

The Ontario Argus
County Official Paper

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SHORT-CIRCUITING MIDDLEMEN

Political thinking, like women's hats follows styles. There is very little originality in either. Most of the products of the politicians, like those of the milliners are copies; and many of them poor imitations at that.

Not long ago, as history reckons time, the panaceas for the ills of mankind were deemed to lie and were thought to be found in political systems, the establishment of republican forms of government were deemed the last word in the adjustment of men's relations with each other in organized society.

In spite of the success of the United States, the greatest example the world has ever seen of republican government, and its imitation by other nations in the western world, as well as its establishment in France, Switzerland, and now many smaller states of the old world; the new system has not entirely replaced the governmental systems men thought would disappear with the advent of popular government.

The same is true of reforms in business; distinguished successes in various fields do not preclude their general adoption in other lines. The present system in vogue in the United States and in use throughout the entire world is one of gradual growth and has its roots deep in the economic life of all the peoples of the world.

It is true that as never before the people are thinking of the economic system. As the result of the high prices of war times and the coining of the word, profiteer, there is a growing belief that there is, "too great a spread between the producer and the consumer." The people generally believe this to be true, even though they are not often in a position to prove their statement.

How to reduce that spread is the task to which economists have long directed their attention, and since it has become a popular pastime the politicians are following the styles and themselves are endeavoring to solve the problem and give voice to many well worn panaceas. National

magazines, newspapers of all descriptions, trade organizations, as well of course as the organizations of producers are all thinking along the same lines—following the prevailing styles.

The most popular style right now is that of co-operation. Its doctrines are being preached on every hand. It seeks to shorten the spread, and many of its extreme devotees see in it the means of eliminating the middlemen and thus increasing the prosperity of the producer while reducing the cost of living to the consumer.

There is no doubt that some of the larger bulky products can be so exchanged. We believe the hay of this valley could be so marketed. We know that the milk, cream and cheese of the Willamette valley and of Tillamook is thus handled; that the Hood River apple growers; the ranchers of Sumner and Puyallup profit through their co-operative marketing methods; while everyone knows the success achieved by the California raisin and prune growers.

But co-operative marketing and co-operative buying are two vastly different things. The present system of distribution is the result of centuries of effort and in service given the middle men; retailers, wholesalers, commission men have materially aided in assembling the product of distant regions for the consumption of the people of the cities.

In the Saturday Evening Post of last week Herbert Atwood had an exhaustive study of marketing methods that is well worth the study of every student of the marketing problem. The writer does not believe that the panacea for economic ills has yet been found. He believes that the co-operation of the farmers will result in material savings in some lines; but points out forcibly the functions which the retailer and the wholesaler performs in the marketing of America's products.

The benefit of such studies as Mr. Atwood and others will be found in the greater appreciation which the public will gain thru the study of various functions of every element from the producer to the consumer. It will tend to sober the radical and to bring the conservative to appreciate the fact that many changes may be made in the present system.

But best of all, it will make many think who have never considered the problems of distribution at all. If the American people really start thinking about this subject there is no doubt they will find the just solution. That is what we all want.

WORK WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR

There is a great measure of truth in the old statement; "distance lends enchantment to the view." But that enchantment often is not the real thing, it lacks substance. In landscape it may be the proper thing to admire the distant scene; but in the solution of business and community affairs it is not better to admire the qualities of those near at hand; to make allowance for deficiencies that we may see in them—which often we magnify because we know the persons so well and see them so often at close range—and while admitting that we too have our faults—together work out our mutual business and community salvation?

For Ontario there is no magic wand that can wave away our troubles. Nor do we have here any difficulty that does not exist everywhere. We are just as well, if not better off than most communities in this land of ours; and so much better off than the communities of other lands, that we should be optimistic indeed rather than pessimistic.

Yet we must not forget that conditions might be better and that it is our duty to endeavor to make them better. How to do that is the problem. It means work, and who can we expect to work for that betterment more than those who have elected to make this community their home?

Can we expect a stranger to come here and work as those who have everything their own in this world invested here? Can we expect a stranger to work harder than those who have long been associated with the growth of the community, whose children have been born here and call this home? No indeed, we believe that where a man's heart is, there his treasure lies and there his best work will be done.

The problem of making Ontario a better place in which to live and the country round about it more prosperous is our mutual problem, and it will be solved by the business men of Ontario and the ranchers about the city. There is as much ability, as much energy right here at home as will be found in any community of this size, anywhere, we veritably believe. Let us connect this ability and this loyalty to our community together and work out our own salvation.

CHANGING CONDITIONS

Right now Malheur county is undergoing what in time will be recognized, perhaps, as a revolution in its economic condition.

We are changing from a stock and hay raising county to that of an intensified agricultural region. The beginning of this change is on now, and it is gaining momentum. It is too bad that even greater progress cannot be made this year, but it is well that so great progress has been made already.

In this work the Malheur County Farm Bureau has been the most potential factor; that is in getting the work underway. The thoughtful rancher and business man has seen the change coming but it remained for the Farm Bureau to set the wheels in motion to solve the problem.

In another column the Argus presents a reprint from the Malheur Farm Bureau News of this month a summary of the work done by the Bureau during the past year. From month to month The Argus has presented the report of the County Agent and in its news columns has told of the work in various lines, but we believe that many have not appreciated the work that is progressing in the county, and therefore we are printing this condensed report. We believe it is worth the attention of those who are interested in what is going on here now.

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