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A BUSINESS LESSON FOR FARMERS

Course of the wheat market, considered in conjunction with the effect of the tariff, provides education for farmers as well as many others who are sincerely interested in their prosperity. The Oregonian has said that the duty on wheat could not do the farmer any good; events have proved that it actually injures him. The price of good milling wheat at the end of 1922 was not substantially higher than at the end of 1920, after deflation had done its work, and certain facts indicate that, but for the tariff, it would have been much higher.

As frequently pointed out, the price of the entire American crop is regulated by the price paid in foreign markets for that part which is exported. In those markets American wheat is sold in competition with that of Australia, Canada, Argentina and India, and is also regulated by the ratio of Europe's own crops to that continent's demand. Our exports normally total about 200,000,000 bushels a year, but if we attempt to get more than the world price, wheat from other countries will take its place and a large part of this quantity will be left on our hands. If we try to maintain the price by reducing production, other countries may increase their acreage and may harvest a bumper crop, with the result that no higher price will be obtained and that our farmers will simply have handed over part of their business to their competitors. So long as we maintain a tariff wall to shut out Canadian wheat, we simply increase the amount that Canada exports to Europe. There it depresses the price, not only for our exports but for our domestic sales.

Writing for the New York Outlook, H. A. Bellows shows that the tariff actually injures the American farmer. It has caused prices in the United States "to remain a little higher than in Canada; not enough to do the farmers any real good in the face of a declining world price, but just enough to make foreign trade in wheat and in its principal product, flour, exceedingly difficult." He says that American flour exports have decreased from 26,449,581 barrels in 1919 to 15,024,628 barrels in 1922, while those of Canada increased from 4,729,000 barrels in 1920 to 9,485,000 barrels in 1922. American wheat exports in 1922 were only 60 per cent of those in 1921, but those of Canada have increased 20 per cent since the emergency tariff became effective. The decrease in flour exports deprived our farmers of a foreign market for 50,000,000 bushels of wheat. It also deprived them of 370,000 tons of bran and shorts as stock feed, which is one reason why they are paying as much for bran as they paid in June, 1919, when they received more than double the present price for wheat.

The moral of this is not hard to read. The question of finding a market for wheat at a profitable price is a matter of business in which farmers should be guided by economic conditions, not a matter of politics. Farmers can solve their problems by taking the advice of business men, who base their conclusions on business conditions, not of politicians, who are often ignorant of those conditions. By organizing for co-operation of their crops, they can hire the services of business men who will be competent and whose interest will be to advise them soundly on what would then be big business. They would eliminate as many of the middlemen as are unnecessary to the economical conduct of their business, and they could convert those who were necessary into their agents.

By controlling the marketing of the crops and by spreading the operation through the year, managers of co-operative associations and the middlemen who remained as performing a useful function would eliminate a large part of the speculative risk, which middlemen, as outright buyers, now take. That risk, which arises largely from the unorganized state of the producers, causes the dealer to seek a large profit when he can get it in order to offset the loss that he often suffers. Well organized co-operative marketing would relieve the middleman of this risk, would make his income safe by giving him a fixed commission, would cut out much of the spread and would put it in the farmer's pocket.

Politicians will not do this sort of service for the farmer, in the first place because they do not know how and in the second place because that is not their game. To provide an occupation for themselves, they have to persuade farmers that congress and government bureaus can cure all their ills, though both congress and the bureaus are mainly composed of just such men as themselves. Experience has proven that the government is the most incompetent manager possible of its own or anybody's business. Proper management of the farmers' business requires employment of big business men at good salaries and with discretion to act subject to the general policy laid down by a board of directors. The government does not pay enough to get such men and when it gets them, it does not give them authority or let them alone to get results and it does not keep them long enough.

What the farmer wants most from congress is that it shall remove the legal obstructions to his managing his own business and that it shall give him the machinery to manage it to his best advantage. Much of this has been done by the farm loan law, the law authorizing co-operative associations and by representation of agriculture on the federal reserve board. Much more will be done by the Capper farm credit law, now sure of passage. The farmer

would benefit, together with all other industries, by reduced railroad rates and by a wise shipping law, but schemes for government marketing or price-fixing would merely take his business out of his hands, or the hands of those whom he would hire and put them in the hands of politicians who are incompetent to run anybody's business.—Oregonian.

Ed Houston's smiling countenance has again appeared behind the counter at the Phelps Grocery Co. Ed smiles for two reasons—because he likes to work and because he does not like lumbago.

Many citizens had been receiving visits from the Cough, Cold and Grippe families lately and there are enough frogs in the collective Heppner throat to start a sizable French restaurant.

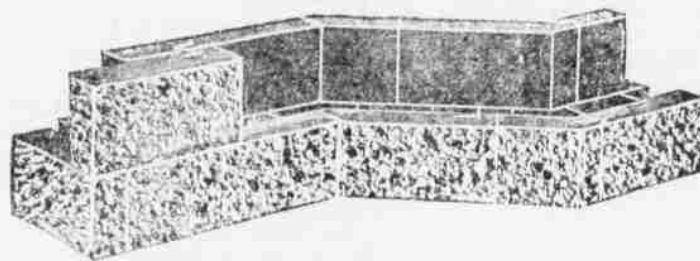
J. O. Turner has gone to Riverview, Washington, where he will engage in the sale of the Calkins seed wheat smut machine which Mr. Calkins is having manufactured at Spokane. Frank Turner also expects to engage in the same business a little later.

NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNTING

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed with the County Court of Morrow County, Oregon, her final account and report as executrix of the last will and testament of John B. Natter, deceased, and that the Court has fixed Thursday, March 29, 1923, as the time, and the County Court room in the court house in Heppner, Oregon, as the place for hearing said account and all objections thereto, and for the settlement of said estate.

Dated and published the first time, this 27th day of February, 1923.
ANNA NATTER,
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