

**Local Man Has Solution for the Farm Relief Question**

An interesting and somewhat humorous discussion of farm problems was given at the Melrose grange meeting recently by Foster Butner, local vegetable grower and shipper, who took as his subject "An Expedition to the Virgin Islands."

Mr. Butner said: "Your chairman told me to choose my own subject. I know that you are tired of politics. We've had a week of that at Kansas City and Houston is soon to provide another week. So I shall talk with you about something new. I shall touch upon politics only when it cannot be avoided. Fifty miles east of Porto Rico there is a group of islands known as the Virgin Islands. They were discovered by Columbus in 1494 upon his second trip to the new world. During the world war in 1916 the United States purchased three of these islands, St. Croix, St. James and St. John, from Denmark, paying \$25,000,000. We assumed possession in 1917. The total area of our three islands is 138 square miles. The population is 26,000, of which 92 per cent are negroes, the remainder consisting of mixed breeds and a few whites. The climate is tropical and the soil is fertile. Being comparatively close to the Atlantic seaboard cliffs and employing water transportation, they offer a wonderful opening for fruit and vegetable growing.

"Eastern capitalists, believing that a great opportunity exists for the growing of tomatoes, pineapples, beans, cucumbers and other delicacies, are using every influence to create better living conditions on these islands. And to bring this into effect they had a representative at the Kansas City convention. It so happened that at the very moment this representative was making his plea to the committee, the farm-relief parade marched in, demanding to be heard. Now it is my habit to form opinions from observations and study. And the fact that the Virgin Islands man had no trouble in getting consideration from the committee while the farm relief parade had to break in, convinced me that the island man was more popular than the crowd from Nebraska and Iowa. This opinion is strengthened by an item that appeared in the Roseburg News-Review Thursday. A gentleman representing the land-settlement bureau of the Portland Chamber of Commerce addressing our forum luncheon at the Umpqua, declared that this farm relief talk disgusted him. What a tragedy! How insignificant for thousands of farmers to lose their farms as compared with a man like that becoming disgusted!

"Now I believe that we farmers, endowed with the experience of agriculture and business here on the mainland, could emigrate to

the Virgin Islands and become rich—stopping all this talk about farm relief. Those negroes are uneducated. The land can be homesteaded or purchased at a very small price. Instead of paying our present freight rates to New York and Philadelphia and Boston, we could use refrigerated steamers and secure a better delivery at a much smaller cost. And there would be no duty on these commodities because the Virgin Islands are just as much a part of the United States and, in some circles, far more popular than the farm belt on the mainland.

"After our fruit and vegetable ranches are well established, we could incorporate a railroad line to serve the islands. This would cost probably not to exceed fifty thousand dollars. We could easily float this for a million dollars. Then we could initiate a light and power company. That would probably cost twenty thousand dollars. With a few high-powered salesmen we could float that for half a million. A telephone service would be a necessity. That would cost, say, ten thousand dollars and could be floated for a hundred thousand.

"Then, without further expenditure or effort, we should send for a man with experience in the land-settlement work of Oregon. Before his arrival we should enact a local law making it a felony to even mention farm relief. Each and every one of us should shout 'Prosperity!' and thus make it easy and pleasant for our promoter. He could never have reason to become disgusted down in the Virgin Islands under the conditions I have outlined. He should bring in settlers by the thousands and our prices would go up, up, U. P. And we should sell, SELL, SELL. Then we should institute a commission to re-value our transportation and public utility properties. That would justify us in doubling our rates and thus make it easy to sell our stocks and bonds. There are doubtless many other opportunities in the Virgin Islands. Probably there is oil in the Virgin Islands. But, regardless of the fact that big money has been taken from oil here on our mainland, I do not recommend our underlarking the oil business in the Virgin Islands. I do not believe those uneducated negroes would stand for the oil business as conducted here on the mainland. After we had educated them fully concerning how public utilities should be conducted, installing our text books in the schools and by propaganda informing all the citizens as to how oil and utilities and transportation can best be handled, we could get by with almost anything. I am not guessing about this. Experience convinces us that it can be done.

"Probably there are some present, who, for various reasons, cannot join our expedition. To them we extend our sincere sympathies. This expedition offers the biggest opportunity since Columbus discovered America. I shall ask all those who intend to go with us to stand. The line shall form on the right."

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**PLANS FOR LAND**

**GRANT LEGAL FIGHT TO BE DISCUSSED**

A meeting of county judges of the land grant counties will be held in this city Friday for the purpose of making further plans in combating the effort of the State of Oregon to seize a portion of the money paid by the government to the counties. The state has lost two rounds, one in the circuit court and the other in the state supreme court and now the case goes to the U. S. Supreme court for final determination.

This final effort will probably be the last and the counties are very determined to make the best possible presentation of their case. Attorney John Carson of Marion county and District Attorney Corbin of Douglas county, who have carried the work of the legal fight so far, will probably be given associate counsel in carrying the case before the higher court.

The land grant counties have formed an organization and have appointed an executive committee to handle the work in connection with the legal fight and it is this committee that will meet here Friday, together with other interested county officials.

McCormick binding twine at Wharton Bros.

**QUAKE AND TIDAL WAVE WIPE OUT MEXICAN TOWN**

EL PASO, Tex., June 21.—Earth quakes are reported continuing in the vicinity of Tuxtepec, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, where 181 shocks have been recorded in the past few days. Chacabana, a seaport town, was totally destroyed by the waves swept inland more than 5,000 yards during the tremors. All houses in Chacabana were destroyed and the inhabitants fled for their lives to the mountains, according to dispatches from Mexico City.

WASHINGTON, June 21.—The seismograph at Georgetown suddenly began registering earthquake shocks at 5:45 o'clock today, and continued to register for four hours. The shocks were of "considerable intensity" reaching their maximum at 6:30 o'clock. The distance away was estimated at over 1,000 miles.

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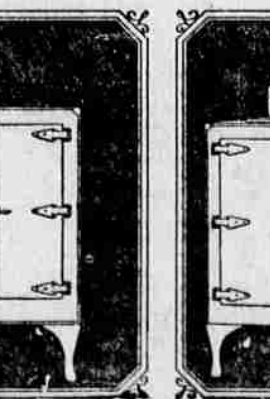
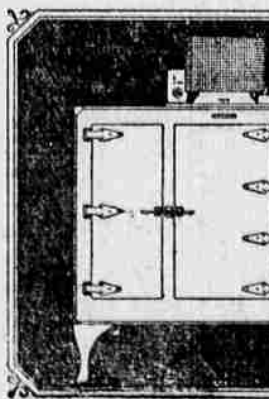
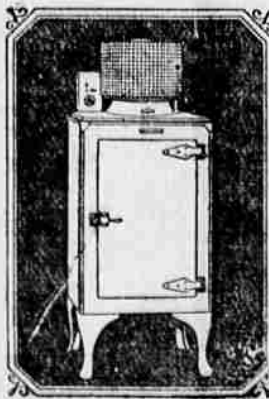
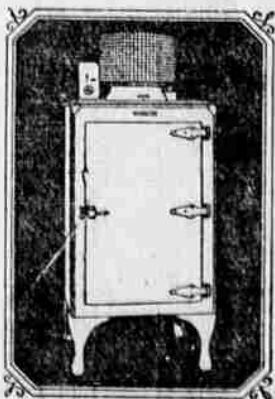
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