

ANNUAL ADDRESS.

BY WORTHY MASTER BRIGHAM REED,

TO THE TERRITORIAL GRANGE, JUNE 2, 1875.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE TERRITORIAL GRANGE:

Once more, through the infinite kindness of our Great Master above, we are permitted to greet each other at the altar of our beloved Order. And although it is for earnest, needed work, and not mere pleasure, that we have met; yet, it is my hope and trust, that when we shall have accomplished the labors of this session of our Territorial Grange, and returned to our homes, we will be justly entitled to that greatest of all pleasures, the pleasure derived from the consciousness of a duty well performed.

On the 21st day of September, 1874, the legal representatives of seventeen Subordinate Granges of this Territory met at Helena, pursuant to a call from our Worthy National Deputy, N. N. Sutherland, and organized the Montana Territorial Grange. At that time there were twenty-three Granges in the Territory; therefore, six were not represented. It was a busy season of the year for the farmers of Montana; and, feeling they could hardly afford to spare the necessary time, the work of organization was hurriedly and imperfectly done.

Considering the limited extent of the Order in our Territory, your working officers have had obstacles to overcome, and no very light task to perform in placing the Grange in working condition. The Granges were newly organized, and of course, imperfect in their work; the means of communicating with them, slow and tedious. In some instances, the laws of the Order were differently understood and applied, thus causing confusion; and in other instances, the laws had not been received. But not the least among the obstacles met, stands the fact of our having to commence with an almost destitute treasury, which has since been inadequately supplied by a very small revenue. Without money it is difficult to perform any great amount of work of this character, especially, in this part of the world. To add to our embarrassments, the personal interests of our Worthy Secretary, Bro. O. F. Furner, compelled him to resign his office on the 1st of November last, and before that office was fairly in working order. As Master of this Grange, and chairman of the Executive Committee, I considered it my duty to appoint some member to temporarily fill that office until the vacancy could be filled by election. Accordingly, Bro. J. D. McCammon, Master of Fairview Grange, No. 12, was selected as Secretary *pro tem.*; and an act your Executive Committee has since approved.

Bro. McCammon has proven himself a capable and efficient officer.

I am unable to report to you any extensive or brilliant work that has been accomplished, and yet I have great hopes for our future success.

We are gradually overcoming the obstacles in our way. We are gaining in knowledge, of the nature and laws of our Order. We are taking more comprehensive views of its principles and purposes. We are improving in order and discipline, and I hope, yes, I believe, we are advancing in those fundamental virtues, Faith, Hope, Charity and Fidelity.

One of our Granges surrendered its dispensation and was afterwards re-organized with a change of name and charter members. But two new Granges have been organized since our September meeting. The work of conferring degrees, in most of the Granges, I believe, has been sufficiently rapid for healthy growth, and a fair percentage has been added to our membership. We now number twenty-five Granges, with a membership of over eight hundred.

In my opinion, the harmony of the Order has been more endangered by an erroneous interpretation of Art. 5th of the Constitution of the National Grange, than from any other cause; and I frankly say to you, I believe improper persons have, in some instances, sought and obtained admission to our halls, both as charter and initiated members.

We have various trades and occupations within our gates, which constitute an active element, foreign to the nature of the Order, and having interests in direct conflict with the interests of the farmer, and the purposes of the Order. This wrong interpretation of the law of eligibility is a formidable rock upon which our organization may possibly be dashed to pieces, and I assure you, we cannot remove it too soon. The law requires that a person, to be eligible to membership, "shall be engaged in agricultural pursuits and have no interests in conflict with our purposes." Here are two distinct ideas included. Applicants may be extensively "engaged in agricultural pursuits," but that is not enough; they must, also, "have no interest in conflict with our purposes." The simple fact of a person owning a tract of land does not prove him or her to "be engaged in agricultural pursuits." They must give their personal attention to the cultivation of the land, or to the care of their herds. Complaint of the lax application of this law appears in the annual addresses of many of the Masters of State Granges. It is a mistaken idea that numbers add strength to the Grange, unless those numbers are of the right stamp; that is, unless they are genuine farmers. A Grange composed of thirty farmers would be a stronger Grange than it would be with the membership increased to forty by the addition of ten merchants. If, in such a Grange, a question of business co-operation that would injuriously effect the interests of the ten merchants, should arise, their united strength and influence would be arrayed in opposition to the farmers' interests. More or less wrangling and confusion would be the result. The same would be the case with all other conflicting interests; hence, the impropriety of any but the farmers' interest being represented in the Grange. Our declaration of purposes, our laws, and the whole spirit of our Order, all point to the one fact, that ours is exclusively a farmer's association, and must be maintained as such, or it must prove a failure. Every true Patron should remember that the ballot is the means whereby we guard our gates. Immoral persons should not be admitted to our halls. Moral improvement is one of our purposes.

This question of eligibility is one of vital importance to the Order. Its future existence depends, to a great extent, upon how the question is answered at our ballot-box. The law of eligibility, as now amended by the National Grange, is plain, and I trust that, in the future, the brothers and sisters of the Order in Montana will see to it that none but those actually "engaged in agricultural pursuits, and having no interest in conflict with our purposes," shall enter our gates.

At the time of my election to office, at our September meeting, I urged as a reason for not wishing to accept the position of Master, my inability to attend the Eight Session of the National Grange. I made a ruling to the effect that the Territorial Grange could not be represented by a proxy, on the ground that we had no member eligible to such a position. I therefore refused to order the election of a proxy.

Thereupon, by a vote of the Grange, I was requested to write to the W. M. of the National Grange, asking if our Territorial Grange could be represented at the 8th annual session of the National Grange by a proxy. I was empowered, by a vote of the Grange, to appoint a proxy provided the W. M. of the National Grange should give an affirmative answer. I wrote, as requested, and received the following reply:

NATIONAL GRANGE, DUDLEY W. ADAMS, MASTER. }
Waukon, Iowa, October 28th, 1874. }

Brigham Reed, Esq.—Dear Sir and Bro.:

Your favor at hand, and in reply, would say, the reason of the amendment to the By-laws requiring a proxy to be a Past Master was, that no other member of a State Grange is eligible to sit in the Sixth Degree, and it would be very awkward to have a body composed of members, a portion of whom cannot gain access to the meetings or pass the examination necessary to be received.

I hope you will be able to so arrange your affairs as to be with us at Charleston in February, as the amendment will not be ratified in time to have the next meeting in November.

Hoping you will favor us with your presence in February, I am

Fraternally yours,

DUDLEY W. ADAMS.

I was not able to attend the meeting of the National Grange last February, but undoubtedly will be able to attend the meeting of that body in November next.

By request of your Executive Committee, I wrote to the W. M. of the National Grange, asking if some member of the National Grange could be sent to meet with us at this time, and instruct us in the Fifth Degree. He informed me that the Secretary of the National Grange, Bro. O. H. Kelley, would send the Fifth Degree by express, on our order. I have ordered it, but this information came too late to order it in time for this meeting.

There has been but little done in our Territory in the way of business co-operation. I believe about all that has been accomplished has been done through the County Councils of Madison and Gallatin Counties. I have no direct information in regard to what has been effected in Madison County, but understand the Council of that county has been able to make arrangements by which the members of the Order obtain family supplies at reduced prices.

In Gallatin County, an arrangement to the same effect has been in successful operation for the past year. The price of blacksmithing has been reduced, and in one instance, ferry toll has been reduced. This season, the Business Agent of the Council has been awarded contracts for flour to be delivered at different Government forts. Thus it will be seen that business co-operation and its benefits have been confined to certain localities.

In some parts of the Territory, Patrons have built for themselves new halls; others have improved their places of meeting—all of which denotes a degree of prosperity. In fact, considering all the adverse circumstances that have surrounded us, both as an order and as a people, I think our Order in Montana is in as healthy a condition as could reasonably be expected.

This is all I need to say in regard to past work. In the reports of your Worthy Secretary and Worthy Treasurer you will learn what has been done in those offices, and in the report of your Executive Committee you will learn of the doings of that body.

Considering everything, we could not expect much would have been accomplished up to this time. Our past is but a short interval of time, our real work is in the indefinite future. Especially is this the case with this Territorial Grange. We are only fairly prepared for work. This is our first meeting since our organization. This is a momentous day for our order in Montana. It is heavily laden with good or with evil. To-day, the real work of this body begins. At this session we prepare the ground and plant the seed. Upon our wisdom and moral principles it depends, to a great extent, whether from that seed there shall grow up a crop of tares that shall choke and blast the future hopes and life of the Order; or, whether instead, there shall grow up a crop of pure wheat, wholesome food, which shall vitalize our fraternity with intellectual and moral strength, justice, charity and brotherly love whereby there shall be insured to it a long life of honor and usefulness.

There will be considerable work brought before you in the way of perfecting our organization; the most of which you will probably be able to perform. Many co-operation business schemes will undoubtedly be presented for your consideration, and many more suggested. You cannot possibly act upon all of them. In considering this class of work we cannot ignore the fact of our limited membership, inadequate revenue, isolated condition as a people, and our limited home markets. All these, and other circumstances, you will do well to carefully weigh and consider in all their bearings upon the various co-operative enterprises you take into consideration. It is well for us to remember that a few acres well cultivated will return greater net profits than a broad field overrun with weeds. I do not wish to impress upon your minds the idea that circumstances are such that nothing, or but little, can be done in the way of business co-operation; that your energies must rust for want of use; on the contrary, ample fields, near at hand, lay open for your labor, into which you may drive deep the plowshare of your business abilities and turn up the rich mould from which our brotherhood in Montana may speedily reap a rich harvest. But I do wish to impress upon your minds the necessity of limiting your work, in this line, within the bounds of probable success. Such a selection will require, on your part, careful consideration, judgment and nice discrimination. It is much better to undertake too little than to attempt more than can be accomplished. Remember that every failure upon our part, no matter how trifling, becomes a sermon against us in the mouths of our enemies.

As a thorough organization is the foundation of all our work, I will first ask your attention in that direction. Some amendments to our laws are indispensable.

Sections 6 and 7, of Art. I, of the By-Laws, should be so amended as to conform to Sec. 2, Article VII, of the Revised Constitution of the National Grange. Sec. 6, of the same article, should be so amended as to require the Secretary to give bonds.

There seems to be a necessity for a law fixing the time that shall intervene between the rejection of a candidate for membership and such time he, or she, shall be permitted to make another application. This is a matter that seems to have been entirely overlooked by the framers of the laws of this Grange. It certainly is only right that a candidate, after having been rejected, should be allowed to apply again. Good men and women are liable to be rejected through false impressions of their character, motives, or interests, and upon a second application the result might be entirely different, and a wrong corrected. A rejected candidate might change his interests, or reform, and thus become worthy of membership.

The Amended Constitution of the National Grange authorizes the establishment of County Granges in the Fifth Degree. These Granges are to take the place of the County Council, and have extended jurisdiction. "Dispensations for such District or County Granges, shall issue from the State Grange, and under such regulations as the State Grange may adopt." They are also organized under regulations established by the State Grange. It will be necessary for you to make the proper regulations, before our organization in Montana can organize and enjoy the advantages of these Fifth Degree Granges. In my opinion, this subject should be referred to a special committee.

There seems to be a necessity for the creation of a Contingent Fund, to be placed at the disposal of the Secretary; for the purpose of supplying his office with all needed supplies, and the other offices of the Grange with the necessary books, and stationery with properly printed headings.

There should be adopted a system of "blanks," but this, I presume will be proper work for your Executive Committee.

I would call your attention to the fact that, in our laws, "Withdrawal" is considered as though there was no difference between withdrawal and demit. This is certainly a defect in the law. Discrimination should be made between the two. In my mind, there is a broad difference. I cannot explain my position on this subject better than by quoting from Smedley's "Manual of Jurisprudence and Co-operation"; a work every Patron should possess.

Brother Smedley says: "A Demit simply disconnects a member from the particular Grange issuing the same, leaving him still a member of the Order. A Withdrawal severs his connection with the order wholly."

"A Withdrawal card is for the purpose of enabling a member, as above to retire from affiliation with the Order, and it is his certificate of voluntary retirement, or honorable discharge. It follows, then, that a person who has withdrawn has severed all connection with the Order."

"A Demit card, however, is to enable the member receiving it to transfer his membership from one Grange to another."

This quotation, I think, makes the question sufficiently plain.

I see that some of the State Granges have fixed the time of their annual meetings, so they closely follow the annual session of the National Grange. This course is recommended in other States, because the Annual Pass-word is given to the State Masters at the National meeting in November, and if a State Grange meets soon afterwards, all the Subordinate Masters of that State could receive the Annual Pass-word at the same time, and at the beginning of the year.

I mention this, because the propriety of changing our time of meeting has been suggested to me. After fully considering the matter, I am satisfied that our present time of meeting is the best that could be selected. It is between seeding and the time for irrigating, and farmers can then leave their work without much loss. If the time was changed to December or January, the inclemency of the weather would prevent many of the Sisters from attending.

The Annual Pass-word can be given to the Subordinate Granges by the proper officers visiting the Granges. These visits could be made at the same time very profitable to the Order.

It seems to me the interests of the Order might be advanced by authorizing our Worthy Lecturer to organize Granges, as in visiting the Granges in different parts of the Territory, it might often be convenient for him to perform the work of organization.

Something should be done to impress upon the minds of the members of Subordinate Granges the necessity of responding promptly and fully to all calls for statistical and other reports coming from the National Grange, Territorial Grange, or County Councils. This is a much needed support to those transacting the business of the Order, and should it be withheld, Patrons have but poor ground for complaint if but little is accomplished. There seems to be great indifference manifested in this matter.

A pressing need in the Executive Department is the establishment of some less laborious and more expeditious method of communication with Subordinate Granges and members of the Order than by written correspondence.

With this end in view, I would invite you to consider the expediency and feasibility of establishing a Periodical Official Circular or Bulletin, similar to the "Monthly Bulletin" of the Executive Committee of the State Grange of Wisconsin, a copy of which I have present. If this could be done, it would bring your Executive Department and Subordinate Granges into a direct communication that would be the means of disseminating much useful information in regard to questions of law, and order, and the general working of the Order, which would prove highly beneficial. I have thought it might be made self-sustaining in the Brotherhood; otherwise, I would not advise its adoption at present. I am not prepared to say that this enterprise is entirely practical, but thought it at least worthy of investigation.

In looking over the laws of the Territorial Grange, we are met by the noticeable fact that nowhere in those laws is there any provision whatever for compensating any of the officers for the time and labor expended in the discharge of their duties.

Thus far, our existence as an organization has depended, and to a great extent still depends, upon sacrifices made by a few individuals for the good of the many; but all past experience teaches that such a condition of life cannot long continue; that the burden of maintaining an association for a mutual benefit must be equally borne.

If I rightly remember, it was the prevailing feeling of the members at our meeting last September, that a fair compensation should be voted our Worthy Secretary for his services up to this time. This would be an act of simple justice, and I hope the matter may not be overlooked.

The duties of our Worthy Secretary *pro tem.* have been quite arduous. I believe he has faithfully performed those duties with an earnest good will. In placing his office, and the Grange, in working condition I believe more labor has been required of him than has been performed by all the other officers together.

I believe at this session a salary should be voted to the Secretary for the coming year.

I do not favor giving pay to any other officer for services rendered in the past; neither do I favor any fixed salary for any other officer for the coming year, unless it be a salary to the Worthy Treasurer. But when the Master, Lecturer, or District Deputies are called upon to perform labor away from home they should, in my opinion, receive fair daily pay and expenses. Your officers, like the most of the Brotherhood, have to put their own hands to the work of the farm and, to a great extent, are dependent upon their own labor for a livelihood; but as far as I am informed they have cheerfully made sacrifices for the good of the Order and earnestly performed their duties.

(Concluded next week.)