

Winkler Express Lines

A commercial trucking firm was started in Winkler in 1932. In 1939, Mr. John H. K. Dyck bought out the shareholders and took over the firm as Dyck's Transfer. Then in 1965 a further change of ownership occurred when Mr. Percy Enns purchased the transfer business. Winkler Express Lines now operate four tractor trailers, one tandem truck, and three small delivery vehicles. The trucking business now serves the town of Winkler, and the area of Stanley Municipality south to the U. S. boundary since 1967 when Stanley Transfer was purchased by the firm. It offers daily express and livestock service to and from Winnipeg. When the terminal and offices on Main Street were vacated, the firm moved to new quarters on Centennial Street in Winkler's Industrial Park. In April, 1973, Mr. R. D. Epp purchased 51% of the shares of Winkler Express Lines.

CO-OP

The story of Winkler Co-op Service (1959) Ltd. since its inception in 1942, portrays much courage and vision by the founders of the organization.¹⁰

The first meeting to consider the organization of a Co-op Store was held in the Calder School on Feb. 9th, 1942, with the teacher, Mr. J. D. Adrian, as chairman. At this meeting a provisional Board of 7 men was elected to investigate further the possibilities of organizing a general store on a co-operative basis.

Elected to this Board were the following: J. G. Brown, Dr. C. W. Wiebe, Sam Wonnick, A. J. Friesen, W. G. Toews, H. D. Fehr and H. W. Wiebe. This provisional Board met on February 23 to elect Mr. W. G. Toews as president and Mr. A. J. Friesen as secretary.

The Board undertook to negotiate with Mr. C. H. Grunau for the purchase of his store. Mr. Grunau declared himself willing to sell his building for \$6,000 and the equipment for \$2,000.

At the next special meeting July 31, 1942, a decision as to when to take over the business was to be made. The first Board of Directors was here elected in H. W. Wiebe, J. G. Brown, John R. Wiebe, J. H. P. Reimer, C. C. Warkentin, A. J. Friesen (Morden), with Dr. C. W. Wiebe and G. J. Rempel as associate directors.

This Board was authorized to complete negotiations with Mr. Grunau and to go into business as soon as possible.

Mr. J. F. Peters and Mr. H. H. Janzen were hired as joint managers of Winkler Co-op Service.

The financial statement presented to the shareholders early in 1944, after 17 months of operation revealed that sales had amounted to \$190,000 with a gross margin of 19.82%. Expenses were less than 10% leaving a savings of almost 10%.

The year 1949 was probably the most difficult in the history of the association, for on June 20, 1949, fire completely destroyed the building, fixtures, and stock owned by the members of the Co-operative. The Board met at 8:00 a.m. the following Tuesday morning, June 21, 1949, and decided to call a shareholders meeting for July 2. The purpose of the meeting was to receive direction from the members, and to have a temporary building (28 x 40)

erected on the parking lot at once. A further meeting that same evening awarded the contract to erect a temporary store to Mr. P. L. Reimer of Blumstein.

The special shareholders meeting on July 2, 1949, voted in favour of erecting a new building to serve the needs of its members. Although there was a drop in sales the year of the fire, sales were back to normal the following year. In 1959 the decision to purchase the Stanley Produce building on Main Street, two doors south of the Co-op Store, was made. This building was to house the Hardware department in order to relieve the overcrowded conditions in the main building. The Hardware building was enlarged in 1960, only a year after it was purchased.

The increasing pressure for floor space is obvious when we note that in the ten-year period from 1954-64, sales increased threefold from \$223,000 to \$667,000. By 1962 over-crowding again reached the point where plans were drawn up to close the back lane and extend the building westward from 364 Main Street. Then in 1964 plans were changed and the property then known as Monarch Lumber Yard, was purchased where on June 10, 1965, a new modern \$145,000 shopping centre was opened at the south-west corner of Mountain Avenue and Main Street. The Board of directors of Winkler Co-op Service that had supervised the building of the new Centre was composed of the following: B. D. Enns, president; Arthur Warkentin, vice-president; G. G. Siemens, secretary; O. R. Gruener; Frank L. Enns; John W. Trinke; John J. Peters; Frank Thiessen; and Jacob J. Hamm.

Sales have increased steadily and the total volume since inception had reached 8 million dollars by 1970; savings were over \$400,000 and cash returned to the members over \$200,000. The annual payroll having a total of 28 employees, now exceeds \$118,000 annually. The services that the Winkler Co-op Store now offers to its 2,300 members and to the community, include groceries, produce, meats, dry-goods, shoes, hardware and furniture. The present manager, Mr. H. W. Bergen, was engaged by the store on July 10, 1948.

In 1969, the two Boards, Winkler Co-op Service and Stanley Consumers Co-operative, decided to place both organizations under one management, to provide for better and more economical operations.

Stanley Consumers which was incorporated in 1941, has seen a continuous growth as sales from 1941 to 1956 totalled \$2,175,459.00, to an annual sales volume now exceeding \$1,000,000. At the present time they employ 25 people and have an annual payroll of \$111,170. Their present membership stands at 1170, offering services in bulk fuels, garage, farm implements, fertilizers and lumber and building supplies.