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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

STRENGTHEN UP THE LOCAL UNION.

It should be the purpose of the membership to make the Local Union the best asset in the community. In the beginning of the New Year a committee on delinquents should be appointed to see those who, through neglect, have temporarily dropped out. Let them know that your Union needs them and that they also need the Union. "We have never had many delinquents on our list," writes the President of a Local Union, "because our committees on delinquents are always alert and active when needed." That's the way to keep up the proper Union spirit and prevent a dropping out of members that would otherwise occur.

In our dreams of co-operation in its larger meaning we should not get away from the idea that the unit of our organization is the Local Union and the possibility of profitable neighborhood co-operation is greater than we realize. In attempting to get the benefits of co-operation through a county or State organization we frequently overlook the possible benefits of co-operation through our own local groups.

DEVELOP THE EDUCATIONAL FEATURE.

Keep it in mind that the Farmers' Union is first of all an educational organization, and at every meeting of the Local Union this feature should be made prominent. Arrange a program for every meeting, by selecting special topics for discussion and appoint some member to lead the discussion. Give each member a part to perform. If you produce activity on the part of each individual member you'll have a wide-awake and progressive local organization and there will be no dull, dragging meetings. Driving co-operative business deals that put money into the pockets of the members is always attractive, but there are other things of value besides dollars and cents. The educational and social feature, properly developed, ought to appeal strongly to every progressive and public-spirited farmer. It brings about a closer relationship that makes rural life worth living.

CIRCULATING LIBRARIES.

In order to develop well the educational feature and make it attractive some helps will be needed and here is where the necessity for a farm library, owned by the Local Union, comes in. Such library should be supplied with standard books on scientific farming and scientific marketing, and especially should it embrace such volumes as the History of Co-operation by Holyoake, and those written by Sir Horace Plunkett, William Maxwell and others giving a history of co-operation in Ireland, Scotland, Denmark and other European countries

where co-operation has become a part of the life of people living in the rural districts. The local secretary can be in charge of the literature belonging to the Union and lend the volumes to the members as requested. This circulating literature might embrace all the farm bulletins published and sent out free by the Department of Agriculture, so that in discussing any farm topic you will have a bulletin dealing with that particular subject. And after the reading habit begins to grow some of the standard magazines may appropriately be added to the Local Union library.

EDUCATION THE GREAT NEED.

No class of people in North Carolina stand in greater need of more information than farmers, and nothing hinders the progress of the Farmers' Union along co-operative business lines more than ignorance among its members. Outside of actual experience (which is a costly school to learn in) there are two ways of getting information, namely, from lectures and from reading. An occasional lecture arouses more enthusiasm than quiet reading, and as a means of getting information it is a good substitute for those who are too mentally lazy to read, but it is not as lasting in results. Farmers will become better farmers and better business men just as fast as they increase their knowledge of the things they deal with and of the influences that affect their interests, and no faster. As a rule, the member who is quickest to become delinquent in the Farmers' Union and drops out "because they ain't doin' anything" is one who is too stupid and mentally lazy to read and think for himself. Our greatest need is to make our Local Unions' neighborhood schools for progressive organized farmers, supplied with appropriate reading matter, so that discussions in the meetings may be intelligent and lively.

NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE.

There is no better agency through which to stimulate the right kind of neighborhood pride—the kind that breathes with better social spirit, and the spirit of progress that uplifts, than the Local Union, and any school district or neighborhood that maintains a strong and active Local Union ought to feel like congratulating itself. On the other hand, a district that is too narrow and selfish to maintain an organization for its own uplift has little reason to point with pride to its prospective achievements. There should be determined and persistent effort among Farmers' Union folks in North Carolina to make the Local Unions more interesting and more efficient this year than ever before. If we will keep the Local Unions strong and active we need have no fears as to the County and State Unions. Success with co-operation in larger groups will come as fast as you are ready for it. It cannot be achieved in larger and broader fields until the principle has been planted and well grounded locally. If we have been dreaming too much about the possibility of co-operation in larger groups, before we have learned to apply the principle in smaller groups we can afford to wake up and first comprehend the elementary lessons at home. When we do this we will be building upon an enduring foundation.

THE FERTILIZER EXPENSE.

The commercial fertilizer expense account on the farm towers high above the other expense accounts. Using it without soil tests, is at best, a leap into the dark, as without soil tests we cannot use a fertilizer mixture intelligently and economically, for we cannot know what element of plant food is lacking in the different kinds of soil. Our next best thing to soil tests through chemical analysis is experimental tests which we can conduct on our own farms. Here, again, is presented another good field of action for the Local Union. If each member makes his experimental tests with different home mixtures an "experience meeting" after harvest, in which results are reported in de-

tail, cannot fail to be beneficial to every member. With the cash outlay for fertilizers in North Carolina running up above twelve million dollars annually, it is worth while to exert every effort possible to make its application judiciously.

HOME MIXING IS BEST.

The best farmers in every county have for years been doing their own fertilizer mixing at home, because they get it at approximately twenty-five per cent less cost and they also have the opportunity of supplying only the elements of plant food which practical agricultural tests have shown to be lacking in the soils of different fields. Home mixing, therefore, by the intelligent farmer means economy both in the original purchase price and also the saving that comes by withholding applications of costly elements of plant food which the soil does not need. By intelligent home-mixing farmers of North Carolina can save something like three million dollars annually on the purchase price of fertilizers, and by paying cash for the purchases it means at least another million dollars saved to the pockets of farmers. The usual ten per cent that is added to make the credit price is for an account that runs only six months and is, therefore, equivalent to twenty per cent interest per year. Nobody but a farmer could stand that kind of interest long, and stay in business, and the farmer stands it only because he has carelessly drifted into that suicidal method of doing business.

BETTER RURAL CREDITS NEEDED.

And this reminds us again of the need of better rural credits. A merchant can deposit notes and other evidences of debt as collateral at the banks and get his loan without even giving a mortgage. Favoritism is not only shown the merchants and manufacturers in making loans, but the few farmers who have saved up a little surplus cash place it in the bank at a low rate of interest and in turn it is loaned to the time merchant who buys mules and supplies to sell to less fortunate farmers whose notes and crop liens he deposits with banks to secure more loans (of farmers' money) to buy more supplies to sell at high time prices that amount, in many instances, to five times the legal rate of interest, and he again takes more farmers' notes to deposit as collateral for more loans, etc. Beautiful system, isn't it—for commercialism. If notes and liens from farmers of limited means are good collateral after the merchant gets them, why are not such evidences of debt good collateral when presented by a farmer whose credit is not doubtful? The country is waking up to see the necessity for better rural credits none too soon. We may expect nothing soon, however, from the politicians in the way of remedial legislation. Co-operative credit societies seem to be the only way out.

The mystery of all the sin and misery lying in life remains the same mystery still, whether we accept it in cheerful faith as to its ultimate and hidden good, or whether we mourn over its hopeless and irremediable sadness. The cloud is there, but so is the sun above it.—Ethel Lynn Linton.

FARMERS' UNION POETRY.

(Continued from page 1.)

When them New York banks set the style,
An' then I'm glad to let it keep
My money, 'cause my money's cheap.

But let a big bank quit, an' say!
Then I can't get my bank to pay
Me dimes for dollars. 'Taint becuz
There's fewer dollars than there wuz;
'Tain't that I need 'em that I set
On that bank's steps an' swear an' sweat;
It ain't becuz there's few or many;
It's just becuz all folks is henny!
An' we insist on doin' what
The rest is doin', right or not.
No use to drive, no use to coax—
So drat them hens! an' drat us folks!