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J. Z. GREEN, Marshville, MRS. E. D. NALL, Santord, - - Home Department

C, A, EURY, - - - General Manager

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Raleigh, N. C. -

January 16, 1913.

EDITORIAL COMMENT.

CO-OPERATIVE BUYING.

In a small town in middle section of the State the other day a group of farmers were seen out in the wagon lot busily engaged in "co-operative distribution." It was rather a novel sight in that town—a crowd of farmers with wrapping paper running a little temporary open-air retail store, unpacking things from the original full cases in which the goods were shipped and dividing to each his portion as subscribed for. It was the members of a Local Union who had come ten miles from their homes in the country. The stock of goods which they handled amounted in value to something over four hundred dollars and embraced such things as soda, axle grease, baking powders, sugar, flour, etc., which the local trade agent had bought from a local merchant after "trying the market" and giving each merchant a chance to drive the deal-if his prices touched bottom, and the wise local trade agent took the precaution not to let one dealer know what figures he has from other dealers, but assured each dealer that he would get the business if his prices were most attractive, quality of goods being duly considered. On some of the goods purchased the saving amounts to nearly fifty per cent. "There's one crowd of farmers who know how to co-operate," said a member of the firm from which they bought the goods. They didn't ask the merchant to take the goods out of the cases and wrap them up for each individual member, for that would have been a retail business. The members themselves went out in the wagon lot, opened their four hundred dollar stock of goods and did their own retail business. They paid no clerk hire, no house rent, no fire insurance, no interest on money It was simply an open-air retail business that existed for one hour only, but it served the purpose. And it wasn't a large Local Union-only fifteen members.

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"THEY AIN'T DOING ANYTHING."

Hundreds of men have quit the Farmers' Union because "they aint doin' arything." A fellow who sits down and nods and dreams in his Local Union, expecting somebody else to do something for him, without effort on his part, is the fellow who quits because "they ain't doin' anything." Sometimes a member drops out because he can't see any opportunity to get any benefits through co-operation, and yet opportunity exists all around him and he can't see it, or refuses to embrace it. Any group of farmers, who buy together through one man, can get concessions in prices, without even leaving his own town or village, which amount to a snug little sum on the purchases. These concessions in prices are not granted to individuals and they can not be obtained by individual purchasers, each buying in small amounts to be wrapped and handed over the counter by the merchant or his salesman. A salesman can deliver a case of soda as quickly as he can deliver a single pound of soda, and the time of the salesmen is a big item in the running expenses of the store. The fellow who persists in transacting his business face to face and refuses to permit the local trade agent to drive the deal for him, hasn't recognized the first essential principle of neighborhood co-operation and he is the kind of fellow who can't see any good in the Farmers' Union. If you have that kind in your Local Union you will do well to be patient with him and try to educate. He hasn't seen the light yet.

× FEWER ACRES AND SOIL BUILDING.

There is an appalling waste of energy and waste of labor in the cultivation of depleted soils. "Fewer acres with a System of Soil Building" is the most important subject relating to the producing side of the business of farming that can be discussed in Local Unions. Investments in soil building are needed on every farm more than any other reform in farming methods. The scarcity of labor and the high price of labor make it an economic necessity to improve the soil, so that we may get out products off fewer acres. The farmer who cultivates three acres to get what may be produced on one acres, is wasting two-thirds of his labor. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of depleted soil in North Carolina that ought to be used for pastures, or turned out to reproduce itself with timber. Better farming means fewer acres and more fertile acres.

* * PARCELS POST.

Referring to the Parcels Post bill, which is now in operation, Rural New Yorker makes the following sensible comment:

"We have never had any thought that this new system would revolutionize industry or country life all at once. It may take months or years to adapt it properly or get it into satisfactory working order. It is just the beginning of a new and useful transportation privilege which may be developed into a great and far-reaching benefit. We shall not join the chorus of snarls and criticisms which many who ought to know better are starting. True, the service which Congress has given us is inadequate, and not what we desired or deserved. We could easily pick a dozen holes in it. It is, however, all we could force the last Congress to give us, and we can, if we will, use it to prove all we have claimed for parcels post, and thus secure the unanswerable argument of facts when we demand a better system. We therefore urge all our friends to make a patient study of the system, and when they understand it make all possible use of it. We shall have what we want in time, and the way to it lies through proving the principle of parcels post in the present bill. It is unfortunate that some good people act as if they thought all their troubles were over when Congress passes some desired legislation. In fact, trouble really begins with such passage, for we must then come forward and ourselves do the part which Congress cannot do for us."

Still Alive and Active.

It was Charles Dickens, we believe, who wrote the description of "a very contentious gentleman who said it was his mission to be everybody's brother, but who appeared to be on terms of coldness with the whole of his large family." This same gentleman appears to be still living in certain sections of the country.

NOTICE TO COUNTY SECRETARY.

Please notify this office at once of any change of County Secretary that I may send the County dues and fees to the proper offi-E. C. FAIRES, Secretary-Treasurer. *cer. Aberdeen, N. C.

Improving the State Fair.

R. S. Curtis, Animal Hushandman, N. C. Agricultural Experiment Station.

Purpose of a State Fair.

The purpose of every fair, either county or State, should be educational. At least this should be the primary object of holding such an exhibition. The management should make the necessary provisions for the growth of the institution, which in reality it should be, the same as a State college of agriculture or any other educational institution. In the Northern and Western Fairs and in one of the Southern fairs especially, this idea is fully recognized. In a great many cases, however, State Fair organizations have not provided for the permanency and increase in the equipment such as buildings, streets, walks, etc.

What One State Fair is Doing.

As the writer is familiar with the conditions existing on the Iowa State Fair Grounds, a few figures will be given to show the rank and importance of that State institution. The management of the fair was originally vested in the State Agricultural Society. In 1886, the State Department of Agriculture in which the management of the fair is now vested, became a real live working organization. Fifty thousand dollars was provided by the General Assembly for the purpose of purchasing a suitable site for the necessary buildings and equipment. Two hundred and seventy acres of land were purchased, surveyed, landscaped, and laid out with a definite object in view. A large number of permanent buildings have been erected, the cost ranging from \$25,000 to \$75,000 each. Permanent sidewalks and pavements have also been laid to the principal parts of the grounds.

One of the striking features of this fair ground is the grouping of the buildings. This has been done in such a way that each department has its own territory allotted, provision being made for proper expansion. One portion of the ground, for example, is allotted to campers who desire to take advantage of the fair in connection with an annual outing. Several thousand people take advantage of this outing each season and are always bettered by the change and the educational features which the fair affords.

The receipts of this fair are used almost exclusively for running expenses, no attempt being made to make the organization a paying institution. Surplus money is used for the betterment of the grounds, buildings, and sanitation. Substantial appropriations by the State each year are used to erect permanent buildings. One of the last buildings provided was a steel and concrete grandstand which cost in the neighborhood of \$75,000.

Privileges and Attractions.

The attractions provided for a State Fair should be for the purpose of amusement and where possible educational. The attractions for the fair spoken of above consist not in frivolous amusements but rather things which are substantial and which lead to higher and better aims. For example, such an attraction as Armour's, Swift's, or Morris' six-horse teams, fire department races, life saving exhibitions, air-ship flights, and other amusements of like character are provided in the daily programs. So important is this question of attractions and privileges that the authorities have seen fit to eliminate from the grounds all canvassing newspaper agents. Separate booths are provided wherein each representative may solicit subscriptions and advertising matter, but this must be done within the booth. Visitors to the fair are absolutely free from molestation by these agents which at fairs in some States are a menace to the visitors. Some of the larger State fairs eliminate from the grounds all newspaper agents who give prizes with subscriptions of their paper.