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EDITORIAL COMMENT

THE Texas Farm Co-Operator says: "The cotton crop of India, China, and Egypt is about one million bales short of last year, and it will take the excess in the American crop to make up the deficit in the foreign cotton fields, so the farmer need not be scared. If the crop does turn out a little large, the volume of cotton will be about what it was last year, and the price last year at the ports was 14.60, and the present crop ought by all means to be worth as much as last year's crop and will bring as much money, if the farmer will stop selling until the market gets right."

THE politicians and "big" farmers—the kind that have tenants to grow from a thousand to three thousand bales of cotton, get interested in the price of cotton when it goes down below cost of production. Very few of these large absentee landlords, who live in town, are members of the Farmers' Union, in some instances because they are not eligible to membership, but generally because they feel like they are big enough to get along without the Farmers' Union, but as we intimated above, they get "powerfully" interested in mass meetings when the price goes down below normal, and mass meetings, calamity oratory and resolutions, especially the latter are some of the things they have been engaged in for several weeks now. And the bad part about it is, every time they resolute this season the price of cotton seems to take another tumble. They are going to hold another meeting in New Orleans some time in the near future and resolute some more. A public mass meeting has never done anything except resolute and that's all a meeting of that kind ever will do, for it's all it can do. If the price of cotton, or the price of any other farm product, is ever controlled, it will be done only through a business system of marketing, supported and maintained by the rank and file of the farmers who till the soil, through a class organization like the Farmers' Union.

WHEN the chamber of commerce at Fayetteville decided to get busy and ask every individual citizen, professional man, clerk, druggist, merchant and everybody else in the town, to buy at least one bale of "distressed" cotton and hold it for better prices, it suggested a plan, which if followed by every town in the South successfully, would produce more tangible results, and produce it quicker, than any other emergency plan that might be suggested. The Fayetteville plan

is more practical and, if generally adopted, would do more for the price of cotton than a public "resoluting" mass meeting could do, if one were held in every town, village and school district in the South. Buying up "distressed" cotton by Southern men would produce real results and it wouldn't be long about it. We hope Fayetteville will live up to the idea suggested by its chamber of commerce and that every other Southern town will quit howling about the price of cotton and proceed to hold up "distressed" cotton on the streets and keep it away from the consuming world until the markets get hungry enough to pay a fair price for it.

THE PUBLIC mass meeting at Raleigh last week was very well attended, a good sprinkling of Farmers Union folks being in attendance. The greater portion of the crowd present represented other interests and there was much speech making, most of it coming from men not members of the Union. To the Farmers' Union men present, who have for years been meeting in their Local Unions every two weeks studying the great marketing problem which must be worked out only through the establishment of a warehouse system of marketing, it was entertaining, and at times amusing, to hear the friendly criticisms and suggestions as to what the Farmers' Union should do—suggestions coming from those who get interested in a marketing system for farmers only periodically, when the emergencies of low prices come.

IN THE FACE of the well-known fact that in no State have the big landlords ever been worth much to the Farmers' Union, a daily paper of Columbia, S. C., suggested last week that the heavy-weight cotton farmers—the fellows whose tenants produce a thousand bales, or more—men who have been howling successes in that kind of business, just grab hold of the Farmers' Union, make the "one-gallus" fellows step aside, and then proceed to turn the world upside down. Now, if these fellows, "who have made a success," can do it, and will do it, they will find the "one-gallus" fellows in the Union just a-hurtin' to step aside and see the fur fly, but if they do it, it will be the first time in the history of the world that any real reform has started from that source. The reason the present low-price of cotton is hurting the thousand-bale fellows so much more than it is hurting the real farmer who makes his living at home, as every farmer should do, exists in the fact that he planted his big cotton crop and cultivated it with high-priced mules, high-priced labor and is now forced to pay more for picking than when the price was fifteen cents—and he did all this with 15 cent cotton and 50 cent cotton on the brain, and unless something happens he will lose fifteen or twenty dollars per bale, and of course he will go to the mass-meetings now, and talk, too!

IT'S A PITY that when it comes to building up a permanent farmers' organization and establishing a general warehouse system of marketing to reform our suicidal system of street selling, the Farmers' Union can never get any help from the heavy-weight fellows except in cases of emergencies, and then only through high-sounding resolutions emanating from a public mass-meeting!

THE PUBLIC resolutions passed by the mass meeting at Raleigh last week to reduce cotton acreage next year are not worth the paper they were written upon. If the farmers will learn the lesson well that real effective business transactions are not done in the open public meetings and that they stultify themselves in the minds of the business world every time they get together and publicly "resolute" about their business affairs, it will be a valuable lesson from which we may reasonably expect results. There will be a voluntary reduction of cotton acreage next year regardless of meetings and resolutions. The pendulum is going to swing backward as a natural result of low-priced cotton and cotton seed. The Farmers' Union educational campaign for the general adoption of the fundamental Live-at-Home idea of farm economics has done more to correct the suicidal economic error of buying a living at the stores than any other influence that has ever been brought to bear upon agricultural life in this country, and the continuation of this Live-at-Home campaign will continue to produce results. It is the Live-at-Home fellow who is holding his cotton this year without financial embarrassment. He is sitting steady in the boat and is not nervous, because he has no debts to pay and does not have to sell his cotton to buy a living at the stores. Millions of others are now preparing to join the Live-at-Home army by sowing cotton lands in small grain as fast as the cotton is removed from the fields. While the low price of cotton is bringing temporary disaster to the South as a whole, it is a blessing in disguise for the farmers. It will help them to see the necessity of pushing along the establishment of a warehouse system of selling and also be a powerful inducement to them to get over on the safe side by joining the Farmers' Union Live-at-Home crowd.

IT IS THE poorest sort of economy to sell cotton seed at the present ridiculously low prices and then make a gigantic fertilizer trust richer by the purchase of cheap soluble fertilizers that are all gone out of the soil in a few months. And don't exchange cotton seed for cotton seed meal unless you get as much as a ton of meal for a ton of seed, but put the cotton seed back on the land and build your soil! Without soil building there can be no success on the farm, and raw cotton seed is a mighty good soil builder.

SOME GOOD speaking was done at the Raleigh meeting last week, but the biggest thing said in that convention was the suggestion of Mr. Thompson, of Raleigh, that the Farmers' Union should receive no farmer as a member who does not produce a living at home. While it would have been impractical to do this at the beginning of the organization, and it is hardly practical now, the carrying of a policy of that kind would certainly go to the bottom of nearly all our troubles. It would be well, at the beginning of next year for the State officials to prepare blanks for the purpose of finding out how many members produced all the food products needed on their farms this year and also find out how many are willing to pledge themselves to plant for a living at home next year, for this is the most important economic question that confronts the Southern farmer, or will confront him.