

President Barrett, of Farmers' Union, On Scientific Marketing; Favors a National Selling Plan

To the Officers and Members of the Farmers' Union: Everyone in America, from the poorest editor of the smallest country weekly newspaper, is now and has for a long time, been advising the farmers how to increase production. You can number on the fingers of your hand those who have, persistently and with intelligence, influential, non-farming Americans who have given devotion and thought to showing the farmer the imperative need of scientific marketing or distribution. Yet it is probable that the task of getting the products of the soil upon the market in a reasonable manner and at a fair price, is more intricate and almost as important as the task of production itself.

The most inferior sort of farmer can bring forth some kind of crop. With the constant chorus regarding scientific agriculture and intensive methods, the reclamation of the desert and the draining of swamp lands, the probability that the country will run out of food in the immediate future is not an alarming one. But what is enough to make a thoughtful man stop and grieve, is the fashion in which the American farmer robs himself year after year by slipshod methods of disposing of his output.

It is a conservative estimate that if the farmers of this country got together in a national selling plan, they would save to themselves three or four hundred million dollars a year. As it is now, they forfeit that amount, or perhaps a larger one, by marketing absolutely without system or rhyme or reason.

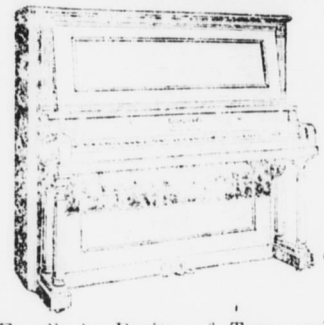
We all agree that the "trusts" have been guilty of injustice to the American people. But the "trusts" can at least teach us a lesson—and that is the ever-remembered need of organization and science in marketing. Many dividends, for instance, you suppose Standard Oil, United States Steel, or the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, or any other of our great trusts, would decay if they were permitted to operate upon a haphazard basis? The American people will be the losers.

There will be some sacrifice, some surrendering of alleged "individual rights," lessening of that lovely "independence" of which the farmer is so fond, in any effective plan of marketing. Other industries know these facts and bow down before them. Until the farmer does he will continue to be at a disadvantage with every other class in the country.

I want you to ponder all these facts carefully and conscientiously as you go ahead with your marketing plan. It is all very important. It is also for production. It is also for scientific marketing. It is nearly half of the battle.

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