

# THE CAROLINA FARMER

## UNION



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## More About the Parcels Post

### General Council Patten Tells How Congressmen Try to Straddle the Fence on the Parcels Post.

The following letter written by General Council J. H. Patten of Washington, D. C., to R. F. Duckworth, editor of the Farmers Union News of Union City, Ga., is given below for the interest of the farmers of this State. What is true of Georgia Congressmen is true in North Carolina and the farmers of North Carolina should see to it those Congressmen of this State who favor the parcels post should not lose by it. If you have not already found out how your representative stands on the parcels post, do so at once and then let him know how you stand in regard to his election. The letter of General Patten follows:

Dear Duckworth:—There can be little doubt but that between eighty and ninety per cent of the people of this country want a general parcels post. Congressmen admit it, but they say,—some of them point out,—that it is the well organized ten percent that don't want it which can with one argument or another in various ways often "dark and devious" defeat the member of Congress who comes out flat-footedly for it and actually tries with all his might and main to secure it. Consequently some "statesmen" up here make the farmer think by a long letter they are for the proposition and turn right around and give the merchant distinctly to understand that they are on his side in the fight.

For instance, Congressmen W. S. Howard, S. A. Roddenbery, and Dudley M. Hughes of Georgia, are out clean and square for a general parcel post. So is Judge Charles R. Crisp candidate for the nomination in the new Third District. These men are writing farmer and merchant precisely the same kind of letters. Now I am not saying that other members of the Georgia delegation are not writing their different classes of constituents frankly and truthfully their actual sentiments and position, but these four are being attacked in all sorts of ways by the opponents of parcel post.

This week the Times-Recorder of Americus has a long double column editorial jumping into Judge Crisp for his favoring a general parcel post that ought to be answered. There is nothing personal in an answer. The thing involved is a question of principle, and that principle is whether the people are longer going to permit the express companies, which are, really in my opinion, nothing but parasites engaged in a business which if the law had been properly construed by a little pin-head law clerk in the Department of Justice years ago would not now be doing such business.

This is practically the only civilized country that does not have a parcel post, and this country has it to every other civilized country. The only reasons we have not a general parcel post have been stated by Postmaster-Generals as the Adams Express Company, the American Express Company, the United States Express Company, and

other express companies; and one who has been here and knows the situation knows those are the reasons.

The reason why those are the reasons is because those companies have through mail order houses and other wholesalers and retailers led the local merchants to believe that parcel post would tear down local industry and business, and build up the business of large mail order houses. By correspondence, through traveling men, and otherwise the large manufacturers and wholesalers, having enjoyed preferential express rates and having lower rates than any local merchant can secure, have kept dingling it into the local merchants ears that parcel post would ruin his business.

As a matter of fact there are no large mail order houses in any other civilized country and every other civilized country has parcel post operated by the government through its postoffice department in one form or another, and in no other civilized country where there is parcel post has the local merchant suffered. As a matter of fact, parcel post has helped his business because he gets the same parcel rates as does the big merchant in the big cities and consequently there are no "big mail order houses" in those countries having parcel post.

Now, it is up to those who want this needed legislation to back up the men who stand for it. The opposition is very busy in subtle and resourceful ways attacking them for their stand, and unless the people who want this beneficent legislation come to their rescue the express companies will continue to have their way. President Barrett said recently: "If you want your Congressman to be what he really desires to be—your friend, your advocate—you must prove yourself worthy, stand by him in every conflict—for this will give him courage, it will make him aggressive, it will make him determined, and it will encourage young men, who really want to do something for their fellowmen, to enter politics and be among those who described by the poet as

'Large brained, clear-eyed, of such as he,  
Shall freedom's young apostles be.'"

It is the same old fight of special privilege against general welfare. Every time it is proposed to curb the predatory practices of privilege congressmen are threatened with defeat. Apprehension is spread among those who will profit the most by the change. Money is spent right and left influencing voters and stirring up every possible class that can be used by the privileged interests to prevent the legislation.

That was true when the Interstate Commerce act was proposed and amended from time to time. The railroads resented the interference and saw to it that local merchants and business men were

duly impressed with the fear that business would be ruined. And yet when the law finally became effective business was encouraged by it and local merchants profited and by continuing to profit by the legislation. The railroads themselves now admit it was a good thing for them. The same thing happened when rural free delivery was proposed. It was honestly contended by local business men all over the country that its establishment would keep the farmer out of town and their trade would suffer, but it has not. Neither did the establishment of postal saving bank department hurt local bankers, practically every one of whom were panic stricken and fought the measure just as local merchants are now fighting parcel post. But they are now praising the act and are perhaps its greatest friends, just as the local merchants will be when parcel post is once established. So, too, with regard to pure food legislation. Local merchants and particularly druggists wrote letter after letter to their members of Congress, stating that the pure food law would ruin them and threatening to defeat congressmen if the act was passed. They honestly thought, as a result of the impure food vendors and others profiting at the expense and health of the people, that the proposed law would keep off the market many foods and drugs which the people wanted, but the results have not confirmed their objections and honest fears. On the contrary, frauds have been prevented, no legitimate business has suffered, and honest business has profited.

There is no question about express rate being exorbitant. The Interstate Commerce Commission and other official investigating bodies have demonstrated that, and that the express companies are an abnormal and parasitic business, that has grown up out of misconstruction of the law, if not illegally. Their excessive charges are one of the causes of the high cost of living and explain to some degree why it is that the farmer gets such a small proportion of what his produce sells for in the market where the consumer buys it. It is natural, of course, that those enjoying the privilege of gathering in some twenty-five or thirty million dollars annually in excess of what the service justifies their taking should do every things they can to prevent legislation that will abolish the abuse and system by which they gather in these millions. If the people will only watch the opposition and meet it squarely, standing by those who stand for the legislation and the right, and carefully analyze the attacks on men who are aggressively and with effect actually doing something substantial to forward that legislation, the legislation will come just as the pure food law, rural delivery, and other beneficent laws have come, and those who fought it will become its friends and advocates and praise the farmer, as usual, for the good he has again wrought.

Yours for parcel post, the Union and right.  
J. H. PATTEN, General Counsel.

We have no right to rest on our arms until the commands of our Lord and Master are literally carried out.—J. Campbell White.