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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

PRODUCTS GOING TO WASTE.

It's a peculiar situation when there is general complaint of the "high cost of living" and at the same time millions of dollars worth of food products going to waste because producers can not find a market for them that affords a profitable price. The writer has within the past six weeks seen fields of fine cabbage which were decaying, also fields of melons that were also going to waste, and in the mountain section millions of bushels of fine fruit will decay in the orchards, all because the producers can not get prices sufficient to justify them in gathering them and hauling to market. In the meantime consumers in towns and cities continue to complain of the high cost of living. Certainly there is something radically wrong about a system of distribution that causes products to go to waste while consumers complain that they can't get these products at a reasonable price.

THE PACK HORSE OF CIVILIZATION.

The farmer is the pack horse of civilization. He is systematically robbed of the profits of his labor. Modern commercialism leaves him just enough for existence, because modern, respectable (?) commercialism pirates do not want to destroy their victim. If thirty-five cents out of the consumer's dollar proves to be insufficient to preserve the farmer, commercialism might allow him forty cents or even fifty cents of the consumer's dollar rather than see him put entirely out of business, for it is his labor and his products that furnish the spoils of the system. Modern commercialism is kind enough to encourage greater productive effort on the part of farmers, but when his energy and effort result in a yield that is greater than the demand, nobody is the loser except the farmer, and he must see the result of his energy wasted.

FAULTY DISTRIBUTION.

With an economical system of feeding the markets the hungry in towns and cities would be better fed and better clothed. They would at least be able to pay the cost of transporting those products that are now going to waste on the farm, plus a small profit to the grower. But the army of superfluous distributing agents refuse to handle farm products when the price gets so low that it does not afford all the toll gates the usual rake-offs, hence we see products decaying in the field because the so-called market refuses to handle them. It is, indeed, a faulty system of distribution that refuses to let products travel that way unless the price is high enough to pay the usual tributes. Even the philanthropic railroad officials, after running "free agricultural trains" to

dispense instruction on growing bigger crops, offer no relief, and seeing products going to waste all along their lines, they refuse to make any reduction in freight rates so that those products may be transported to the hungry multitudes in the towns and cities.

THE FARMER MUST CO-OPERATE.

With all political parties ignoring the interests of farmers, referring in platforms to our interests in such a way as to promise nothing definite, it is worse than folly for the American farmers to look for relief from political influences that are under the absolute domination of the special interests. So the only available remedy is in the hands of the farmers themselves and must be applied through business co-operation in selling and buying. When the Monmouth County (New Jersey) Farmers Exchange began business it had been costing fifty-nine per cent to transport their potatoes from producer to consumer. In four years they reduced this cost to one and a half per cent. When the orange growers of California were forced to see their oranges go to decay for want of a profitable market they cured the trouble by co-operative marketing. When "the system" was demanding all the profits of the onion growers of the gulf coast of Texas those growers got together and applied the principle of co-operative marketing to their business and thus prevented bankruptcy, and turned what had become an unprofitable industry into a profitable one. If co-operative marketing can be established successfully in certain localities, in competition with the organized "system" that had been robbing them, our cotton growers, tobacco growers, peanut growers and fruit growers, can certainly apply the principle of co-operative marketing to their business, if they will become as much concerned about good selling as they are about producing bumper crops.

LOCAL CO-OPERATION FIRST.

We have frequently called attention to the necessity of local co-operation first. It is an empty dream to think of starting in with county co-operation before we learn to apply the principle of co-operation locally, and most assuredly we can not hope to co-operate as a State until we learn to co-operate as a county. In organizing Local Unions it would have been better to have made the taking of stock in a co-operative enterprise a condition of membership than to organize under the idea of general co-operation, which can never be attained except through local co-operation first. Of course, to conduct an organizing campaign under a definite constructive business policy would not enlist the numerical strength that we have obtained through the rather aimless and indefinite policy, but practical co-operation would have been established much faster and there would have been less inactivity, indifference and re-action behind a constructive policy. In fact, it is becoming more and more apparent that we must adopt a constructive business policy in every county and establish local co-operation before we can hope to achieve the results hoped for by the Farmers' Union. In his last article on "Rural Co-operation in Island," Mr. Clarence Poe says:

"Before leaving the subject of these Irish co-operative societies, one other thought comes into mind that cannot be too strongly emphasized—and that is, that in this matter, as in all others, we must learn to crawl before we can walk. We have had in the South too many big, high-sounding schemes for financing the South's billion-dollar cotton crop, and other such gigantic schemes, and not enough attention has been given to local business organizations wherein the principle of co-operation might be tried out and a way prepared for effective co-operation in larger things. This is a fact which Mr. E. E. Miller has frequently urged in The Progressive Farmer. My observation in Ireland has convinced me more strongly than ever before of the correctness of his teaching. What we

need in the South, what we need in our Farmers' Union, is a determined effort to organize local co-operative creameries, poultry societies, fruit growers' and truck growers' societies, co-operative credit societies, etc., and through these neighborhood organizations develop the business qualities and experience which will enable us to grapple with the mightier problem of financing the South's great staple crop."

STOP, READ, ACT AT ONCE.

This has been a very strenuous summer campaign thus far. All the available lecture force has been called into action to try to meet the demand for union speakers at union rallies. The calls are still coming from every section of the State, some asking for dates as late as the middle of October. The officers of the State Union have traveled day and night, traversing the State from the mountains to the sea and from Virginia to South Carolina, preaching the doctrines of the union, better farming, co-operative marketing and economic buying by means of the county and State warehouses, and a better system of education.

This propaganda work has cost and is costing the State Union a lot of money in addition to the laborious work entailed upon the men doing it. I am sure that the men on the firing line of battle have never had a thought of giving up the fight for the cause we all love. But sometimes we can not refrain from asking the question: What are we accomplishing by all this labor and expenditure of money? Are results tangible, permanent? Are the people really responding to our appeals in their behalf? Is this work having the effect desired, or must it all be done over again next year? Are we getting real constructive, enduring results that will in the end reform the present method of selling and buying?

I am going to let the loyal members of the union from every section of the State answer these questions by their actions. Not by words. The State Union has incorporated a State warehouse company in accordance with instructions given by the last State Convention. This company has decided to establish warehouses in Greensboro and Raleigh, to be known as central warehouses, for co-operative marketing and buying. Several months ago an option was obtained on a very valuable warehouse property in Greensboro. This option will expire about the first of September. The owner will hardly agree to renew it as he has already been offered more for the property by business men who know its value. There is not yet money in sight to take up the option. What are we going to do about it? This property is renting now for more than 8 per cent interest on the option price. It will very likely double in value in six or eight years. Will we save this property to our system of warehouses, or will we fail to grasp the opportunity and let some wide awake business man own it? I want to appeal to every loyal union man who can possibly raise ten dollars to pay for one share of stock to send it at once to our State Treasurer, E. C. Faires, Aberdeen, N. C., and he will mail certificate of stock. Every dollar received will be invested in valuable real estate that will not only be worth the price paid for it, but will increase in value every year. You will also be helping to establish a co-operative warehouse system of selling and buying, which must be done if we ever free ourselves from the present iniquitous system of marketing and distribution.

I am sending thirty dollars to pay for three shares of stock. I would take more but I have not the money to spare just now. How many will you take? I mean you, the man who is reading these lines. Ten dollars from each thirty thousand members would give us a volume of money sufficient to dot North Carolina with warehouses from Currituck to Cherokee. But please do not conclude that there will be enough money

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