

Objects of the Farmers' Movement.

Editor Willamette Farmer:

I find, in my intercourse with my fellow farmers, as well as in the report of the Highland Farmers' Club published in the FARMER of the 1st of March, that there is a great want or lack of information in regard to the objects and aims of the present farmers' movement, as well as the necessity that exists for such organization. And, as we may be somewhat to blame for this, as well as others who are leading in the movement, we will, by your permission, discuss the question some further.

There is a certain combination among the wheat-buyers of this coast which is working for the accumulation of an immense fortune at the farmers' expense. And after having so shaped their schemes as to shut out all possible competition, they have forced down the price so low that the majority of farmers can not pay the running expense of their farms with the proceeds of the sales of their surplus. While some farmers are especially favored with a virgin soil of superlative richness and a household of industrious sons, and is able to tap the market at its best, and can do something more than pay running expenses, the majority of farmers less favored cannot do so. This state of things leads rapidly to discouragements. Improvements had in contemplation a year ago are now given up, and the business of the country has become more or less paralyzed, so that it is doubtful if the country recovers from the shock it has now received in the next ten years.

Could we look forward to the future and anticipate the time when a competition would spring up between these men, by which prices might become more healthy in the future, we would take less interest in exposing them now, though it would be very desirable to be able to dispense with the infliction at any time. We, however, regard any reformation in this direction as hopeless and out of the question, without a combination on the part of the tillers of the soil to oppose it. Men seldom voluntarily relinquish their grasp upon a promise of wealth, though the means by which it is accessible be ever so questionable; and now the facilities for combining these rings and making them effective are so great, and the principles by which they become paying institutions are so well understood, that nothing short of a revolution on the part of the oppressed will cure the evil.

The advances made in agricultural machinery in the past quarter of a century, has had a tendency to throw out of agriculture about one half the previous force necessary to carry it on. But while one man may now, with the use of improved machinery, till four times the number of acres, the cost and wear and tear connected therewith forbid him the privilege of furnishing his products to the market for a farthing less than before. This extra force thrown out of agriculture has sought employment in other avocations, so much so that available labor has been in excess of the demand, and per consequence the various manufacturers and monopolists of the world have been gradually ruling the price of labor down, and this has brought on a kind of an irrepressible conflict between capital and labor—hence the various strikes that have been so rampant every where in the past few years. While these strikes, where successful, have had a tendency to increase the price of labor, they have invariably been followed by an increase in the price of the commodities turned out by these establishments. Take the manufacture of tin and of glass: the employees strike for higher wages and secure them. This is followed by a rise in tin and glass, a matter of but little significance to those hands, because they use but little of these articles, being principally interested in their bread and butter. So of all others outside of agriculture.

This state of things has had a tendency to enhance the price of all the

farmer's foreign commodities while it has brought no relief to him in the price of his own products. This, however, it would do, were it not for those rings which stand between him and the consumer—hence the necessity of organizing in such a way as will enable us to dispense with those rings. We would have but little objection to those parasites could they be satisfied with reasonable profits, but such is not the fact. Though we may not know exactly what profits these men realize upon a cargo of wheat, yet it is safe to suppose that they do not and will not touch a cargo of wheat without a fair prospect of a reasonable profit. This being a fair presumption, we are enabled to estimate their enormous profits by the data they themselves have furnished us. It is a well-known fact that these dealers in wheat have run up the price of wheat in San Francisco to \$1.25 per bushel. Now, if we conclude they have a fair profit when they pay this price (and this is a legitimate conclusion), then it is fair to assume that the difference between the average price and \$1.25 per bushel constitutes a sum which they have swindled the farmers out of. If then we take 75 cents as the average price paid, we have the sum of 50 cents per bushel as the sum extorted from the farmers unnecessarily. This, on a cargo of 36,000 bushels, amounts to the round sum of \$18,000, over and above a reasonable profit. If then we add the sum of \$10,000 as the supposed profit on \$1.25 per bushel, the least probable profit these men would be likely to take or expect on a cargo, we have the sum of \$28,000 as the profit on a single cargo of a thousand tons. Now, distribute this sum, over and above what farmers have received, in each neighborhood that raises 36,000 bushels of wheat, and it will enable us to see the point why farmers should do their own shipping. Can you, Highland Farmers, see this point ???

While the first cost of this cargo is but about \$25,000, his investment is more than doubled on each cargo, and with the facilities he has for drawing money from the banks on his cargo as it is ready to sail, he can send in succession half a dozen cargoes in a single season, thus increasing his \$25,000 to \$150,000 in a single year. No wonder these men soon become millionaires, and no wonder the farmers from whom such sums are annually extorted find it hard to keep afloat.

It is not with a view of enhancing the price of grain in the world's market that we are seeking a combination among farmers, but that we may have the benefit of such markets as the world, by reason of its necessities, is willing to give. While the starving millions are offering us paying prices for our surplus, we seriously object to those land-sharks swallowing up the major part of it, so that what reaches the farmer is a mere pittance, and falls far short of a just compensation for the capital employed and the labor expended in its production. And why we may not have paid agents in whom we can confide and trust with the transmission of our surplus products to the consumer, without passing them through the hands of these rings, is a mystery which I would like those wiseacres of the Highland Club to solve. It is true, they instance the mutual suspicions that broke up the Union Store at Salem, but we fail to see the practical connection between the two, so that the failure of the one may be arrayed against the probable success of the other. In the case of the store, a single man was entrusted with the capital and management of the whole concern, and of the buying and selling of commodities, concerning the value of which the stockholders knew little or nothing. This left an open field for embezzlement, and as the agent of that concern was not above suspicion, the concern naturally collapsed. But in the farmers' organization we are not thus situated.—We propose to have a State board, whose business it will be to thoroughly post themselves in regard to

the market value of our wheat, wherever it may be sent, and that we pay our outside agents a stipulated sum, and as we need not entrust those agents with the handling of our funds, there need be no suspicion about the matter—hence no possible show of a failure.

It is objected that these agents must be paid. True, we expect to pay them a reasonable compensation; a less sum, however, on a million of bushels than the ring would be satisfied with upon a single cargo. What are five or ten thousand dollars compared with the millions we have lost by passing it through the hands of the ring? I would respectfully ask these quibblers to consider the proverb, "Penny wise, and pound foolish."

We are told by these rings that they are paying \$25 per ton on their charters, and that therefore they can afford to pay the farmers only so and so for their wheat. We are sorry we cannot place the most implicit confidence in the statements of these men. We wrote to members of the ring last fall about wheat matters.—They answered us that they could not pay over \$1.40 per cental delivered in Portland. Notwithstanding this positive statement of the ring, they nevertheless did advance the price themselves without any outside competition up to \$1.90 per cental. Now if they could not afford to pay more than \$1.40 per cental, how comes it that they paid the \$1.90? Does any one believe these men paid more than they could afford to?—Surely not.

Again, these ring men are very careful to make us believe that their charters are costing them \$25 per ton. Now, while we believe some vessels have been chartered at these rates, and while we are ready to concede the fact that we have no certain means of knowing just what they do pay, we nevertheless do know that they do not pay \$25 per ton in the aggregate. We remember sometime since of seeing the statement in the papers at that time there were 80 vessels enroute for San Francisco, and that they were all under charter at from \$3 to \$5 per ton, to carry wheat to Liverpool, and that the average cost per ton was \$20. Taking this statement of the case as coming from the ring men themselves, who were especially interested in overstating the case, it is a fair presumption that the aggregate cost is below this. Shortly after this statement one of these vessels came into port a few days behind time, said to be chartered at \$5. The charter party refused to accept, and the charter was forfeited. Now had they been paying \$25 per ton, why did they reject this charter? Can anyone tell? Still further, this vessel immediately went upon the market at \$3 1/2, and continued in the market a few days at that price. Now if the average charter tonnage was \$20, how comes it that this vessel was offered at \$2 1/2 less per ton than the average? And, still further, how came this vessel to stand in the market at that price for several days before her charter was accepted? We conclude from these facts that the aggregate tonnage from this coast to Liverpool has not cost the rings more than \$17 or \$18 per ton, the statement of the ring to the contrary notwithstanding.

But now comes the evil consequences of these statements as to the high prices of freight. They have published it far and near that they were certainly paying this \$25 per ton on freight to Liverpool, their object being to make the farmers believe that the rings were paying all they could afford to for wheat. While these statements have served to increase the profits of the rings, they will evidently serve to make the shipowners believe that all other vessels have got that sum, and therefore they in the future will ask that price. This being a natural consequence, the rings will be compelled themselves to pay more the coming season than they have this (not however, more than \$25 per ton), but they will make this an excuse to grind the farmers down still lower than they have this. Quite likely they will refuse to pay more than \$1 25 per cental at Portland. This we look for, unless the farmers organize and do their own shipping.

WAREHOUSES.

This Highland Club seems also to be equally ignorant upon the warehouse question. They cannot see the point. They cannot see why farmers should build warehouses, when there are warehouses already built, and especially do they think that in the mills is a most excellent place to store grain. Pshaw! yes, why not? You Highlanders seem to have staid at home the past season; perhaps have had no wheat in store in the warehouses or the mills. At all events, you seem not to understand the way things were done up in those places

the past season. We farmers over this way have found out that it is positively necessary to be able to control the warehouses in which we store our grain.

Last fall, when the ring concluded to force the price of wheat down to 62 cents, farmers were not disposed to sell at that price, but the ring had vessels in port to load, and they must load them, and in order to do this without advancing the price of wheat they borrowed of some warehousemen large quantities of wheat, promising of course to make these men safe.—Under this arrangement large quantities of wheat went forward, and these men were able to load their vessels.—There was no inducement for them to advance on the price of wheat, because they were getting what they wanted without. Farmers were everywhere surprised (except in this Highland region), supposing of course that the farmers somewhere were selling their grain at the price the ring was offering, when in fact they were not. The mills were doing the same thing in regard to the grain stored in them; they were grinding away, regardless as to whether the grain they were grinding was purchased by them or not, being confident that the ring they were in would be able to control the price—because they cared but little whether they bought or not, except at the price the ring had concluded to give. Now, had these warehousemen not betrayed the trust reposed in them by the farmers, these wheat-buyers would have had to advance to about eighty cents at the start, and the Willamette valley would have saved a half million dollars thereby, enough to have built all the warehouses Oregon would need for the next fifty years. Yet the Highlanders see no sense in building warehouses. Well, we farmers who have wheat to export do, and we are desperately determined not to store wheat in warehouses controlled by the ring, thus placing our wheat in competition with us to keep the prices down. This question is not therefore premature.

Aside from the reasons above mentioned, there are other good reasons why farmers should build warehouses. In the first place, farmers are paying either directly or indirectly enough on the storage of their grain in a single season to build their own warehouses. This is doubtless rather much. Again: there is a large increase in the weight of grain in store. One of these warehouse men over here, more honest than some others, has stated that this increased weight in his warehouse one season amounted to a thousand bushels. This of itself, if true (and I suppose it is), ought to pay the storage.—So confident of this increased weight was Judge More, of Benton county, that he proposed to build a warehouse if the farmers would bind themselves to fill it, and charge nothing for storage. He expected to be amply repaid by the increased weight of the grain in store. There are also other good reasons, which for the present we will waive, lest we be tedious.

STEAMBOATS.

Now a few words about farmers' owning steamboats. For my own part, I have no desire to interfere with the steamboats or the railroads, provided they will carry freight at reasonable rates, but if they will not, and we farmers can afford to build our own boats and carry our own freight cheaper than these monopolies will agree to do it, we certainly ought to and will do it. I am confident that wheat can be carried from here to Portland for five cents per bushel, and to Astoria for eight cents, and from points above here in this county for about one cent more; and if no other parties will do this, I am willing to enter into contract with the farmers of this county to that effect. So much for steamboats.

Suppose the farmers of the country adopt the Highland wisdom, and let the rings, mills, steamboats, railroads, and warehouses all grind along just as they have been doing this season, how long will it take these men to accumulate wealth enough to buy up the country and reduce us to the same servile condition in which the poor of England are found to-day? But a few years, certainly.

It surprises me to see men who have manifested the usual intelligence of this Club, crouching down under this state of things, and recommending (by their actions) their fellow farmers to do likewise. Surely, they have not properly understood the facts and the necessities of the case, otherwise they manifest but little of the courage of their forefathers who bearded the British lion over things trivial in themselves compared with the depths of commercial iniquity under which the farmers of Oregon are groaning to-day. There are, perhaps, only two kinds of servitude, voluntary and involuntary. Of these, the voluntary is always the most profitable to the masters who are fortunate enough to be able to control it. And in view of the fact that these Highlanders have manifested such a docile disposition—seem so willing to bow their necks to the galling yoke—we suggest to these ring-masters the propriety of having a gold medal struck off and presented to this Club. Doubtless there are some other farmers who would prefer the phantom more than a dignified and honorable freedom from their withering tread, who could be wooed by the

glittering toy to bow to the same melancholy fate.

Oregon is not alone in her struggles against monopolies. The people of the Western States (so called) are now realizing the fact that they are under the heel of railroad kings. Railroad companies have been combining in those States until three kings reign over them all. The time was when a wholesome competition between the railroads secured reasonable rates of freight, but since the owners have been combining, the price of freight has been going up, till the thing has become intolerable, and the farmers have risen in their might, determined that this state of things shall not continue. It is true, they are a little like ourselves—they hardly know what course to adopt to rid themselves of the nuisance, but they are desperately determined that something shall be done, and they will doubtless ere long hit the nail upon the head, and settle the matter once and forever that they are not to be the mere serfs of monopolies.

W. M. RUBLE.

Southern Oregon.

The County Court of Douglas has made an order directing the construction of the road from Wilbur to a point five miles south of Roseburg, in accordance with the Act of October 28, 1872, and pledging the credit of the county for the payment of \$15,000 appropriated for that purpose.

A Roseburg paper says: The farmers in the southern part of this precinct have formed a club and have taken steps to build a warehouse at the railroad depot at this place for the purpose of storing grain. They intend hereafter to do their own warehousing and forwarding. This is a step in the right direction.

The Roseburg *Plainsdealer* notes the arrival of Heinrich Lener, of Minnesota, who came to find farms for himself and a few friends. He states that the intense cold which prevailed there last Winter will cause a large emigration from that State the present season, much of which will come to Oregon.

The school fund apportionment in Douglas County is \$1 56 per capita.

The Coquille country in Coos County is fast settling up. There are large tracts of Government land along that river subject to homestead and pre-emption settlement. The land is heavily timbered, yet the market for lumber renders the clearing of such land remunerative, and the land, after it is cleared, is rich and productive in all kinds of farm productions.

OSCILLATION has a wonderful effect upon even powerful bodies if not frequently broken in the vibration. We have frequently seen notices placed at the ends of large suspension bridges, that processions must break step in crossing; this has to be done to ensure safety.

It is stated in illustration of the effect of the phenomenon in question, that when the first suspension bridge was being built in England, a fiddler offered to fiddle it away. Striking one note after another, he eventually hit its vibrating note, or fundamental tone, and threw it into such extraordinary vibrations that the bridge builders had to beg him to desist. Once a bridge went down under the tread of infantry in France who had not broken step, and three hundred persons were drowned. The experience is well known of a tumbler or small ment glass vessel being broken by the frequent repetition of some particular note of the human voice.

THE PARKER GUN.—Sportsmen are no content with a muzzle loading gun,—they must be able to load and fire with a rapidity and precision little dreamed of when we were boys. America ranks first in the manufacture of fire-arms, and first among her worthy artisans stand the firm of Parker Bros., of West Meriden, Conn. Their breech-loading shot gun is beyond question the best and cheapest arm of this sort now made. We speak from experience, and heartily commend the firm and their model gun.—*Illinois Legal Directory.*

"Humbog" is a corruption of the Irish word *uim bog*, pronounced oombog, signifying soft copper, or pewter, or brass, or worthless money, such as was made by James II. at the Dublin Mint—twenty shillings of which was worth only two pence sterling. At first applied to worthless coin, the word became the general title of anything false or counterfeit.

Dr. Hall asserts in the *Prairie Farmer* that the simple use of soft soap, put on hot, is quite as effectual against borers, for the exclusion of the moth from laying her eggs in the bark, as the carbolic soap, and not one-eight as expensive.