

TOBACCO SITUATION

The following is a statement of Congressman Harold D. Cooley, regarding the plight of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers:



CONG. HAROLD D. COOLEY

While I fully realize that England is engaged in a conflict of major proportions, I cannot believe that she is justified in imposing the embargo which makes the American farmer the first economic casualty of the war in which she is now engaged. We modified our Neutrality Law, lifted the Arms Embargo and provided for the sale of ammunitions and implements of war to England and other warring nations upon a cash and carry basis, and in taking this action we were not actuated by selfishness, but rather by a sincere desire to render some aid to the grand cause of Democratic Government. But it seems that England is forcing us to realize just how dependent a portion of our population is upon her trade and commerce. Unfortunately flue-cured tobacco farmers are dependent upon exports of their commodity to Great Britain, but I do not believe that we are even in the present situation completely helpless. We still have economic weapons which may well be used. Just how effectively we may be able to use these economic weapons remains, of course, to be seen.

While the real significant and permanent effect of the embargo is not yet fully understood or appreciated, it is plain to see that if the embargo is continued the action of Great Britain is a death blow to our tobacco farmers. It is my purpose, and I am sure that it is the purpose of all the other members of the North Carolina delegation to do everything within our power to secure a rescission of this drastic and unjustified act on the part of Great Britain, and to do everything possible to prevent suffering and distress on the tobacco farmer of the country.

I have discussed the situation with Secretary Wallace and other officials of the Department of Agriculture, and with Secretary of State Hull and his associates, and I have every reason to believe that both the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of State and their associates and representatives will make a vigorous appeal to Great Britain in behalf of the tobacco farmers of America. I have today requested the State Department to advise me immediately upon the return to Washington of Ambassador Kennedy, who is now sojourning in Florida. Upon the Ambassador's return to Washington I intend to confer with him regarding the devastating effects of the British embargo and to urge upon him that he exercise every effort to alleviate the economic distress which the embargo is so well calculated to bring upon our farmers.

The embargo on American tobacco has created an acute emergency and brings the tobacco farmers of America face to face with the worst situation which they have confronted in many years. If Great Britain persists in its announced purpose to trade with and to purchase its tobacco requirements from its "gallant friends, the Turks," our market in the United Kingdom will, for all intents and purposes, be taken from us, and even if the ban is lifted in two or three years, after they have alienated our consumers and caused them to cultivate a taste for Turkish and other foreign grown tobacco, our export trade will be permanently impaired. It is, therefore, imperative that no stone be left unturned in our efforts to prevail upon and to persuade Great Britain to rescind its action and reopen its markets to American grown tobacco.

Unfortunately the economic prosperity of Eastern North Carolina is completely dependent upon the growth of flue-cured tobacco, a large portion of which is in normal times purchased by British buyers. If we are not successful in our efforts to obtain a lifting of the embargo and a return of British buyers to the market in 1940, obviously we will be in a distressing situation and many of our people will be forced into bankruptcy. This situation is of importance not only to the farmers but to the business and professional men of Eastern North Carolina.

While I fully understand that there is not much that tobacco farmers can do about the International situation, they can at least conduct their 1940 farming operations in a manner which will minimize the distress and suffering which the situation will most likely cause. Tobacco farmers should be fully advised, to the end that they may, with all the facts before them, plan their 1940 farming operations. They have already embarked upon a program which will result in a drastic curtailment of production. But now it appears that tobacco farmers are to be offered as a sacrifice upon the altars of International Trade. In this situation I

feel that our Nation should not hesitate to use its most powerful economic weapons in defense of the livelihoods of the large group of our citizens who are so absolutely and completely dependent upon the production of the commodity upon which the embargo has been placed.

Naturally tobacco farmers are more interested in parity of income than in parity prices. Even parity prices on the domestically consumed portion of our crop might result in disastrously low total farm income. It appears that the fight of the tobacco farmer from now on should be a fight for parity of income rather than parity prices, and in this fight the farmer can contribute much to his own success by adopting a program of diversified farming.

Even with parity prices upon the small acreage allotments which are being made under the 1940 program of curtailment, it will be most difficult for the average tobacco farmer to make "both ends meet." Even with parity prices many of our farmers will not be able to pay expenses, and few, if any, will be able to earn a decent livelihood, much less make a profit upon their 1940 operations.

It appears that the present acute situation will force North Carolina tobacco farmers into diversified farming. It is perfectly apparent that tobacco farmers who have in the past devoted most of their time and attention to the production of tobacco will be forced to plant and to cultivate more feed and food crops, including poultry, pigs, peanuts, potatoes, beef cattle and dairy products, and the many other things which can be consumed upon the farm. I know that this suggestion perhaps will not appeal to tobacco farmers but in this emergency it is worthy of their serious consideration.

The large crop of one billion, one hundred million pounds of flue-cured tobacco produced in 1939 has resulted in a three hundred and fifty million pounds surplus carry-over. This bad situation is greatly aggravated by the uncertainty of a favorable exercise of the option which British buyers have upon the portion of the 1939 crop purchased by them with funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation. There is even grave doubt at this time as to whether or not we will be able to consummate an agreement with British buyers in 1940 similar to the arrangements under which they returned to the markets in 1939, for unless the embargo is lifted tobacco purchased by them cannot be shipped into England, and the chances are that British buyers would not under these circumstances be interested in incurring additional obligations which will of necessity be imposed upon them by an agreement to purchase a portion of the 1940 crop. Of course, I would personally like very much to see a large portion of the federal tax which is annually collected from tobacco set apart for the benefit of tobacco farmers, so as to secure to them a parity income which would enable them to maintain the much talked about "American Standard of Living." But I am very much afraid that this is but a vain hope. There are a very few members of Congress in whose districts tobacco is commercially produced, and it would be difficult for us to single out one farm commodity for special and preferred treatment. We can at least, however, present our case and in good morals insist upon fair treatment being accorded to the producers of the one farm commodity which has been singled out for the purpose of taxation and which brings into the Federal Treasury more than a half billion dollars annually.

Being intensely interested in the problem of tobacco farmers I am not afraid that members of Congress will feign an indifference to a situation of such importance, a situation which so vitally affects the welfare and happiness of such a large group of our citizens. I know that the members of the

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North Carolina delegation in Congress are all tremendously interested in a proper and permanent solution of the problems of tobacco farmers, and I am sure that these problems, together with the other great problems which today face American Agriculture, will receive their prompt and preferred attention.

Franklinton News

Miss Saunders Entertains Bridge Club
Miss Mary Neal Saunders entertained her bridge club Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. G. B. Harris. Miss Helen Stoneham received high score prize and Miss Claire Kearney second high. The hostess served sandwiches, potato chips, pickles and coffee, followed by ice cream and cake. Only club members were present.

Mrs. Hicks Entertains
Friday afternoon at her home, Mrs. D. C. Hicks was hostess to her bridge club and extra guests. Mrs. J. E. Brady received high score club prize and Miss Ruth Jenkins high guest prize. The hostess served a three-course menu. Guests, other than club members were Mrs. W. H. Green, Miss Ruth Jenkins, Mrs. P. P. Purnell, Mrs. Plummer Jones, of Wake Forest, and Mrs. R. M. Saunders, of Monroe.

Auxiliary Meets
The American Legion Auxiliary held its regular monthly meeting Monday evening at the home of Mrs. W. H. Green with Mrs. Green, Mrs. R. B. Pearce, Mrs. W. M. Jenkins and Miss Lizzie Whitfield as joint hostesses. Sixteen members were present. After the regular business was completed, Mrs. H. H. Utley gave a talk on the legislative program of the Legion. A social hour was enjoyed.

Lions Club Meet at Mitchiner's Pond
Instead of the weekly meeting held with a dinner each Monday in the dining room of the graded school, the Lions Club met this week at Mitchiner's pond and had for dinner barbecued rabbit with vegetables, bread and hot coffee, all cooked at the cabin. Lions present at this meeting were A. B. Allen, president; W. W. Cooke, W. H. Green, P. H. Massey, H. C. Kearney, H. F. Fuller, C. L. McGhee, Eagles Culbertson, R. C. Whitfield, Fred Blount. Guests of the Lions were D. C. Hicks, John Collins, H. S. Pearce and W. L. McGhee.

MAVIS ALLEN PATTERSON
Funeral services for Mavis Allen Patterson, aged 13 months, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Patterson, were held Saturday at the Pittman-Lancaster Funeral Home in Louisburg. Dr. A. Paul Bagby officiated. Burial was in the Corinth Church cemetery. The child died in Parkview Hospital at Rocky Mount Thursday after an illness of four days. The parents and a sister survive.

Eight Lenoir County farmers are setting 1,000 seedling pine trees per acre on unused fields this winter. Assistant extension agent O. R. Freeman says 15,000 trees have been set to date by these men. He also reports cleaning tobacco seed for 411 farmers to date.

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HON. C. WAYLAND SPRULL

Windsor, N. C., Feb. 1.—C. Wayland Sprull, prominent farmer and State Senator for the third district, of Bertie County, today formally announced his candidacy for Commissioner of Agriculture in the Democratic Primary.

Entry of the popular "Silver-tongued Orator from Bertie" assures a lively race for the State post now held by Kerr Scott, who is expected to run again. "Cousin Wayland", as he is known to hundreds of men with whom he has continuously served in the General Assembly since 1933, is recognized as one of the most successful dirt farmers in this section of the State. On his farms he grows cotton, tobacco, peanuts, corn, grains, truck, and livestock. He has attracted wide attention by providing for each of his tenants a milk cow and the essentials of a "live-at-home" way of life.

In addition to his practical farming Senator Sprull has long been prominent in Democratic Party politics, serving as County Commissioner and Road Commissioner of his County several terms as well as in the General Assembly.

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to provide some fireworks for an otherwise drab political year.

ICE BREAKS, MAN DROWNS

Smithfield.—Sam T. Honeycutt, Jr., about 24, of Smithfield drowned in Holt's lake near here Monday when the icy coating on the water gave away under him. Honeycutt and two companions were walking on the frozen surface of the lake when the ice cracked. The other two got to shore safely.

Honeycutt's companions tried unsuccessfully to save him. They were reported to have said he kept himself up for several minutes before releasing his hold on the edge of the broken ice and sinking below the water.

Gurney J. Franklin of Linville Falls, Avery County, says a flock of pure bred poultry will pay any farmer. From 121 hens he sold \$192.94 worth of poultry and \$394.44 worth of eggs last year to clear \$215.59 net.

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