

SOUTH CAROLINA IS GOING FORWARD

Mr. Dabbs Enumerates Some Evidence of Agricultural Progress, Amply Justifying His Inspiring Conclusion, "We are Making Progress"

IN DARLINGTON, S. C., last week I was told that the new creamery is there to stay—not merely a fad—to be allowed to languish and die as a



MR. DABBS

canning factory did many years ago. The creamery not only is making some money, but the farmers are delighted with the cash returns that come in regularly. Some cream is being shipped from adjoining counties to the Darlington Creamery and as fast as farmers can get together the cows to make it pay the idea is growing. Along with it will grow egg routes and other quick cooperative marketing of farm produce that in my judgment is the main salvation of the farming interests.

To revive some ancient history, "When we make our farms finance themselves from January to September the cotton crop will finance itself." This is a sentence in my first published remarks upon being elected County President of the Farmers' Union seven and a half years ago. In every way financial conditions are better now than then—the ability to borrow from Federal Reserve banks on agricultural products properly stored; in South Carolina a cotton warehouse system that encourages the storing of cotton on the farms where it grows, and gives to such paper a desirability—equal to or better than brick and mortar warehouse receipts in the concentration centers—both results of the educational work of the Farmers' Union.

But greater than these bringing about and maintaining the stable and advancing market for cotton of the past eight months, has been the supply of home-grown wheat, oats, corn, peas, bacon, eggs and butter that have enabled the farmers to live better than ever before, and the improved marketing methods that have distributed the surplus at more uniform prices.

The State Bureau of Marketing has perhaps done more at less cost than any other agency in the marketing line, and it is but a fitting tribute to Col. E. J. Watson's pioneer work that he has been made president of the United States Marketing Division of the Commissioners of Agriculture. But the work of Clemson College in its extension division in establishing several creameries, beef cattle markets, and packing houses for hog products, and of J. L. McLaurin in inaugurating a system of cheap plantation cotton warehouses, are all a part of the general advance that marks 1915-'16 as an epoch in South Carolina agriculture.

I must not close this hasty review without mentioning the cooperation of the banks, when they did get started, with the state warehouse system and the Federal Reserve system by which farmers have been able to secure 6 per cent money to hold cotton—and of the liberal policy of all the leading banks in appropriating considerable sums of money to buy pure-bred bulls to be practically free to the farmers who will make use of them in improving their stock. All of these bulls are of the best beef types. Other banks, individuals and firms have contributed liberally in prize money for the boys' and girls' clubs, and have advanced money for boys to buy pure-bred pigs. One of the largest cotton fertilizer firms in the state,

Harby & Co., of Sumter, put up \$1,000 without interest, the money to be loaned to worthy boys recommended by County Demonstration Agent Williams who will visit them from time to time and advise with them about feeding and breeding hogs.

The big insurance row is not hurting anybody except the agents and the companies that withdraw. But according to the companies' published statements they have been very remiss in their duties to their stockholders and other policy holders in doing business in South Carolina at a loss. They say they only did it to protect their agents and the people who could not protect themselves. Of course such generosity (?) deserved better treatment at the hands of the South Carolina Legislature than to make them amenable to the State Insurance Commissioner, which they say is the sole reason for withdrawing.

Outside greed is not only making us live at home, but insure at home too. We are making progress.

E. W. D.

Helping the Landless Man

LAND tenure reform that will provide a workable plan under which the industrious and thrifty tenant may become a land-owner is perhaps our greatest need, if our rural life conditions are to be made inviting and attractive. The most vigorous blood is being irreparably lost to many rural communities, because the young men of ambition and enterprise are attracted with the higher money wages and better social life of the cities. Through the high speculative prices of farm lands we are rapidly hastening along a farm tenant civilization. Having no permanent ties that bind him to a community in which he lives, the tenant is usually unconcerned with improvement of educational facilities or the development of a wholesome community life. In the development and rapid growth of the tenant system we have a condition of inequality that is directly opposed to the democracy of equality and independence.

It is unfortunate that our legislators attempt to provide rural credits of the same kind, both for the man who has land and for the landless man, and fail to recognize the existence of two problems that are vastly different. The problem of supplying landowners with adequate credit facilities for productive purposes should be left to private initiative, and there are land mortgage companies in some sections that are already supplying land-owners with the capital they require on terms that are mutually advantageous. But the credit problem of tenants calls for much more radical treatment, if land tenure reform is the aim. A material reduction of the rate of interest to all farmers does not mean that the low rate itself will cause any diminution in the percentage of farm tenancy. In fact, the immediate effect of the reduction of the current rate of interest would be to promote the spirit of land speculation, such as would be opposed to the interests of farm tenants who want to acquire the ownership of homes.

The Federal government can extend direct aid to tenant farmers in the purchase of lands (with residence requirement and limitation of loans) and keep the land hog out of the trough, and the rate of interest to the landless man should be lower than the current rate of interest. When free lands were available the Federal government was a liberal donor of public lands to the homeless. Now that the free lands have been exhausted, a program that involves special aid to the landless man would be a logical continuation of that policy, and rural credits for tenants, embodying direct Government aid at low rates of interest, are needed more than any other sort of rural credits.

J. Z. G.

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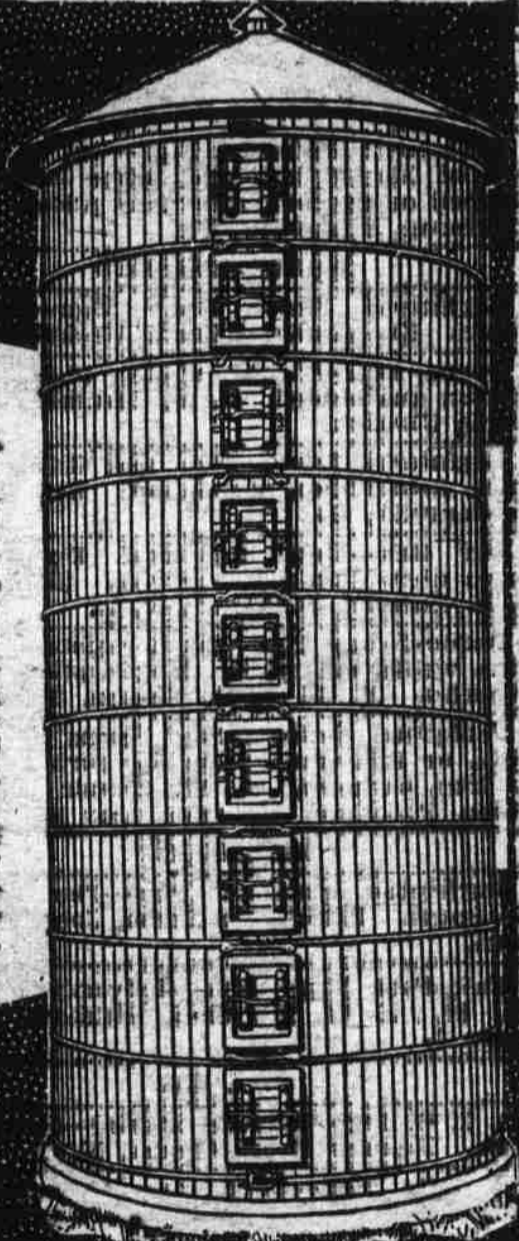
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