

Agricultural Organizations in Germany.

H. C. Price in Wallaces' Farmer.

The agricultural interests of Germany are well organized, and every winter in February they hold an annual round-up meeting in Berlin. This is similar to our State agricultural weeks, only much larger, as it is for the entire German empire. This year it came the third week in February, and it was estimated that over 10,000 farmers were in attendance. During agricultural weeks in Berlin it is like Chicago is during the International Live Stock Exposition—the hotels are crowded, and the city is full of farmers.

These various meetings are of interest to an American, because they reflect the conditions of the agricultural interests of the country. The central organization about which all organizations gather is the German Agricultural Society (Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft), which is probably the strongest agricultural organization in the world, and has a membership of almost 19,000, who pay a membership fee of \$5 per year. Although it was not organized until 1884 it now has property of almost \$1,000,000 in value, and has its own building in Berlin. It is a private organization and has no State or government support. It is strictly non-political and confines its efforts entirely to promoting the scientific and practical agriculture of the empire.

There is another organization that meets during agricultural week, that is known as the Farmers' Union, and that is purely political, having no purpose except to advance the political interests of the farmers. This year their general meetings were held in one of the largest auditoriums in Berlin, and over 10,000 farmers were in attendance. The discussions were confined to ways and means of advancing agricultural interests by means of legislation. They adopted ringing resolutions calling for the maintaining of a high protective tariff on all agricultural products, and emphasizing the necessity of Germany producing all its food products, so as to be independent of all other countries in case of war.

The agricultural interests of Germany have always held a strong position politically, and represent the vested interests of Germany. This is due to the fact that the nobility hold an immense area of agricultural land and have been in a position to shape legislation so as to favor themselves. However, there is a strong spirit of protest prevalent, especially among the lower classes. At the recent election of the Reichstag (the German Congress), the Socialists elected 110 members out of 397, and now have the largest representation of any political party. In the former session they had only fifty-five members, and their unexpected increase is viewed with great alarm by the old-line standpat conservatives. The vote of the Socialists amounted to over four and one-half millions, and can not but be interpreted as a strong protest against conditions as they now are and the legislation that has been enacted in recent years.

The German Agricultural Society is most completely organized, and has been very active in all the different lines of agriculture. It is divided into eight different divisions, such as live stock, soils, crops, farm management, plant breeding, etc., and has over forty committees for specific subjects in the different departments. They not only publish their annual report, that appears in four quarterly numbers, but also a

weekly publication and special bulletins. These special bulletins vary in size from twenty to thirty pages to good sized books, and the number already published has reached about 200. Several of them are reports on American agriculture and the bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture on Swine, by George Rommel, has been translated and published as a bulletin in this series.

Another feature of the society's work is the holding of agricultural expositions each year in the different parts of the empire, similar to our State Fairs.

An idea of how extensive the agricultural organizations are can be gotten by mentioning some of the more important that met during agricultural week. In addition to the two that have already been mentioned are the dairy association, draft horse breeders, horticultural society, the alcohol manufacturers' association, the potato driers' association, the starch manufacturers' association, and what to me was the most interesting of all, the country life association.

It was inspiring to see between four and five hundred persons in the regular sessions of this association, and the addresses were the best given during the week. The rural life work is nothing new here, they have had a national organization for sixteen years—and are doing a splendid work in bettering the conditions of rural life in the country villages. Practically all of the small farmers of Germany live in villages, and the greatest contrast between America and Germany, as one travels through the country, is the absence of the farm homes on the land, and of fences separating fields. This is no place for a wire fence trust. The village system of farming is almost universal, that is, the farmers live together in small villages, and go out to work the outlying lands. Such a system is exceedingly wasteful of time, and one of the reasons that is given why manure spreaders cannot be used here to advantage is the distance that the manure frequently has to be hauled.

The work of the Country Life Association has been to improve the conditions of living in these villages by organizing the young people into clubs for social and general welfare purposes, furnishing exhibits of pictures that are sent from village to village, and especially helping to furnish good, healthful amusement for the young people. They are taught to love their home and country, and for this purpose many songs have been written, and the association encourages the singing of these, as well as the well-known national hymns and folk-songs, at all of their gatherings.

A great deal has been written on this subject, and at the exhibit that was made in connection with their annual meeting, a fair-sized library of works on the subject of rural life work was shown. In addition, two semi-monthly papers are published devoted to this purpose.

The problem here is the same as in America; it is the question of keeping the young people in the country, of enriching country life so as to make it so attractive that it can compete with the cities, and so that the young people will be satisfied to stay on the farms. All of the organizations that I have mentioned may be classed as those that are maintained for the purpose of promoting agriculture. In addition, the

NORTH CAROLINA FARMERS' UNION PLEDGE

.....Local Union No, County of, N. C.

We hereby pledge ourselves to plant, or have planted, on all lands owned by us, or under our charge during the year 1912, at least one acre of cultivated or hoed crops for each and every acre planted to cotton or tobacco.

We further agree, as far as possible, to use only FERTILIZER MATERIALS and do HOME MIXING, instead of buying ready mixed guanos, and in order that we may be able to greatly reduce the amount of fertilizer necessary, we also agree to adopt a more economical system of farming, to do more deep plowing, sow more legumes and to adopt some system of crop rotation.

We further agree, as far as possible, to run our business on a cash basis during the year 1912, and if compelled to assume obligations for future payment, we will endeavor to have amounts mature on two dates, viz.: one-half in December and the other half in May.

Signed in my presence, this theday of..... 1912.

....., Secretary.

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