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Our Farmers' Union Page

Devoted to Organization, Cooperation and Marketing

Contributing Editors: J. E. GREEN, Organizer-Lecturer North Carolina Farmers' Union; E. W. DABBS, President South Carolina Farmers' Union; G. C. WRIGHT, Executive Committeeman National Farmers' Union

- ### SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT LOCAL UNIONS
- JULY**
 Plans for a Neighborhood or Union Picnic This Summer.
 How May We Best Cooperate in Marketing This Year's Crops?
- AUGUST**
 Best Methods of Harvesting Hay, Corn, and Forage Crops.
 Plans for Sowing Clover, Vetch, etc., and for Cooperative Purchase of Seed.
- SEPTEMBER**
 How May We Make Work Easier for Our Wives and Daughters?
 How May We Improve Our Local Schools, or Help Grow-up Literates Learn to Read?

TIME TO STOP THE COTTON TARE LEAK

Mr. Hobbs Suggests a Remedy for the Losses We Are Now Suffering—Concerted Action Needed

IN ABOUT 30 days from now the cotton crop of the South will begin to be marketed, and I wish again to call the attention of the cotton farmers to a certain little leak they have allowed to go on year after year, with no apparent concern. It is small individually, but collectively amounts to many millions of dollars loss annually to the growers. This is the excessive cotton tare. The great spinners of Europe fix the price they will pay for cotton, with the understanding that they will have to take 6 per cent bagging and ties with each bale. Therefore this



MR. HOBBS

will be figuring on 30 pounds (commercial bale 500 pounds) to the bale for deduction. The average farmer puts on from 18 to 22 pounds. If more is added, the buyer refuses to buy, claiming that the amount is excessive, seeming to be forgetful of the fact that the full 6 per cent, or 30 pounds, was already deducted from the purchase price by the spinner in the beginning, and if not over 6 per cent is added there will be no kick coming from said spinner. This situation is so well known that exporters who buy cotton with less than 6 per cent tare seem to have made a practice of adding extra bagging up to the full 6 per cent limit, thereby getting the benefit that the farmer himself should receive.

Now what are the farmers going to do about it? The Commercial World tells us that 6 per cent tare is "right and just," yet when the grower puts this amount on he has trouble from the buyers, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the farmer, knowing his rights, walks up like a lamb dumb before his shearer and is shorn of from 60 cents to \$1 a bale, yet he openeth not his mouth. A pitiful sight for gods and men to look at, yet it is but too true. It is a case where the individual cannot act alone. It is a case where the power of organization must be brought to bear through the Union and other farm organizations.

The Union can and must get busy and save these millions to the producers now wrongfully going into the coffers of the exporters. There are two ways in which this question can be settled. First, let the farmers in every cotton state get together and demand the passage of such a law as South Carolina has, which reads as follows:

"Section 1. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation engaged in the business of buying cotton in this state, as principal or agent, to deduct any sum for bagging and ties from the weight or price of any bale of cotton when the weight of the bagging and ties does not exceed 6 per cent of the gross weight of such bale of cotton. In the event that the weight of the bagging and ties exceeds 6 per cent of the gross weight of said bale of cotton, only the excess over the said 6 per cent may be deducted.

"Section 2. For each and every violation of this act, the offender shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined in the sum of not less than \$5, nor more than \$25, or imprisoned not less than 10 days nor more than 30 days; Provided, this act shall not apply to what is known in trade as round bales, and bales of cotton which weigh less than 300 pounds."

Or a still more satisfactory way would be to settle the question upon a fair and equitable basis to both spinner and producer by International agreement. This could be easily arranged no doubt by Secretary Houston or his representatives in conference with spinners of Europe. This plan has been suggested quite a number of times, and is to my mind the most logical way to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the question.

I would suggest that the Farmers' Union throughout the South get busy at once and try to have the question of cotton tare adjusted upon a basis that will be fair and equitable to the grower. The farmer has rights, and it is plain that in this matter of excessive cotton tare his rights have been grossly abused. There is no excuse for further delay. I would suggest further that 4 1/2 per cent

tare would be a fair and equitable adjustment.
 S. H. HOBBS.
 Clinton, N. C.

Necessity of Keeping European Markets Open to American Cotton

YOU have the happy faculty, Mr. Editor, of bringing things to pass, and it looks now that the South, as well as all of America, needs some good strong pulling and pushing from some authoritative source to open up the blockade of neutral ports for the South's great crop, cotton.

The Georgia Legislature, as you perhaps know, has taken this matter up with President Wilson, and upon a suggestion from us, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce is taking up this matter with the various boards of trade throughout this state, and will ask them to act through resolutions or as they think best. If this spirit can be extended to every Southern state the combined effort should bring results. And since every state of the Union is either directly or indirectly interested in this great American crop, surely the North and West and East will lend their efforts also. In addition to the boards of trade acting, if your good paper can stir the Farmers' Unions throughout the country, surely we can bring such strong pressure to bear upon England that she will immediately lift the embargo that restricts our crop to such a small market, and will thus guarantee better prices this fall. Unless this is brought about we may have this fall similar conditions to those of last fall when cotton was a drug on the market at six cents, and such a condition is not to be desired by any means. Can you not devise some plan by which every state of the South will get busy and immediately set on foot measures that will at least relieve this crop of the restricted market it now has. Whatever is done must be done quickly, as the time is near for gathering, and any delay will militate against us.

J. H. WILLIFORD.
 Commerce, Ga.

Why Not Have Official Cotton Graders?

AS A result of the efforts of members of the Farmers' Union in Robeson County, official cotton graders have been appointed for that county. The weigher and grader is combined as one man. And why shouldn't the cotton weigher be the legal grader in every market town? If it costs a little more money to get an efficient man, it will certainly be money well expended in the interest of justice and a square deal. With the right kind of men as official graders in every county in the state it will afford needed protection for the producers in a commercial transaction in which protection can be provided in no other way, for the individual sellers can not be graders. Being forced to sell cotton on grade only, it is properly the business of the state and counties to provide official graders, and I think it will be well for the State Union to insist upon the enactment of legislation providing for this much needed reform in every cotton growing county in the state.

J. Z. G.

The editor of the Buie's Creek Record quotes and emphasizes The Progressive Farmer's phrase, "The man who reads is the man who leads," and goes on to say: "It is distressing to think about the flimsy excuses people give for not reading. One man hasn't time, but he can discuss politics and the latest scandal by the hour. Another cannot spare the money, but he buys tobacco by the pound and whiskey by the gallon. The Buie's Creek people are above the average in our section, we believe, but our people spend annually far more for tobacco and snuff than they do for books, magazines and papers."

The men who lead are the men who read.

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- Chapter III—Cooperative Buying Is Good; Cooperative Merchandising May or May Not Be.
- Chapter IV—Rural Credits and Cooperation.
- Chapter V—Why I Believe in the Farmers' Union, Grange, etc.
- Chapter VI—Some Farmers' Clubs I Have Known: Examples of Neighborhood Cooperation.
- Chapter VII—How to Organize a Co-operative Society: Some Fundamental Principles.
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- Chapter IX—Why Can't You Have a Neighborhood Like Svea?—A Properly Organized Rural Community.
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- Chapter XIV—A North Carolina County Cooperation Has Waked Up: Creameries, Egg Collecting, Potato Marketing, Credit Societies, etc.
- Chapter XV—What Florida and California Citrus Fruit Organizations Have Done.
- Chapter XVI—An Arkansas Cotton Marketing Association.
- Chapter XVII—Every Farmer Should Join a Mutual Insurance Company: What Some Companies Are Doing.
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- Chapter XIX—Two Irish Rural Credit Societies and How They Work.
- Chapter XX—The Large Outlook of the Irish Agricultural Leader: Problems of Rural Cooperation.
- Chapter XXI—Agricultural Cooperation in England.
- Chapter XXII—What Cooperation Has Done for French Farmers.
- Chapter XXIII—Cooperation Gives Danish Farmers Three Profits Instead of One.
- Chapter XXIV—Cows and Cooperation Have Made Denmark Rich: Business Methods and High Quality Products as Factors.
- Chapter XXV—Averaging \$2 More Per Hog Through Cooperation: How Livestock Farmers Benefit.
- Chapter XXVI—"People's High Schools" Made Danish Cooperation.
- Chapter XXVII—Eight Secrets of Success with Cooperation: The Experiences of Denmark as a Lesson for America.

APPENDIX

- Chapter I—What Sort of By-Laws Shall We Have—Suggested Forms.
- Chapter II—Regulations for a Cooperative Store.
- Chapter III—By-Laws of a Farmers' Club.
- Chapter IV—Parliamentary Rules.

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