

# The CAROLINA UNION FARMER



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One Dollar a Year.

## The Grab Bag Trust.



DURING the last ten years the United States has spent \$72,745,300 for public buildings, and the Government is constructing them now at the rate of ten a month. Architecturally they are creditable, and some of them effect economies, because the Government can secure chapter or better accommodations by building than by renting.

In most cases, however the public business could be done more cheaply and as well in rented offices; and these buildings are not built primarily to facilitate Government business. They are built to please the voters in the districts and towns in which they are placed. They are a part of the "pork" which Congressmen give and which the local political managers have come to demand as the price of re-election.

Almost every member of the House introduced this year at least one bill providing for the erection of a public building in his district. The Committee on Public Buildings welded these demands into a single "omnibus" bill in which it tried to be fair to each claimant without recommending a sum so big as to arouse public protest. In this way a skillful committee parcelled out a \$22,000,000 appropriation to give 282 out of the 391 Representatives "something to take back home." In some towns the Government accommodations are so extravagant that they cost \$2 a year to maintain for every inhabitant, though of course the United States Treasury and not the inhabitants foot the bills.

The Committee on Expenditures on Public Buildings in the recent session handed in an exhaustive report which said that in the "mania for the construction of public buildings" many towns have been given buildings "where private persons would have been glad to have equipped them under the direction of the Government—for a rental of one half the price paid for janitor service."

The Committee points to many extravagances and wasteful practices but it does not get at the root of the matter. It does not offer a remedy for "pork barrel" appropriations. As long as a Congressman's constituents demand that he raid the United States Treasury for their benefit as the price of reelection and he is in a position to do it, so long will the majority of Congressmen work for their districts' special interest and not for the United States as a whole. As long as this continues, the Public Buildings Bill, the River and Harbors Bill, the Pension Acts, and to some extent the army and navy appropriations will be made in corrupting and pauperizing waste.

Under Mr. Roosevelt "pork barrel" appropriations reached their zenith. Mr. Taft has spoken against them—and signed the bills that made them into law. A tremendous opportunity for true economy and the elimination of a deep-seated corruption is open to the new leaders in Congress and to a new President.—*World's Work*.