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Our Farmers' Union Page

Devoted to Education, Organization, Cooperation and Marketing

J. Z. GREEN, E. W. DABBS, C. G. WRIGHT, Contributing Editors

"BETTER FARMING" NEEDED

It is the Duty of Every Local Union to Work for Better Farming as Well as "Better Business and Better Living"

IN A meeting of a Local Union that I attended recently plans were arranged for a meeting "on wheels." The county demonstration agent was to be invited to join the members in a trip to farms in the neighborhood to observe the crops of red and crimson clover, vetch, bur clover, alfalfa, pasture grasses, livestock, etc.



MR. GREEN

In this way each member will get the benefit of the experience of other members and the demonstration agent, being "on the spot," will offer suggestions for greater efficiency. In this way the organized farmers may more effectively avail themselves of the benefit of the services of the demonstration agent, and this, too, right out in the fields where crops are growing.

If "better farming" depends upon more information about practical and progressive farming, wouldn't it be worth while for other Local Unions to spend a half day occasionally visiting farms in the neighborhood, accompanied by the county demonstration agent? These "riding meetings" of the Local Union may profitably be extended to other parts of the county, and especially to visit a farmer who has gained a deserved reputation for doing better farming than the average farmer in the county is doing.

The farmer who is indifferent about "better farming" cannot hope to do anything more than to make a mere living, and in most instances a very sorry living. In the Local Union a rival spirit for better farming should be created, and along with it we should avail ourselves of the benefit of all the agencies and means for acquiring more information about our business.

In a recent canvass of a county I visited 14 places and at each appointment a neighborhood crowd assembled. At one place where I called for a vote to ascertain how many homes were represented in which agricultural papers were received, not a single hand went up. Just think about the tragedy of the thing! Here was a neighborhood of hard-working men living on the farm and not one of them was attempting to gain any more information about better farming, and they were employing the same methods of farming that their ancestors used 50 years ago, the only difference being in the kind of implements used (for which change they were not responsible) and in the application of some expensive fertilizer "dope" which their ancestors did not use. There wasn't a field in the whole vicinity that had a winter soil-building crop growing on it and the whole dependence for crops was in the application of commercial fertilizers bought "on time."

A leading farmer is always a reading farmer, and with a representative neighborhood crowd of farmers there is no better index to agricultural progress in that vicinity than to find out how many homes are supplied with agricultural papers, and when I am in doubt about it, I take this kind of vote to decide the matter.

The other day I was in conversation with a "knocker" who was contending that we didn't need to know more about production, as we are al-

ready producing too much to get the best prices, but when I asked him if he was producing too much on his own farm, he seemed to see it in a different light, and he answered, "No." Certainly we ought to want to know how to produce what we do produce at less cost, even if we do not care to increase the quantity, and the application of that sort of agricultural economics is what "better farming" means.

Again, I would especially emphasize the importance of making our Local Unions agencies for the development of better farming as well as better business and better living.

J. Z. G.

RURAL CREDITS FOR HOME BUILDERS

A Farm Woman's Appeal Urging Farmers and Farmers' Wives to Write Congressmen Now

WOMEN throughout these United States are helping, heart and hand, in the wonderful work of home-building. How much love and effort are compressed in these two words! Those of us who began the undertaking long ago remember the happy dreams which we trusted the future might fulfill. Too many weary women know how gradually, but surely, the years have forced the conviction that life is made up of sterner stuff than dreams—and yet, do the realities make it any the less dear? No! But much of this grinding poverty and constant strain is all wrong! I believe that our God meant we should earn an honest living, but he also intended that we "should dwell safely; every man under his vine, and under his fig tree."

How many are dwelling safely—how many under their own roofs? Figures show that three out of every four homes have mortgage debts hanging over them; and as the lender and lawyer press these short-time loans, collecting high rates of interest and exorbitant fees—many foreclosures are being made, while countless others are harrassed and worried to death, in the struggle to meet the unjust demands—despite the hope and prayer that a resting place may be theirs when old age comes.

Rural credits, with amortization features, will come up before our next Congress to decide. I want men and women to give the matter their earnest consideration. It is a big question, with many side issues beyond our knowledge or comprehension, but we can get the main points, and then write our Congressman and Senators to see to it, that we have a fair deal. Unless we bring our united influence to bear upon them, more than likely our political and banker friends will either garble the issue, or sidetrack it altogether. History will repeat itself.

Rural credits as outlined in the Hollis-Bulkley bill, provides for long-time loans—35 years—with amortization features. For instance, if the farmer is to pay 4 per cent, provision is made for not exceeding 1 per cent to pay administration charges of the bank. Then suppose he pays ½ of 1 per cent for amortization—this last is simply a payment on the principal, made at the interest period, which will in time lift the entire burden of debt. Of course the whole thing may be paid off in less time, according to what one pays for amortization.

Don't you see what a relief it would be to have these long time loans, letting the small amortization payment eventually pay out?

MRS. W. B. DOAK,
Clifton Station, Va.

Save your papers and get a binder.

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

Two New Farmers' Union States

NORTH Dakota and Montana are now with us. I have just returned from Bismark, North Dakota, and Great Falls, Montana, where the North Dakota Farmers' Union was organized the latter part of March, and the Montana Farmers' Union in early April.



PRESIDENT BARRETT

In organizing these new state Unions I was deeply gratified by the splendid enthusiasm and deep interest shown. There was a good attendance at both meetings, but better than that was the evident eagerness for the organization and the desire to begin work along the lines of our cooperative effort, under state charters.

Both in North Dakota and Montana the ground had been well prepared by the organization of local and county Unions, and the brethren in both states had a clear understanding of the principles and purposes of our association. We should not only congratulate those states upon the excellent showing they made, but we may also congratulate ourselves upon bringing to our ranks two such strong, promising, and enthusiastic state organizations.

The affairs of our own organization are progressing favorably wherever I went, and through it we have reasonable hope of achievement in improving the conditions of the individual.

As I am writing I am planning to go to Washington to take up again the threads of our work there, particularly as to rural credits legislation. As I have before told you, Congress knows what we need and want on this subject, and can, if it will, find a way to give it to us. It knows we do not want and can get little relief from the committee bill now pending. If you will just keep strongly enough behind your Congressman and Senators, and let them thoroughly understand your wishes in this matter, it will not only be of great help to you, but you will come much nearer getting rural credits legislation that will give you a chance.

The Farmers' Union is growing stronger every day, not only in these additional state organizations, but in the growth of local unions in most of the states now organized. We are strong, not only in ourselves, but in our affiliation with kindred organizations, and through cooperation with these, we are coming nearer and nearer all the time to where we shall get at least some of the things we are entitled to.

In the meantime, every member of the Union should feel that he is an important factor and can help. It is only in this way that we are going to get results. Together we may accomplish what no man single handed could possibly hope to do.

CHAS. S. BARRETT,
President, Farmers' Union.

HAND-MADE CROPS

Profits Always Small When Farmer Depends on Hand-made Crops—Labor-saving Crops With More Machinery or More Livestock the Way Out

BROTHER Zeno Moore, of Edgecombe County, scores a good point when he suggests that in connection with labor-saving farm machinery we should consider the planting of "labor-saving crops." In fact, they both go together. In agricultural sections that grow only the crops that require hand labor, the retained wealth of farmers is always low as compared with the sections that produce machine-made crops. Cotton and tobacco are hand-made crops and require much hand labor.