

# THE ENTERPRISE

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### The Weak Spot In The System

Some timely advice is offered continually by many in the proper marketing of farm products. The extreme has been almost reached in fancy packaging and kid-glove handling, but there's precious little that has been done to narrow the price-margin-between-producer-and-consumer.

Sweet potatoes sell for around 1.6 cents a pound in Martin County. The same potatoes or ones similar in quality and grade are sold across the retail counter in New York at the rate of 19 cents for three pounds. The farmer is told in so many words that he can take the 1.6 cents or let his old potatoes rot, the consumer is told in so many words to pay six and one-third cents a pound for sweet potatoes or go sweet-potato hungry.

The in-between man is not being accused of robbery, for there are costs to be incurred in handling, shipping and trucking. But when compared with the returns the farmer gets and the amount the consumer pays, those costs are entirely out of line. Transporters often get more for hauling an article than the producer actually receives for it. There is no willingness on the part of the transporter to accept a rate in keeping with the price the producer receives. And yet in another section of the country, the transporter will haul another article at a lower rate to meet competition. Such a proposal to harmonize prices and costs has received no attention. We merely shut our eyes, put something in the ground here and open our eyes when it comes out there ready for the consumer.

The marginal price has a peculiar way of acting. Observed since 1913, the spread has had a tendency to increase through normal periods, depression periods, war periods and periods marked by uncertainty. The only break in the trend is noticed in the early thirties.

Back in 1919 the farmer received \$267 for a given amount of food, the consumer paying \$407, a price spread of \$203. In 1929, the spread had reached \$220. About ten years later the spread had dropped to \$185.

Price margins are necessary in the handling of manufactured goods, but there is reason to believe that labor, as a whole, is receiving hardly a subsistence wage while the final purchaser of the manufactured article is at the end of a wide price spread.

In recent years the farmer has taken progressive steps to place a better food on the retail counter. But as fast as he moves in that direction, the price spread follows in his track to gobble up any price advantage that better marketing may have provided.

The Martin County farmer can wish his sweet potatoes, wrap them individually in wax paper, pack them in cushioned containers and place them on the retail counter, and any price advantage he may gain will be eventually eaten up.

The weak spot in the farming business is getting the food from the farm to the consumer.

### Remains Uncorrected

The problem surrounding the listing and collection of the intangible tax is far from solved even after the efficient State Revenue Department took it over virtually lock, stock and barrel several years ago.

It would appear now that the Raleigh boys were more anxious to get their bills in the intangible pie than they were to effect a fair listing of intangible properties and a reasonable collection of the particular tax.

At one time the successful application of the tax rested upon the honesty and fairness of the people. That the system was a miserable failure is not disputed. But observations these past few years indicate that the State Revenue Department has only muddled a bad situation, grabbed part of the bag contents and returned to its den in Raleigh to give struggling towns and counties the horse laugh.

If the 1941 legislature will render the counties and towns a service, the lawmakers will look into the system and take action. At the present time the system is not at all convenient for the holders of mortgages, notes and other items falling in the intangible property list.

"Six times I have tried to list a small note, and I can't find anyone to receive it," an aged woman who holds an interest in the little-revenue bearing paper, said a few days ago.

Accept the new tax schedule for intangibles if you will, but the big problem of listing remains unsolved. It is quite apparent that the issue will be placed fairly and squarely before the property owner when he lists his real and personal holdings, than it is under the present system.

### Dispelling The Fog

We learn from the "Washington-Merry-Go-Round" that the famous Glenn Frank Platform Committee, after three years of pondering, is making a report. No, it is not a Republican platform—just a survey of conditions for the use of the Republican National Convention.

Its first great discovery is that it was not the New Deal that halted the depression, but Herbert Hoover. He had the depression licked in 1932. It was the wicked Democrats who disrupted his program by electing Franklin D. Roosevelt.

It should be noted that during the eight months following after Mr. Hoover had the panic down for the count, and before his successor took office, there were among the evidences of returning prosperity these happenings:

A thousand banks closed their doors. There were 20,000 business failures. Unemployment went to fifteen million—the all-time high.

The National income dropped to forty billion dollars for the year.

In the first eight months of Roosevelt, after the banking moratorium:

There were 154 bank failures—all or nearly all those that were not deemed sound enough to reopen.

Eight thousand fewer commercial failures than in the Hoover period.

Two and a half million of the unemployed back at work.

The national income had jumped two and a half billion dollars—it reached nearly seventy billions last year.

Likewise it was Mr. Hoover who first acknowledged the obligation of Government to relieve those in need. It is curious that nobody—least of all, the needy—knew anything about this. We are forced to the conclusion that there were nearly 23,000,000 chuckleheads in the United States in 1932 who did not realize that the depression was licked and that they were condemning themselves to diabolical ruin—and fewer than sixteen million wise enough to understand that their salvation lay in re-electing Mr. Hoover.

For the rest of it, the suggested platform—which is not a platform—is as straddley as anything Senator Vandenberg could think of in his highest moments.

The New Deal's relief measures are "extravagant, politics-ridden, unsound and discriminatory." They are not even new—being based on obsolete theories of the "least enlightened leadership of Big Business" forty years ago.

However, agriculture must be protected. In the crystal clear language of the alleged report, though the A.A.A. is bitterly bureaucratic, "until the basic policies here suggested (only they failed to suggest the basic policies) begin to register their effect, the necessity of some form of direct subsidy to agriculture to secure effective parity and control the impact of surpluses on farm prices must be recognized."

And so it goes on. Business must be regulated, security issues must be carefully guarded but business should be given ample freedom to take risks. Everybody ought to be happy about the question of Secretary Hull's reciprocity treaties, because nobody can tell whether the Glenn Frankers are for them or against them.

On taxes they are quite clear. They want to reduce the higher individual surtaxes, and put them on people in the middle brackets. Everybody must sympathize with the distressed multi-millionaires. A pathetic case was recited recently when one of these panting refugees complained that after the Government had taken its toll, he had a bare \$800,000 a year to live on.

The columnists credit many of the ideas of the survey to the advice and influence of ex-President Hoover. To that extent the survey is rather fitting, for what the G.O.P. would like to see is a return to the good old days, before any of this nonsense of public service and consideration to the underprivileged came along to clutter up the convenient processes under which the great fortunes of America directed the Government, and pretty much everything else.

However, it is perhaps not quite fair to jeer too much at the bombastic side-stepping of this extraordinary group.

Their output cannot be frankly Conservative, without kissing goodbye to the Liberal Middle West. They dare not be Liberal because that would check the flow of the river of fat checks they must have to float them during the coming campaign.

They have to do something, so they are forced to the rather sad expedient of telling how bad the Democrats have been doing and throw in a lot of words that mean only: "Let us have the Government and the delayed millennium will be on us in a rush."—Charles Michelson, Director of Publicity, Democratic National Committee.

Neglected headlamps will lose as much as one-third of their lighting efficiency during the first year.

# SPRING

At Belk-Tyler's Opening

## Ladies' Spring Dresses

Spring has come to Belk-Tyler's! A large selection of new spring dresses in all sizes and styles and all the colorful patterns to make this a happier season. Youthful flares, and all the other latest models. See them today.

**\$4.95 and \$5.95**

New Arrivals In Ladies' Spring Dresses

You can't afford to miss these outstanding values in silk and novelty weaves. All the newest spring colors and styles for you to select from. See these today.

**\$1.98 and \$2.98**

### New Arrivals In LADIES' SHOES

Comfortable, becoming shoes in high, medium and low heels in patent, navy blue, brown and white combinations in the latest spring styles. Belk-Tyler's is shoe headquarters.

**\$1.98 and \$2.95**

### Ladies' NEW HATS FOR SPRING

Hats are more feminine than ever. Spring goes right to the head in our lovely straws and pastel felts with gay flowers and veils for trimmings. Select yours right away.

**98c and \$1.98**

## Spring SUITS

"Suit" yourself at Belk-Tyler's in any wanted style. Whether it's stripes, pastel colors, navy or black, we have the colors and styles for you, in tweeds, flannels and novelty weaves. Hurry down and make your selection.

**\$4.98 - \$5.95**  
**\$7.95 - \$9.95**

## Spring Coats

Large array of all styles, patterns and sizes just arrived in spring coats for you to choose from. We have them to fit every figure and in the most becoming and newest styles. Start your spring outfit right with a coat from BELK-TYLER'S.

**\$5.95 \$7.95 and \$9.95**

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