

EDUCATION, COÖPERATION, LEGISLATION

(1) Education to Develop Power, (2) Cooperation to Multiply It, and (3) Legislation and Good Government to Promote Equal Rights and Human Progress—Plain Talk About Men, Measures and Movements Involved

By CLARENCE POE

Some 1916 Jobs for Every Southern Farmer

AS WE have said before, we believe in New Year resolutions. We believe every man should stop at least once a year, ask himself "where he's at" and which way he is going, and then make up his mind what he ought to do and make himself do it.

The fellow who "doesn't know where he's going but is on the way," as the modern slang phrase has it, doesn't usually reach anything worth reaching. And the new year is not yet so old but that we can resolutely make up our minds that we are going to make it the best year we have ever had. In the language of the poet:

"Not enjoyment and not sorrow
Is our destined end or way,
But to live that each tomorrow
Find us farther than today."

Let us resolve then, all of us, that we are going to get busy on some of the big tasks that need to be done in 1916. What some of these tasks are we are indicating roughly on page 1—to make a richer South, a more beautiful South, and a South of abounding neighborliness, comradeship and brotherhood. There is work for us to do as individuals, as neighbors, and as voters.

What the Individual Farmer Can Do for Himself

LET us see, to begin with, what we can do as individuals. We can make up our minds that we are going to do good farming and good farm business on our own farms.

Nobody doubts, for example, but that what the South ought to do is to feed itself first—feed its people and its animals, leaving its billion-dollar cotton crop free of debt. We can't quite do this, but we could come amazingly near it, and if we did as well as we could, the South would soon be about as near an El Dorado for wealth as anybody ought to wish for.

And here the point is, Brother Reader, that whether or not the South as a whole adopts this wise policy in 1916, it's one you can adopt on your own farm, and with correspondingly good results.

The Southern farmer has produced almost incredible quantities of wealth every year; the trouble is he hasn't kept it. "Our wealth-producing power," as Prof. E. C. Branson says, "has been enormous; our wealth-retaining power shamefully feeble. . . . Money talks, but in most cotton and tobacco counties about all it says is good-bye!"

Average Southern Farmer Can Increase Profits 1000 Per Cent

DR. Seaman A. Knapp, was not far from right when he estimated that we might increase by 800 per cent the actual profits—not the total earnings but the actual net profits—of the average Southern farm worker. He divided the 800 per cent increase as follows:

- 300 per cent by using more and better work stock, tools and machinery;
- 200 per cent by raising more and better cattle, hogs, horses, poultry, etc.;
- 150 per cent by better rotation, diversification and cultivation;
- 50 per cent by better drainage;
- 50 per cent by using and growing better seed;
- 50 per cent by growing more legumes and feed crops.

There is no doubt, we repeat, but that Dr. Knapp was about right as to its being possible to increase actual profits on the average Southern farm 800 per cent as indicated; but the golden opportunity does not end there. If Dr. Knapp were alive today, with his ever-broadening vision, we have no doubt but that he would say that it is possible to increase profits ten-fold, a full 1,000 per cent, by adding an extra 200 per cent as follows—

- 100 per cent by wiser marketing of crops;
- 100 per cent by "better business," including avoidance of time prices.

Now much of this program can be carried out, it is true, by the individual farmer himself, but for maximum results in nearly everything he should cooperate with his neighbors:

1. For profitable marketing—packing, grading, warehousing, selling, shipping—there must of course be cooperation.
2. There should be cooperation in credit unions, savings and loan associations (as we pointed out last week), to enable all to avoid "time prices."
3. There should be cooperation in buying and

using up-to-date farm tools, farm power, and machinery.

4. Neighbors should join together in buying pure-bred sires for improving stock, and in having all neighbors raise the same breeds.

5. Cooperation in doing farm work—as in the case of the "doubling-up" mentioned in Mr. Berry's recent letter—helps all concerned.

6. Effective drainage work also usually calls for cooperation.

Five Ways to Help Your Neighborhood This Year

THERE is need therefore for every farmer to have a talk with himself and see which of the reforms just mentioned he can adopt by himself in 1916, and then set out to join with his neighbors in the six plans where cooperation helps. How fast such cooperation is developing all over the South was well illustrated by our Christmas issue, and if any reader missed seeing that number, he ought to borrow it from some neighbor.

And then there are a number of other things that Mr. Farmer should resolve to do this year, not to make more money, but to help his neighborhood and make it a better place to live in. For just as it is possible to increase cash profits ten-fold, so we believe it is possible to increase our happiness dividends 1,000 per cent also. The farmer should—

1. Help get a better school. The first test of every neighborhood, the first question asked by every stranger is, "Has it a good school?"

2. Help get better roads. For the second question the stranger asks is sure to be about either roads or churches.

3. Join the Local Farmers' Union or other farmers' club. Don't say, "Farmers won't stick"; first do a little sticking yourself. And make real business cooperation, not talk, the aim.

4. Encourage your wife to join (or organize if not already organized) a club of farm women; and enroll your boys and girls in corn club, canning club, pig club, etc.

5. Resolve to have some neighborhood picnics, baseball games, and a community fair in the fall.

How Farmers Can Get Needed Legislation

ALL these things we can do as individuals and as neighbors, and we have been repeatedly emphasizing their importance. We are now reminded, however, that this is election year and there are many things farmers should do as citizens in order to win a larger measure of prosperity and happiness for themselves. But there's no use expecting to win these things unless you are willing to fight for them. And there's no use expecting them if you are going to vote for a man without regard to his stand on vital issues but just because he is a great hand-shaker, or a great joke-teller, or because he remembers your name better than the other fellow. The time has come when farmers must know what they want and vote for the man who will get it.

What We Should Demand of Congress

WE ARE left but little space in which to point out the big things which farmers as citizens should work for this year, but we can name them briefly:

1. We ought to demand that Congress give us a genuine, workable rural credits system, with enough government-aid to local societies to insure their organization and operation. President Wilson and Secretary McAdoo say—and say rightly—that the government should itself assist the ocean-shipping business if private capital does not respond readily enough in the beginning; and the same principle should apply in rural credits legislation.

2. We should have the Lever National warehouse law—providing for Government supervision of warehouse inspectors and graders, so that we may have such a standardization of grades and such safety and definiteness about warehouse receipts as will make it easy for any farmer to borrow on them.

3. Farmers should oppose the proposed increases in taxes on gasoline, bank checks, etc., and insist that the United States Government get its revenues from taxes on inheritances and the incomes of the wealthy. Any increase in income taxes should come from those above the present exemption, not from those below it.

Reform Taxation, and End or Mend the Crop Lien

AMONG the state measures we believe our readers in every Southern commonwealth should work for this year are:

1. **Repeal of the merchant's crop lien.** The law in most states says that 6 or 8 per cent per annum is interest enough, and to charge more is usury; yet in the name of time prices it permits interest at a rate averaging 50 to 70 per cent, as was proved by our recent reports from all over the South. The crop lien at present binds the giver to a form of slavery. No person under Heaven can limit the rate of interest to be charged, and the giver is powerless to go anywhere else to get even the food to sustain life. We might permit crop liens to be given in return for advances of so much cash a month (as we suggested in our credit union article last week) leaving the lien-maker free to buy in the cheapest market, or we might permit crop liens to be given merchants, goods to be charged at cash prices plus 1 per cent a month, but the present unregulated crop lien is a disgrace to civilization. We must mend it or end it.

2. **We must have a better tax system.** Some say we should have less taxes. We don't think so. The Government should do more for the citizens than it does now—more for roads, schools, health and "the general good;" school books for the poor, for example, should probably be provided. And all such progress in civilization means taxes. "The savage pays no tax." But what we do need is to have the tax burdens lightened on those less able to bear them and made heavier upon those more able to bear them—especially when the wealth is unearned. We should tax the gains of thrift and industry less, the gains of chance or inheritance more. The poll tax is an iniquity and should be abolished, and some provision should be made for exempting from taxation, say, a man's first \$500 worth of tools, machinery and work stock; the tools of industry, the things that create wealth. Then heavier taxes should be levied on inheritances of \$5,000 or over to make up for the loss from these sources. Some may call this socialism. We call it justice.

Other Needed Laws

THESE are two of the most important reforms we believe farmers should fight for this year. Other things that should have attention are:—

3. Legislation permitting race segregation in land ownership by community local option. Neighborhoods where the majority of the people are white and wish to keep them white should be able to prevent absentee landlords from sandwiching undesirable Negroes in among white neighbors. The same power to keep out other races, would, of course, be given Negro communities where they own the land.

4. The Torrens System of registering land titles should be adopted in states still without it. The new rural credit land banks will make the Torrens System a necessity and it should be adopted in every state—as it is bound to be sooner or later.

5. A state warehouse system modeled after the South Carolina plan recently described in The Progressive Farmer by Commissioner McLaurin. The state must actively encourage and develop warehouses, while the United States should inspect and insure uniformity of grades and certificates.

6. Better support of public schools with compulsory attendance. The only way the South can become rich is by developing the brain-power of its citizens. An ignorant people are always poor. Has a parent a right to condemn his child to a life sentence of ignorance and poverty?

7. "Back of all reform lies the method of getting it," says Woodrow Wilson. The people must have the machinery so they can actually get the reforms they want and not have their will throttled by bosses and machines. Hence every state should have a legalized state-wide primary for all parties and all offices the same day with the compulsory secret ballot; and the people should have the power of the initiative and referendum—but so safeguarded as to prevent overloading the voters with too many propositions at once.

8. Let temperance legislation keep pace with the growth of public sentiment, but aim especially to educate the young as to the evils of alcohol so they will understand and approve restriction.

9. Abolish the office of county treasurer and all other useless offices, and investigate commission government for counties.

We ought to make 1916 the best of all years. We ought to make it such a year that when it is ended we can look back and say, "As a farmer, as a neighbor, and as a citizen I believe this is the best record I have made yet. And 1917 must be still better."

Let's get busy on these big and worth-while tasks!