

# FREE PORTS BUILDERS OF COMMERCE

CONGRESS SHOULD GIVE THEM PREFERENCE IN APPROPRIATIONS.

By Peter Radford.

This nation is now entering upon an era of marine development. The wreckage of European commerce has drifted to our shores and the world war is making unprecedented demands for the products of farm and factory. In transportation facilities on land we lead the world but our port facilities are inadequate, and our flag is seldom seen in foreign ports. If our government would only divert the energy we have displayed in conquering the railroads to mastering the commerce of the sea, a foreign bottom would be unknown on the ocean's highways.

This article will be confined to a discussion of our ports for the products of the farm must pass over our wharfs before reaching the water. We have in this nation 51 ports, of which 41 are on the Atlantic and 10 are on the Pacific Coast. The Sixty-second Congress appropriated over \$51,000,000 for improving our Rivers and Harbors and private enterprise levies a toll of approximately \$50,000,000 annually in wharfage and charges for which no tangible service is rendered. The latter item should be lifted off the backs of the farmer of this nation and this can be done by Congress directing its appropriations to ports that are free where vessels can tie up to a wharf and discharge her cargo free of any fee or charge.

A free port is progress. It takes out the unnecessary link in the chain of transactions in commerce which has for centuries laid a heavy hand upon commerce. No movement is so heavily laden with results or will more widely and equally distribute its benefits as that of a free port and none can be more easily and effectively secured.

## THE VITAL PROBLEM OF AGRICULTURE

By Peter Radford.

There is no escaping the market problem and the highest development of agriculture will not be attained until it is solved, for a market is as necessary for the producer as land on which to grow his crop.

Governmental and educational institutions have spent \$180,000,000 in the United States during the past ten years for improving soil production and improving seeds and plants, but very little attention and less money has been given to the marketing side of agriculture.

The problem is a monumental one and one which will never be solved until it gets within the grasp of a gigantic organization where master minds can concentrate the combined experience and wisdom of the age upon it. It is a problem which the farmers, merchants, bankers, editors and statesmen must unite in solving.

The Farmers' Union stands for all there is in farming from the most scientific methods of seed selection to the most systematic and profitable plans of marketing, but does not believe in promoting one to the neglect of the other. We consider the work of farm demonstrators valuable and we ask that governmental and commercial agencies seeking to help us, continue to give us their assistance and advice, but we believe that their influence should be extended to the marketing side of our farm problems also.

We cannot hope to develop manufacturing by over-production of the factory; we cannot build up mercantile enterprises by the merchants loading their shelves with surplus goods and no more can we develop agriculture by glutting the market with a surplus of products.

### DARIUS

The neigh of a horse made Darius King of Persia, the six contending powers for the throne agreeing among themselves that the one whose horse should neigh first should possess the kingdom. This ancient method of settling disputes among politicians could be revived with profit today. If our partisan factions and petty politicians could only settle their disputes by the neigh of a horse, the bark of a dog or the bray of a donkey, it would be a great blessing and would give our citizens a better opportunity to pursue the vocations of industry free from political strife.

Let those who pick political plums by raising rows and who flash swords dripping in the blood of industry understand that they cannot turn the public forum into a political arena and by a clash of personal aspirations still the hammer and stop the plow and that their quarrels must be settled in the back alleys of civilization.

## OUR PUBLIC FORUM

I---Introductory

Through the Press Service of Agriculture and Commerce, the master minds of this nation will be invited to the public forum and asked to deliver a message to civilization. Men who achieve seldom talk, and men who talk seldom achieve. There is no such thing as a noisy thinker, and brevity is always a close companion to truth.

It will be a great privilege to stand by the side of men who can roll in place the cornerstones of industry; to associate with men who can look at the world and see to the bottom of it; to commune with men who can hear the roar of civilization a few centuries away.

Too often we listen to the rabble element of our day that cries out against every man who achieves, "Crucify him." Mankind never has and probably never will produce a generation that appreciates the genius of its day. There never will be a crown without a cross, progress without sacrifice or an achievement without a challenge.

This is an age of service, and that man is greatest who serves the largest number. The present generation has done more to improve the condition of mankind than any civilization since human motives began their upward flight. The Greeks gave human life inspiration, but while her orators were speaking with the tongues of angels, her farmers were plowing with forked sticks; while her philosophers were emancipating human thought from bondage, her traffic

moved on two-wheeled carts driven, and oftentimes drawn, by slaves; while her artists were painting divine dreams on canvas, the streets of proud Athens were lighted by fire-brands dipped in tallow.

The genius of past ages sought to arouse the intellect and stir the soul but the master minds of today are seeking to serve. Civilization has assigned to America the greatest task of the greatest age, and the greatest men that ever trod the greatest planet are solving it. Their achievements have astounded the whole world and we challenge every age and nation to name men or products that can approach in creative genius or masterful skill in organization, the marvelous achievements of the tremendous men of the present day. Edison can press a button and turn a light on multiplied millions of homes; Vail can take down the receiver and talk with fifty millions of people; McCormick's reaper can harvest the world's crop, and Fulton's steam engine moves the commerce of land and sea.

The greatest thing a human being can do is to serve his fellow men; Christ did it; Kings decree it, and wise men teach it. It is the glory of this practical age that Edison could find no higher calling than to become the janitor to civilization; Vail the messenger to mankind; McCormick the hired hand to agriculture, and Fulton the teamster to industry, and blessed is the age that has such masters for its servants.

## OUR PUBLIC FORUM

II---L. E. Johnson

On Two-Cent Passenger Rates



The farmers of this nation are vitally interested in railroad rates and equity between passenger and freight rates is especially important to the man who follows the plow for the farmer travels very little but he is a heavy contributor to the freight revenues. Some of the states have a two cent passenger rate and whatever loss is incurred is recovered through freight revenue. The justice of such a procedure was recently passed upon by the Supreme Court of West Virginia and the decision is so far-reaching that we have asked L. E. Johnson, president of the Norfolk and Western Railway whose road contested the case to briefly review the suit. Mr. Johnson said in part: "Some ten years ago, passenger fares were fixed by the legislatures of a large number of states at two cents a mile. As a basis for such economic legislation, no examination was made of the cost of doing the business so regulated, nor was any attention given to the fact whether such a rate would yield to the railway companies an adequate or any net return upon the capital invested in conducting this class of business."

## OUR PUBLIC FORUM

III---Julius Kruttschnitt

On Financing Railroads



The farmers of this nation need to become better acquainted with the railroad men and their problems. It is only those who know that can give us information and the farmers of America should listen attentively to what the men who manage railroad property have to say. Mr. Kruttschnitt, executive head of the Southern Pacific, has written an article dealing with the financing of railroads. He said in part: "The financing of a railroad is a function which the people, through their servants, the Railroad Commissioners and the Legislators, have never attempted, but it is a most important problem, especially to sections of a State where new railroads are needed. The placing of securities has been left entirely with the promoter and owner of railroads."

"The immediate determination of what earnings the railroad shall be permitted to receive and what burdens it shall have put on it is in the hands of other servants of the public

—the Legislators and the Commissioners.

"Managing a railroad is quite different from managing a government where the money is raised by taxation. When the expenditures, for good reasons or otherwise, increase, taxes can be equally increased. The railroads, while servants of the public, cannot raise money with such ease and facility. The railroads must keep their expenditures within their incomes because while they have some control over their expenditures they have almost no control over their incomes, their rates being fixed by public authorities."

"There is not a railway manager in the country today who is not fearful that under the press of increasing demands the transportation systems of the country will, in a few years, break down, unless the railroads are allowed to earn larger funds wherewith to build it up. There are vast sections of the country, especially in the West, where more railroads are needed and they cannot be built unless the railroads raise new capital."

"People invest money in order to make money, and they are skeptical as to whether they can make money by investing in concerns that are dealt with stringently and unfairly. Railroad securities must be made more attractive to invite investments, and in order that they may be made more attractive, the roads must be allowed earnings that will enable them to meet the increased capital charges."

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