

THE CAROLINA FARMER

UNION



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One Dollar a Year

FARMERS SHOULD BE CAREFUL

Impending Presidential Year, Says Barrett, Will Be Fiery Furnace to Test Parties and Politics, and Advises Farmers to Apply Yard-Stick of Sincerity, and Not Cheap Appeal.

To the Officers and Members of the Farmers' Union:

The impending presidential campaigns and elections finds an unusual amount of unrest and uncertainty and dissatisfaction prevalent in the country. There will be the customary appeals to prejudice and one's liking for that man or dislike for another.

It is an excellent opportunity for the members of the Farmers' Union to view all men and measures, all parties and platforms, not by what they say but by sheer test of sincerity and of past performances.

Be careful of the man or the party that has, before, promised you everything to get into office, and after he achieved election, occupied himself mainly with keeping his personal political fences in order. Be careful of the man who does you little petty personal courtesies, such as distributing a few garden seed or government bulletins, but who votes against the measures in which you are vitally interested.

Be careful of the man or the party that makes you promises you know are impossible of performance, that are political gold bricks, pure and simple, coined to get votes, straw issues to be forgotten as soon as the party or the man rides into office.

Vote less by the ear and the eye and more by the brain. Do your own thinking. Refuse to have your convictions ready-made for you.

Size up political situations exactly as you would a business deal; with the same judgment, and with the same refusal to be influenced by "hot air" or the clever stories of a man who would like to get the best of you in a horse-trade.

It is high time the farmers of this country ceased being governed by sentiment in politics, and be guided by sense instead. The campaigns about to open offer an excellent chance for a beginning, for the reason that the situation is more confused than in many years, and there will be opportunities for men and parties to practice more than the ordinary amount of campaign slush and unredeemable promises.

CHAS. S. BARRETT.

Union City, Ga., Dec. 28th, 1911.

THE FARMERS BUSINESS

To the Officers and Members of the Farmers' Union:

The farmer is the only business man in America who does not keep books.

In a few portions of the country he is learning the wisdom of mending his ways in this regard, but the reform is lamentably far from being a universal one. Especially is he backward in the Southern States.

He plants his cotton, his grain, or his forage crops at the regular time, tends them, spends money for fertilizer, for wages, for food, for farm machinery, for animals, for upkeep for himself and family, but does not once set down these items in definite figures.

Indeed in many communities about the only bookkeeping done is that done by the merchant when he renders the farmer every fall the bill that has accumulated during the past several months. And it violates every rule of business and common sense that books should be kept only by one part to a trade.

The farmer who records every penny that he spends and every penny that he receives, and for what in both cases, knows precisely where to locate leaks, where to place losses, how to estimate profits; in a word, how to sum up his entire business.

The farmer who does not keep books is in dense ignorance regarding just how much he clears or loses on a bale of cotton or an acre of grain. He knows in round numbers what it has cost him to produce both. But so many little side items are occurring throughout the year that where a total of between \$60 and \$100 is involved, he will in all likelihood lose sight of from \$5.00 to \$10.00 by a slipshod, unbusinesslike method. Multiply this apparently small sum by the number of farmers who keep no records and the sum total annually unaccounted for on American farms is appalling.

It is not as though the keeping of books necessitated a bookkeeper or the sinking of money in expensive equipment. All that is

necessary is for the average farmer to familiarize himself with easily acquired first principles of bookkeeping and to buy the two or three books necessary. After that comes, of course, the small amount of labor involved in keeping track of every source of outgo and income. Less than half an hour's work a day will suffice for this with the average farmer.

If the average business man in America ran his affairs along the happy-go-lucky lines used by the farmer, finance and industry generally in this country would go to the dogs inside of a night.

I do not mean to say that keeping books on the farm will cure every ill to which our agricultural system is heir. But it will open the eyes of the brethren generally to mistakes of long duration, to weaknesses which could be made strength, and to pitfalls that might easily be avoided.

CHAS. S. BARRETT.

Union City, Ga., Jan. 6, 1912.