CHAPTER V

Government and Sponsorship of the Winter Shows

Webster's dictionary defines the word govern "to guide or to direct or to decide." Further, the word govern-
ment is defined as "the act or process of managing, especially referring to a govern-
ing body or organization." Certainly, in 1910 the guiding force and direct-
ing body or organization of the first annual Short Course and Farm Crop Show was Superintendent C.G.
Selvig and the staff of the Northwest School and Experiment Station. By the time the second year rolled around, citizen-leaders in business and in the professions in Crookston joined the University staff.

The history of the guiding and governing organization which planned and operated the Winter Shows each year is a story of vision for the future, of courage to try something new. There were voices among the agricultural leaders which suggested that a strong agriculture could not develop in the Red River Basin unless there were livestock. Consequently, the Dairymen's Association, the Poul-
trymen's Association and the Red River Valley Livestock Breeders were among the earliest commodity groups to become associated with the Show. Even though a livestock show in midwinter was a question mark, livestock farmers needed every help available to successfully raise livestock in the rugged winters out on the prairie. The Crops Show generated wide interest. As a result, a special organization, the Red River Valley Development Association, was set up in 1914. This group had representatives from each of the ten counties and was the first association to give financial aid. They adopted the Farm Crops Show and built wide regional support. They scoured the countryside and secured top-level premiums. Until 1920 it was this Red River Valley Development Association which was the guiding and governing body of the Winter Shows. Other commodity groups were cooperating but weren't providing governing service to the annual Short Course and Farm Crop Show. The building of the new buildings in downtown Crookston brought on new problems. The nature of the Red River Valley Development Association did not provide for owning buildings nor could the modest appropriations provided by each county be used for constructing buildings.

The Red River Valley Livestock Association was beginning to come alive through the efforts of agricultural leaders who realized the importance of livestock as part of the future farming scene. County breeding associations had formed in the early part of the decade, and a Red River Valley Livestock Breeders Association was organized in 1914 at the short course. In 1917 this group reorganized at a Development Association meeting in Warren and were formally incorporated in 1918 under the laws of the State of Minnesota as the Red River Valley Livestock Association, Inc. It became the only organization cooperating with the Winter Shows which could own property. When the push came to erect buildings and facilities in the immediate area of the new armory, therefore, the Red River Valley Livestock Association took on that task.

The leadership of the Livestock Association and of the Development Association included many of the same people. For nearly four decades, 20's, 30's and 40's and even extending into the 50's, there was a strong cross-linking of directorships between the Winter Shows board of managers and the government of the Red River Valley Livestock Association. A quick look at the old premium books for those decades will show the name of a University staff member as president of both organizations. The livestock association became the leading cooperator in the fund drive for the first two buildings: the livestock pavilion in 1918 and the big livestock barn in 1919. The third building, which was built in 1920, met with some internal differences among the cooperating groups and with the post-World War I recession. It began to dawn upon leaders of the Winter Shows that the title to the Red River Valley Winter Shows facilities by a single commodity group might well be providing the shows with some problems.

Consequently, the government of the Winter Shows took on a new name in 1920, the Winter Shows Board of Managers, and from that time the government of the exposition repre-

We Salute the Red River Valley Winter Shows on their 75th Anniversary!

117 West Robert • Crookston, MN