Those were hard days, bad enough to drive a man crazy, to pay such an inflated debt with the lowest prices of commodities in history; how could it be done!

However, I decided that to have perseverance and patience was the only solution. It was dark now, true, but the law of nature is that after night comes day.

And so I must struggle along and carry on, the situation had to change in another few years, and perhaps eventually I would be able to climb out of it all. And so I set to work harder than ever to succeed.

The foregoing event and thoughts took place in the winter of 1934. Time passed on and spring was coming; the days were getting longer and the sun was shining warmer, and so, by instinct, one starts again to plan for the spring, as always.

The weather was getting warmer and the snow gradually started to melt, and so this was an ideal time for cleaning grain for seed. David and I rigged up the fanning mill in the yard with the little engine for motive power; I fetched a load of grain and got everything set and working properly and then left David in charge to keep the hopper full and to see that the grain was being cleaned properly, while I went to repair the mangers and stalls in the barn which had been damaged by the horses and cows during the long winter.

After working for some time, I thought to go out and see how the grain cleaning was going. I found the engine and mill working but no grain in the hopper. I waited, looked around and called for David; no answer. Finally I went into the house and to my amazement I saw David sitting at the table reading his favorite magazine. I naturally asked him what kind of an idea this was; he could have taken the book outside and read it while he watched the machine and that besides, there was a time for everything, and one could not read and work at the same time. Before he got to say a word, his mother exploded and started shouting, "He is not your slave; he can do as he likes!" Needless to say, we had quite a noisy few minutes, and then David went back to his job and responsibility. I tried to get an explanation from him, for he was no longer a baby, in another few months he would be eighteen, but he would not say a word. I realized that I had another problem on my hands that must be solved. I tried to explain to David and his mother that, since he had passed grade ten in school, he had to go to high school in town the next winter, and until then he should take his place on the farm and I would either pay him wages which I would otherwise pay a hired man, or I would do my duty as a father and see that he got the education to which he was entitled. His mother spoke for him and said, "He is not going to work on the farm; work on a farm is only wasted, the mortgage company will take it anyway." "All right," I said, "if this is the case, David is not going to loaf any longer as he did since January, after he graduated from school." As a result of this controversy, David went to work for his uncle, his mother's brother, also a farmer, and I hired a man as usual and carried on as best

I could. For two years, our family life was just dragging along. Isaac and Sylvia were going to school, and Dora was going about her daily chores and every Saturday went to see her folks with the children. I worked hard, looked after the crops and livestock, and made my meals very often, and managed to take the time and help with the political work in our constituency and quite often attended meetings and conventions.

For some years then, I had not been feeling well. I had a sort of dull headache and pains across my back at the belt. I saw several doctors, they prescribed medicine for me, but I got no relief. We did have a municipal doctor at that time, but somehow no one had much faith in him because he was young and had just started practicing his profession. However, one day I made up my mind to go and ask his advice about my sickness. He looked at me and asked me about my work and family life and did not examine me at all. After he knew all about me, he told me what to eat and suggested that in his opinion my ill health was mainly caused by my unhappy married life, and the sooner I would get my family life settled, the sooner I would get well. I thought he was right, but how could I do it? Time went on. I harvested the crops and did the fall work on the land, but my headache and the pain across my back were getting worse. So, after frost set in, I decided to go to Melfort and see what a chiropractor could do for me. When I got there, the doctor told me that if I wanted relief from my pains I would have to stay in Melfort for at least ten days, which I did. After that stay in town and receiving those treatments I felt a lot better, but I sincerely believe that the rest and being away from the daily aggravation in the house did me more good than those treatments.

While I was in town and had some leisure hours, I thought over my problems and I remembered that about ten years ago Dora came back to me and we were supposed to have turned a new leaf in our married life, and that in another few months it was going to be our twentieth wedding anniversary, and perhaps on that occasion we should turn another new leaf in our married life. I decided to write a letter and make another try; perhaps she would come to her senses and realize what it was all about.

Melfort, Sask, Feb. 14, 1935

Dear Dora,

On the fourteenth of next March it will be twenty years since we entered into the bonds of matrimony, a bond which has legally tied you and me into one family and has cut the strings, if any, that were still attached to our parents. Morally and legally we were bound to be loyal to each other, to help each other, tolerate each other's vices and to strive to fulfill the principles and the duties of married life, namely: the building and making of a happy and contented home for ourselves and our offspring to come.

We have lived together more or less for twenty years, but instead of contentment and happiness, dissatisfaction and bitterness have prevailed in our life together. Now, Dora, twenty years is a long time in a person's life, and to spend it in misery, as we did, is in my opinion silly. Therefore, I think the time is due that we should account the stewardship of our married life to ourselves and see if we can come to an understanding and adopt a policy of "live and let live" on the fourteenth of next March.

For my part, I wish to make it clear to you that I cannot endure any longer a life as we are living for the following reasons: my health is failing, the financial difficulties are unbearable, and the attitude of our children is deplorable. The question arises, why should we not get along as we should? From the outset we were fairly well matched for teamwork. We are both fair looking, fairly built physically and you and I possess a fair amount of elementary education. Neither of us is a runabout or displays bad physical habits that would annoy the other. But there is one thing the matter with us: we are of different characters and each has a different outlook on life and his responsibility in this world. The only way we can analyze our characters is to review our actions of the past twenty years.

I was dissatisfied with city life in New York and came to Canada in the year 1910 at the age of twenty. In 1911 I filed an application on my homestead, on which we are living. My idea of life was that I should get the security of a livelihood there and build a comfortable home which should make me feel contented.

However, homesteading and batching was rather lonesome and I was longing for a friend, a mate to help make the home com-

fortable and happier, one that would share in my responsibilities, work, joys and sorrows.

When I got acquainted with you in the fall of 1914, during our discussions you agreed to my ideas of life and religion and we mutually agreed to get married on March 14, 1915, with the understanding that we should be loyal, helpful, and respect each other and live together contented and happy the rest of our lives.

Accepting the responsibility of married life, I worked harder than ever to earn more and more in order to get the necessities and some comforts for my wife and children. In 1916 I took the responsibility of paying for another quarter of land. In 1918 I added to my responsibilities by getting a threshing outfit, and in 1920 I further added to my responsibilities the payment of another quarter of land. All this worry and work I took upon myself with a view to increase the comforts and pleasures of life for my family and myself.

Considering the difficulties between us and the house we were living in, which did not give us much comfort, I decided in 1928 to build a modern and most comfortable house with all the conveniences that a housewife could wish for to make your work easier and make all of us feel contented and happy in our new home.

Briefly, my ideas and actions at all times were to do my best at whatever I was doing, and I adopted the principles of "business before pleasure," and "not to leave for to-morrow what could be done to-day." I was always thinking and planning how to do things better and I felt that I was responsible as an individual in our community to help make conditions better, not only for myself and my dependents, but for society and mankind as a whole. I may add that I provided for my family to the best of my ability, in accordance to my income, at all times, and also, when you or any of our children got sick I provided medical care and paid the bills. Further, to my recollection I have never said or done anything to hurt your feelings unless you hurt mine first. The foregoing shows briefly my character and ideas. Now I shall endeavor to review your actions since I have known you, which have led to the ill feelings between us.

When we were intimately acquainted and discussed the probability of getting married, you will recollect that I impressed on you the responsibilities of married life, that you would have to do

the housework and sometimes the outside work, too, when necessary and that in a general way you should do everything in your power, as I was prepared to do, and make a happy married life. I taught you to shoot and use the gun in the event you would have to scare some animal away while I might not be home, and you solemnly agreed to everything that I outlined to you.

After we got married, your family lived with us for a while until their house was completed on your father's homestead. When they moved, you made too frequent visits to their place, to which I objected, for you could not look after our home when you spent half of your time visiting. You got vexed at me because of my objections and you left home and went to live with your parents, and this was the first summer of our marriage. In the fall, at harvest time, one evening when I lectured you of your responsibilities to our home and your duty to help me, particularly at harvest time when I must have your assistance, you got angry and flared up in a rage and became unconscious. I called our neighbor and he went for your parents while I tried to revive you but to no avail. For four hours you seemed to be unconscious, but when your mother came in and started talking to you, you became normal again. You did your work in the house more or less with the conceived idea that you were doing everything for me, that you were my servant without pay, and so on. You intimated on many occasions that you could have married a doctor or a lawyer. Now you know that I did not bring you from the city. You came yourself, voluntarily to me, and agreed to get married under the conditions and circumstances as you found them. Naturally, with such a state of mind, you did not do anything with the spirit and thought of the premarriage days to try to please me as you did then. And, of course, it has affected me that you broke your promise.

Under such circumstances and thoughts we have lived these twenty years. At the slightest provocation you would get upset and act so strangely that it was almost unbelievable. Here are a few samples: you would spill the barrel of water after I had pulled it up from the river with a team of horses, which meant for me to get another one. You claimed you never got anything for your work; I handed you a ten-dollar bill once which you grabbed and tore to pieces.

In January of 1929, I prepared a report to our local United

Farmers meeting from a U.F.C. convention at which I was a delegate. I placed it in my notebook and laid it on the table and then went to the barn and hitched the horses to the cutter and drove up to the house, tied the horses to the fence post and walked into the house for my notebook in which I had my report, but did not find it on the table where I had left it. When I asked you where it was, you told me that you were not the watch-dog of my things, and then I asked Sylvia, who was only two and a half years old, and she led me to the bed and pointed under the mattress where I found my notebook with my report. Then I walked out to drive to the meeting. I had hardly untied the horses, when I heard Sylvia crying because you had given her a beating for telling me the truth, where the book was.

I also remember what happened on Saturday, December 6, 1930, when my father came in to discuss a letter with me which he had written to his brother and you got into a quarrel with him and threw the lamp at him. The kerosene spilled and caught fire. I luckily could put it out and so saved our house.

The next day you aroused your brothers and they came and "were going to make a man or a corpse out of me." By the way, all your four brothers and your father have threatened to fight me at one time or another because you got them worked up with your untrue stories.

In November of 1934, your father and mother appealed to me for a reconciliation. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg spent several evenings with us and they tried to reason with you and me and appealed to us, for the sake of the children to make another try and make a go of our married life, and I finally gave in, because I considered you mentally a sick person and not responsible for your actions, on your promise that you would try and do your utmost to keep the peace and get along with me.

Only a few days after this incident, and in spite of your promise, you again started with your silly nonsense. On December 27, over a trifling matter you started a fuss, got angry and attempted to walk to your parents in a temperature of about thirty degrees below zero. Of course I stopped you after a struggle. On Saturday January 5, 1935, when Sylvia was singing and shouting, to which Isaac objected, you suggested to Sylvia that her head should be knocked off for her spiteful shouting against Isaac's objections. You ought to know, if you don't, that on many occa-

sions during the last twenty years you got me angry enough that I could have broken your limbs, but I controlled myself, considering your mental state, and realizing that no good purpose would result therefrom.

Now summing up all your actions for the last twenty years, one must come to the conclusion that your character differs greatly from mine. You have always been and still are, tied to your mother's apron strings. You have never conscientiously accepted the responsibility of making our married life a happy one, as you promised before we were married.

It would seem that you got married only to satisfy your sexual impulses, without giving a thought to the responsibility of making our married life a success that we and our relatives should be proud of. You have been brought up in an environment of having your own absolute way, of doing things as you pleased when you pleased, and nothing at all if you pleased. Your parents even allowed you to get married when you pleased, knowing that you did not have the slightest idea of the great responsibility of married life. After we got married, you insisted on having your own way, as you were used to, disregarding my feelings about it. You were and still are under the impression that I have to bow to your wishes, even if they are silly from my viewpoint. You never gave it a thought that you are chiefly responsible to make our home comfortable, bright and clean and to create and maintain a happy atmosphere at all times, to make our home a place of hospitality for our friends and neighbors, a home for our hired man as well, and a real home for all of us. Did you practice these high, noble ideals of life? No, on the contrary, you drilled into yourself and the children that the most comfortable home in the district which I have built for us is a prison, that you and the children are my free slaves, that I am a boss, a dictator, a Hitler, a crook and so on.

On nearly all occasions when I made an attempt to instill into our children a sense of responsibility for their work and actions, that they should have some discipline and respect to their elders, you always stopped me and undid what I tried to do. You have succeeded to drill into David's head that our home is a prison and that he is my free slave, and of course he acted with that impulse and refused absolutely to do his duty of helping with the work. After all, when children are helping their parents, it is

merely complying with the law of nature, just like the birds take out their young when they get old enough, to teach them how to fly and hunt for their own daily bread.

Of course, when David refused his duty to his father, I told him that there was no place for him on this farm unless he did his bit, but the result was that he complied with your instructions to do nothing. In all the years you very seldom lived up to your responsibilities. You claimed to be as much boss as I am and have as much right of ownership, but you never wanted to take the responsibility of taking care of the things we possess and meeting our financial obligations for the privilege of being boss and owner. Your simple statement was always, "I don't care."

The question arises now, Can you change your actions and character so that we can live in peace and harmony for the rest of our days? I doubt it very much. If I should try to change my actions and character to meet with yours, it would be an impossibility. I would have to knock my brains out to do it. Then what is there to do? I will make a proposition and if you can comply with it, well and good. We shall make another try. After all, the reason that our characters differ so much is not the fault of you or me. The nature of our characters is the result of the environment in which we were brought up, or it may be traced to the heredity of our ancestors generations back.

Let us forget our miserable past and turn a new leaf over in our life, as your father said once. Let us have a party and invite our parents and all our friends on the fourteenth of next March, and let that day be the beginning of a new, happy life between us. Let us carry out our daily responsibilities of our family life with loyalty, co-operation and friendliness to each other as the basis of our goal. Detach all strings from your parents and become responsible to the principles and duties of marriage to make our married life a success. If you cannot agree to the foregoing suggestion, the only thing for us to do is to separate legally. You appoint an arbitrator and I will appoint one, and these two will choose an umpire, and let them settle our separation conditions; I hope that we shall settle our problem without any fuss or quarrels and that each of us spend the rest of his days in peace.

Yours as before,
Abe L. Plotkin

Pointing out the virtues and faults of both of us and the incidents that took place during our married life, I pleaded with her that she should reconsider the whole situation with a cool head and sincerely decide the issue once and for all time one way or another.

I typed this letter in four copies and dated it February 14, 1935, just a month before our anniversary. I gave one copy to Isaac to hand over to his mother, and asked for a reply. The crucial day of our anniversary passed by as every other day and I received no reply. I asked Isaac who was nearly seventeen years of age why his mother did not consider my letter and had ignored it completely. His reply was that he did not know and that he was not taking sides in our issue. Finally she did reply as follows:

DEAR SIR:

I read your letter and all I found in it was a lot of conceit on your part and a lot of lies on my part. Your answer to your own letter proves it too. I am writing this because you have asked for an answer, and this is how I feel about it. When I asked you that question, it was only to prove you if you lived up to faithfulness of your marriage vows, or whether you were what I thought you were. I got the answer I expected. In your own reply you want all the rights and no rights for me. Therefore you prove yourself again against your own preachings (equal rights to all). You will notice I didn't use your name on the heading because I know you are not my friend. D.D.C. Happiness can only come through peace and peace through forgiveness. As you please.

And so life dragged on for another year. After New Year of 1936, Isaac passed grade ten and was in the very same position as David had been in two years ago. I now tried to induce Isaac to work with me on the farm in the coming summer, but with no success. In the spring, I hired a man who was married and provided him with living quarters, so that I would not have any trouble providing meals for him. In the month of April, after Easter, I asked Isaac again what his plans for the summer were, and insisted that he either work on the farm, or else he must

secure himself a job elsewhere; he surely could not loaf around doing nothing.

The climax came one Sunday after breakfast, when I insisted that he make his decision now. Again Dora interjected and said, "Isaac is not going to work on the farm; if he goes, I go, too." My reply was that it was immaterial to me if she went or stayed home, for she was not of any help to me anyway and only caused trouble all around. A quarrel ensued, with the result that she took Sylvia and walked off to her folks again. Isaac stayed on till late in the afternoon, when he said to me, with a feeling of sorrow, that he thought he better go too. I told him that I would rather have him stay home, but he was his own boss. I was not a dictator, as his mother called me. He walked away to his grandparents, too.

Later in the summer, she charged me under the "Deserted Wives and Children's Maintenance Act" for support. At the hearing she had witnesses to corroborate her untrue statements: her father, brother, and her two sons, David and Isaac. I had no witnesses for my defense. All I had for my defense was my letter to Dora and her reply. The Judge asked her if those were the letters that I referred to, to which she replied "Yes." And the hearing was postponed for reconciliation another week.

At the next hearing, the judge asked again if we had patched up our problems; the answer was no. The judge's verdict was that I should pay Dora ten dollars a month forthwith. I was more than satisfied with the judgment; Sylvia would have cost me a lot more than the ten dollars to keep her home. Mainly, my letter had outbalanced the untrue evidence presented by her and her witnesses. I felt at that time, that I struggled for justice and did get some consideration.

Three years later she appealed for an increase of the amount and was awarded $17.50, and three years later she appealed and the amount was increased to $25.00

CHAPTER 19

A VACATION TRIP THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

In the fall of 1943, I quit farming and stopped paying the allowance to Dora. I felt that since Sylvia was of age now, they both could look after themselves as well as I could. I made an offer to her lawyer for a final lump-sum settlement, but they turned it down.

In December of that year, I went on a vacation trip to New York to see my mother, brothers and sisters. This was a trip that I had been planning and hoping for many years. I was visiting and traveling all winter. I stayed with Sister Fannie for a while and saw Mother every day, for she only lived a block away from Fannie. I stayed for a while with Sara in Washington, D.C. and then went across the continent, west to Los Angeles. On the way I stopped at St. Louis to see an old neighbor who used to live on a farm in Saskatchewan, and then I stopped at Tulsa and visited an aunt for a short time whom I had not seen for many years, and cousins whom I had never met before. I stopped for a day at El Paso, for three days at Tucson, and for a day at Phoenix, and went on to Los Angeles.

I arrived in Los Angeles in March of 1944 and stayed for over a month with an old neighbor who used to farm in our district in Saskatchewan years ago and now is established here in Los Angeles and owns some property here. I found the same kind of wild oats as we have in Saskatchewan. On the vacant lots and everywhere in the parks and outside the city in the fields everything was green and in full bloom. The orchards of oranges, lemons, grapes, walnuts, avocados, etc., looked to me very beautiful. The many fruit trees were loaded heavily, and in many places the heavily loaded branches were propped up to hold the load. What a contrast to the climate and vegetation where I spent most of my

life, and at this time of the year! It was almost unbelievable, but seeing is believing. Of course I read about this great difference in climate and vegetation in geography books, but somehow it is different when one is actually experiencing it.

I bought a weekly streetcar fare card, and traveled in different directions of the city every day I stayed here. One day, while traveling by bus outside the city, I noticed a man working with a mule in a small field. I got curious, got off at the next stop and went to investigate what he was doing. I found that he was cultivating rows of carrots that were just popping up through the soil, and in the next patch a man was pulling half-grown carrots which were tied into small bundles for the market. The man told me that they were growing three crops of vegetables in a year. All these sights and experiences fascinated me to the extent that, after comparing all the places that I had visited and lived in, I made up my mind that this was the place where I was going to spend the rest of my life if I was spared.

I started to look for a building lot in different districts and at different prices, but it was a big problem for me to buy, for the war was still on and I could only take $25.00 out of Canada—that was the limit. How could the impossible be done? I consulted my host, Frank Gordon, about my plans, and he also thought about it. One evening, when his in-laws were visiting and we were having dinner togther, we discussed my problem and Mr. Trustman made a proposition to sell me a building lot, 60 x 140 feet, in the neighborhood at a reasonable price. I investigated and found the lot satisfactory, in comparison with other lots that I had investigated, and I closed the deal with him, taking into consideration the problem of sending money over from Canada.

The month of May came around, when I had to take the train back to Canada. On the way I stopped at San Francisco for a few days, made a couple of trips across the Golden Gate Bridge which had always fascinated me greatly, and visited the Golden Gate Park and saw the seals sleeping on the rocks in the ocean a little distance from the shore. All these sights were very interesting to me. After a few days' traveling in many directions in these so-called bay cities, I did not find anything that surpassed the district

of Los Angeles, and then took the train for home. I passed Sacramento, Portland, Spokane, and crossed the boundary to British Columbia at Kings-Gate; then I went across the Rocky Mountain passes, which was interesting and at times frightening to me to see the railroad track built on a shelf of a mountain; when you look out on one side of the coach, you see the mountain reach nearly straight up into the sky, and when you look out of the other side of the coach, you see a very deep canyon which is a most terrifying sight when seen for the first time. I marveled at the engineering work and at the many obstacles which the builders had to overcome to make the road possible, to build those bridges in seemingly unpassable places and to dig those tunnels through some of the deepest mountains. I always liked to look out the windows when traveling and watch the beautiful scenery, with the mountains sometimes far away and at other times very close by. Finally, we got out on the open prairie and then traveled straight east. This trip was a great experience and I shall always remember it vividly.

CHAPTER 20

BACK TO THE FARM AS A VISITOR

In April of 1944, when I arrived in Regina, the snow was gone and the ice was melting in the streams. Somehow I caught cold here and was laid up in the hospital for a few days and after my recovery I went back to the farm. Here I was welcomed back home by my successor and his family. His name is Kost Kopachewsky, and I had hired him in the spring of 1936 when Dora deserted me. He took over the farm as a going concern and still lives on the place today. He is well off both financially and socially; he has his son-in-law living and working with him now and he is one of the happiest and the most prosperous farmers in

the district. He has thanked his lucky star that led him to my place to start working at fifteen dollars a month on many occasions. While I was staying on the farm here and giving a hand occasionally with the farm work when necessary, I had enough spare time on my hands to keep up on current events. One day I read a letter in the open forum of *The Western Producer* in which the writer appealed for an action program among the farmers of the western provinces with a view toward better conditions for the farmers. But the letter was written by commodity producers in a rather selfish way with which I did not agree, and so I wrote a letter in reply which here follows:

The Editor
Western Producer

In your issue of October 5, 1944 there is an appeal by Mr. Nichols to all farmers, whereby the farmers and the workers will secure "ample leisure and comfort and security with real individual liberty." Great credit is due to Mr. Nichols and to the organization he represents for making a renewed attempt in assisting the farmers to get security after the war is over. But I very much doubt the feasibility of their program. The old United Farmers of Alberta had tried to do the very same thing before, and now the Alberta Farmers Union is trying it in a different form. The United Farmers of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario and the eastern provinces, the fruit growers of British Columbia, the workers in the fish industries, in the forests, in the mines, in the factories and offices, on the railroad and all along the line, all are trying to make their livelihood secure through united effort, since people have realized that individually they are powerless.

While it is true that some economic relief was secured by the efforts of the different organizations, yet the main goal, the permanent security of their livelihood, was not realized. The reason was, and still is, that they are all trying to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. All the various organizations, to better the lot of the individual member, have tried to increase the income for their services, which automatically reacted against the consumer, and somehow the fact that we are all consumers, no matter what our occupation is, was overlooked; so here you have

it. Instead of our whole economic web working co-operatively together, with a feeling of comradeship and sympathy toward one another, we have the very opposite. Every individual and every organization is working in competition and against every other. We do not get anywhere. Meanwhile wars, depressions, and wars again occur, which we all hate, condemn and detest. Nevertheless, we are slowly beginning to think now how to find a remedy to eliminate this useless slaughter and the destruction and waste of human life and energy.

Let us be specific and take one craft, to illustrate what I am driving at. The workers of the steel industry feel that the cost of living has gone up and demand a raise in wages to meet it. They feel that the profits made by the industry are high enough, that they can raise the wages without raising the price of steel. But this does not happen. The industrialists and businessmen are not in business for the glory of the workingman, nor for the glory of God, but to make a profit, and the bigger the profit the better they like it. Consequently, when the wage raise is granted, the price of the commodity goes up, and there is nobody to stop them from doing it, not even the government with its present setup. What happens in the steel industry takes place in every other industry in the nation, for this cycle is contagious. And we have the vicious spiral of inflation ever so often. After the inflated balloon bursts, we have deflation and a depression in the nation's economy.

Monetary reform is another subject that is beclouding the real issue. Our government has full control over our financial policy and the issuing of money. Our greenbacks are Bank of Canada notes and are put into circulation through the private banks by way of a loan or the sale of securities, to facilitate the exchange of goods and services and are accounted for to the treasury department. But here is where part of our trouble lies. Our estimated national net income for the fiscal year of 1944, according to the Canada Yearbook, is about nine billion dollars. (In 1933 it was three billion.) This included all kinds of goods produced for consumption as well as capital goods, from a hairpin to a battleship, and represents the actual purchasing power of all the people of Canada. Our statistics show this national income to be about $800.00 for every man, woman and child for our population of about twelve million people. But this income is

not equally divided. The vast majority of our people are receiving about $200.00 per capita.

Let us assume that in general we spend on the average about $400.00 per capita for all the necessities of life. This would mean that our population spends about half of our national income for consumable goods and services. The balance of four and a half billion dollars, representing savings and capital goods, is available for investment. It follows that the income of the vast majority of the people has been spent for the necessities of life during the fiscal year, while the few whose income is in the high brackets have the other half of the four and a half billion dollars to their credit. Knowing these clear simple facts, we can see that the sum that represented savings or capital goods for the fiscal year is in the hands of the few, and over a term of years it accumulates interest and grows, and the few thereby become the owners of nearly all the wealth, tools and means of production in our country.

It may be stated here without fear of contradiction that this accumulated wealth or the capital assets are the only basis of issuing credit to carry on and further develop our industries and our natural resources. We must always bear in mind that whatever credit or loans are issued, the borrower must pay back with interest and give collateral as security, and so the capital is always safe and keeps growing, whether it rains or shines, war or peace. The foregoing shows clearly how capital goods accumulate in the hands of a few, and naturally these all-powerful individuals through interlocking directorates in control of big business, and from whom the government itself must borrow continuously and who so have control of our government, see to it that all laws and regulations are so incorporated as to protect capital, instead of society, and so this is called the capitalist system.

The paramount factor we must consider in our present state of society is science and machine technology. With the invention of steam, the gas engine, electricity, radio, automobiles and airplanes, distances are now covered in a fraction of the time it took in our grandfathers'. The foundry that takes a part of the earth (ore) and turns it into great sheets of steel, castings and other useful metals and materials is marvelous. The practical use of the tractor, harvesting combine and the modern farm

machinery on the land has cut down the drudgery of manual labor to a minimum and has increased production to unbelievable proportions. The spinning in the cotton mills and the cloth-making machinery in the factories have displaced manpower and increased production a hundredfold.

And so through our whole industry the machine is displacing men and increasing output. Right now, while we are at war, our most fit and capable men and women are in the armed forces, and with the old and the youth that are left behind we are not only keeping up production, but we are actually increasing it. We have come to the stage in our historic life when the machine is doing most of our manual labor and men are only supervising it. The subject of full employment is not our goal now. It is not possible and not desirable. What humanity wants now is a full life, security and freedom. We must go forward, not backward, like the reactionaries who want us to go back to the good old days of full employment, where instead of plowing with a tractor that pulls many plows, they would give everybody a job digging up the ground with a fork, or instead of flying from Halifax to Vancouver, they would want us to use our legs. Considering our immediate past, it does seem that we are in a sort of confused state of mentality, all pulling against one another and not getting anywhere. We are stalled. Is it not time that we all started to do a little clear thinking? We are actually not stalled, but we are at the crossroads of our economic life, and because of this confusion we do not know which road to take.

There are only two roads that we can start our future journey on: socialism or fascism. Irrespective of how many political parties we have asking for our votes at the next election, they all point to either one or to the other. There is no middle way. The principles of fascism are known to many of us. They are: capital must rule, the elite brain of the few who were able to accumulate most of the wealth and capital of this earth in the past are the only ones who have the ability to govern and run the country's affairs, and of course, either with dictatorial powers as they have now, or with direct dictatorship. The principles of Socialism are: society (the people) must rule, with absolutely democratic control of all the people by the people and for the people, with social ownership and democratic control of our natural resources, our financial institutions, and the big industries. A planned

economy of our social and national life, with a view toward making full use of our technological inventions, so as to give us all a full life, not necessarily full employment.

With the ownership and control of our natural resources, with industry and finance vested in the people, the people's government can issue credit when and where necessary and eliminate borrowing money from anyone, and make it really possible for all the people (not only for the fortunate few) to enjoy "ample leisure and comfort and security with real individual liberty."

A. L. Plotkin
Brooksby, Sask.

On August 1, 1944, I received a summons to appear before the judge again to answer why I was not paying his orders to Dora. I decided not to appear in person, but I sent him a letter by registered mail and explained to him my reason. In due course I received the verdict of the court, which read that I had to pay her the sum of one hundred and seventy-five dollars. I was given thirty days' time to comply with the order.

I told my father of the situation, and that I was going to Winnipeg to live, and advised him that he better come along with me, and he reluctantly did.

In Winnipeg I rented for him a furnished room with light housekeeping privileges, but after a few months the lady of the house sent word to me that she could not keep him any longer, that his place was in a home for the aged where he could get the proper attention. I made arrangements to have him placed in an old folks' home and paid four hundred dollars to have him admitted there. He also was getting his old-age pension cheque monthly, which was turned over to the home. He lived there less than a year and passed away on Tuesday, May 29, 1945.

About six weeks later, I received word from my brother-in-law Abe Diament that my mother had passed away in her home in New York City on Friday, July 13, 1945. They both had lived to a ripe old age and had raised a family of three sons and four daughters, all of whom were living and doing well at that

time, with the exception of our second sister Ida who had died in childbirth.

Their lives were mostly spent, to my knowledge, in an environment of worry, uncertainty, insecurity, and quarrels over economic conditions or the management of the family affairs. Father was of a slow disposition, stubborn and old-fashioned in his thoughts and actions, though he partially realized that he was living at the beginning of the industrial and mechanized age which he could hardly comprehend. He did not quite agree with many of the definitions or explanations of the Bible and attempted to write his own definition, but no one would consider his work and he finally gave up in frustration. His handwriting was very beautiful, and I always admired it.

While mother was industrious and a hard worker who never went to bed before all her planned work for the day was done, she was very orthodox in her religion and far more firm than father was in her belief. She did her utmost to implant and impose her ideas and belief, her customs, traditions and the rituals under which she was brought up into her family, but when we grew up, it nearly all faded away from us. She managed her affairs and her life thoughtfully, with a vision for the future in her own way, and was practically independent of anyone in her own home to the last day.

CHAPTER 21

SOJOURN IN WINNIPEG

In Winnipeg I established my home in a nice, well-furnished apartment and had the best vacation I ever had in my life. I had all conveniences, comforts and pleasures that a modern city can provide and a good library within walking distance which I made good use of and for which I had had no time on the farm. I read

extensively on many topics: history, geography, religion, politics, science, etc., which gave me a broader and deeper outlook on the world we live in, and I kept abreast with local problems as well. I kept up my subscription to my favorite papers, *The Western Producer* and *The Saskatchewan Commonwealth,* both of which I helped to get established. The house which I lived in was not too far from the Parliament building which was surrounded by a beautiful park with lots of trees and lovely flower gardens and well-kept lawns, and many benches to sit on on nice, warm days. I used to take my portable radio with me to the park, lie down on the lawn and listen to the music. Music attracts listeners like flowers attract bees, and usually there were men and women who had time on their hands like I did, and who would stop and listen and quite often we got into a conversation and got acquainted. I chummed with one man, an ex-soldier, for nearly three years; he had been slightly wounded in the war and was living on his pension. I also had a few romances with some ladies.

Having time to spare while living in Winnipeg, I helped Scottie Bryce in his campaign in the Selkirk constituency in which he was re-elected to represent them in Parliament at Ottawa.

My first big job when I got settled in Winnipeg was to engage an attorney to get in touch with Dora's attorney in Melfort with a view toward settling her claim with a lump sum and perhaps to obtain a divorce. The correspondence continued for four years with offers and counteroffers but no settlement. Under the Canadian laws, a divorce is granted on grounds of adultery only, and since such grounds didn't exist, I was out of luck. My only alternative was to emigrate to the U.S., where I could settle my problem, and I tried several times to go south, but the immigration authorities at the boundary would always question me if I was married and then I was told to go back home and settle with my wife. It appeared that Dora's lawyer brother advised the Immigration Department of the U. S. that I was not complying with the court order and should not be allowed to go across the boundary line.

From a superficial point or view, I really had a wonderful time in Winnipeg, a life of leisure; but mentally I was depressed when

I thought about my circumstances and tried to forget all about my problems with my new acquaintances. In the summertime I used to spend my time mostly in the parks when the weather permitted, or reading in my room, and I started to jot down my memories, letters and documents to have them ready on file for the day when I hoped I would be able to write my story down. In the winter months the Educational Department had adult education classes in some of the university rooms, with professors lecturing on different subjects. I registered and attended the lectures very often.

At one of these lectures I got acquainted with a lady who became interested in me, and we kept company for over two years. She had a steady job, was self-supporting and single; she was very industrious and had savings too, not like most women, who spend their earnings faster than they make them. But our religions differed greatly; she was Catholic and my religion is humanity. She divided her leisure on Sundays between me and the church; one Sunday she would go to church and the next one she would spend with me. She was a very nice and understanding companion. She liked very much the idea of going to Los Angeles with me some day, where I told her I had a building lot. However, after some consideration I decided that she was too religious for a permanent relationship and we parted company in a very friendly manner.

On May 16, 1948, the daily newspapers carried headlines, PROCLAMATION OF JEWISH STATEHOOD ISSUED IN JERUSALEM APRIL 22, 1948. This news item brought joy to many Jewish people. Ever since the Romans overran Judea and occupied that country and dispersed the Jewish people all over the world—for two thousand years—the Jewish people have had no home, have been chased from one country to another; their rights and means for a livelihood were limited and they have been the scapegoats for many tyrants who happened to come to power in the last two thousand years. They have been persecuted, crucified, tortured and annihilated wholesale by Hitler, for no other reason than just because they were the descendants of Judea. This mode of thinking and the actions toward our people were and still are an outrage and an injustice, and mainly because of ignorance and

the still-lingering inheritance of the beastly characters in too many so-called intelligent people from their animal ancestors.

I remember my parents and grandparents had always worried, prayed and hoped, that some day Moses would come on a white horse and deliver them from wandering and take them to their homeland. And so their dreams, vision and beliefs came to be reality, not through miracles, but in a practical way, through men and women of knowledge, faith, devotion, and sacrifice if need be, to establish a home for the Jewish people scattered all over the world. I felt that our generation was fortunate to live in an era when such transformation was taking place, and the rebirth of the old homeland to our people occurred. This was a great achievement in our present age, when all peoples in the world were striving to become independent and self-governing nations.

However, my sincere belief and hope are that the United Nations is the nucleus and the beginning of a new era, when the evolution is going on toward a world government, just like the United States has evolved from a beginning of thirteen states along the Atlantic coast to the fifty states this mighty nation now encompasses. And so some day, and I hope soon, will all the nations in the world establish a world government to supervise over all the nations, to eliminate friction between nations and to establish peace and harmony among all the people of the world, and to eliminate the barriers of boundaries for travel and trade that exist to-day. Of course, this will not come to pass in my lifetime, and it will depend on the intelligence and foresight (not hindsight) of the leading statesmen in many nations, "for where there is a will there is a way."

Some time later, I happened to read a letter in *The Western Producer* from a man who lived near the district where I had farmed in Saskatchewan, who made the following statement, "In 1948-49 the Jews drove out the Arabs from part of the Arabian homeland." To which my reply was as follows:

> The said statement is not true. Great Britain in 1916 conquered Palestine in the war against Turkey, which was called the First World War and which involved thirty-one nations, and

in 1922 the League of Nations gave the mandate over Palestine to Great Britain. This mandate expired in 1949. During the time Britain ruled Palestine, the Balfour Declaration was issued, namely: ". . . the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine . . ." When the British mandate ended, the Jewish people proclaimed Palestine a Jewish State and called it Israel.

The United Nations of the world recognized the new state of Israel as one of the nations of the world, but the Arab states surrounding it refused to do so. The Arab states went to war against the newly born state of Israel at that time and were defeated. Right here, in the history of that conflict, is the misconception of the fact held by many. At the time the Arabs were fighting Israel, the Arab forces called all the Arabian people *out* of Palestine, because they intended to annihilate all the Jews, like Hitler had tried to do by driving them into the Mediterranean Sea. They wanted to save their Arab brothers, which was quite natural. The result was that many thousands of Arabs left their country, of their own free will. And because the Arabs were defeated, it was up to them, who possess over a million square miles of territory, with a population of only about twelve million, to take care of those people, instead of keeping them in camps and let them be a charge of the United Nations.

Another important fact is that many Arabs remained in Israel and apparently preferred to live with the Jews. They have an equal status as citizens, have their representatives in the Israel Parliament and are enjoying a far higher standard of living than their brothers in the Arab countries.

Among the officers in the defeated Arab army, was one named Gamal Abdel Nasser, who is the dictator of Egypt now, and naturally cannot forget his defeat at the hands of the Jewish soldiers. The fact remains that the Jews did not drive the Arabs out of the country; there was a war on, a war to the finish, and each must accept the consequences. The Jews are human beings, like all others, and they are entitled to a homeland like other people in this world, especially after they have been kicked about from pillar to post for the last two thousand years. Practically all the nations of the world have recognized Israel as one of them, but the Arabs will not—not with Nasser leading them. It is too bad that the Arab dictators are so blind or so intoxicated with their

way of life as to keep their people in ignorance and poverty and subjugated to their domination. They are afraid that their people will learn from their neighbor Israel how to be independent and may then demand democracy from their leaders and a higher standard of living and may become equal in stature to the dictators themselves. This they will not tolerate.

Sooner or later they will learn, whether they like it or not, to adopt the human principle of "Live and let live."

A. L. Plotkin

One day I read in the *Winnipeg Daily* newspaper that a lecture was going to be held on the subject of "One Religion and One World," which I was curious to hear. I went to the meeting and found the hall full with an attentive audience. The speech, however, consisted mostly of historical background and was not appealing because the presentation was very dull.

After the meeting there was a question and answer period, and literature was distributed and sold. I got a supply of the free literature and also bought a few books. The saleslady invited me to come to their monthly meetings, and I did. This was the Bahai Revelation movement. Their main contention, as I understand it from their speeches and the books I have read on this subject, is that religion, like everything else, goes out of date (or lives out its usefulness in time) and it must be renewed from a different angle or philosophy every two thousand years or so, in order to make it function and be effective for the purpose it was created, namely: a better understanding between man and man and the establishment of peace on this planet of ours.

To prove their case, the Bahais go back four thousand years or more, when Moses gave the people the first constitution, *The Ten Commandments,* with one invisible God, whereby the people should live in peace and harmony and quit fighting over whose god was stronger and more powerful. This idea for the good of the human race brought results, and for about two thousand years, the people did get along fairly well.

But about two thousand years later, things again were not too good, and the people started to grumble, criticize and revolt against the way of life they were leading. At that time, from

among the people, arose a leading man, Jesus of Nazareth, who preached a better way of life, for we read in the Bible that he chased the money lenders out of the temple. This man was renamed or added to his name Christ, and the result was the birth of the Christian era. This new idea and philosophy of life took root and has become the religion of millions of people, and today we have over one third of the population of the world believing in the principles of Christianity.

But again after nearly two thousand years, there are forces who are grumbling and criticizing the old religion, and are splitting it up into different sections under different names. They are revolting against it or, becoming indifferent, just don't care. Money and power are becoming the religion of to-day, instead of love. And so, the Bahais reason, the Christian era is slowly disintegrating and another religion must be developed to take its place, and to them the Bahai philosophy is the answer.

However, when I found out that this new movement was only trying to create another religion to supersede those in existence—and in my opinion there are already too many religious groups who are always trying to convert members from other groups into their own fold, which automatically brings about more friction between groups and individuals and does more harm than good—I quit going to their meetings.

Another experience I had about the same time was when my next-door neighbor, with whom I had become acquainted, gave me a monthly publication to read, called, *Rosicrucian Digest.* This is another religious theory. Let me quote two paragraphs of this publication to illustrate their ideology:

> "The earliest Christian cosmology was inherited from the Jews. It is a direct presentation of the Jewish idea of the constitution and creation of the world. We are told that in the beginning there was God—that he spread out the heavens like a tent to emcompass all things beneath. Jesus expressed faith in these same Hebraic ideas of creation. To him, God was the Lord of creation. He was a central figure or power from which all things came. Paul of Tarsus, the great apostle of Christianity, proclaimed that there is one God of whom all things are a part, a single cause

in the universe, a personalized God. The idea of the created word of God passed from Memphis, Egypt, to the Hebrews, and thence to the ancient Greeks and finally got itself established in Christian theology. The Gnostics were a group in the early period of Christianity, who sought God exclusively through knowledge. It was their contention that men could be brought closer to God through knowing and understanding His works and Manifestations, not merely by a blind or prejudiced faith. These Gnostics became the first Christian Theologists. . . ."

"Why did such a thing as this war have to be? What am I to believe? How could the God we have always been led to believe was kind, just and good, how could he deliberately will such a thing? The first step towards this understanding is to trace back to that concept of deity which so-called primitive man is said to have formed. To him every phenomenon which he could not explain was caused by a superbeing representing that force. This being then became to him a god. So it was a god that rolled the thunder in the heavens, a god who thrust the lightning into the earth. It was one god who controlled the river flowing beside the village, another who governed the distant lake. The difference in this primitive concept of deity was that these early tribes conceived of these gods simply as superhuman. Each god, while all-powerful in his own domain, at the same time possessed very human characteristics attributed to him by the worshipers, such as the capacity for indulgence in enjoyment or in anger. But it was because of this belief that the native tribesmen concluded that whatever they enjoyed the gods would also enjoy. So they decked their ceremonial places with flowers and burned aromatic herbs to send up sweet-smelling smoke. And because they believed in the anger of their gods, primitive tribesmen brought also their sacrifices to propitiate these gods so that they would not bring harm to mankind if they so willed. To-day we have turned away from this belief in many gods to the concept of the *One God.*"

These booklets were interesting reading, and after I read a number of copies which my neighbor loaned me, he gave me an application form for membership. However, it contained the stipulation that members commit themselves to secrecy, which did not appeal to me. Besides, I left Winnipeg for Los Angeles at that time, and so did not contact this gentleman.

CHAPTER 22

I MAKE MY HOME IN LOS ANGELES

During my sojourn in this western metropolis, Winnipeg, I lived a most enjoyable life, physically speaking, but mentally I was depressed. I was still tied to my matrimonial bonds and could not obtain the necessary visa to go to Los Angeles.

One day I got word from my attorney that he had received a communcation from Dora's lawyer that the settlement sum had been reduced to about 30 per cent of the original offer and that there may be prospects for a settlement. I sent a messenger with instructions to compromise for a settlement and was waiting patiently to receive word if the deal was consummated. When I received the answer from my messenger I was very disappointed, for Dora had increased the sum again, instead of coming to a compromise. This news got the better of me and I landed in the hospital with a heart attack.

There were only two occasions in my adult life that I shed tears over anything. The first time, I remember, was when I received a letter from mother telling me that my sister Ida had died after giving birth to a nice baby boy. I got a sort of indescribable feeling about my heart and felt the tears rolling down my cheeks. That baby boy was named Harvey, and he grew up to be a husky, able and intelligent young man. He was in the army when I visited his grandma in Tulsa on my way to Los Angeles. I regret that I did not have an occasion to meet and speak to the young lad.

The second time was when I lay in the General Hospital in Winnipeg suffering and recuperating from the heart attack. A young girl came in to visit her father who lay in the next bed, and she brought him a cold soft drink which her father enjoyed. I felt sort of dry, too, and wanted a drink, and asked this girl if she

would be kind enough to bring me one, too, and she did. After thanking her for her kindness, I asked her how her father was getting on, and she told me quite a long story, but what impressed me most was, that she worked not very far from the hospital, so she could come every day in her lunch hour to visit her dad. I noticed also that when she left she kissed him and wished him to get well soon. When my friend came to visit me later, I told him of what I had seen a few hours ago. I also told him that I, too, had a daughter who was about the same age; but that my miserable married life had estranged her from me, and that now, after a life of hard work providing for my family, I was all alone and sick in the hospital, and none of my children would come to see me. At that moment I burst into tears, which was unusual; then my friend calmed me down with a few jokes and gave me hope that the sun would shine again for me, too, some day, and departed.

After my recovery, I went back to my room and gradually regained my full strength. However, my mind was still at work thinking of a way out of my dilemma. I conceived the idea of drafting a brief statement of my problem to the U. S. Immigration Office, and pointed out that it takes two to make a settlement, and stated the facts that proved she was not interested in a settlement. I swore to the truth of this statement before a commissioner and they handed it over to the immigration authorities. Apparently they must have invesigated it as to its truthfulness, for when I went for my visa in the fall of 1948, it was granted without question.

Upon my arrival in Los Angeles (by the way, I made the trip in my car), I had a thorough appraisal made of my building lot as to what kind of a building I could erect on it, and started to draft plans for the structure.

However, I considered it my first duty to drive to Las Vegas establish my residence there, and get a divorce to free myself from my unfortunate marriage. This procedure took all winter. In April of 1949 I received my divorce certificate, about which I was very happy, and received congratulations from my attorney and the people where I stayed. While in Las Vegas, I visited most

of the gambling joints, but was never tempted to take part in the fun which so many people seemed to enjoy. The city in itself was interesting, particularly at night, with its many lights that were glittering all night long. My visit to Boulder Dam was a thrilling experience. To see the wonderful engineering accomplishment—the dam, built between two high mountains and over five hundred feet down, deep to the bottom of the Colorado River, with a dozen or more giant electric generators that send power hundreds of miles away to supply cities with electricity—is a marvelous sight that is never forgotten.

In June of 1949, I returned to Brooksby to the farm once more. During the summer there, I spent my time helping with the farm work, especially the harvest, and with visiting old friends in the neighborhood occasionally. After this, I drove again to Los Angeles.

On my arrival this time, I had my plans for the building structure ready and presented them to the City Buildings Department for a permit to build. I had quite a time to get the authorities to accept my plans, for I didn't know all the intricate details required in drawing the plans up, but eventually they accepted them with the stipulation that I obtain the services of a licensed engineer to draw up the plan for the foundation, since the lot had an incline of about fifteen feet.

After I had received my building permit, I hired two men, and together we constructed the foundation forms, put the reinforcing steel rods in place, and started to pour in the cement. Then we started on the framework.

The building is two stories high, with two apartments on the upper floor. The front of the house is level with the street, and one apartment and three garages are on the lower floor which is level with the alley. I worked at it all winter long with the help of one, or sometimes two men. I contracted to have the plaster work, the plumbing, the electrical wiring and the hot tar roofing work done. All the framework and finishing touches I did myself.

The structure was completed and ready for occupancy in May of 1950, and I went back to Brooksby again, for the U. S. Immigration authorities had allowed me to stay only for six months. I

did receive an extension for another month, and they had to have a good reason for granting it.

There is a strange regulation in the U. S. immigration laws. When I went for a visit I was allowed into the country for six months; but when I applied for a permanent visa (because I happened to have been born in Russia) I was told I would have to wait until my Russian quota number comes up and is approved, and it might take years before I would receive that number. And so it seemed that I was in a predicament again, and there was nothing I could do about it but to drive forth and back from Brooksby to Los Angeles every fall and spring hoping that time would rectify things, for I remembered an old saying, "Time will do what man can't."

After I had gotten everything in order: had rented the apartments and put a man in charge of the place, I drove again to Brooksby for the summer. The crops that summer were of a fair stand, and when harvesting time came around, I helped with the work. I learned to manipulate the self-propelled harvesting combine which I thought was a great improvement over the one I used to pull with the tractor a few years ago, when I had to sit sideways on the tractor and keep my eyes moving forward and backward so as to keep the tractor going straight and at the same time watch the combine behind and see that everything on the machine was working properly.

After the harvest, I drove back to Los Angeles, taking the same route, straight south to Regina, then to Regway at the boundary, and after having been examined and inspected by the custom officers, I hit the highway south again to Culbertson and Miles City in Montana, then to Sheridan, Casper and Rock Springs in Wyoming, then onto Provo in Utah and to highway No. 91, which took me right into Los Angeles.

When I got there, I found everything in order, and there was a lot of mail to which I had to attend. One of the letters was from my Sister Sara, with detailed family news, as usual, and at the end of the letter she wrote, that she was sorry to tell me that our brother Joe had taken his own life and was not with us any

more. This news gave me an awful shock. *Why?* He had been financially well off; had had his own home, all paid for, a nice wife and his family was all grown up and doing well. Then why should he not live and enjoy this beautiful world? This unfortunate tragedy has puzzled me immensely and still remains an unsolved puzzle to this day. I felt that life was good and must go on.

The often-heard statement, "A woman can make or break a family" is absolutely true. My own story proves it: Dora did not have any reason whatsoever to act as she did and to break up our family life. For I was neither lazy, nor a drunkard, nor a gambler, nor a woman chaser.

I can only attribute her strange behavior to her having been spoiled by her parents. She had been brought up as the 'belle" of the family. Her father could read but little; her mother could not read or write at all, because they had both been brought up as orphans in the old days, when education was a luxury. Dora's parents, realizing the importance of an education, saw to it that their children should be educated, and they sent Dora, their oldest child, after she had passed elementary school, to a business college to learn bookkeeping. At that time they lived in Montreal, and they had a hard time trying to make a living. Her father was working, and her mother was milking cows and delivering the milk to the customers to help pay the family expenses. Naturally, like all parents, they expected that once their daughter was grown up, she would marry some nice professional man, and Dora would become a lady. But somehow, circumstances made them leave the city and they came to Brooksby to get a free homestead and became farmers. Here, on the farm, their educated daughter did not have a chance to meet the doctor or lawyer they had dreamed about, but she met me and agreed to get married to a farmer instead.

On the farm, bookkeeping was no help at all, and what she would have needed was some encouragement from her parents to learn housekeeping, how to milk cows when necessary, etc. When I mentioned those things to her mother before we were married, she said, "Where there is a will, there is a way," which is true,

but after our marriage the will disappeared, but they remembered that their belle was educated and must not work. Their youngest son Joe did succeed to become a lawyer.

In contrast, I am going to write down the story of another family (with their permission), who were neighbors and friends of mine and who lived practically under the same conditions and in a similar environment, where mother also worked and kept the family together and was also an inspiration to her friends and the community, the Rosenbergs.

CHAPTER 23

THE ROSENBERGS

Chaye came to the Edenbridge District—a healthy, nice, able and attractive young single girl—with her married sister and husband and three brothers in 1906. The men all took up homesteads close to the Carrot River and they worked hard to get their farms improved.

Two years later, Rafael Rosenberg came to the district with other friends, and he also took up a homestead near Chaye's brothers. Rafael was a nice, handsome young man, ambitious and a hard worker. He built himself a house and was always busy clearing his land to get it under cultivation. Naturally, the people living in the same community get acquainted soon, and here was a young girl among his neighbors, so Rafael and Chaye got to know each other better and better as time went on. Two years later, in 1910, they got married.

During the time these families got settled on their homesteads, the provincial government built a steel bridge across the Carrot River. This steel bridge was hailed by all the settlers as a great improvement and a convenience for all who had to cross the river. The water in the spring or even after a heavy rainfall was very deep and so swift that it was impossible to cross except by

boat. You will remember that I once tried to cross the river with a team of horses and wagon when the water was fairly low, and I nearly drowned with my brother-in-law. The construction of the bridge which took about two years to build helped the settlers who lived close by also financially in two ways: the men got employment on the structure, and the women accommodated the bridge gang with food and necessary supplies from their farms. At about the same time a post office district was organized which was named Edenbridge.

After the bridge was completed, there was considerable traffic on this road, for new settlers were coming in and settling further north as far as Nipawin (which is a good-sized town to-day). Those settlers from the north had to cross this bridge to take their grain to the nearest elevator, which was in Star City, fourteen miles south of this bridge, and so here, at the bridge, was a natural stopping place to feed their teams and to eat themselves on the way to and from town. The Rosenbergs recognized this situation as an ideal opportunity for a business, and they opened up a small store on their premises, with supplies of groceries and other items that were in demand by the visiting public. Chaye took charge of the business, while Rafael worked on the land and got more acres cleared up and under cultivation every year. In later years they acquired two more farms, and when the new railway connection was installed near by, and the siding was established and called Brooksby, they built a new store there on a corner lot with ample space for expansion. And so they lived and worked happily together and raised a family of four boys and two girls. Their children all went to school across the road from my farm and later they went to the Brooksby school where they lived, and I saw them grow up and give pleasure to their parents. After they finished the elementary grades, they went to high school, and all are well educated and are doing well.

The oldest boy, Harry, became secretary-treasurer of our municipality at the age of 21 in the year of 1931, and was considered the youngest secretary of a municipality in Canada. He was very popular among all the people, young and old. In the fall of 1940, in the course of his daily work, he unfortunately caught a cold

which turned into pneumonia, and he passed away suddenly. This was a great shock to the community and a tragedy to his parents, especially his mother. I used to see her quite often in the store, when I'd come to shop, and for years she would talk about him, with the usual question, "Why should such a young man, in the prime of his life, just married, have to leave us?" But no one could answer that question. Harry was a very attractive, handsome and musically talented young man. While doing his work as secretary of the municipality, he still found time to learn to play the saxophone. Every summer, when the tax roll had to be prepared and tax notices had to be mailed to all taxpayers, he generally had an assistant to help him with his work. This summer was no exception, and he had engaged a girl as his assistant. He began to like her, and she liked him, too, and so they got married, and it was only several months later that Harry got sick and passed away. A few months after his death, his wife gave birth to a little girl.

His brother Norman was teaching school at the time at some distance away. He resigned his position and accepted his brother's job and is still secretary-treasurer of the municipality at Brooksby at the present time. He is married and has a family.

At that time, World War II was on; the younger two boys, Morry and Abe, joined the Royal Canadian Air Force along with their older sister Lillian, and they served the national cause faithfully till the end of the war. Lillian was teaching school before she enlisted, and when she returned from the service she married a nice young man. They now have a family and are living in Winnipeg in a beautiful home. I visited with them the last time I was in Winnipeg. The youngest girl, Rachie, became a secretary and was engaged in this work until she fell in love with a nice young fellow. They got married and have a family and live with her father, who is getting on in years, in a nice home in Winnipeg. Morry is quite a sophisticated young man. I remember his write-ups in the local paper of the sport events in Brooksby, which were always very humorous and witty.

I remember how one day, while he and I lived in Winnipeg, I invited him to come along for a fishing trip to Lake Du Bonnet. When we got there, we hired a boat on a twenty-four-hour basis,

got our fishing lines in order and rowed out into the lake and fished till it started to rain. We did not get a nibble on our hooks. We got into our car to get out of the rain, and made ourselves comfortable. It got dark and the rain didn't stop, so we slept in the car that night. I converted my Pontiac into a kind of bed.

The next morning, it cleared up, and we rowed out again to try our luck, but with no success, so we got discouraged and drove back home to the city without fish. In a way we could or should not have expected any different results because this was my first fishing experience with a line and hook, and I tried out my new reel for the first time since I had bought it. It might have been the first fishing experience for Morry, too, I do not know—for he was so discouraged that he would not talk and did not tell me. There was no doubt that there were fish in the lake, for there were other boats on the lake and we saw the men pulling fish in from a distance. Well, this was the only fishing trip I made in many years. The only fishing experience I ever had before this was when I put a net across the river on my homestead and I struck it lucky at one particular time, when the fish were going upstream to spawn. The next morning when I pulled up the net, I found about three dozen two- and three-pounders in it. Oh, boy, did I have a time to get them out of the net! We preserved a good many of them in jars, which came in handy at mealtime, and I gave a lot of them away to my neighbors.

Morry lives in Winnipeg now and is in the real estate business, is doing well and happily married. The youngest son Abe, who was quite a husky and popular athlete in his school days in Brooksby, lives in Toronto, is happily married and in the construction business. Their mother, Chaye, kept the house and store spotlessly clean and cared for a nice flower garden which they had alongside their house. She was up early in the morning and worked like a beaver all the time to keep her family and her husband, who did not feel too well in his later years, in comfort and in a happy mood. The house was always open in hospitality and sympathy to all who walked in.

It was with great sorrow that I heard five years ago that Chaye Rosenberg passed away. A friend of everybody who knew her,

she was the hostess at my wedding party and did her best to entertain us, and I shall always remember her untiring efforts on many later occasions to try and cement my marriage with Dora, but without success. I still have her letters on file. She was the corresponding secretary for the family, who answered my letters when I wrote to the Rosenbergs from Winnipeg and also later, when I wrote from Los Angeles.

CHAPTER 24

A LONG TRIP WITH A NEW BRIDE

Since I had established my own home in Los Angeles now and was single again, and with human nature what it is, and since living alone is lonesome and uninteresting, it seemed proper that I should have a lady friend to keep me company.

It happened at a dinner party which was given at the end of summer on the grounds of the Workmans Circle summer camp in the Carbon Canyon district. I met a lady who I thought, after some investigations, would make a possible companion, and we started going out together. After keeping company for about five months, we decided to get married, and drove to Las Vegas, where the justice of the peace declared us husband and wife.

When we came back to Los Angeles, Millie and I went to the U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and made out the necessary documents, that my wife Millie was sponsoring my entry into the U. S. and so I would not have to wait for a Russian quota number and would be admitted as soon as the papers were verified. In June we went for our honeymoon to Brooksby, Saskatchewan, and stayed there on the farm all summer. Millie got a few lessons on how to drive a tractor and harrowing in the field, and I gave her many lessons on how to drive a car, for there was no traffic to speak of there, and this was a good opportunity for her to learn how to drive. One

day she was driving from Brooksby and was in full control of the car, but when she had to turn into the yard, somehow she did not turn the steering wheel fast enough and bumped slowly into the gatepost. She never took hold of the steering wheel since.

The crops were ripening and the harvesting had started and I helped a bit. Millie was observing the harvesting procedure of Western Canada, which was something new to her, and we were kept interested in the harvesting work as long as the weather was nice and dry. But one day it started to rain and by the time it had dried up a bit, another heavy shower came down, and so we got discouraged and decided to go back to L.A.

Upon our arrival in Regina, we went to the U. S. Immigration Office, and I asked if my papers were ready for my permanent residence in the U.S. The man in charge searched and could not find them. However, after some pertinent remarks, he assured me that he was going to trace the papers in a hurry, and we left, hoping that in about a week they would be there. Meanwhile, we took a room in a hotel and waited. Eventually word came from Washington that my quota number had not come. An argument could not be avoided, for I understood that the law was that when a U. S. citizen petitions for her husband to be admitted there is no quota number, but the boundary officers, calling themselves "justices," they were the law and there was nothing I could do about it. I was kept there waiting with the car and Millie took the train and went to Los Angeles.

When Millie arrived home, she went after the authorities to find out about the delay, and received a reply to the effect that they were still investigating my record to see if I was not a communist, but that they hoped that I would get my papers soon. There is your justice and efficiency in the Immigration Department. It took them eight months to search my record. Finally about the middle of December, 1951 my papers were cleared and I drove back to Los Angeles through the snow. I was stuck on the road for three days because of a snowstorm. The roads were impassable, but finally I arrived home with no ill effects.

Upon my arrival I found a letter from my sister Sara, telling me that they had about two inches of snow in Washington, D. C.,

which had tied up traffic to the extent that it took her three hours to get home from work, instead of the usual forty minutes. She also wrote that I was the only brother she had left now, for Harris, too, took his own life about a month ago, and she did not know the reason why. This news shocked me to the heart. I met his son, who was about eighteen, the next year in Monticello, and I tried to find out from him what was the cause of his father's death, but he said that he did not know any more about it than I. The cause of the deaths of my two brothers, Joe and Harris, under those conditions, has been for some time a mystery and a puzzle to me, and still is. I do not know if it has any significance that they were both married to two sisters.

The winter passed with the usual daily work around the place. Millie was back at her former job. On weekends we would drive out to visit friends and at times they would come to see us and we would spend an evening discussing world affairs or playing a game of cards, preferably canasta. In the spring of 1952, we started planning for our trip to New York. I wanted to get acquainted with Millie's family, and she wanted to know my sisters as well. We got ready and started on our journey by car the first week in June. It was a long, but interesting drive. We saw many beautiful and interesting places on the way that we had never seen before. We had quite a time to find the entrance to the turnpike, or the freeway, as we call such a superhighway here in Los Angeles, so as to get to New York City faster, but we made it after considerable inquiries.

Needless to say, we had a royal welcome from our relatives when we got there. We attended a nice wedding party of Millie's nephew, and I met many of her relatives and friends there. It was held in a very nice place near Central Park, and I enjoyed it immensely. We stopped for about two weeks with Millie's sister Hanna, and for a few days with my sister Fannie. My sister Eva and all of Millie's sisters entertained us with dinners and we really had an enjoyable time.

Next we drove to Monticello to see Millie's sister Lena, and to visit the old farm where I used to live in my teens, and the little red schoolhouse I used to go to receive education and wisdom.

I remember one day, when the school inspector came to visit us to see how we were doing. Before he left, he told us a little poem which ended up with "Early to bed and early to rise makes little boys and little girls healthy, wealthy and wise." Another one he told us was, "One man can take a horse to water, but ten men cannot make him drink it."

After I had studied up on my road maps, we started one nice morning for the Catskill Mountains. The traffic was very heavy and we could not make much time. It took us a good half day to get there. When I spotted the sign reading "Mamakating Park," on the road and knew we were getting close to our destination, I turned off the road and drove to the old farmstead which I had not seen since I left it in 1910. Upon reaching it, I was very disappointed. The place was untidy, the old barn and the stable underneath it nestled against the bank were still there, but the house was a different one. The old house burned down, I was told; the old stone fences were still there as ever, and a few old apple trees were still bearing apples. We exchanged a few words with the present occupant and then drove on to see the schoolhouse and found the windows boarded up. The old woodshed over which I used to play with the other boys, was still there, all deserted. We drove up a few rods to Rumsey's place which was near the school and found old Fred sitting on the porch. I recognized him only because I expected to find him there. When I called his name, he looked at me with surprise, thinking, "Who is this?" I asked him if he could not remember me. He said, "No!" I told him who I was, then he remembered me well. We reminisced together about when we used to go on hayrides in the evenings, and about those dances we used to have in the winter time, and the tricks we used to play on our neighbors on Halloween nights, and all the fun we used to have together with the other boys. "How we have changed," he said, "I would have never recognized you." Of course not; when I left Glenwild, we were boys, and now we are old men. The outstanding changes that I noticed were: all the roads were paved now and many big hotels, some with swimming pools in the yard, were dotted all along the roads. The drive through the countryside was interesting and en-

joyable, with trees and vegetation everywhere; as contrasted with some of the California and Arizona deserts we drove through, it was a beautiful journey.

While driving on the New York highways, there was one matter that I could not understand, namely, why they had tollgates across the roads, which slowed up traffic, in contradiction to the principle of building those freeways—to be free of stops and to speed up traffic. Of course, the answer is that the roads must pay for themselves. Then how is it that there are no tollgates on the freeways in California? The roads there pay for themselves, too, through taxation. In my opinion, the reason is that the leading officials or politicians in New York State are too old-fashioned; they refuse to learn new, modern methods.

After we got our fill of the mountain-fresh air and refreshing sceneries, we drove back to New York, and after a few days' rest we got ready to go to Washington, D. C., to see my sister Sara. On that nice and early morning, I got up and went to start the car and to check it for gas and oil, and found the starter wouldn't work. This got me upset at bit: a new car and already trouble. Well, I'll have to get it fixed up: I called my nephew David, and he gave me a push with his car, and got my car working again, but the starter still wouldn't work, so I drove up to the nearest car repair shop to get it fixed. The mechanic said he could fix it, but he wouldn't give me a price, for he had to examine the starter first. It was a little after 8 A.M. The mechanic had other work to finish first and would start work on my starter soon after that. Meanwhile, I was sitting in the office waiting and noticed a sign over the door which led to the workshop, reading "No Admittance." I did not pay attention to the sign and walked into the shop to see if he had started to work on my car. He had, and he told me that I should go into the office and wait there till the car was ready. I refused. I wanted to see what he was doing and what was wrong with the starter. It took him nearly an hour to get the starter out of the car. He examined it and told me that there was a part worn that must be replaced. I disagreed with him and told him that all it needed was oiling of the Bendix that slides on the shaft to start the motor, and which was stuck because of

lack of oil. He gave me an argument in turn, that if I knew better than he did, then why did I come to him to have the starter fixed? I had no alternative but to wait till the boss had time to go and get the part in question. While waiting, I studied the oil chart which comes with the car, and found that there was supposed to be an oil hole on the starter housing, and I looked for it in my car but could not find it. Apparently the man on the assembly line had overlooked to drill an oil hole on that housing, which unfortunately happened to be on my car and now gave me trouble. After the boss had gone and spent a few hours trying to get the part, he came back with the report that the supply houses do not stock that piece. (Perhaps he never looked for it.) So the mechanic went to work again and fiddled around a bit, and got the starter together again, and it worked. He bolted the starter in place and the car worked again as usual. The bill was $39.65. It should not have been more than $5.00. Besides, I was waiting over six hours; this is how I was gypped in New York City. ...

It was 3 P.M., when I came to pick up Millie to drive to Washington. Fannie wanted to ride with us to the express office, which was on our way, she said, to send a parcel to her daughter. She guided me to the express office. We drove for some time; I finally told Fannie it was about time we reached the express office. Then she admitted that she was lost. After some inquiries we got there. I dropped her off, we said good-by, and drove on to Washington.

After wasting so much time all day, we arrived there about 9 P.M. We did have quite a time finding the place after dark, but we arrived there safe and sound. Sara and Abe were surprised that we found our way to their place in the dark. Our visit to the national capital was very interesting. We visited all important places of education, museums, the White House, and the House of Representatives. The most interesting experience was when we went up the elevator to the observation tower of the George Washington Monument, which is over five hundred feet high, and it is a most thrilling sight when one looks out on all sides over the city—just like being up in an airplane. Another unusual experience we had when we went to the beach on very hot days. I found

that the beach was fenced in about half a mile into the bay and about ten rods wide, with a nice, fine, smooth sandy bottom, and very gradually getting deeper the farther one goes. I walked about a quarter of a mile in, and the water was only up to my shoulders and was so nice and clear and very warm; in fact, it was warmer in the water at times than in the air when it was breezy or windy.

The avenues and streets of Washington are laid out in a magnificent geometrical pattern, not like most cities in a haphazard sort of way. Most of the avenues radiate from Capitol Hill, while the streets run in straight north-south and east-west directions, which makes it easy to locate any place in the city.

From Washington our destination was Niagara Falls, but we stopped on our way in New York again and picked up Millie's sister Ella who was going on her vacation to Provincetown, on Cape Cod. This was a unique, nice old place, with its very narrow streets, the town crier, whom one occasionally hears through the loudspeaker. While driving along the peninsula, one can see the Atlantic Ocean on one side of the road and Cape Cod Bay on the other, which is very interesting, but I don't think this would be a very pleasant spot to be on a wintery, cold, stormy day.

We left Ella to finish her vacation in Provincetown and drove right on to Niagara Falls. This is a great summer resort. The water falls and the topography of the land surrounding it are most interesting and fascinating. We stayed there a few days and saw all there was of interest to us and then we left and headed west for Winnipeg.

This was another long trip, and I was a little tired when we got into Winnipeg. We stopped at a hotel and got rested up, and then went to see some of my old friends whom I introduced to Millie. I also showed Millie around the city: the Parliament Buildings, the beautiful parks, some of the outstanding department stores, etc., and I took her to some of the places where I used to live.

Then we took to the road again, west to the farm at Brooksby. This time we did not stop long. After a good rest and after having seen the progress of the growing crops, we started south for Yellowstone Park. The weather was nice, the roads were good, and

we traveled right along, with no car trouble. All I had to do was to keep refilling the gas tank, change the oil and grease the car when required, and we were all right. But the winding roads on the terraces of the side of the mountains leading to the park were treacherous, especially when one meets one of those big trucks or buses. However, when you arrive at the destination safely and see all the beautiful places—with the hot springs and geysers here and there spouting hot water from the bowels of the earth—it is surely fascinating and surprising the first time you see it, and one forgets the strenuous trip coming into the park. At this time we got tired of traveling and started to long for home, and so we hit the road south for our comfortable home in Los Angeles.

CHAPTER 25

INJUSTICE IN CALIFORNIA

After we got home from the long journey and had rested up, we felt it was an experience we would remember all our lives. Eventually we went back into the harness again. Millie went back to her job and I looked after the apartments and got started to prepare the plans for the building of a second house, which was to be a two-story building with four apartments, and situated in front of the lot.

About the first of the year in 1953, I got my permit from the building department at city hall to go ahead with the construction work. I hired one man and we built the foundation forms while a trench-digging machine dug the trenches to place them in, and got the reinforcing steel rods in place, as required in accordance with the plans. The ready-mixed cement trucks came and filled the form up with cement, and in a few days we were ready to start building the frame structure, and the work progressed slowly but surely. I again contracted for the plumbing work, the electrical wiring, the plastering work and the roofing,

and did all the finishing and painting, as before, mostly myself, with some hired help. In August we moved into our apartment, while the house was still unfinished, and I kept on working to finish it up. It was in 1954 that I eventually finished all the apartments and received my occupancy certificate and then had a good long rest. From that time on, I was taking things easy, completing the finishing touches here and there where necessary, and keeping the apartments rented and in good condition all the time. We had a warming-up party at which we had a full house, and of course later many friends invited us to their parties, and so life was moving along nicely with no unpleasant excitement.

At this time, after I had my buildings completed, I got to thinking what could be done to have a sidewalk built on my side of the street. There were sidewalks on the next blocks east and west, but here apparently, it had to wait until I came and constructed my buildings. I went to city hall and inquired about the procedure, and was given a petition form and advised to get the signatures of the majority taxpayers living on my side of the street and I would have no problem getting the sidewalk built. It took a few months to get the preliminary clerical work done, and eventually the sidewalk was built. As soon as the neighbors living across the street saw our sidewalk, they wanted one, too, and asked me to help them get organized. I did so, and the next year there was a sidewalk across the street, too.

The next year, in 1955, an acquaintance called me up who had been my plumber at the last house I built, and asked me how I was doing and if I was not too busy, and if I would consider to take a job of building an additional room to the residence of one of his friends. I consented to go and see the proposition and found that his friend wanted the additional room to contain a bedroom, bathroom, clothes closet and linen closet. For nearly a month we were haggling over the price, and we finally compromised on a figure and drew up an agreement and signed it. Briefly, the agreement stipulated that the owners pay for the material when delivered and ordered by us, that after the roof would be on the owners were to pay us a hundred dollars each, and the balance of the amount agreed upon, less the sums paid out for material,

when the building would be completed. My acquaintance was a licensed plumber in his seventies and semi-retired on a pension, and I was a carpenter. (It was not required to have a license for carpentry work.) We did not have much to do, so we decided to do this job together, to do the work ourselves and earn a few extra dollars which we could always use. We secured a permit from the building department and went to work on the job.

After the foundation and framework were done and the roof was on, the owners paid us $150.00 each on account, which was more than the sum stipulated in our agreement, because they felt that the work was well done. After the siding was on and the plumbing in, our friend, the plumber, dropped out, because he could not do finishing work, and I was left to complete the job by myself. Somehow, a controversy arose over the electric wiring and the painting work, and I felt like quitting the job then and there and to forget my equity in it. But the owner kept on phoning for me to come and finish the job.

Considering their actions and behavior, I was in doubt whether they would pay for the work after it was done, and saw a lawyer for advice. The attorney, after reading the agreement and considering the payments already made, told me that the balance could be collected through court action. (This lawyer apparently did not know, or he had forgotten that Section 7031 of the Business and Professions Code states, "No person acting as a contractor may bring any action in any court for the collection of compensation for the performance of any act for which a license is required.")

To make sure that they intended to pay for my work, I went to talk with them one day in the presence of a witness, when they assured me that they would pay for the job when completed. Then I went to work and completed the job. On the last day I went with my friend to finish up odds and ends and pick up my tools. The owner came out and met us at the door and asked me if I had a contractor's license, to which I replied no. Then he said, "You are off the job," and shut the door on us. I was stunned at this incident. Before I could decide what action to take, I received a summons from the city attorney to appear on a charge of contracting without a license. At the hearing the attorney ruled that

the agreement in question was a valid contract. I still maintain that an agreement and a contract have different meanings: a contractor is a man who secures a job and hires other people to do the work for him; but here was an agreement to do work, and not a contract. I was not a contractor and did not intend to become one. This meant that I could not collect for my work despite the lawyer's advice that I could. To make the story short, I paid a small fine for committing a misdemeanor, as they called it.

But how is it that the law should be so worded that I could not collect for legitimate wages, for I worked at it myself and did not hire anybody, so how can they call me a contractor? This is *highway robbery* and okayed by the State of California. The owner has used the law as a *weapon to rob me of my wages,* with the same intentions as a highwayman using his gun to rob his victim of his money, which is a crime. This is an outrage. This sort of law is ridiculous, unethical, unfair and unconstitutional. Our constitution does not provide for our lawmakers to confiscate wages of one party and to give them to another, and this is what has actually happened in this case. Such a law is encouraging crime, instead of preventing it. It is against the principle on which laws are based, namely, *the prevention of crime.* For if I were thirty-five, instead of seventy years of age, I would have taken my hard-earned wages out of my employer's hide, and mind, he is himself a wage earner.

I have consulted other lawyers and the district attorney, and the reply always was, "I am sorry, there is nothing that can be done about it, until this law is amended." The district attorney admitted that there were many similar cases but that he was powerless to do anything about it. As a result, I went to work and typed out a petition, secured thirty-six signatures on it, and presented it to our district assemblyman, requesting him to take the necessary steps to have this unjust law amended, on the grounds stated above, at the next session of the Legislature which was held in 1957. Our assemblyman has presented to the Legislature a Bill A B 190 to amend the said act as requested, which would have eliminated the objectional part of the code. The legislative committee has set it aside for further study and investigation, because

of the objections from the secretary of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. I wrote a letter and asked the secretary what were the grounds on which he objected to that amendment. His reply was,

> "In response to your letter dated November 11, 1957, re Bill A B 190, please be advised that I opposed the measure before the Legislature on behalf of the California State Federation of Labor. Our position on the Bill is straightforward. As an organization, we have consistently supported the contractors' licensing law and worked for its improvement as a necessary protection for the consumer who engages a contractor. We do not believe that it would be consistent with the purpose of the law to encourage an individual, as proposed in bill 190, to engage himself as a contractor without regard for the standards of protection deemed essential for the consumer."

The Labor Secretary ignores (for his own protection) the main contentions raised for amending that portion of the law: *that it is unfair, unethical and unconstitutional,* that it encourages crime, instead of protecting the consumer. He wandered away from the main issue to other phraseologies and got away with it.

Who are the contractors that they should make laws to protect the consumer? Here we have a field which should be in the hands of the elected legislative bodies, in a democracy, and not in the hands of the contractors' monopoly, who are only interested in monopolizing their profession to enrich themselves at the expense of the consumer, and we are all consumers, the public. Here we have a sample of the fairness and justice of some of our labor union officers. The irony of this matter is that the labor secretary who is supposed to represent the working people on democratic principles of justice to all citizens is actually supporting a mob contractors' law which is only trying to protect the clique of contractors along the lines of Dave Beck, good or bad, and ignores the main principles of fairness and justice to all working men and all citizens of our country. I have written a letter to Governor Goodwin J. Knight and have pointed out the shortcomings of our legislature on September 11, 1958, and his reply was that I should ask our assemblyman to reintroduce Bill No. 190 again to the 1959 Legislature, which I did, but our assemblyman will intro-

duce the Bill only if he receives an opinion from the attorney general that the portion of Section 7031 of the code in question is unconstitutional.

I wrote to our newly elected democratic attorney general on December 10, 1958, and enclosed my copy of Assembly Bill 190, which I asked to have returned, and pointed out briefly why the amendment was requested, but did not receive a reply. On January 18, 1959, our attorney general, Mr. Mosk, addressed a dinner at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, at which I also was present. I approached him and asked why he did not reply to my letter. His answer was that he could not reply to individuals but would answer a letter from an assemblyman or an organization. I wrote him a letter the next day and reminded him that he did not return my copy of Bill 190, nor a reply to my letter. On April 29, 1959, our attorney general did send his opinion to Mr. Elliott, our Assemblyman, covering three pages of legal verbiage in which the main question was drowned, and stated that Section 7031 does not conflict with the state or federal constitutions and that this code has been in existence for the last twenty-eight years. Our attorney general did *not defend* Section 7031, that it is based on fairness and justice, that it does not confiscate wages of one man and give it to another; he did not admit or deny that Section 7031 encourages crime. The code emphasizes, "The purpose of this law is for the safety and protection of the public against *imposition* (meaning swindlers). This is fine, but the term *public* means the worker as well as the employer: then why enact a law that protects the employer and penalizes the worker? It is significant to note that the secretary of the labor unions, in his reply dated November 21, 1957, whose duty and responsibility is to protect and defend labor, was defending the employer through the contractors' association; is it not ridiculous?

Now lets go down to my own case. Because I was ignorant of the law and had committed a misdemeanor, I paid the fine imposed on me by the judge, and it was up to the court of justice to decide whether the fine should be $10.00 or $10,000. This money would have deprived me of my wages and would have gone to our State Treasury, but to word a law in such terms as to confiscate my

wages and give them to my employer, and thereby to encourage crime, is ridiculous.

It is a shame and a disgrace to our state that an attorney general, whom the people have elected—and I was one to help swell his majority—should ignore the letter of an individual, who helped elect him, and not even return the copy of Bill 190 which I asked for twice. Yes, some may excuse him because he and his staff are very busy, but I was in his office in the State Building to deliver my second letter in person, and I found his secretary sitting idle, for no one was in the room at that time anyway. Perhaps it is because, after a man gets elected to a high office, his head gets so swelled and his eyes become so blurred that he can't see individuals any more.

The excuse that the law had been in existence for twenty years or more, does not justify its further existence when found that it is not a just nor a fair law, if that is the case, then all our laws should never have been amended, but there are hundreds of laws being amended at every session in all the governing bodies in our nation.

Here again, we have the demonstration that once an individual gets in a rut, or even one of the people's elected representative, good or bad, he cannot easily get out of it. Our new attorney general, just elected, who is supposed to be liberal and progressive, when it came to making a forward step, he elected to follow the old clique with no change for equality and justice. He also ignored the fact that this law confiscates the wages of one man and gives it to another, which in turn encourages crime, instead of preventing it.

It is a shame and a disgrace for the lawmakers of the State of California to have such an unjust law on its statutes. This is a dirty spot on our law books which sooner or later will have to be amended to make our law books clean.

When I started to get established in Los Angeles, I naturally looked for some contacts and *friends*. There were three families here with established homes, who had been farmers and had lived in the same community where I had farmed in Saskatchewan, and a number of families of the second generation, who had left their

parents to do the farming and themselves came here for greener pastures. One of them I knew very well, for I used to stop at his parents' place when on the way to the forest north to get fence posts. He used to go to school then. His parents and his brothers were very friendly and hospitable folks with whom I had always associated. This man took an exceptional interest in the problems which I encountered in getting to know the city, its customs, laws etc. He had a lot of experience, for he had lived here for many years. He used to call me up on the phone and visit me quite often and he advised me in my decisions regarding insurance on my car and property, and the buying of supplies and materials for my buildings. However, to compensate my friend for his efforts, I did considerable repair jobs on his many apartment buildings, some of which had seen better days, free of charge. These friendly relations continued for about five years, when at last I found out that he was getting a commission on many of my business transactions. Naturally, I became suspicious and got cool toward his frequent calls, in which he had always tried to put fear in me for doing things without consulting him, because then he would lose track of my business transactions on which he was likely to get a rake-off. One day he asked me to do some repair work, as usual, which I refused to do gratis. He insisted that I should do it and that he would pay me when the job was done, and I did, and he then refused to pay, because he felt that I owed him for the advice that he had given me. To top it off, while I was on a business trip to Canada, he came to my house and told my wife an untrue story about me so as to cause friction in the family. This was a bad experience, and I wonder whom a man can trust.

In the summer of 1957, I made a vacation trip to Canada to see the farm. I boarded the train at Union Station on August 11, and changed trains at Oakland on the Shasta Dome Streamliner to Seattle. To ride on this train was exceptionally pleasant; the coaches are so insulated now that one can hardly hear the train moving and to watch the scenery through the glass-dome windows was very interesting. Seattle is a nice city and I took a sight-seeing trip on the bus. The driver drew the attention of the passengers to the nice building and property that Dave Beck acquired while

being president of the Teamsters Union; many passengers made sarcastic comments—one called him an unscrupulous character.

The next day I took the boat to Victoria, B. C. The approach there to the docks was so inviting, particularly the words, "Welcome to Victoria," written in beautiful flowers on a well-kept green lawn were very impressive and very much in contrast with the old-looking, unpainted docks we had left at Seattle. On the following day, I took the sight-seeing bus and enjoyed the fine scenery and beautiful residential district of the city. From there I went to Vancouver, where I visited many friends and acquaintances. One of them was a man who had worked on my threshing outfit on the farm in 1919, and I had not seen him over twenty years. Needless to say, we spent hours talking over the good old days, or rather, the bad old days, when we worked so hard at back-breaking jobs, in comparison with the present labor-saving devices and the gadgets we have to-day, which make work easy and satisfying. On Sunday, August 18, many of my friends gathered in the famous Stanley Park to bid me farewell. The ladies brought lunch, and we had a real picnic. I took pictures of everybody present, and of some beauty spots in the park. At the end of a perfect day, one of my friends took me to the train, and I left for Regina, Saskatchewan.

The next morning, when I looked out into the fields, we were in Saskatchewan. I noticed that the crops were about ready to be harvested and some fields were already swathed, and puddles of water were all over the fields for miles and miles. Just at a time when the farmers are hoping and praying for nice warm and dry weather, it is a situation that breaks one's heart. Some districts were not so bad. In Regina I visited the C.C.F. office and spoke to some of the officials. We discussed the last federal election, when John Diefenbaker became prime minister of Canada. The consensus was that another general election within a year was possible because of the small majority the newly elected Conservative party had. In 1931, in the worst depression in history, the Conservative party was elected, with R. B. Bennet at the head, who had proclaimed before his election that he would blast into the markets of the world. He was elected but failed in his attempt.

At the next election he was defeated with his party, and the so-called Liberal party was elected into power, and it is very likely that the same fate is waiting the present Conservative government, unless they get down to fundamentals and rectify the economic system they are perpetuating.

From Regina I went to the farm and stayed there about a month, helping the people there to build a granary, and then the harvesting started there, too. After a few nice days it started to rain and before it had dried up it rained again. This situation made me sick and I left for Winnipeg. Here I visited my old friends and noticed that we are all getting older and that a new generation is growing up to take our place. I found that the city had grown considerably since I was here last; there is a new bridge across the Assiniboine River, and there are many new building projects in the suburbs of the city. I also visited the Manitoba C.C.F. office and found Mr. Swailes at his desk. We had a lengthy and very friendly discussion about political and economic problems here and in Los Angeles. I wished him success in his endeavors and went to my hotel. The next morning I took the train for Los Angeles and did not stop anywhere, for I was anxious to get home and have a good, long rest, for I was tired and disappointed by the unfavorable weather at harvest time on the farm. At home I found everything in order and things were moving along as usual. I gradually recuperated from my long trip and got back into the every-day responsibilities. I did have some disagreements with our treasurer at our Socialist Party's office, but things were going along not too badly. However, on the morning of November 13, at about 3 A.M., I woke up with a terrible pain about my heart, which was almost unbearable, and Millie had an awful time to get a doctor at that early hour. Eventually, a doctor came and had me taken to the hospital in an ambulance, where my case was diagnosed as a heart attack. After fourteen days, I was removed into my own bedroom in our apartment, and have since gradually recuperated from this, my second, attack and am living to tell the tale.

CHAPTER 26

MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND ECONOMICS

The ever-controversial subject of *religion* has been puzzling me ever since I was in my teens. I was brought up in a very orthodox religious environment. I had to go through the daily prayers and rituals whch mother had imposed on me from infancy. She taught us that God was the creator of the world and everything on it, below it and above it, and that we must believe that he is the only God and there are no others. As I grew up, I observed that there are a number of religions: All believe in one God, but some people keep the day of rest, the Sabbath, which is the commandment of God, on Friday, some on Saturday, and some on Sunday, and the prayers and rituals are different, too. Things that were forbidden to do in one religion were allowed in others. This sort of contradiction got me thinking. I have studied the Old Testament, the Koran and the New Testament, and the King James version of the Bible, and have read many books on the subject from many points of view, including Robert Ingersol, Thomas Paine and others. After a lifetime of study and consideration I have come to the conclusion that religion is a form of belief, and the term "belief" can only apply to a subject that one does not know, for as soon as one learns to know the subject one stops believing, one *knows*. Religions have *evolved* since the human animal first started to think and realized that he was different from all other animals and began using his intelligence on how to survive his enemies who threatened to devour him, and how to secure food and shelter to survive when the caves they were living in became too crowded. That age in our history our scientists and historians call the Stone Age, when our ancestors learned to use stones as weapons and tools for their survival. Their language very likely was similar to that of the other animals at that time.

In other words, the evolution of the human race is like the evolution or development of a child in our present day with the assistance of the knowledge and intelligence of its parents, which is a very short time, in comparison, to the thousands and perhaps millions of years that it took the human race to get to the stage when some of their geniuses started to ask questions what this was all about. I like to compare the beginning of our human race to a new-born baby. An infant when born is alive and gradually grows and develops first in body, then in conscious awareness. His mind develops more slowly than his body, but gradually he starts to realize his surroundings and tries to satisfy his desires and wants, his hunger and thirst. The bright, inquisitive child explores the unknown things that he comes in contact with, falls over obstacles in his way, burns his hand on a hot stove, gets cold when he ventures out on a cold day. At every new experience he learns—and at times the learning is very painful—through the process of trial and error. As he grows older and gains a little knowledge through experience, he asks questions of new things that he sees or comes in contact with.

This reminds me of an instance that happened while I was traveling in the streetcar to the Assiniboine Park in Winnipeg one nice and sunny afternoon. Two ladies attracted my attention, each had a little girl with her, about the age of six. One of the little girls was cuddled up in her mother's lap and lay there very quiet and contented, while the other little girl was standing up on the seat and was looking out the window, and continuously kept questioning her grandma about everything she saw while passing as we traveled along. I could not help but remark to my friend who was with me, "There is the difference between a normal child and an extraordinarily bright one, one who may become a genius in some profession of her choice someday.

And so must prehistoric man have felt when he first became conscious of the things around him: the bright sun above him which gave him warmth and light, the water that quenched his thirst, and everything else around him. The extra bright individual among them must have started to ask questions. *Who created all this around them?* Why did some live and some die? and many

other like questions. But no one knew the answers, and so finally he put his own brain to work. The answers were, as we read in history, or in the writings of men who have tried to understand and analyze the prehistoric age, that the broiling sun so aloof from everything else must be a powerful spirit. The wide, blue sky, which sent down the beneficent rain, or spat fire and bellowed with thunder must be an equally powerful spirit. The moon, the wind, the earth and all the great elements must have mighty gods working for them. This was an age when human beings first started to think and to reason—of course in a very crude way—and everything that they could not understand was either a god who had done good for them, or a devil who had done harm.

I shall elaborate a little further on the visionary environment of our ancestors of those days. They began to find out that the stones were useful, that by rubbing a soft stone against a hard one, they could shape the soft stone into an axe, a chisel, a punch, or other tools, and that by striking one stone against another they could create a spark. These experiments were naturally carried on for excitement or for creating light at night, and of course, when there were any dried leaves or other dry, spongy materials lying about, it set them on fire, and this was the greatest invention they ever discovered and they naturally made good use of it. And so this discovery helped them to survive, and they multiplied and increased their numbers and then had to find more living and breeding space. So they started to wander in all directions from their place of birth, which had been the Mediterranean basin, where man could survive with vegetation and fruit of all kinds in abundance and animal flesh, if he so willed, and where no clothes were needed to cover his naked body, for the climate in that part of the world is ideal all year round.

This natural evolution follows: that people originally lived in family groups and later in larger groups, called tribes. Because they lived in large groups and their main motive in life was to survive, they were able to round up some wild animals, such as sheep, goats, and cows, and later horses, and kept them alive to be slaughtered for food when necessary. And so they started raising flocks of sheep, which was the easiest of all animals captured

and so at times it happened when pastures for their sheep and water supplies dried out they were forced to look for greener pastures. Each tribe would send out some of their most alert men in all directions to explore and find new land, and when they did they would come back and report to the elders of the tribe. There was their problem. In order to survive and be alive they had to get water and pastures for their flocks. The reports came in that there was a green pasture in a certain locality, but that it was occupied by another tribe, and the question was if the other tribe would allow them in, for they might fear that their pastures and water supplies would not suffice for two tribes. So they may have decided to send a delegation and ask them for permission. If it was granted, well and good; but if permission was declined, then what? Of course, there were serious debates as to what to do: to starve to death, or to go and fight for admission into those green pastures. These conditions and circumstances happened occasionally in different localities all around the Mediterranean basin, and of necessity wars were inevitable. It was a case of the survival of the fittest. Let's consider the mentality of those people, who believed that all the elements were invisible spirits, and that there were gods who controlled them and who had names for all of them and made idols to represent those gods. Then they started to speculate as to which of the gods was the strongest and most powerful, and they decided to take these idols along with their armies to help them in their struggle. Sometimes they succeeded in their battles and then they claimed that their idol which represented the spirit of their favorite god had helped them, and then they believed that this was their all-mighty god.

We can also visualize that in those days of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, and their dependence on food and shelter, the father of the family was king; he was the only one who possessed strength, wisdom and authority. And when the people of those days started to clan together and to form tribes in order that they may live and survive, for in union there is strength, they naturally found through bitter experience that they must have a council or a king to plan their defences or attacks in order to succeed in their battles. So the idea and the necessity of

kings or leaders became established in an organized society. Under this gradual evolution or development of events, it is apparent that the *leaders* who were loyal to their tribe and felt responsible for their welfare had to have men who were able, physically as well as mentally to assist them in organizing and fighting their battles. They had to have means of getting the people to congregate once in a while, or, when necessary, at a central point where they could speak to them of their problems and at the same time to select the necessary manpower required for their battles for existence.

The belief that there are spirits behind the elements who are controlled by a god who had to be flattered and appeased was the *dawn of worship*. Somehow the people of those days felt that not only must those gods be worshiped but they must also bring material things to thank the gods with, such as fruits, lambs, etc., parts of which were sacrificed on an altar, and the major portion of which went to feed the priests who were responsible for keeping the meeting premises in order, who performed or rendered services to the organization, and others who rendered public services. Later on, temples were built to accommodate these gatherings, at which the people received instructions from their leaders, priests and kings as to their duties, behavior and responsibilities and beliefs. Thus religion and government were evolved about the same time and they continued to function side by side for thousands of years.

Another important fact must be emphasized. While the wars among the many tribes to gain possession of greener pastures continued, there were also wars caused because the different tribes claimed that their gods were stronger, more powerful and superior to the others, and they tried to demonstrate it on many occasions on the battleground.

In many of those battles, the victorious armies occupied the conquered territory and took the other tribe's people as prisoners of war and made slaves out of them. Thus we have the birth of a slave system among people which has lingered on until recent years.

The wars between the different tribes and kingdoms were car-

ried on for hundreds of years because of the search for new land, and mostly because of the competition between the superiority of the different gods or their idols. Even in those early days of civilization there were people who did not like wars and who felt that the many idols whom the people worshiped and fought over did not make sense. It culminated with Moses bringing down the Ten Commandments from the Mount Sinai, with the declaration that there is only One God: "Thou shall have no other gods before me." This happened 5719 years ago (according to the Hebrew calendar). The Ten Commandments represented a constitution the people should obey so that they would quit fighting over their many idol gods and live under a code of morals and in peace. This new constitution spread like a wildfire to all parts of the world at that time.

To fortify my arguments for evolution, I wish to make a few observations. Let us trace back the custom of wearing clothes, to keep our nakedness covered and our bodies warm. It has been recorded in Genesis 3:7, that until Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge, they did not know that they were naked. And "they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." This symbolizes the stage of development of mankind, when he became conscious of his environment and began to understand to differentiate between good and bad and that his body should be covered. And gradually from the crude leaf covering of the loins in the days of Adam and Eve, clothing has evolved or developed into the long garbs of the ancient people of the Near and Far East, to the very many different styles of clothing we have to-day.

Another observation I made about the habit of smoking. In the early age of prehistoric man, when the human being was merely a two-legged animal, sanitation was unknown, of course, but the smell of refuse and decayed matter was nevertheless realized when it was compared with the smell of some wild clover, or roses, or apple blossoms they happened to come across, and no doubt even in their primitive life, the smell of the blossoms was more pleasant to their nostrils than the odor from the refuse that was about. We read in the Bible that they burned certain herbs on

the altars to make a pleasant smell for God, which produced a perfumed air with their offerings, so God would appreciate it in atonement. And so gradually the idea of burning herbs which produce a pleasant smell in their otherwise stinking quarters evolved, which gave them pleasure and satisfaction. Of course, the development of burning herbs to the smoking of cigarettes is obviously a short step.

And let us think back of the evolution or the development of our own age. We remember the transformation of the old horse and buggy into our present modern automobile. Who ever dreamed, when we were young, that we would be able to fly in the air even much faster than birds, or even sound or swim under water like a fish? Then there is the plumbing we enjoy to-day, and the glowing lights all over.

A few centuries ago, it was unheard of to debate or criticize religion, when government and religion were one institution and no one dared to think or speak contrary to the established customs and rituals, for the command from the religious authorities is: "Do not debate religion or ask questions about it." Believe! Oh, believe! Oh, believe!

The Bible is a collection of many stories that happened in those days including the constitution Moses gave us, the teachings of the prophets, Jesus and his apostles, and fables and dreams, some of which was passed on from mouth to mouth for many generations and centuries until it was written down. It is readily understood that there were few who were qualified to write in those days, and it was a very slow and tedious job, until our human race gradually evolved and developed to the stage when they invented new processes for writing and printing presses as we have to-day.

Since the printing press was invented it has produced enough copies of the Bible that are available to all who want to study and understand it for themselves, instead of listening to the preachers and taking everything for granted that they say, without question. This period of study and enlightenment on the subject has provoked thought and discussion and debate, and different definitions arose on the interpretation of the Bible with the consequences that the belief and religion of one God has branched out for the

last several centuries to about three hundred different religions that we have in our world today. This state of religious affairs seems to be confusion confounded. Because of these and other economic conditions, it seems that at present another form of religion is taking place: the worshiping of the golden calf, *MONEY*. Money talks all over, in the halls of goverment, law and justice, and even at the pulpit. Children, as soon as they are able to walk and get a desire for things, grab at money. The whole structure of life, religiously, economically, and politically, seems to be based on the foundation of money. The principles of humanity, justice and the brotherhood of man are forgotten, which are the main principles and the underlying foundation of religion. Money was originally developed and intended primarily as a medium of exchange of goods and services. But our statesmen of to-day and our elected representatives in all levels of our government bodies are blind and deaf to these glaring facts.

There is another question that should be discussed: How did the idea of heaven and hell and resurrection come about? The only logical and reasonable conclusion one comes to is that instinctively all living things, including man, do not die willingly, and resist death if at all possible. Here again we must go back to the time when man awoke to his consciousness and started to and tried to answer the many perplexing questions that he was confronted with, the fear of death and the struggle for his miserable existence. He got the vision of heaven where the gods reside, and of resurrection, and that, after all, when he passed on he would go to heaven (of course he was going to be good, or, if he was not, he was going to go to hell) and there he would have a great time as never before in his life, so as to make death and the miserable existence palatable and acceptable, and to give the living stamina and perseverance to carry on and hope for a better life after death.

The idea and the belief in heaven and resurrection were very effective at the beginning to ingrain into man the virtues of morality, and obedience to law and authority. The reward for good behavior would be heaven, where the soul would live forever in luxury and pleasure high above, while the punishment for bad

behavior would be hell, where the soul would suffer in fire way down in the bowels of the earth; for they had evidence of the hot lava and the smoke spouting up from a volcano, and they loved the pleasant warmth and light the sun above them was lavishing on them. And so naturally, the wise men who were recognized as the servants of God, taught the people to do good and to behave, so that they would be rewarded with heaven for the soul after the death of the body.

Scientifically speaking, the idea of heaven and hell for the soul is a reality, for the soul of a person is actually the ideas, thoughts, ideals and accomplishments of the person when he was alive. The deeds, ideas and thoughts of the great men that have lived, whether good or bad, that are recorded in our histories, do have eternal hell or heaven, as the case may be, in accordance with our conceptions of what is good or bad.

However, there is one factor that seems to hold many people to the old traditions and customs, despite their logical reasoning and understanding, and that is the disposition of their bodies after death. Whenever a human being is born it is seen to it by our existing social institutions that he is accepted by one of the established faiths, but when the individual grows up and disagrees with the faith in which the society has placed him, he is confronted with the problem of disposing his body after death, for obviously the faith in which society has placed him is very reluctant to have anything to do with the body of one who has left his faith when alive. This last phase of man's passing out of existence no one likes to give much consideration or attention and lets things slide as they are, although some people, who have the courage to face the facts of life realistically, do order their bodies cremated and the ashes scattered over their favorite places, where they have spent their lives.

There is a new movement in progress, with a nucleus of an organization in many parts of the country called, The Ethical Culture Society, and at their masthead is the following, "The ethical movement is a religious fellowship in which faith of man is paramount, and ethical conduct regarded as the highest form of worship. It asserts that the real best of religious consecration is not in

worship of the supernatural, but in what men can do for one another to achieve mutually creative and liberating relationships."

Religion of the unknown belief is fading out as rapidly as education with the incentive of using one's brains to understand things with logic and reason is advancing to know the unknown. There are, however, forces of conservative-minded people who believe in the old customs and ways of life that have served them well and which have made it possible for them to possess great wealth, prestige, power and the control of the press, radio, television, and the pulpit in many instances, who are doing everything in their power to keep real education from the great masses of the people, and are confusing them in every way possible by pulling the wool over their eyes so that they cannot see the issues clear which it is in their power to solve, and who thereby keep education and progress from advancing.

In my own lifetime, I have seen men living in a very primitive stage, when they plowed the soil with wooden plows built in shares of hardwood, with the points covered with bits of iron. They were pulled by a yoke of oxen, which were driven by one man, while another man was holding on to the crude plow handles by which he gaged the width and depth of the furrow. Grain was sown by hand from a basket and harvested with a sickle and threshed with a flail. Hay was cut by hand with a scythe and raked up with a wooden rake. Grain was ground into flour by turning a round stone with a hole in the center, to put the grain in, on top of another, flat round stone. The bread baked out of this flour was dark brown, and some loaves I have seen had a diameter of about eighteen inches. It was lying on the table all the time, covered with a cloth, until the family had consumed it all; then another loaf was baked. Transportation was with oxen and some slow horses. Good, fast horses were a luxury only the rich could afford.

To contrast this with our present mechanized machine age, in the last year of my farming I was driving a rubber-tired tractor while sitting on a well-cushioned spring seat, pulling five bottom plows, each fourteen inches wide at a speed of four miles an hour. The grain was seeded with a machine that can cover fifty acres or

more in a day, and when the grain was ripe it was harvested with a self-propelled combine operated by one man, which is a marvel when one compares it with the old methods of back-breaking hard work. Now hay is cut with a self-propelled mower with such ease and speed, and, when sufficiently dry, it is raked and baled and loaded on a truck by two men all in one operation, thereby retaining all the nourishing leaves which are of great feed value to stock instead of being shaken off and wasted as by the old methods.

The progress reached in mechanization and labor-saving devices on the farm and in all the industries of our country is really marvelous and amazing. The wonders of our modern fast transportation systems, with airplanes, seaplanes, and supersonic planes that cross the Atlantic in six hours. The nuclear-powered submarine "Nautilus" that can stay under water for months, makes its own fresh water, and has traveled under the North Pole ice cap. All these modern inventions for more leisure, comfort, and luxury for mankind were not even dreamed of in my young days. But, unfortunately, the powers who are in a position to make all these things available, as they should, for the comfort of all mankind the world over, are only doing it to make more profits—*money*—for themselves, and are trying to control and dominate the whole economic life of our nation and, if possible, the whole world economy. Instead of bringing comfort and happiness to the many millions of people in the world who are not fortunate enough to have all these modern facilities, so they may also enjoy more leisure, comfort, and the enjoyment of life.

But in the final analysis, they cannot stop the forces of progress of the human race any more than they can stop the water from running down stream. There is a great struggle between two powerful forces in the world to-day, because of the last two world wars and the great depression between them. On the one hand are the progressive forces that are for education and enlightenment for a better life, economic security, and the elimination of war; on the other are the conservative reactionary forces who are trying to keep things as they are, with the old beliefs about religion and keeping the masses in ignorance and poverty, which leads to friction between people and nations and to war.

History teaches us that all the progress humanity has achieved in the past was despite the efforts of the conservative elements to stop it. Our new approaching atomic-power age and the forces of enlightenment and progress will succeed in the very near future in getting established the *welfare state* in our country and eventually *peace* the world over.

Inflation is another subject that has been troubling my conscience for many years. It has been a political cancer that has been undermining our economy for centuries. I have a chart before me illustrating trends of inflation and deflation dating back to 1400. In the years 1416 to 1493 inflation and the deflation which followed were due to the causes of the Hussite German religious wars. Again another cycle took place in 1562 to 1598, when a sharp inflation and deflation took place because of religious wars in France and central Europe; then another cycle in the years of 1618 to 1648 because of thirty years of wars between many nations, mainly German. Then again, another cycle in the years of 1660 to 1700, caused by English civil wars, and Holland and France. Again another cycle in the years of 1776 to 1781 because of the American Revolution. In 1795 to 1815, were the Napoleonic wars with America. In 1854 to 1864 the Crimean War and the American Civil War. In 1914 to 1918, the First World War. Inflation followed as usual, and in 1930 to 1938 came the worst deflation in history. Then again the Second World War in 1939 to 1945 with the spiral of inflation, which is still festering our economy to-day. It is reasonably and logically understood that if a country finds itself in a state of war, most able-bodied men are mobilized for battle, thereby manpower to operate the nation's economy becomes scarce, so wages go up; then prices of commodities go up, too. Also, much of the commodities and material produced and some of the established industries are destroyed. So naturally this situation creates more scarcity and high prices and high wages prevail. After the war ceases and manpower and production catch up to normal again, then wages and prices go down, creating deflation. But, since 1945 there were no major wars; there were small ones here and there, but they did not deeply affect our economy, particularly in

the U. S. and Canada. We had no serious shortages, which boost prices and wages; we even had surpluses in many fields, including manpower and even unemployment, and yet we have a continuous period of inflation.

We are the richest country in the world and we have the highest standard of living in the world (except in some isolated districts or states where the people apparently wish to have it that way). People and governments in other countries who would like to buy our surpluses cannot buy them, because our prices are so high that they just simply cannot afford to buy; oh, yes, our State Department is practically giving our surpluses away to some countries but people resent charity, they don't like it, besides, there generally are some strings attached to it. Prices and wages have been steadily going up since 1945; they have just about doubled to what they used to be, and there is no end in sight. Recently there were headlines in our newspapers that our President has declared war on inflation, but it was just talk; no action was taken, because it seems that the people who are in control of our economy want higher prices and higher wages to continue. Where are they heading for? To another catastrophic depression like the one of 1930.

I had a disappointing experience in our local city elections in April of 1955. There was an amendment to the city charter to increase the city officials' salaries, as follows:

For Mayor	from	$18,000	to	$25,000
For City Attorney	from	15,000	to	22,000
For Controller	from	12,000	to	18,000
For Councilman	from	7,500	to	12,000

The arguments advanced were: that the Los Angeles elected officials are the lowest paid in any large city in the nation, and have been compared with the salaries paid by New York and Detroit, which were higher; and they pointed out that if the electors want good government, they must pay for it, or industries will pick up our best available men. Again the driving principle behind our so-called statesmen is *money,* that is their religion and goal for the welfare of our society. They do not stop to think from where does

the money come to pay for those increased salaries—the taxpayers.

Since the taxpayers are paying their salaries, then why should they not compare their wages with the wages of the average taxpayer? After all, why should an elected official receive from four to six times the wages of an average taxpayer; his official expenses are taken care of by the city. Just because he happens to be an honest man and has the gift of the gab, that should not entitle him to become rich at the public's expense. And further, just because one of us gets elected to office, one does not acquire the capacity to eat six meals at one time, or to drive in six automobiles at one time. Seriously, this raise marks the beginning of another cycle of inflation, for the thousands of employees who are in the service of the city will rightfully demand a raise in their salaries, too, and so will the workers in the shops and factories all along the line. Then the next move is the rise in prices of commodities the consumer buys, and this is just what has happened since the passing of that amendment in 1955. Edward Bellamy wrote in *Equality,* "True men never rise save to raise his fellowman with him." The action taken by our statesmen is not in line with this thought. At the time of that election I wrote a letter to the editors of the daily newspapers expounding the aforesaid principles, why the electors should vote against that amendment, and asked the editors to publish my letter as a public service, but none of them did. On the contrary, they published editorials just before election day expounding their ideas why the electorate should vote for the amendment. The result was that about 45 per cent. voted against the amendment and the other 55 per cent voted for the amendment. Had they published my letter and kept quiet, it might have likely gone the other way. The drive for money in our present generation is astounding. Everybody wants to get rich quick and become a big shot, like the officials of the big industries who receive hundreds of thousands of dollars for their yearly service, or like the Hollywood stars who receive a like salary.

Let us look at this money question from another angle. In its very beginning, when mankind evolved from the stone era, there was no money. So people conceived a method of an exchange of services for things they possessed in the early days of civilization,

and it is still practiced today when feasible, but on the whole it is a clumsy method and practiced mostly by small boys in trading marbles. The practical method is a medium of exchange as we have for services rendered. At first, people had some sort of trinkets, then coins of metal which were based on silver and gold standards. The coins which were in circulation were issued by the kings only and the country that possessed most of the precious metals were the richest. Later, paper money was developed which made it even more convenient to transact business with, but in the main our present medium of exchange is cash and the check system of bank accounting which works quite satisfactorily. There is no more shortage of money, as in the old days. *What is physically possible, is financially possible now.*

There is an inherent fallacy in our economic setup which helps to create inflation. These are the stock exchanges in our nation, where stocks, shares and bonds are bought and sold daily like at an auction sale. They run into millions of dollars and have a greater influence on our national economic life than the average citizen realizes. The selling spree indulged in by those who control the stock exchanges in November of 1929, which apparently went out of their control, created misery for hundreds of thousands of people and brought death to many. It is the most vicious gambling joint in our nation today. It is the opium and poison which is undermining our democracy and economic system. It may have done some good when our financial system was based on a silver or gold standard, but since the last depression of the 1930's this was done away with, and now we are on a production and service standard. *"What is physically possible is financially possible." Our government must establish a department to plan and finance industry and services when and where necessary,* and not leave this important phase of our economy to an irresponsible gambling joint. The millions of Chinese, Indians, and others are at the crossroads; they will not accept communism, nor will they accept capitalism. We are the nation who can and should clean up our own backyard first, and make our way of life acceptable to all the people in the world. We can do it if we want to.

Our big industries and big business concerns which grew up

gradually in the last century from the small, individual entrepreneur with very little capital to still further expand their business at home and abroad, sell their stock and shares to the public on the stock exchanges, and in order to make their stock and shares attractive to the buyer, they must show a handsome profit or dividend in their annual financial statements. Thus their managers see to it that they sell their products at the highest possible price—all the traffic can bear. No one can stop them, not even our elected representatives. They cannot, for indirectly these big industrialists have supplied the means to get them elected to office. If one takes the time to read and study our financial publications, one learns that our big industries and big business ventures are interlocked by directorates in our financial institutions and so control our entire production and the wealth of our nation; in fact, it is in their hands whether or not we have prosperity or unemployment. The question is: Is there a statesman among us who will rise to the need of our nation and rectify our economic condition, as Franklin D. Roosevelt did in 1933. It remains to be seen.

There were statements made in recent years by politicians and industrialists and widely publicized that the United States is the richest and strongest country in the world, because of the capitalist system of production for profit. This is very questionable, for many countries in other parts of the world have also been operating under the same system but did not achieve the same standing. The reasoned and logical answer is that the United States was settled by immigrants from many countries of the old world, and the character of probably the majority of them who came to settle here for many years was of those who possessed courage, fearlessness, ambition and the incentive to explore the unknown, and who wanted to have more freedom and a better life than they had experienced in the old country. It is generally accepted that people who are satisfied with their lot and are fearful of the unknown stay home. Thus we had a new generation growing up, a new character, young people who were continuously alert and ready to explore new territories and to invent ways and means for

faster transportation and faster methods of doing the job they were at. Because of this gradual progressive trend during the last few hundred years we became what we are. Of course, England, France, and Germany have progressed, too, but not to the same extent. In the first place, the progressive spirit was not of the same caliber which existed here, and secondly, they were always harassed by wars and destruction which has greatly retarded their progress, while the United States has benefited from their misfortunes, has increased its markets and its exports to the extent that nearly every country in the world became a debtor to the United States. Some great man once said, "Poverty destroys monarchy," which has come to pass, and "Riches destroy democracy," which I am reluctant to say is slowly happening in our rich land. The masses of our electorate are indifferent on election days; less than 50 per cent of the registered voters take advantage of the privilege of voting, and there seems to be a general apathy toward the democracy for which our great statesmen have striven and fought. The situation is deplorable, but as long as we are enjoying the age of plenty, nobody cares.

The inflationary trend goes on and no end is in sight. The steel strike is on and thousands are unemployed. Our elected representatives talk about the inflation and do nothing. Our labor leaders blame the government for the situation and they themselves do nothing about it. It would seem that the labor leaders who represent more than fifteen million workers and have millions of dollars in cash and assets to their credit have embarked on a tug of war with the industrial management of our nation who have billions of dollars to their credit and who is the more powerful organization in this battle of prices and wages, with no regard whatsoever for the welfare of our country, and our elected governments are standing by and watching the sport as though it were of no concern to them.

From the observation point of view it looks as though the parties in the conflict, the labor leaders and the industrial management, were living in a world of their own, and were disregarding the effect their actions have on the welfare of our country. *This*

is capitalism in action. No moral obligation to the electorate for good government. No planning whatsoever to assure economic stability and security to its teeming millions of citizens.

The future looks bleak with a probable repetition of the 1930 depression because of the unbridled *INFLATION.* We are in the transition period of a gradually changing world: from the capitalistic era to the *welfare state* and automation era, whether we admit it or not.

The only alternative we have is to organize a new political party. (The western provinces of Canada are doing it; I wish them success.) It matters not what the name might be, but its main principles should be to declare war on inflation, and to unite all forces of good will. We can find its men in all ranks of our society, men of action who will adopt a planned economy, with stabilized prices and wages fixed by law on a fair basis, and who will make our country a model of real, true Democracy, Freedom, Equality and Economic Security for all our citizens.

The Cause of Inflation

	Profits	
Company	*1959*	*1958*
General Motors	$590,000,000	$334,000,000
Ford Motor Co.	285,900,000	16,100,000
U.S. Steel	254,948,000	135,650,000
Union Carbide Corp.	90,442,617	49,901,375
Chrysler Corp.	58,000,000	25,200,000
Kennecott Copper	47,760,040	22,959,071
Alcoa	28,936,333	19,471,908
Caterpillar Tractor	28,863,689	14,732,767
U.S. Rubber Co.	18,560,286	8,696,611
Olin Mathieson Chemical	17,504,095	9,801,495
B & O Railroad	10,042,484	6,371,617
Otis Elevator	9,743,233	7,107,900
American Machine & Foundry	8,348,000	4,679,000
National Cash Register	8,088,417	7,244,557
United Airlines	7,039,087	4,139,514
L & N Railroad	6,233,339	4,457,730
Pullman Corp.	3,741,442	1,878,096

I cannot resist pointing out the inconsistencies of the officers of our labor unions. Today I read in the *Los Angeles Citizen,* of September 25, 1959, the official publication of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. a report on the convention at San Francisco:

> "The A.F.L.-C.I.O. Convention approved salary increases of $10,000 a year for President George Meany and Secretary-Treasurer William Schnitzler. Meany will receive $45,000 and Schnitzler $43,000.
>
> Meany, Schnitzler and the 27 vice-presidents were re-elected to new two-year terms."

They have re-elected the whole slate of officers for another term, and no new blood was added, for no one dared to oppose them. They are virtually a dictatorship, despite their lip service claiming that they are democracy in action. And not only were they re-elected by their delegates, but they have voted an increase of $10,000. to the already high salaries of their officials. The delegates are generally the officers of local unions, so this action to increase the salaries of their superiors makes this maneuver a precedent, so that the salaries of the officials on the local level shall be increased in due course. Consequently, a raise of the membership dues will naturally follow. The workers, faced with increased dues and the continuous increase in the cost of living (due to the national cancer of inflation) are forced to demand higher wages from the industries wherever they work. And so we have the spiral of inflation aggravated not only by the management of industry, but also by the action of our labor leaders.

In the same issue there is a report from the Director of A.F.L.-C.I.O. Industrial Union Department at Washington blasting the F.R. Board for boosting higher interest rates. "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." What a glaring inconsistency.

The same body at their convention were critical of the disarmament plan proposed by Khrushchev and labeled it "Vague Rehash." For in reality, it appears that the labor leaders do not want disarmament; because it would mean turning the sword into plowshares, to grow more food and more conveniences for the

comfort of life. *But* we have too much of everything now, we are living in a country and in an age of abundance. Inevitably, the consequences will be closed factories which have produced the implements of destruction, and more thousands of unemployed workers, for which our great leaders of labor and industry have no solution. While Khrushchev admits that they want disarmament so that they, too, can put their factories to work and make the conveniences and the comforts of life for their people, as we have done in our country, but also pointed out that we had two hundred years to get our industries developed so that we can produce for the comforts of our citizens as well as keep our war industries going at the same time, while the communists had only about forty years to develop their economy and industry and are trying to catch up with us. He also admitted that the United States had taught them how to organize their industries to make machines, and then bragged that now they, as pupils of the United States, have surpassed their tutors in science and space.

In the same issue I read a commentary by Drew Pearson on Khrushchev's philosophy, and I agree with him on many points, namely, that the United States has already adopted the majority of Marx's *Manifesto,* and enumerates the following:

> (1) Land should belong to the people (2) Graduated income tax (3) Graduated inheritance tax (4) Centralization of credit in the hands of the state (which is only partly controlled) (5) Centralization of transport in the hands of the state (there is a lot of room for improvement) (6) Increased production with the assistance of the state (7) The T.V.A., Grand Coulee, The Panama Canal, and the Navy-Interior Department ownership of oil lands (which is only a small fraction of the oil industry in the country) (8) Public compulsory education and free schools) (There are still many needs for improvement to eliminate our juvenile delinquency problem, and make it possible for all pupils who have a desire for a higher education not to depend on rich parents or scholarships.)

I would also add our post office system; our road and street building system, our city water supply; our sewer system; our sanitary system; our police protection system; our fire protection

department; and many power systems which are all nonprofit enterprises for the good of society (the people). Radio and television, and all electric power facilities in the nation should be taken out of private hands and taken over by the state, as all the other public utilities, for the good of all the people.

Those important features mentioned by Mr. Drew Pearson, which we have adopted, are really socialistic principles, whether we admit it or not. In other words, these principles are good for society, for all the people, and not only for a few. And we must go still further and establish a *national economic planning board* to plan and direct where and which of our industries shall be expanded to absorb our army of unemployed people, and not leave this important part of our social and economic life of our nation to irresponsible financiers and industrialists who are only planning their business, to make more profits for themselves. We must organize and establish a *national health system* along the lines of England's Health Department. We must organize and establish a *national insurance system* along the lines established by the Saskatchewan government for the benefit of all the people in our country.

Yes, it seems that our labor leaders as well as the captains of big finance and industry who control our daily press are very skeptical and reluctant to consider Mr. Khrushchev's proposition for total disarmament for obvious, selfish reasons stated previously, mainly, because it would create unemployment and eliminate the sources for profiteering. As for profits, I do not think that any intelligent man who uses his brains to reason should consider this very essential. In the first place, one does not take it along with him in the far beyond. Secondly, there is the income and inheritance tax which takes the lion's share of it anyway. As for unemployment, that is important. In my humble judgment, unemployment must be the responsibility of the *national economic planning board* (which should be enacted and established at our next session of Congress). They can start building more schools, more and better roads and streets throughout the nation, more overpasses and underpasses at level railroad crossings, and instead of employing our scientists and engineers to invent implements of

destruction and rockets into space and to the moon, this great army of our best brains should be put to better use to make this planet of ours more livable and more comfortable. What I have in mind is that our men of science and engineering should find a method whereby they can remove some parts of the Rocky Mountains, so that the warm Pacific air current could be made to pass between the mountains and to circulate further east and thereby make the climate warmer in winter over the midwestern states and the western provinces of Canada. It all boils down to this: that we must open our eyes and realize that we are living at the beginning of a new era, a time when peace shall reign over the world, a time when the religion of the golden calf, *money,* is a convenience and important only as a medium of exchange for services rendered, and shall gradually take second place to *humanity first;* a time when the motto "dog eat dog" shall gradually be eliminated, a time when we shall realize that we are our brothers' keepers and assist and lead the hundreds of millions of people in India and China to a better way of life, a real social democratic system, when all the people in the world shall live in peace, security and happiness.

Juvenile delinquency is another social problem which is growing steadily worse as time goes on. It may be called a social cancer.

I have a number of articles before me on this problem. An appeal from the board of supervisors to vote for the juvenile bond issue. They require more housing, recreation, and school facilities for juvenile court wards, for the present facilities are overcrowded. Another writer favors curfew and claims that mothers as well as teenagers favor it, for there will be no arguments between them as to what time to be back home. The police chief reports that 35 per cent of the seventeen-year-olds in the state have been arrested. Another writer suggests that the parents of those arrested should be behind the bars instead of their children, and there we have a situation and conditions which are deplorable. It is again talk and talk, but no preventative measures are taken. Let us analyze the cause of this steadily increasing juvenile delinquency. At the outset I wish to make a statement which

I did in my foreword and which can stand being repeated. *A child is most fortunate* if he is raised on a farm or in the country, where the child takes part in feeding the chickens, ducks, calves, lambs, etc., and helps to take care of them with shelter and food, and watches them grow to maturity. There is so much satisfaction and pleasure in seeing the young birds and animals play and at times fight for food. And so one becomes interested and accustomed to an environment of service to helpless living creatures, with no thought of reward. However, on second thought, there is a reward to the giver of service, to see the birds and animals feel contented after the feed and watch them stretch out into the sun's rays, resting in leisure, or playing, which makes one smile and feel satisfied.

There is another angle to it, the "give and take" philosophy, which very few give the proper recognition in our educational and every-day living habits.

When we are born and our first cry is heard, it is a sign of want, and the good mother gives food, warmth and attention to the little infant until he develops and is able to serve himself. Gradually, as the child grows and develops and becomes proficient, mother asks baby to pick up the spoon which fell on the floor, etc., thereby teaching the child to start giving its services, instead of taking. As the child grows and develops, his abilities to render services grow, too; also, the things he wants and the services he requires increase as well, and generally he wants more than he gives. The limitations are provided only by the parents' ability or judgment. We must observe the nature and character of the ability and desire in the human being to *give* and *take.* Children cannot give services, but they take continuously from their mother and society the services and attention they require, until they are weaned by their mother or by their own growing wisdom or instinct that they must help themselves. To our sorrow, too many children grow up and refuse to be weaned from taking and then become parasites on their parents or society or both. The human being, when fully grown and able, must give to society more than it receives because of the fact that children and oldsters and the incapacitated cannot give, but must take from society the

necessary services and attention to survive. The main point outstanding is that no monetary reward is anticipated or recognized in the rendering of services, and the wants of the child or the grown-up for that matter are not continuously instigated by glaring advertisements in the newspapers, radio and television.

On the other hand, if a child is raised in the city, as soon as the little toddler starts to walk he follows mother to the corner grocery. There he gets treated with some sweets which taste mighty good to him, and since the store is not far, he manages to visit there quite often and asks for candy, and when refused because he has no money, he goes back to mother and asks for pennies, and so he gets what he wants. The next experience is when mother asks junior to go to the store to get a loaf of bread. He gets a reward for his services, namely, money. Here is just the beginning. As he grows older and goes to school and meets other youngsters like him and they start comparing toys, as to who has more or nicer guns or trains, etc., and there competition starts, with more demands from mother for more money. And so the routine goes on until he finishes elementary school. Oh, yes, and what does he, or she, do after school or at weekends? Some join the boys club and spend the evenings there learning something, sports and craftsmanship, and some are kept busy by their parents who have the time and intelligence to train their youngsters to do some homework, or look after the lawn or garden, if they have one, but the majority of them hang around street corners and are getting into mischief of one kind or another.

At this age they are learning, as they started to learn when they were little tots, that money is everything. If one has money, one can get a bicycle, a car, and a good time. They were never trained or given to understand that money represents services of somebody, somewhere; that it just does not grow on trees.

After they have finished elementary school, some go to high school—those who have ability and a desire to learn, but most of the youngsters do not and are left to roam the streets. What else is there for them to do in the city? And these are likely the 35 per cent which get into jail that the police chief reported about. The matter is simple. These young boys and girls have nothing to do;

they are too young to go to work, and when they get old enough to go to work, they are not used to it, they don't like it, and besides, they are not trained to do any kind of work, so they live in a world of confusion. They want to enjoy life in accordance with their unrealistic philosophy, and they need money. If they can't get it out of their relatives, they are going to get it somewhere. Consequently, they become the juvenile delinquents in our society. They cost us taxpayers plenty to provide them with food, shelter, clothing, recreation and a police force to keep them in jail, or to keep track of them and then get them again behind the bars.

Another factor we must bear in mind is that sixty years ago about 80 per cent of our population lived on farms and in small communities, while to-day it is just the reverse. About 20 per cent or less live on farms, and about 80 per cent live in cities and towns. This is the main reason why our juvenile delinquents are gradually increasing, and it is getting to be a real cancer in our society.

From my observations it would seem that the only proper method to handle our problem is: (*I*) To amend our school laws that the age for compulsory school attendance to school be raised to eighteen years. (*II*) After twelve years of age, if the child does not have the capacity for learning, he should be taught a trade for the six-year period, so that he shall become experienced in the kind of work he is capable to command. When he comes of age, he can enter the trade of his choice with experience, and he will be able to command full pay for services rendered and be independent of parent, husband or wife, and social welfare organizations.

It is reasonable and logical that we must keep our laws and customs abreast with the progress of our time. The time has come that we must plan our educational system in such a manner so as to keep our idle youngsters off the streets and out of mischief and jails, and train them to be *responsible* and *respectable* citizens of our society. Also it should be made clear that there are many families where both father and mother go to work because they have to keep up with the Joneses, and the children are left alone

to shift for themselves. And there are many parents who are delinquents themselves, who are irresponsible and are only two-legged animals, so there is no sense in making them responsible. These parents of a sort mentioned are a product of our past shortcomings for avoiding our responsibilities to our community, to our nation, and to the world as a whole.

And further, we must make provisions in our school laws that teachers should keep a record of those youngsters who are abnormal, too mischievous, to a point of showing danger to their schoolmates, etc. These youngsters who have a bad record should become the responsibility of the authorities who are in charge of this kind of work while they are young, and be placed in special institutions for training and should not be allowed to roam the streets until they become hardened criminals and then put behind bars, when it is too late to make peaceful citizens out of them, and they become a far more expensive responsibility on society than if they were nipped in the bud while young.

Somehow I feel that my book will not be complete without any comment on the cold war which has been going on between the two great powers and which came about as a result of the last world war. The Russian Communist party has bragged about their ideology, and they were boasting that in a matter of time communism will sweep the world and the capitalist system of the United States will crumble in its wake, and they have bombarded the world with its propaganda.

On the other hand, the spokesmen for capitalism in the United States have shaken the big stick of the hydrogen bomb at the propaganda of the communists. The communists, in retaliation, quietly developed the sputnik, and sent it into orbit circling around the earth. This surprise shocked the spokesmen of capitalism in the United States. Naturally, there were many conferences and discussions about this new problem, and so the United States also developed a satellite and sent it into orbit circling the earth. However, this nerve-breaking situation has culminated in sending our Vice-President to visit Communist Russia, who received a friendly welcome in that country.

The next move was that Premier Khrushchev was invited to visit Washington in the middle of September 1959, to see the United States and confer with the President. Then it was reported in the press that Mr. Eisenhower was invited to visit Moscow and see Russia and confer with the dignitaries there.

These new developments to soften the ice in the cold war are refreshing and they give some optimistic hope to people the world over, that this might be the beginning of a new era of peace in the world.

It is significant to note that the United States has a population of 172 million with an ideology or a way of life of private capitalism. The Soviet Union has a population of 200 million with an ideology of communism (or, as some of us call their system, state capitalism). The next most populated country India, who has a population of 392 million who have only recently, about twelve years ago, become independent from Great Britain, and have since adopted the socialist principles as their way of life. Premier Jawaharlal Nehru of the Union of India was educated in England and he has published a book some time ago, which I read, and in which he spoke very favorably of socialism, while he was still a scholar. Then we have China, with a population of 640 million people, who are at the present time under the influence of the Soviet Union, but their ideology, or way of life, has not crystallized yet, so they still can be influenced to some other ideology. It follows that the United States and the Soviet Union each are trying to get these two highly populated countries on their respective sides, and they have, it seems, come to the conclusion that shaking the big stick at each other will not get them anywhere, and are, I believe, trying to come to an understanding that the best way to avoid conflicts is for each to mind its own business and to live and let live and let those peoples do what is best for them in their own way.

Wendell L. Willkie, presidential candidate of the United States in 1940, wrote a book called *One World,* which was published in 1943, in which he outlined his views on world peace. Norman Thomas wrote a booklet, *World Federation,* which was

published in 1942, giving his views on how the world should live in peace. After the First World War, the League of Nations was organized, so that the nations of the world would have an instrument through which they would be able to settle disputes and eliminate wars, but it did not work. Hitler ignored the document and started the Second World War and lost out badly, and so did all other participants in it. After the Second World War was over, the nations reorganized and established the United Nations, which has fulfilled its expectations so far, and I hope that the United Nations is the nucleus for a world government.

However, I think that in the prehistoric days of the human species the world was one, so to speak, but the human animal in the course of thousands of years has evolved and developed into a state when they tried to understand their surroundings and themselves. They became divided into families, tribes, communities, districts and nations, with boundaries dividing each community and nation, with the development of different languages, beliefs and ideologies, which makes confusion confounded, for after all, what the human race wants is life, security, happiness and peace. Somehow I believe that some day it may take hundreds or thousands of years; it all depends on the thinking statesmen that our generation can produce who will use common sense in their deliberations. With the present trend of mechanization, communication and transportation, and with the gradual development of the United Nations, boundaries will gradually be eliminated and the world will become one again for all the people of the world to live in peace and harmony, when swords shall be turned into plowshares.

CHAPTER 27

CONCLUSION

To conclude my story I wish to quote from *Unity* (Lee's Summit, Mo.) the following jewels:

"Living is a business that is a combination of all the best requirements of every other business in the world."

"The city of happiness is in the state of mind."

"The mind puts kinks in the nerves in ways beyond description. A thought of fear or excitement will stop the even flow of life in some nerve center deep down in the body, forming a nucleus where other fears may accumulate and finally congest the blood concerned in some important function."

"One of the most direct and effective shatterers of fear is laughter. *Laugh your fears away.* See how ridiculous they are when traced to their source."

"The nerves surrounding the heart are most sensitive to thoughts of fear, and when mind and body are strenuously excited, the fearfully charged nerve cells grab the heart and hold it like a vise."

"That there is an intimate relation between happiness and health goes without question. When you feel good you sing. Singing promotes health, because it increases the circulation, and a good circulation is a sign and a promoter of health. One of these and a very important one is joy. Back of every true song is a thought of joy. It is the thought that counts in the end. First sing in your soul—you can sing way down inside of yourself—then you soon will be singing with your voice."

"The mind may be compared to the sea, which is calm or stormy according to the wind that moves it. Thought utilizes the substance of the wind and forms that which man ideates. A rest-

ful state of mind is greatly to be desired because of its constructive character. When the mind is lashed by brainstorms, the cells of the whole organism are shattered and exhausted. Man's whole character is determined by the thoughts for which he allows a place in his mind. A strong man or a weak man is what he is because of repeated thoughts of strength or weakness. Steadfast affirmations of peace will harmonize the whole body structure and open the way to the attainment of healthy conditions in mind and body."

This reminds me of a verse that I read about smiles, "Smile a while, and while you smile another smile, and soon there will be smiles, and miles of smiles and lives worth while because you smile."

A few more jewels I wish to quote from Bertrand Russell.

"The world has need for a philosophy, or a religion, which will promote life. But in order to promote life it is necessary to value something other than mere life. Life devoted only to life is animal without any real human value, incapable of preserving men permanently from weariness and the feeling that all is vanity. If life is to be fully human it must serve some end which seems, in some sense, outside human life, some end which is impersonal and above mankind, such as God or truth or beauty. Those who best promote life do not have life for their purpose. They aim rather at what seems like a gradual incarnation, a bringing into our human existence of something eternal, something that appears to imagination to live in a heaven remote from strife and failure and the devouring jaws of time. Contact with this eternal world—even if it be only a world of our imagining—brings a strength and a fundamental peace which can not be wholly destroyed by the struggles and apparent failure of our temporal life. It is this happy contemplation of what is eternal that Spinoza calls the intellectual love of God. To those who have once known it, it is the key of wisdom. By contact with what is eternal, by devoting ourselves to bringing something of the Divine into this troubled world, we can make our own lives creative even now, even in the midst of the cruelty and strife and hatred that surround us on every hand . . . Wisdom and hope are what the world needs and

though it fights against them, it gives its respect to them in the end.

Men fear thoughts as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions, and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the well-tried wisdom of the ages. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence; yet it bears itself proudly, as unmoved as if it were lord of the universe. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man."

(continued from front flap)

the proposals of this organization were treated with scorn by many. It required courage and perseverance to advocate ideas that were ahead of their time. Today many of the more important proposals of this group are accepted in principle by Canadian politicians in all parties. They include universal hospital insurance, old-age pensions without a means test, public ownership of the Bank of Canada, advanced labor legislation, protection of farm debtors in crop-failure years, and other measures for social improvement."

Mr. Plotkin's story is that of a man who, while working hard to make his own way in the world, never lost sight of the needs of his fellow man. As such, it makes highly rewarding reading.

About the Author

MR. PLOTKIN, who was born in 1889 in a little village near Minsk, now makes his home in Los Angeles, where he became an American citizen in 1956. He is now retired and includes among his hobbies: reading, listening to classical music, writing and "keeping our apartment and premises clean and in good repair." He also is a voluntary film projectionist for the United Nations Association of Los Angeles.

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