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Our Farmers' Union Page

Devoted to Education, Organization, Cooperation and Marketing

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

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION IN LOCAL UNIONS

MAY

1. Cannot We Join Together More as Neighbors With Teams, Hands and Machinery in Doing This Year's Farm Work?

2. Can Our Local Union Make a Fair Exhibit, or Should This Be Left to Individuals? Should We Have a Community Fair This Fall?

NATION IS PAYING FOR NEG-LECT OF AGRICULTURE

The Industry Has Been Exploited by Other Interests and Consequently Weakened, Says Barrett-Now Give It a Square Deal

THE country is being swept by a very frenzy of praise, encouragement, and exhortation for the farmer. Never in all our history has anything

been seen or heard like it. Back of all this laudation and exhortation from congressmen, governors, chambers of commerce, editors, etc., one cannot fail to see that there lies fear, real fear, born of the apprehension that

PRESIDENT BARRETT they, in common with others, will have to face the pinch of hunger.

We have a vast country, for the most part fertile and productive, we have a farming population of more than 40 millions of people, enough under proper conditions to produce food for 300 millions of people.

What, then, is the trouble? The real trouble lies in the fact that all. these gentlemen now so abundant in appeals, written and spoken, have for fifty years utterly ignored the needs of the basic industry of the world with the result that we are paying the penalty.

Under governmental encouragement, banking, commerce, manufactures, and speculation have had an abnormal growth such as the world has not before seen. Paper wealth has reached undreamed of figures. out of all correspondence with the intrinsic wealth of the country. All the banking capital of the country has been at the command of the paper wealth makers, leaving for the farmer no method of procuring working capital-except in a small way from private individuals through mortgage brokers and at excessive rates.

Resulting from the inability to procure capital at moderate rates, farming as an occupation has become less profitable than other occupations, and this has tremendously weakened the business of farming.

of parasites has fastened itself on the farmer so that he gets but a small part of the ultimate value of his product. The gentlemen now so deeply concerned have not heretofore had any concern for the farmers' interest and now they see danger to their own.

The first concern of the American people always should have been to make farming the most attractive of all occupations by working out methods that would have insured the farmer fair profits. But they could not see this. The dollar held too close to their own eyes so obscured their vision that they were unable to grasp the fundamental truth that the permanent prosperity of the country is absolutely contingent upon the prosperity of the farmer.

Now, consider briefly what another

country has done which long years ago took the correct view of this question.

Do not misunderstand me-I am not tinctured in the slightest degree with any pro-German proclivities. I am pro-American to the core, but I am not too proud to take a lesson even from an enemy.

Germany is a small country with a dense population. About four-fifths as big as our state of Texas, it now has about 70 million people. It has a harsh climate, and a soil which is naturally infertile. But it has been fortunate in having had during the past 40 years two big men, Bismarck and Von Buelow, each of whom was able in his time to direct the national strength.

These clear-headed big men saw that if their country was to support its people and build up as a great power, that the great trinity-Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce -must be cared for with equal prudence and solicitude. More than that, if any preference was to be shown, it must be to agriculture which was the most vitally important of the three.

The banking capital of the country was made the useful servant of the three big interests. The farmer got his capital on short or long time as he needed it at 4 per cent, which was as low a rate as anybody else got.

What happened? In those 40 years Germany grew to be the second commercial and manufacturing country of the world, and her farmers prospered beyond those of any other country. Emigration decreased until it almost ceased entirely. And now for nearly three years, with its great foreign commerce destroyed, with its factories converted to war uses, the German farmer has been able to produce enough to keep 70 million people at fighting strength.

Properly looked after in normal peace times, the farmer of Germany has shown the logical result in times of stress and is repaying an hundredfold all that has ever been done for

Let us look forward a little. Those who survive the present troublous times may see the people who are frantically appealing to the farmer in this spring of 1917, and making him big promises, promptly forget all about him. For

"When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be, But when the devil was well, the devil a saint was he.

Then will come the crucial time for the farmer. It will be "up to him". If he has profited by the lessons of this day, recognizing that he holds this Nation in the hollow of his hand, he will organize his forces, and compel an adjustment which will give him a "square deal" and equal opportunity. He cannot depend on any bad weather promises, nor any temporary personal prosperity. He must As if this were not enough, a horde shoulder full responsibility and plan for all the people. For past experience has taught us that other classes will plan only for themselves, and if the farmer refuses to stand for the doctrine of a "square deal for everybody", then the outlook for the preservation of our country and our civilization is indeed hopeless.

C. S. BARRETT. Union City, Ga.

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