Regulating the Price of Cotton

Cotton, the great agricultural staple of the South, is free from government control and prices have shot upward amazingly, to the enrichment of the planters and the burden of the consumers. When the world war started in 1914 cotton brought less than 7 cts a pound at the farm. According to the United States Year Book of Agriculture, the Farm price for 1917 was nearly 28 cts. In three years the price quadrupled.

If the wheat grower had enjoyed a like advance, he would now be receiving about $4 per bushel for his product, for the same government authority reports that the average farm price of wheat in 1914 was nearly 99 cts.

This seeming discrimination has led to frequent accusations that sectional and partizan influences swayed congress when it passed the law to hold down the price of wheat and left cotton to run its course under the law of supply and demand. It has been pointed out that if cotton had had the same treatment as wheat the price would have been limited to about 14 cents a pound and cotton would not now be selling around 30 cts.

Every farmer's wife knows the meaning of 30 ct cotton. It means that the prices of all kinds of cotton goods have gone up 400 or 500 per cent. The writer was discussing these advances the other day with a western dry goods merchant.

"Before the war" he said, "I bought prints at less than four cents a yard. For the same quality of prints I now have to pay 22 cts. wholesale. A similar advance has taken place in ginghams, sheeting, etc, and the wholesalers are the most independent people I have ever known.

"A Spokane merchant was telling me of some of his experiences in buying, the other day. A traveling salesman had quoted his prices and the Spokane man said he would think it over and decide upon his orders the next morning. 'But these prices I have quoted will not hold over night', the salesman said. 'When I go out of that door all offers will be off.'"

There is an old saying: "Beware of the Greeks when they come bearing gifts." and that spirit of caution will be felt by many people now that the Southern cotton growers are proposing government price fixing for their products. The fear will rise in northern minds that they want the government to hold prices around the present high level.

A press dispatch from Washington says that a scheme of price fixing on raw cotton, suggested to Bernard M. Baruch, chairman of the war industries board by the cotton delegation which has just closed its conferences at the national capital has been laid before President Wilson by Representative Lever, chairman of the house agricultural committee. After accomplishing their object, that of getting their plans before the chief executive, the cotton growers have left the capital, "confident that their proposal will meet with fair treatment by the government."

Apparently the cotton growing interests fear a slump in prices, for the price fixing plan was advocated by a delegation fo cotton bankers who were in Washington at the time.

When the scheme of price fixing on cotton is proposed it is not likely to follow out the scheme of price fixing on wheat or iron and steel, or any of the other commodities on which the government has fixed the price. The proposal which seems to have the greatest support was to have a maximum and a minimum price. The minimum price would be the price at which the government would buy the cotton. For instance, whenever the price of the commodity went to the minimum and threatened to go below the government's cotton corporation would be directed to step in and take the cotton. The maximum price, it was suggested, would be five cents a pound higher. Whenever cotton threatened to go over the maixmum price the government would cammandeer the cotton.

The full meaning of 30 cent cotton, with all it implies of extraordinary prosperity for the southern growers and correspondingly high prices for the consumers, is better grasped when one glances at the range of prices for the last 40 years. Through the 80's prices were uniformly around 8 and 9 cents. Through the 90's they ranged from 5 to 9 cents. From 1901 to 1910 they ranged from 7 to 14 cents.

The price was below 7 cents when the war started in 1914, and shot upward to 20 cents in 1916. The average for 30 years before the war was close to 8 cents.

Cotton goods are a necessity and high prices are just as burdensome to the public as high prices for flour. There should be government control of one as well as the other, and the basis of price-fixing should be the same for both. That is, the government should take the average prices of wheat and cotton over a range of 10 or 20 years before the war, and allow the same percentage of increase for both staples. The west and north should protest emphatically against 25 and 30 cent cotton.—Oregon Farmer

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A peculiar prune trouble thought by many growers to be brown rot but not related to it in any way, is reported to H. P. Barss, plant pathologist at O. A. C., from prune districts throughout Oregon. The trouble, thinks Prof. Barss, is due to the severe and prolonged drought followed by the rains of late July. The sudden change from dry to moist conditions probably induced changes in the fruit which brought on structural and physiological breaking down in the flesh. No brown rot is visible so far this year, and although many prunes will be lost from the injury reported it is still true that many still unaffected may mature in fair shape, as the trouble is not contagious or infectious.

Horticulturists and entomologists from all Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain states and Western Canadian provinces and from the United States Department of Agriculture, met at the Oregon Agricultural College, August 5 to 8, to form the Western Horticultural association and consider problems of interest to all districts represented. Methods of marketing through state and district organizations were recommended, cooperation in insect and disease control including uniform inspection and quarantine regulations, and a study of Oregon horticultural methods at the College and in the big Marion county orchards and factories, were considered. The meeting will be held next year at the Washington State College and the University of Idaho. The delegates gave public expression to their sentiment that the meet was a success and that the palm for good work in horticulture goes to Prof. Lewis and his staff at O.A.C.

Corvallis, Or., August 15—Oregon wheat growers may deliver their 1918 crop direct to the Food Administration Grain Corporation or sell in the open market at either Portland or Astoria. Or they may ship to a commission merchant at a terminal point and thus secure the benefit of competitive buying.

If the grain is sent direct to the Federal Grain Corporation it will be unloaded in the elevator and remittances made for it as soon as the weight and the grade returns are made to the Corporation. The returns will be based on the government grades and weights and the government price less one per cent for service.

A traffic bureau to aid shippers of wheat and flour to get cars and expedite their shipments will be maintained by the Food Administration. Application should be made for service to the Grain Corporation at either of the primary markets, Portland or Astoria.

Buyers at the point of origin may place their own grade upon the wheat they purchase. If higher than the government grade it will raise the price. If lower, the producer may ship his grain to the Federal Grain Corporation. This protection is always open to the grower if he feels that he is not getting a square deal through commercial channels.

The primary price at Portland and Astoria is $2.20. "It will be to the advantage of every shipper to see that his grain is graded by inspectors licensed by the secretary of Agriculture," says Director Center of the O. A. C. extension Service.

The first draft on the sugar bank comes from the trenches and the fighting lines. The boys at the front are living under trying conditions, many times in mud and water and cold. Sugar is a fuel for the body and the boys need this fuel. Sugar provides the quickest and most valuable reactions in heat and energy, therefore when the weather is severe in the trenches the sugar consumption by the troops necessarily becomes very high. Think of this before you take that extra spoonful of sugar. Keep to your two pounds per month ration, or cut it lower, if you want to do your share of backing up the boys at the front.

"It is as essential that there be built up in this country a reserve supply of food as that the army be guaranteed clothing, guns and ammunition", says the Food Administration.

It is better to be a worker in the ranks than a shouter on the side lines. Everybody can be a worker in the food-saving ranks.

Notice of Sheriff's Sale

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Polk County.

Walter W. Wells and Mary Alice Wells, Plaintiffs, vs.

C. W. Leonard as the administrator of the estate of D. W. Harvie, deceased, C. W. Leonard, F. W. Sloan and Blanche Sloan, his wife, Mrs. A. E. Harvie and David Harrison Harvie, Defendants.

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of an execution in foreclosure issued out of and under the seal of the above entitled Court in the above entitled suit, to me duly directed and dated the 5th day of August, 1918, upon a judgment and decree rendered and entered in said court in said entitled suit on the 29 day of July, 1918, in favor of said plaintiffs, and against said defendants, for the sum of $1500.00 with interest thereon from December 1st 1913, at the rate of 8 per cent per annum until paid, for $100.00 attorney's fee, and for $25.00 costs and disbursements of said suit, and the costs of and upon said writ, subject however, to the rights and equities of the defendant, C. W. Leonard, commanding me to make sale of the following described real property, situate in Polk County, State of Oregon, to-wit:

Beginning at a point which is 19.61 chains South 89 deg. 27 min. West of the S. E. corner of the Wm. Meyer's D. L. C. No. 61 in Township 8 S. R. 4 West of the Willamette Meridian in Polk County, Oregon, running thence North 89 deg. 27 min. East 12.25 chains; thence South 12.25 chains; thence West 12.25 chains; thence North 12.25 chains to the place of beginning, containing 15 acres, more or less.

Now, therefore, by virtue of said execution, judgment, order and decree, and in compliance with the commands of said writ, I will, on Saturday the 7th day of September, 1918, at the hour of one o'clock P. M. thereof, at the front door of the County Court House in the City of Dallas, Polk County, Oregon, sell at public auction, subject to redemption, to the highest bidder for U. S. Gold Coin, cash in hand, all the right, title, interest and estate which said defendants or either of them, had on the date of the mortgages herein or since had in or to the above described real property or any part thereof, to satisfy said execution, judgment, order, decree, interest, costs, taxes, and all accruing costs. That defendant, C. W. Leonard has paid all taxes on said real property.

Dated at Dallas, Oregon, the 7th day of August, 1918.

JOHN W. ORR,
Sheriff of Polk County, Oregon.
SWOPE & SWOPE, Attorneys.