



TAR HEEL SKETCHES.

BY J. Z. GREEN.

Editor Ashcraft, of the Monroe Enquirer, says: "Congress has a job on its hands in finding ways and means to reduce the high cost of living and at the same time make things we have to sell bring a high price." When you come to think about it, that is a pretty big job to undertake, isn't it? If reducing the high cost of living means 8-cent hen eggs, 15-cent hens, 6-cent cotton, 12-cent hams, etc., for farmers, the sooner we let the high cost of living alone the better it will be for the country.

For the life of me I have never seen anything in the high cost of living for farmers to worry over, except that too many needless middlemen take the profits of the farm. The consumers of the city can help remedy the trouble if they will organize as consumers and establish closer relationship with the farmers, pay cash for their purchases, dispense with small deliveries or 'phone orders, etc. This economic proposition isn't a legislative question. When a city consumer, who is in his right mind, will deliberately pay 65 per cent of the value of a product for the simple process of transferring it from producer to consumer, would he stultify himself by contending that "government" should come to his relief?

I lost an oat crop last year because I didn't put in my seed until the latter part of October and first of November. I had always seeded my oat crop about that time of the year and had, without exception, harvested good crops. But the winter of 1911-12 was so cold and there was so much rain, that it caused the oats to rot in the ground and I got no stand. I relate this experience to call attention to uncertainties which are not to contend with in other occupations. The element of uncertainty due to weather conditions, over which farmers have no control, make it impossible to succeed by any fixed rule, and regardless of the knowledge of farming, the man who depends upon the soil must, at times, meet with partial losses and sometimes total losses on account of unforeseen adverse weather conditions, and there is no way to entirely avoid them.

A young farmer who lives near me

is interested in better live stock. He ordered a 125-pound pig from Tennessee and the express company charged him nine dollars (\$9) for transporting that pig a distance of about three hundred miles, or a little over seven cents a pound. Last year I ordered a Guernsey calf shipped from Virginia and the express company held me up at this end of the line for sixteen dollars and ten cents! When I noticed a statement from an official of an express company the other day that the establishment of the parcels post had hit the express companies a hard lick, I was wondering how many folks had been hit hard licks by the express companies.

"It's unlawful to lend money in North Carolina for more than six per cent, but it's lawful to swap the money for merchandise and charge fifty per cent interest on the merchandise payable in money," said a farmer in a small town in the eastern part of the State. The thought was suggested by a group of wagons at the side door of a "time" mercantile establishment. It isn't anything unusual for a time merchant to charge 50 per cent interest on his merchandise, and it doesn't affect his standing in the Church just a little bit. We may be making a little advancement in some respects morally, but if there has been any reform in the "business morals" of the country it isn't indicated in commercial transactions.

While we are talking about "rural credits" it might be well to conduct a little educational campaign designed to teach farmers to use their own cash assets intelligently. It is a well-known fact that a large per cent of our farmers do not know what to do with surplus money when they happen to get a little ahead. So they deposit it in the banks at four per cent. The banks in turn lend it to the time merchants and the time merchants, being law-abiding citizens, refuse to lend it to less fortunate farmers in violation of the six per cent interest law, but invest it in groceries and then lend the groceries to the needy customer at the modest rate of from 30 to 50 per cent interest. Beautiful system, isn't it?—for the time merchant. Under this "system" the few farmers who, by denying their fami-

lies of many comforts and conveniences of life, manage to acquire a little cash surplus immediately turn it over to the time merchant to capitalize his private money-making business. This kind of "rural credit" system stands very much in need of reform.

With our very indefinitely defined purpose, and with numerous failures and much misdirected effort in trying to build co-operation from the top downward, it isn't anything but natural that in many localities there should be a falling off of members. In some rural vicinities peculiar environment and a lack of efficient local leadership make it impossible to maintain a local organization, and as a matter of course some Local Unions are on the suspended list. But I have been agreeably surprised this year to note the splendid growth in membership of some of the oldest Local Unions in the State. I confidently believe that if the State official family will get together upon the purpose to use the funds available for the promotion of local co-operative enterprises, organized upon a purely co-operative basis, North Carolina will not only hold the lead in all the States, but will take the lead in constructive Co-operation.

The mongrel goose is generally the result of a mating between a Canada gander and some dark colored domestic goose, usually an African or Toulouse. Sometimes these goslings are termed "mules" because of the fact that they are sterile. It is occasionally true that a mongrel goose when kept for two or more years will lay a few eggs, but there is no record that goslings have ever been hatched from eggs laid by a mongrel goose. It is difficult to fatten mongrels properly until the cool weather of fall when they fatten readily. They are never sold as green geese, being reserved for the Thanksgiving and Christmas trade.

The poultryman who follows a practical system does not complain of the work. System is a great labor saver in all occupations, and especially so in raising poultry. The man who has no regular method causes himself extra and unnecessary work, and it always "seems to pile up on him" at an inopportune time.