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## Our Farmers' Union Page

Devoted to Organization, Cooperation and Marketing

Contributing Editors: { J. Z. GREEN, Organizer-Lecturer North Carolina Farmers' Union  
E. W. BARBS, President South Carolina Farmers' Union  
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### ABSENTEE LANDLORDISM THE SOUTH'S GREATEST MENACE

J. Z. GREEN

**T**WO and a quarter million tenant farmers in 25 states that produce most of the perishable farm products, the grain and the cotton of America, make the organizing and federation of farmers for business-like marketing a stupendous, if not almost an impossible undertaking."

This was a statement made by Charles W. Holman, of the University of Wisconsin, at the recent Conference on Marketing and Rural Credits at Chicago. "The richest and most productive of American states are today confronting a problem of absentee landlordism that bids fair in the near future to be the all engrossing task of statesmen and economists," said Mr. Holman.

In dealing with this land question simple palliatives can do no good except delay the final crisis. In the South, on account of our racial problem, absentee landlordism is much more intolerable than in all-white communities. When a white man moves to town and puts Negro tenants down on his place as neighbors to white land-owning farmers who don't want to move to town, and in the meantime places a prohibitive price upon the land, it makes a bad economic condition still more acute and an additional social problem. It is only through the agency of taxation that this evil can be mitigated by legislation. An absentee land tax and a graduated land tax on large holdings will help wonderfully. The speculative value of land will never be reduced until we get after the "unearned increment" with the kind of tax that will make it unprofitable to retain large holdings of land purely for speculative purposes. The quickest and most practical way to reduce the speculative prices of land so that men without homes can buy, is to use the lever of taxation.

It is all right to provide cheap money to farmers for the purpose of buying homes, but unless you head off the speculators they will boost the price of land just as the demand for land increases when you provide better means with which to buy. What will it profit a poor man to be provided with credit sufficient to make him a land purchaser, if land speculators are permitted to double the price of the land which he is to buy? Wouldn't "rural credits" under such circumstances be an economic delusion?

Perhaps palliatives may be permitted if they don't make the patient worse—used as a sort of experiment, but Beasley of the State Journal, is right in insisting that we go to the root of the disease. Absentee landlordism and tenant slavery are the things that are striking at the foundation of our rural civilization, and when you destroy rural civilization, and no longer have fresh blood from the country to draw upon, your towns and cities will have reached the beginning of the end. Because neither of the dominant political parties have taken previous notice of this problem is no reason for our refusing to study it.

- ### SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT UNION LOCALS
- May—(1) What Can Be Done to Keep the Boys and Girls from Leaving the Farm?  
(2) What Can We Do (a) to Avoid Paying "Time Prices" This Year, and (b) to Keep from Having to Buy as Many Supplies Next Year?
- June—(1) The Country School: How Can We Make It Attractive?  
(2) Have We Cultivated Our Crops as Economically as Possible this Year and Are We Growing All the Leguminous Crops We Should?
- July—(1) What Effect Has a Mortgage System on the Happiness and Prosperity of the American Farmer?  
(2) What Can We Do to Improve the Social Life of Our Community and to Get Our Farming People Together More?

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**THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER**

The most beautiful Southern story ever written will begin in The Progressive Farmer May 23.

### Mr. Hobbs on the Duke Warehouse Plan

**I**N REGARD to the Duke Cotton Warehouse plan, I must say that it meets with my most sincere disapproval. The first look we have at the plan it seems to be all right, but the more I look at it the worse it gets until now I have about come to the conclusion that the cotton farmer had better let it alone. It is likely to become a "Pandora's box" from which many evils will be let loose that will be hard to overcome, if ever. "In the first place who is the promoter of this warehouse plan?" Mr. J. B. Duke. Mr. Duke is President of the American Tobacco Company or what is left of it. This concern after exploiting the tobacco growers of this country for many years and causing them the loss of millions of dollars was found by the Supreme Court of the United States to be guilty of doing business in restraint of trade. Therefore illegally, and was ordered disbanded.

Have these millions ever been returned to the rightful owners? No, not one penny. Part of these millions has been expended in the purchase of water-power and monopolizing the same, part in building cotton mills, and another part is now proposed to be expended in building cotton warehouses and capitalizing the same throughout the South for the farmers' particular benefit.

Now, Mr. Cotton Farmer, ask the tobacco farmer how he fared in the past from a concern under Mr. Duke's direction. Then take heed and beware! Beware of any Wall Street financiers' plan. Their sympathy for you is like the Dutchman's sympathy for the goose he nails to

the board and fattens. It's the day of execution he has an eye to. Your best friend is yourself. Put your own capital together and build as many storage warehouses as you can and operate them. And when your capital fails, get your monied friend and banker at your own door to back you. Your interest is his interest and vice versa. But never monkey with that Duke warehouse plan, for when your cotton goes into that warehouse your control over it virtually ceases. It will then be in the hands of the owner of the mill and the capitalist and the rise in price will not take place according to the law of supply and demand but only on the whim of the warehouse owner. For the cotton farmer to expect any permanent good from such a warehouse system is foolish.

Besides, as has been pointed out by others, if a large number of cotton farmers were to adopt the Duke warehouse system and the great cotton brokerage firms of the world were to take it into their heads to recognize no other warehouse certificates but Duke's then all the money you have expended in warehouses of your own heretofore would go and you would be forced into the system and a great monopoly would be found.

When looked at carefully the beautiful scheme to get possession of the Southern farmers' cotton reminds one of a certain story I heard once, to-wit: A certain old fox was going through the forest one day when he suddenly came upon a lion that lay basking in the sunlight. The lion said, "Mr. Fox, I have been wanting to see you for some time, I have a proposition I wish to make to you for your protection. You know," said the lion, "I am endowed with great

strength and courage and you with great cunning. If you will join hands with me we need have no fear of any beast of the forest."

"Stand up Mr. Lion," said the Fox; "Ah, I see enough! It strikes me, Mr. Lion, from the way your stomach sticks out you might have at least a half dozen Jack Rabbits in there and perhaps there might be room for a Fox. So I hope you will excuse me for declining your proposition."

Moral: Let Duke's warehouse plan alone. The tobacco farmer's experience is enough. S. H. HOBBS.  
Clinton, N. C.

### What One Farmers' Union Local is Doing

**O**N SATURDAY, March, 14, we went down to Luthersville, Ga., to meet with and to talk to the members of the Farmers' Union at this place. The country is thickly settled with white farmers who own small farms and are doing good work.

No wonder then we found the liveliest local we have ever seen in Georgia, and that they were accomplishing wonders in buying their supplies along cooperative lines. This local was getting in their guano. They bought 400 tons of fertilizers and saved some two and a half dollars on each ton, which was one thousand dollars to put in the farmers' pockets instead of going into the pockets of some dealer. They had lately received a solid car load of flour, 270 barrels, on this they saved \$1 per barrel and thus put \$270.00 more into their pockets or were enabled to give their wives and children this amount of needed comforts of life. They bought 400 pairs of shoes and saved \$1 per pair on them. In all they have done over \$15,000.00 worth of business and all for the CASH. This is great. But better still the news that the members of this local have quit buying corn, and they have 1,000 bushels to sell this year.—Southern Cultivator.

### Short Weight in Fertilizers

**T**HE Department of Agriculture is receiving some complaint as to this matter. Stamping 200 pounds or another amount on a sack of fertilizer is as much a guarantee as to its weight as is the guarantee that it will give the chemical analysis put on the sack. The law permits 5 per cent shortage without rebate; over 5 per cent and under 10 per cent, double amount of value of shortage is allowed; over 10 per cent six times value of shortage. See Section 3949 of Fertilizer Law.

W. A. GRAHAM,  
Commissioner.

### Opportunity for North Carolina Teachers

**T**HE North Carolina A. & M. College announces the first session of its "Summer School in Agriculture" for principals and teachers of State high schools, to be held from June 4 to July 1, 1914. Full particulars can be had by writing President D. H. Hill, West Raleigh, N. C.