

## **Friesen & Wiebe Building Supplies and Construction**

One of the bigger building supply establishments in Winkler is a relatively new organization started in April of 1968 in temporary quarters on Provincial Highway No. 32. The business grew so rapidly that in November of the same year, the owners moved to their present location, purchasing Country Lumber Yard at 570 Centennial Street. Abe Wiebe, one of the founders of Friesen and Wiebe Building Supplies Ltd., is well qualified in the building trade, having owned and operated a lumber yard and saw-mill in Paraguay, South America. Moving to Canada in 1967, he worked at a local lumber yard for a year and formed a partnership with John Friesen.

## **Prairie Cabs**

The "Prairie Cab", built on the prairie for prairie weather, has become synonymous with farming in Manitoba. Mr. P. L. Reimer, owner of the moderate sized operation, started production in 1968 after he sold the John Deere farm implement dealership in Winkler. Converting the buildings at 358 - 6th Street to a manufacturing operation, he began producing tractor and combine cabs for the prairie markets. Employing a staff of four, their production grew by leaps and bounds, with sales reaching all the corners of the Manitoba and North Dakota markets.

## **Winkler Real Estate & Insurance Ltd.**

In 1950 Mr. Fred Rietze purchased the Insurance business from D. J. Loeppky. At this time he was also a partner with his brother Harold in the Bowling and Billiard Business on Mountain Avenue west of the present site of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He continued his bowling and billiard business until it was destroyed by fire in 1961. The insurance business was continued in the building next to the Harvest Inn, and in the same year Mr. Rietze purchased the Winkler Real Estate and Insurance business from Albert Schulz. This became his first venture in the Real Estate business. Shortly after, the Winkler Theatre building was purchased which was remodelled and he moved his business to 334 Main Street.

In 1969 he incorporated his business under Winkler Real Estate and Insurance Ltd. and is the president of the company. His son Randy has been working with him since 1968. Mr. Rietze has served on the Winkler Council for 6 years, and acted as Chairman of the Winkler Town Planning Committee. He is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, serving as elder, treasurer and trustee for the last 30 years. Mr. Rietze is very active in promoting Sports activities.

## **Hildebrand Agencies**

Hildebrand Agencies located at 236 Main Street is one of Winkler's newer business establishments, as only recently, Mr. Bill Hildebrand, former owner of Winkler Furniture, purchased the business from Kroeker Realty. Mr. Hildebrand has had many years of experience in

dealing with the public and has been active in community service as United Way Campaign Chairman.

## **Wiebe Funeral Homes Limited**

Wiebe's Funeral Home, with head offices located in Winkler, celebrated its 21st year of operation during Manitoba's Centennial year. Mr. Nick Wiebe, the undertaker and owner went into the funeral business in 1949, after receiving his Embalmer's License in Toronto. He came to Winkler and purchased the funeral home then owned by Frank J. Dyck. A few years later (1935) a branch was opened in Altona with his brother Hank serving as manager.

A further expansion took place in 1955, when through a partnership arrangement with the late Alex Minty, the business expanded into the town of Morden. Five years later (1960), a new modern funeral home was built in Winkler on 8th Street. Then in 1964, they purchased the Pine View Chapels in Morden, making Wiebe Funeral Homes Ltd. the largest funeral service in southern Manitoba.

## **Kroeker Seeds**

Abram A. Kroeker, formerly of Winkler and now a resident of East Kildonan, was one of six Manitobans to receive a Good Citizenship Award at the awards banquet at the Tourist and Convention Association annual convention Saturday, November 21, 1970.

The Kroeker family has been closely associated with this community for most of the past century.

In 1876 grandfather Abram Kroeker with his young wife homesteaded on the quarter section of land which later became the "West End" of Winkler. Their first homesite was at what is now No. 238 on 14th Street, north of the Salem home, and they were thus Winkler's first residents.

Ever since those pioneering days, and through the following decades which saw the building of the railroad, the establishment of a community, and the growth of this community to its present eminence the Kroekers have been a part of its agricultural scene.

In 1928, Abram Arthur Kroeker and his family began farming six miles south-east of Winkler. To solve the problems created by drouth and depression, he diversified his farming operations with a succession of new ventures: in 1931, corn growing for grain; in 1933, seed corn production; and in 1936, Western Canada's first corn-drying kiln. Also, in these and later years potatoes, forage crops, seed grain, cattle, hogs and onions were added. As time passed, the ventures and innovations which had been considered daring, proved to be sound, and many were eventually and successfully adopted by other farmers in the area.

Today, two associated family companies carry on the farming and agribusiness tradition: A. A. Kroeker & Sons Ltd., operate farms in the Winkler area and are engaged in the production of table, seed and processing potatoes, onions, turnips, hogs and cattle, with branch operations (under irrigation) at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, and Outlook, Saskatchewan. Kroeker Seeds Limited serves the farming community of the area as a