

The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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HIGH COST OF LIVING

THERE IS NO DOUBT but what much of the high cost of living, is attributable to the so-called "middle-man." That is to say, there is a too great difference in the price received by the producer and what the consumer is required to pay. The toll exacted by the men who handle the product, from the time it leaves the farm until it is placed on the table of the consumer is too great. This is notably true of the meat products of all kinds. Much of the beef which nets the producer from three to five cents per pound, is sold to the Chicago or New York consumer at thirty and thirty-five cents. The sack of flour which is produced from less than a dollar's worth of wheat, is sold to the consumer for one-half more and this is true of almost all products of the farm and factory.

The farmer seems to occupy the most dependant position of any, in some respects. The dealer fixes the price for which the farm product is sold and the merchant, manufacturer or other dealers, fixes the price the farmer must pay for such supplies as his needs require. Manufacturers, too, form combines by which competition, the old time price leveler, is completely squelched and the extremely high tariff wall shuts out the foreign competitor.

When we consider that the money which keeps civilization moving, that provides for our army, that builds our navy, railroads, steamships, etc., that rears palatial business houses, residences, manufacturing plants and, in fact, every conceivable money-making device or for business or for pleasure, all comes from the soil and much the larger part from the farm, it does not appear just right that the producer of all this basic wealth should be dictated to by both buyer and seller. But what can the farmer do about it? It has been demonstrated that most farmers organizations, if we except the grange, flourish for a while and give promise of benefit; but they have been allowed by the farmers, themselves, to expire, peacefully in a few months or years at most. The farmer is now as completely at the mercy of the trades people as he was one-hundred years ago.

No doubt the farmer would be just as dictatorial and merciless as the trades people, if they had the power; for human nature is very similar throughout all of the walks of life.

It is quite evident that the farmer has very little to do with the high and unequal cost of living. True, he gets better prices for his products now, than he did a few years ago. However, the price of the products of the farm, when in first-hands, has appreciated no faster than wages have increased. The cause must be looked for elsewhere. We have reached a condition in political and financial economy wherein competition, as a price leveler, has been eliminated and the tariff, trusts and combines, are responsible for this elimination. The remedy which now seems to be most potent is, to eliminate the tariff, trusts and combines. This would open the doors of competition again. The people would then have to pay only the cost and a reasonable profit on the products they consume. Nor would the farmer have to sell his products much cheaper than now; for the world is now open to compete with him.

The fact that merchants, manufacturers and transportation magnates amass fortunes in a few years, which can only be expressed with ten figures, while farmers, during a lifetime of hard labor and economy, are able to amass but a modest competence, is evidence sufficient to show that our financial system is both wrong and unequal.

Some plan will have to be adopted by which the power of men, who have the people at their mercy, can be restrained in their greed, especially with manufactured and food products, the cost of which is easily ascertained. Under our present system, the man who buys and in the smallest quantities too, is required to pay the highest price and who is usually the wage earner. He is the least able to pay and, in consequence, is compelled to buy an inferior and oftentimes unwholesome article.

Nor will these matters ever be rectified until the voter becomes so independent and so selfish, if you please, that he will vote for candidates who will look well to the interests of the great mass of consumers and, especially, to that of the farmer and other laboring men. He must cut away from partisan prejudice and vote for the interests of himself and family. It makes little difference what political color a congressman wears, so that he stands for the interests of all the people.

COMPARE THE NEW WITH THE OLD

IN ORDER THAT OUR READERS may judge between the old and proposed new city charter fairly, we quote the sections of the old charter which corresponds to the same subject treated by the new charter. As every voter is in possession of a copy of the proposed new charter, he can compare the two and decide which is the better upon the points at issue.

It will be observed that the old or our present charter, gives the council absolute power for the opening of streets, improving streets, building sidewalks, etc. The proposed new charter gives the property owners effected, considerable say in the matter. Upon the sale and regulation of the liquor traffic, the new charter is, practically, a copy of the present state law. The sections of the old charter are quoted below:

The City Council shall have power—
Section 9—To tax, license, regulate, restrain or prohibit, by general ordinance, the sale of spirituous, vinous or malt liquors, bars, barrooms and drinking shops and tipping houses, billiard tables, pool tables, pigeon hole tables, or any tables where balls or cues are used, bowling alleys and shooting galleries: Provided that no license for the sale of spirituous, vinous or malt liquors shall be issued for a less sum than is prescribed by the general laws of the state of Oregon and not less than the restrictions and provisions of the same for the license of spirituous, vinous or malt liquors in force at the time of the issuance of such license; Provided further that no license shall be issued for less than six months or more than one year; to provide, by general ordinance, for the punishment by fine or imprisonment or both, of any person who shall sell, give away, or in any manner dispose of any spirituous, vinous or malt liquors within the corporate limits of the city of Scio, without first having obtained a license therefor from the city.

Section 14—To provide for the removal of any or all obstructions from the public highways, streets, side and cross walks, alleys, gutters and sewers and provide for the construction, repair and cleaning of the same.

Section 39—To provide for the construction, cleaning and repairing of sidewalks and grading of the streets at the expense of or by the owners of the adjacent property: Provided that the cross-walks at such street crossings be built and kept in repair at the cost and expense of the city.

Section 41—The Council shall have power, whenever they deem it expedient, to open, lay out, widen, extend, vacate or close streets or alleys, and to provide by ordinance the manner by which the same shall be done.

President Roosevelt was in Portland this week, was feted and is now on his road homeward. It is difficult to place Mr. Roosevelt in the right category. Nevertheless he was president for seven years, the people do not know yet, just where to place him. In the main, his intentions are, undoubtedly, for good; yet he is so erratic and has so large a disposition to play to the galleries, that there is always a disposition on the part of the people to accept his public utterances with caution. He attempts, too often, to carry water on both shoulders. But because of the good he has done, Oregon and the people in general, have given him a cordial welcome on his trip circling the United States. He has an excellent opportunity to place himself among the nation's great men, if he will.

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