



THE FORUM
Where Every One Has His Say

Larned, Kan., Jan. 18.—(To the Editor)—During the recent campaign in Oregon we heard much said about Kansas and perhaps it will be interesting to readers of the Observer at this time to know more about Kansas.

Kansas, as nearly every school children knows, is situated about the center of the United States, and one of the largest wheat producing states of this nation. The 1914 crop was about 170 million bushels, and the average yield per acre for 1914 was about 15 bushels per acre. To the Oregon farmer this looks small, however with 80,000 square miles of practically level land in the state it can easily be understood why the heavy production.

Kansas certainly has her share of drouth and one dry year is frequently followed by two or three more. The same may be said of good crops, when the citizens have experienced two or three dry years and are about ready to go into bankruptcy, nature smiles upon them. Plenty of rain comes, and bountiful crops is the result. The citizens again take courage, improve the farms, villages grow into towns and towns into cities. Thus it is the population of Kansas struggle along with uncertainties always facing them, yet in spite of all these conditions Kansas people are plucky, enthusiastic and happy. Considered from all view points her people as a whole are better fed, better dressed and better educated than those of a majority of the states.

Morally, among the young generation now growing, it can be said Kansas can boast of having no superior and few states that will equal.

With all her ups and downs it is something of a puzzle to know how she has forged ahead and built up such a tremendous wealth within her borders in the last few years.

Having spent more than one month in the state, stopping two and three days in towns of 2000 to 3000 people the writer has had a very good opportunity to study the general con-

ditions, and feels safe in saying the prosperous condition of Kansas now at a time other states are struggling with depressed conditions, is due in part to the recent large wheat crop and present high prices, but mainly to the "economic" habits of the people. Kansas people are good buyers. During drouth years they have been forced to reduce their expenses to a minimum in order to exist and through this manner of education they still cling to the habit of making a dollar buy one hundred cents worth of wares. It is very noticeable in the grocery stores that buying is largely done by the housewives in person and not by telephone. Vegetables are carefully examined before purchases are made. In cigar stores you will observe merchants, clerks, in fact men of all stations of life, usually buy five cent cigars. In hotels and boarding houses you will observe that people eat heavily on vegetables and fruits and little meats. For meat much poultry is used, as both beef and pork are more expensive.

Plain But Well Dressed People. In towns of 3000 and less you will not observe so much of the up to date costumes as is worn by the ladies in the West and while they, as a rule, are neatly dressed, it is plainly evident that when an article is purchased it is used until worn out regardless of the style. Both old and young men dress in about the same up to date clothing as is worn by the Oregon people. The people do not seem to require the expensive entertainments here as in the West. As you well know a town in the west of 2000 or 3000 supports two or three picture shows seven days in the week and two or three travelling performances each month, and Fourth of July as well as county fair days are scarcely recognized as being a howling success unless something of a very exciting nature is pulled off. Reminding the writer of a five cent show he once attended in Kansas City when everyone was invited to attend the performance the next night as they were going to kill a "Bull" on the stage. Then he remarked "we want the people to help pay for the animal." Thus it is with us in the West, we seem to demand the excitement and it is expensive.

Towns of 2000 to 3000 people in this state have usually one picture show and they give performances three nights in the week, none on Sundays, and traveling shows find a very weak support when they appear. Young men and women content themselves with their little societies, lodge gatherings and house parties while the older classes seem to find all the social life necessary in their churches. Truly the average young man of the West would call the entire business a Sunday school affair as it would be too tame in character for him. Fine board and rooms can be had in almost every town for \$5 per week, and good meals at restaurants for 25 cents.

Kansas of today is entirely different to the Kansas of 25 years ago. Then it was that our western spirit prevailed here. When I asked an old friend to explain the great change his answer was: "We have in the past made fortunes and spent them and now we have slowed down to a gait we can stand and still have something left for a drouth year."

The last proof of prosperity is the deposits in the banks, as the money is loaned back to the people for legitimate enterprise and not for wild-cutting experiments, and it is truly surprising to see the tremendous amount of deposits as indicated by the bank statements.

Day Laboring Classes. Since Kansas is largely an agricultural state there is not the day wage workers here in numbers to be found in the West. True however, there is a normal supply here all the time except in the harvest season at which time laborers from Missouri and Arkansas flock to the state in great numbers and disappear as if by magic when the harvest season is ended leaving the permanent day laborer

here undisturbed, with a fair demand for his services the year round at about the same prices paid for the same work in Oregon. A very large proportion of the day laborers have families, hence it is up to them to stick to their jobs, consequently a fair job with regular work is considered worth sticking to here and they stick.

No Public Soup Counters. I have not seen in the papers or heard of any public soup counters in the state, and have not seen a tramp or beggar. No doubt such may be found in the larger cities but not in the smaller ones where I have traveled.

The farming population from the middle to the western part of the state is made up of Germans (Dutch Minonites), Bohemians, Swedes, Russians, and Missourians with a small per cent from other states.

Notwithstanding their foreign birth these people have grasped the western spirit of civilization and manner of doing things and now actually form a part of the best citizenship in the state as they are truly loyal, law-abiding, industrious and progressive, and you find in the colleges as many or more students from the families of the foreign born citizen as the native.

Very Little Waste. The silo is reducing the old time farm waste in the state to a minimum and solves a very serious, heretofore problem in drouth years as forage can be saved at almost any stage through this medium.

A visit to the blacksmith and repair shops reveal the fact that no wagon, buggy, plow or other implement is ever broken beyond repair and never discarded until actually worn out. To the farmer this means a great saving over our methods as we quickly discard a wagon, buggy, plow or mowing machine when they begin to look bad and give us a little trouble.

We Use Better Farming Methods. Oregon farmers as a class use better methods in farming than is practiced here and as a result get better results, due, I believe, to continued reminders sent out by our agricultural college encouraging farmers to get to the front.

Prohibition. In the recent campaign both wets and drys told truths about Kansas and both parties told things not true. If you really want a drink in Kansas at a certain hour of the day the best plan is to get a money order and send it to a wholesale house in Kansas City and in three or four days you will get your package at the express office by signing two certified statements showing where from, who from, how much and that the same is for your own personal use.

Kansas people claim there is no open bars in the state and yet I have not visited a town where there was such. From the writer's observation under the present package system there is probably 10 per cent now used as against what would be used under the license system.

Pasing through the holidays and 34 days all told the writer has seen one real drunk man and five or six partially intoxicated men. Have not seen a single street disturbance of any kind.

Bankers, merchants, millers, in fact practically all business men when asked what they think of the Kansas condition will tell you it suits them.

I have not visited Jay county yet with empty jails but so far have found none with more than three inhabitants and as a rule they are bootleggers and petty thieves.

Automobiles. Kansas people have Gasmania and

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have it bad as the state papers say there is now 62,000 automobiles in the state and there will be by May 25,000 more added to this.

The Farmers and Producer. Poultry, butter and eggs are the valuable assets to the up-keep of living expenses. Every town as a rule has its poultry and egg shipping station and they are kept pretty busy receiving dressing and shipping the product for which cash is paid to the farmers. I am told that large part of the family expense is kept up through this one medium which is largely produced by the housewife and children, to say the least these commodities return millions of dollars to the state and is a source of production that should be encouraged in Oregon among the farmers of Oregon.

The Old Dairy Cow. All towns of any consequence have their cream shipping stations and this branch of industry while not so large as in Oregon brings vast sums of money into the state. From the writer's personal experience all the good cream is shipped away as the so-called cream served in restaurants and medium priced hotels is a bigger joke on the real article than was Bill Hanley's campaign for United States senator in Oregon. Sizing up state conditions in Kansas now and comparing with 20 years ago when the writer lived in Kansas I can realize the greatness of the better conditions now and can also foresee the change that will naturally come to Oregon and the Pacific Northwest in the next few years the beginning of which is now. We must slow down to a gait that we can keep, fight for the good and eliminate the bad, learn to be a more hospitable people, which is the strongest invitation to emmigration and the surest road to happiness and success.

Kansas is a great state and should climatic conditions prevail that will give the people good crops two or three more years in succession more keys will have to be put on the adding machines in order to enumerate the increased wealth. Notwithstanding the present prosperous conditions the beautiful and fertile land, the well improved and delightful villages, towns and cities, the education and culture, the "make you feel at home" progressive citizens all of which goes to make up any great state, my home is in Eastern Oregon in the mountains, to me the beauty spot of the world and I have yet to find any locality where good results come with as little effort as in Oregon and once we have formed the "economic" habit we will naturally slow down to the proper pace and for the amount of "area" the people of the Grande Ronde valley will become the most prosperous and happy of all, as we have the climatic conditions that never fail to bring us health, wealth and prosperity.

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