

Parcels Post.

Farmer Who Would Consider It a Disgrace, Says Barrett, To Be Skinned In a Horse-Trade, Fooled by Politicians Every Day About Parcels Post and Other Political Measures.

To the Officers and Members of the Farmers' Union:

The main reason the American farmer is not now and has not for some years been enjoying the benefits of a general parcels post, is his own laziness. Added to that, perhaps, is his practice of letting the politician give him a toy to play with and distract his attention, when he begins to seriously demand a general parcels post. The same rule applies to other needed legislation.

The hardest reforms or measures to enact into law are those favored by the overwhelming majority of people, but for which this same majority will not develop sufficient energy to get out and make a fight. There are no reasonable men in America opposed to a general parcels post, except those few who have, or think they have, a selfish interest in defeating it or postponing it. Yet we have the spectacle, these years, of representatives of the farmers striving in vain to obtain the crystalizing into legislation of a measure self-evidently just, and self-evidently popular.

The express companies have been charged with maintaining a rich and powerful lobby against the parcels post. Other interests have been plastered with the same indictment. It would not be surprising or unnatural if either, or both, accusations, were well-founded.

But all the express lobbies, and all the other lobbies in America couldn't prevent the enactment of a general parcels post, if the American farmer, whose vote controls congress, brought sufficient pressure to bear on his representative and senator to get results.

Under treaty agreements, we now have a general parcels post with considerable more than half the civilized nations of the world. It is possible to mail an eleven-pound package from San Francisco to London, to St. Petersburg, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Hon Kong, to the negroes in Port-au-Prince, Hayti, for twelve cents a pound.

But it costs sixteen cents a pound to mail the same package from your county seat to the county seat adjoining, and even then you have to split the bulk into three or four parcels.

The President has recommended a parcels post on the rural free delivery routes, with an investigation as to the advisability of a general parcels post. That is progress, but it is of the crab variety—very slow and tortuous.

Just suppose you sit down right now, write your representative and

senator, and make your support of him in the next election contingent upon his supporting a general parcels post bill. Talk about "practical politics," that's practical politics with a vengeance. You must insist upon a straight answer, though, and then you must follow up the answer with letters prodding him until his vote is actually recorded for a general parcels post. Be from Missouri. You would everlastingly keep your eyes peeled to keep yourself from being skinned in a horse trade. You'd think it a disgrace to admit you had palmed off on you a spavined or wind-galled nag. Yet you get skinned, time after time, in important political measures by the fellow you're paying to represent you and attend to your business. Isn't it about the time you applied the same vigilance to politics you do, or ought to do, to horse-trading and business generally?

CHARLES S. BARRETT.
Washington, D. C., Jan. 18, 1912.

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