

## EDUCATION, COÖPERATION, LEGISLATION

(1) Education to Develop Power, (2) Coöperation 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

### Who Will Get the Extra \$5.62 Per Bale?

IT'S a reflection upon the intelligence and progressiveness of our Southern cotton growers that they every year allow a crop worth the better part of a billion dollars to be graded and marketed by such a loose, unscientific, haphazard system as now prevails and has prevailed for a hundred years.

The difference between "middling" cotton and "good middling" as shown by the port quotations the morning we write this, is  $1\frac{1}{8}$  cents a pound.

This amounts to \$5.62½ on a 500-pound bale.

The question we now wish to ask is, who is going to get this extra \$5.62½ per bale on your good middling lint this year? We ask who is going to get it, because it is a well known fact that in hundreds and hundreds of Southern markets, grades above middling are practically unknown.

In the early part of the season when all the cotton is good and much of it is really "strict middling" and "good middling," it is the custom of buyers to accept all cotton as being simply middling and put into their own pockets all the extra premiums for grades above middling. As a merchant-farmer wrote us in our recent "Marketing Special":

"We have only a small town here, our cotton market being too small to have a sworn grader. Consequently we have sold off to cotton factors' agents as we bought, the sale always being made 'so many bales to average middling.' Well, it 'averaged middling' all right (but never above middling), until probably 40 per cent of the cotton crop had gone each season. Then began the most abominable and disheartening cutting and slashing of prices. They cried out 'blue cotton,' 'dog tail,' 'yellow,' 'smoked,' 'damaged,' etc."

This same man went on to say that without getting any extra prices above middling in the early season, he had been cut about \$4 per bale under middling in the latter part of the season—and all this had gone on year after year until 1915 when he had his cotton officially graded. "The result," he says, "was that on 1,100 bales I lacked only \$13.34 of averaging middling prices for all, whereas I had expected to fall \$1,000 short of middling basis. I am sure this grading saved me \$700 to \$1,000."

### A Licensed Cotton Grader for Every Market

WE MENTION this matter now in order to urge upon our farmers the importance of getting expert, licensed graders in the market towns in all sections where it is not possible to have the cotton graded under the direction of the state agricultural department or experiment station.

First of all, consult your agricultural department and experiment station, and if they cannot help you, then get busy and get your neighbors busy in an effort to have a licensed grader put in your market.

State Warehouse Commissioner McLaurin of South Carolina, who says that he himself has shipped cotton to New York and received grades 65 points above those allowed him by local buyers, makes this clear statement of the situation:

"There must be some law passed that will not only adopt the fixed standards of the United States Government, but the graders must be licensed and required to grade that cotton accurately. Why, think of the system of grades upon which cotton is bought and sold in the open markets in the towns of South Carolina, as compared with the practice in the exchanges of this country. If you buy 100 bales through the New Orleans or New York Exchange, and that cotton is tendered to you, the man who tenders it is not permitted to grade it; you are not permitted to grade it; but they have sworn, disinterested graders and the graders do not know to whom the cotton belongs. It is carried to them on numbers and they grade it

without the slightest knowledge as to its ownership. Now, you take it in South Carolina, and every bit of the grading is done by the purchaser of the cotton. You have either got to let him have your cotton that way, or not sell it at all. When he goes to tender it on contract it is done disinterestedly, and I doubt exceedingly if there is one bale out of one thousand that is bought in South Carolina in the open market from the farm on which, when the buyer comes to sell it to the mill, he doesn't make a profit on the grading."

There are, as has been well said, three classes of graders: (1) The competent and honest grader; (2) the competent but dishonest grader; (3) the honest but incompetent grader. The result, as Mr. John A. Brailston recently said in urging a licensed grader for his town, is that while the honest and competent grader gives all a square deal, "the dishonest grader who is competent, dishonestly grades and the farmer loses by that process, while the honest but incompetent grader necessarily and naturally undergrades according to his own judgment in order to protect himself from his own ignorance"—with the result that the farmer loses as heavily from incompetent honesty as from dishonest competency.

In one town near us, as the result of the activity of the county Farmers' Union, there is an expert, official grader who also acts as cotton weigher. And here, it seems likely to us, is a solution of the problem. We must have a weigher anyhow and by paying more, we can get an expert grader to do both weighing and grading. As Mr. J. Z. Green says:

"Why shouldn't the cotton weigher be the legal grader in every market town? If it cost 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."

Meanwhile The Progressive Farmer wants to get experiences and views from farmer readers as to cotton grading, and we will pay \$2.50 for the best letter sent us and our regular cash rates for all other letters published. Let's have your views.

### Coöperative Timber Marketing Will Pay

SPEAKING of marketing, there is probably no crop grown on the farm which has been so carelessly and unprofitably marketed as timber. We have been saying this over and over again, and there are many new proofs of it in a new Farmers' Bulletin just issued by the United States Department of Agriculture. This is Farmers' Bulletin No. 578, "Measuring and Marketing Woodlot Products," and we wish every Progressive Farmer reader who has 20 or more acres in timber would send for a free copy. Here are three cases the bulletin mentions:

1. A Maryland farmer was offered \$1,500 for his timber. He got the help of the state forester, however, who estimated the quantity of timber and its market value "with the result that the man who had previously made the \$1,500 offer raised his bid to \$4,500, and the sale was soon made to another person for about \$5,500." The contract also called for cutting only marked trees, leaving a good stand for another crop.

2. In western Ohio a farmer sold a tract of timber for \$260. The author of this bulletin carefully measured the stumps and tops and found that "the

### COME TO RALEIGH AUG. 29-31

WEEK after next the North Carolina Farmers' Convention will meet at the A. & M. College, West Raleigh. Make your plans now to come and bring your wife and neighbors. We have already printed the superb program, and the railroads offer rates of practically one and one-half cents a mile. Rooms at the College will be furnished free and meals at twenty-five cents each.

timber included in this sale was worth not less \$1,436, or \$1,176 more than the farmer received for it."

3. A land-owner in northwestern Ohio got bids of \$550 and \$600 for his timber. But taking a friend's advice, he bought a portable sawmill, sawed the timber and sold it himself and cleared \$1,400 instead of \$600.

We mention these things now, because here is a fine field for coöperative marketing. When a sawmill comes to a neighborhood a bunch of farmers usually sell to the owner. Why shouldn't they coöperate—get together and find out what prices should be, and get bids from a number of sawmill owners? Then if prices are not satisfactory, let them buy a mill together and run it on the coöperative, patronage-dividend plan.

This may be a good chance to make some extra money the coming winter. Write for Farmers' Bulletin No. 578 and think about it. Gifford Pinchot suggested the coöperative sawmill idea in a recent issue of The Progressive Farmer, and whatever advice Pinchot gives about timber is worth carrying out.

### "Boost Your Neighborhood"

IT WAS a good point made by Prof. E. R. Groves in one of our recent issues, "Keep Up Community Pride," and we hope all our Progressive Farmer folks who are trying to improve conditions in their communities will keep Prof. Groves' admonition in mind. Criticism should always be constructive rather than destructive. Tennyson gives all of us an excellent piece of philosophy when he says, "It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill," and we should also remember Dr. van Dyke's fine phrase about the wisdom of being "governed by our admirations rather than our disgusts." Don't say, "We have an unprogressive, slow-moving people." Say, "Our people haven't done what they ought to have done, but they are waking up and are going to do better." Don't say, "We killed local tax for schools, or we let our Local Union die, or we defeated a plan for better roads, and so there is no hope for progress," but say rather—as we have no doubt is true, "We haven't yet got to the place we ought to be, but the leaven of progress is working, and all the good seed we sow will bear its harvest sooner or later."

As an anonymous poet has well said:

Boost your neighbor, boost your friend;  
Boost the church that you attend;  
Boost the farm on which you're dwelling;  
Boost the goods that you are selling;  
Boost the people around about you;  
They can get along without you;  
But success will quicker find them,  
If they know you are behind them;  
Boost for every forward movement  
Boost for every new improvement;  
Boost the stranger and the neighbor;  
Boost the man for whom you labor;  
Cease to be a chronic knocker;  
Cease to be a progress-blocker;  
If you'd make your township better,  
Boost it to the final letter,  
Stop your knocking! Boos!"

### Protect People From Fraudulent Companies

THERE was one subject discussed in the Progressive National platform four years ago that deserves more attention than it has received in either state or National legislation. We refer to the demand for "blue-sky" laws to protect the public from fake promoters, this plank reading as follows:

"The people of the United States are swindled out of many millions of dollars every year through worthless investments. The plain people, the wage-earners and the men and women with small savings, have no way of knowing the merit of concerns sending out highly colored prospectuses offering stock for sale, prospectuses that make big returns seem certain and fortunes easily within grasp. We hold it to be the duty of the government to protect its people from this kind of piracy."

The fake rural credits association mentioned on the preceding page is only one of many such companies.

Make yourself enjoy the best books by a little discipline. Get out of the narrow shell of your preferences. To this end put a coal of fire on your own back by a self-imposed task. Do some thinking also. Debate with your favorite authors. Take issue with them. Thus you will whet your faculties to a keen edge.—Dr. E. Y. Mullins.