

Rural Letter Carriers Department.

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To the Editor R. L. C. Department,
Carolina Union Farmer:

In a recent communication to this department our good friend, Dr. H. Q. Alexander, makes a strong plea for the rural carriers. As an exponent, and in the name of that great class of public servants, I wish to thank him for his personal interest, but take some exception to his zeal.

It is a fact, as he says, that the rural carrier has much responsibility, and that his expense is probably out of proportion to his salary, but the work is not arduous. It is rather pleasant to the carrier who is something more than a machine. He takes an interest in the farming, the schools, the churches, the men, the boys and girls, and the many little kindnesses which he renders are met with a responsive spirit. The carrier is not forgotten at Christmas, Thanksgiving, wedding and other occasions, a steaming cup of coffee, a hot baked potato, fruit and melons in their season.

In the winter time the carrier who knows how to protect himself need not suffer at all in this section of the country) than the average farmer about his business. This morning with the mercury standing at 30, a hundred and fifty boxes and a thousand patrons to serve, I have read the morning papers, and am jogging along eight miles out with a small writing tablet held on a light-board in my hand writing this contribution with gloves on, and it will be finished when the postoffice is reached. I drive a pair of Indian ponies who know their business, alternating them, and yesterday I arrived at home in time to attend a meeting of stockholders of the Farmers' Union Cotton Warehouse at two o'clock.

The Doctor says under the rules and rulings, "These men are treated more like subjects of an Oligarchy than free born citizens of a great republic." What awful treatment he has reference to is not very clear. They have the right of appeal, the right to organize, the right to express their opinion, untrammelled, at the ballot. They are not required to go where, or when,

there is danger to life, or to the life or injury of their stock. If on account of excessively bitter weather a day is lost, the Department is not prejudiced against the carrier. It is no doubt a little galling to a man of spirit (I have felt it) to live under the civil service rules, but these rules are not for rural mail carriers alone. Many thousands of other government employees are subject to the same rules. Any observing man who takes thought knows that it is best that this army of workers should not be permitted to work actively in politics. Some of them would doubtless be discreet, while many, very many, would "root" for politicians rather than measures.

But my friend says "And yet the postoffice department expects these carriers in election years, to line up solidly with the administration seeking re-election," and that is where my good friend is more seriously mistaken, or he is himself, in violation of the spirit of the Farmers' Union, of which he is the honored chief in North Carolina, bidding for votes for the administration (?) not seeking re-election. If carriers realized that their liberties were thus limited, there would be immediately a flood of resignations, for we are not slaves, or dumb driven cattle. Unless there is such a requirement, why should one say that the postoffice department expects it? As a matter of fact it is neither required or expected. At a postoffice near me there are several carriers lined up, and others that I know over the State, for the administration (?) not seeking re-election—no not "lined up," but they have, as other carriers, the courage to walk up and express their convictions.

Here is the rule: "Persons employed as rural carriers, while retaining the right to vote as they please, and to express their opinions privately on all political subjects, shall take no active part in political management, or political campaigns." Carriers are selected on merit alone and not on any consideration of party affiliation. This is the rule: "No inquiry shall be made as to the political or religious opinions, or affiliations of any eligible, and no recommendation in any way based thereon shall be received, considered, or filed by any officer concerned in making selections, or appointments."

The Doctor's "plea for carriers" seems more like a fusillade against the administration seeking re-election. Should the carriers take seriously what he has written, they would be a stupid lot to remain in the service. Should they take it humorously, they would be in a similar position to a distinguished

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Cary, N. C.

T. IVEY.

The Rural Carrier.

The rural postman, day by day, goes on his long and toilsome way, and takes the farmers' mail; he jogs across the hills and moors and much of hardships he endures for small supply of kale. I've seen him driving through the rain, but never knew him to complain or read the riot act; he pushes his tired old nag along and greeted with a cheerful song the cold wet cataract. I've seen him when the blizzard blew, I've seen him when the snowstorm snew, but never heard him roar; serene he drives along the trail and leaves the farmer's green goods nail in tin boxes by the door. I've seen him when the roads were rough, and when the raw winds were enough to make a mummy cuss; he jolted o'er the ruts and stones that dislocated all his bones, and never raised a fuss. His wages make a paltry heap, and half of it must go to keep his wagon in repair, to manicure his trusty bay and keep its stomach full of hay, but he does not despair. I've seen no rural postman yet who made it his life work to fret and whine about his lot; when duty calls him to the road, without complaint he takes his load, a Johnny on the spot.—Uncle Walt.

Dear Bro. Carriers: After reading the last Farmer, I was somewhat disappointed at seeing no "hearing" from any of the brethren—no, not even Jim Hayes. I thought of you all on the 21st. The most disagreeable day I have seen for the past seven years.

I was well protected, but the rain came down in misty form and was in puddles under my seat of honor, and all the consolation I could get was, tomorrow will be Geo. Washington's day, a holiday. So the 22nd came, a nice day, but cold. I spent it pleasantly by visit-

ing my county town, Burgaw, to pay taxes, etc. "Death and taxes are sure to come," and of course while on the cars and in the hotels I kept my ear low down to the ground listening to the Senatorial trend and heard some funny things that I'd like to relate, but time, space, and other considerations forbid.

Notwithstanding the terrible winter there have been beautiful bright rifts between the clouds. "Beyond the Alps lie Italy."

This ground hog weather won't be here always. I hear the blue jays kicking up a racket, maple buds are swelling, and spring is coming some time or other. Our ladder has not suffered, we are in the midst of hog killing this week. Sausage, pudding, cheese, scrapple, and one day this week a good patron filled my buggy with oysters, fresh from the sound. We had a roast right that night. Some time ago just as I was crossing the Northeast river, I saw a curious sight, and on investigation found a buck towing up a small river tug. The captain found him trying to swim across the river, and as he had no gun he had to go on the buck's starboard side and flung all the monkey wrenches and spikes on deck, without killing him. Finally he made a lasso of the cable and caught him by the horns. Well the story is not finished yet. That same buck was killed and placed in my buggy and hauled to the captain's home about three miles. He was "male matter" and of course was entitled to the privilege. Any way, I carried home as a present a large saddle of venison that lasted us a week. How is that Bro. Jim Hayes?

I am enclosing one of "Uncle Walts" best, and will ask the editor to give it space, since it so completely covers the ground and fills the bill, especially on that rainy 21st of February.

I am faithfully yours,

E. D. PEARSALL.