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Farmers' Union News Column

By Peter Radford, National Lecturer, Farmers' Union, Fort Worth, Tex.

Farmers to Ask Federal Aid. Fort Worth, Texas, Sept 12—With representation from more than two-thirds of the states in the Union, the eleventh annual meeting of the Farmers' Educational and Co-Operative Union of America came to a close in this city after a three days session. The keynote of the convention was the action of the body in voting to ask direct aid from the government in the present crisis which confronts the American farmer as a result of the titanic struggle across the water. A plan was formulated whereby the Federal government will be asked to tide the farmers over the emergency, and a committee was appointed to go to Washington to consult with Federal authorities relative to the situation.

A high tribute was paid to the work of Peter Bradford by National President, C. S. Barrett, in his opening address to the convention, who declared that it was the Radford type of men which keep one's faith sound, his courage high and renews his faith in humanity. He stated that Mr. Radford had been of invaluable assistance to him in his work and that his wise counsel and suggestions had materially assisted him in the solution of problems confronting the national work.

The National Union has strong and active organizations in twenty-seven states of the Union and is composed of a membership numbering eight million. The officers of the Union were unanimously re-elected for the coming year, as follows: President, C. S. Barrett, Georgia; Vice-President, A. V. Swift, Oregon; Secretary-Treasurer, A. C. Davis, Arkansas.

Profitable Prices for Farm Products. The greatest encouragement that can be given agriculture is profitable prices for farm products. Crop destroying insects have been a stubborn enemy, and Jupiter Pluvius has played many pranks on the farmer, but there is no pestilence like low prices; they will sap the life-blood of an industry.

It is one of the most pitiful sights in the twentieth century civilization to see a farmer after he has raised a crop sit helplessly by and watch the bulls and bears of Europe and America trample over it, and yet if the farmer will only organize and co-operate he can successfully fence out these animals that devastate his products after the harvest.

The Oregon farmer needs co-operation as badly as diversification.

The World's Greatest Financier. The world's greatest financier is the Oregon farmer's housewife. Her daily investments exceed in shrewdness the clever transactions of Wall Street and no business concern or corporation, however ably officered, has ever been able to approach her in economy. She is the Nation's ablest trader and her transactions more nearly reflect the progress and prosperity of the country, than the reports of our clearing houses.

All legislation, financial or otherwise, ought to be so plain that the housewife can understand it. Our legislators, state and national, shoot so far over the head of the average citizen that those who are unable to employ an attorney and accept his statements in blind faith, must forever remain in ignorance of our laws. Of course we have so many laws that no human can expect to read them and survive the ordeal, but any person who feels an irresistible impulse to legislate, should try his proposed law on his neighbor and get it down where the common people can understand it before attempting to put it on the statute books.

Ability, Not Quantity, Pays In Farming. No farmer gets rich by the quantity of production. It is the price he gets for his products and economy and business judgment displayed in management that makes the farmer wealthy.

We cannot pass a law that will increase the price of production or reduce the cost of plowing the land and marketing the crop. We must depend upon factories and transportation facilities for marketing our products and upon improved mechanical appliances and the business ability of the farmer to reduce the cost of production, and to more intelligently market his products.

The Men Behind the Plow. The eleventh annual meeting of the National Farmers' Union was in session for three days at Fort Worth, Texas, last week. The delegates attending the meeting came from more than two-thirds of the states in the Union and every branch of agricultural endeavor was represented. The wheat farmer from the Northwest, the corn grower from the Middle West, the tobacco farmer from the Virginias and the cotton farmer from the Sunny South—all held counsel together and were united in their effort to solve the grave problem which now confronts the Amer-

ican farmer. Coming, as they did, direct from the soil, with their hands brown from exposure and their minds attuned to the needs of the hour, there was no chance for dissection among their ranks and there was a complete harmony and unity of thought and action, such as befit the class which feeds and clothes the world.

Farm Facts

Where there is a silo there is prosperity.

There is not enough of the community spirit among our rural districts.

The need of the rural communities today is intelligent and consecrated leadership.

The farm is the power house of all progress and the birthplace of all that is noble.

The laws relating to business are wholly unsuited to the transactions of the farmer.

The farm is the nursery of civilization and the paragon of all religious denominations.

The waste of effort through impractical methods of farming is the greatest tragedy of the age.

Co-operation between practical farmers and proficient business men will eliminate ignorance and prejudice.

Something is wrong in our marketing system when a small crop brings more money than a bountiful one.

The farmer asks no special privileges. The business of farming only wants the same opportunities afforded other lines of industry.

The nation's menu must be made up from the fields, pastures, orchards and gardens, and to farm intelligently the farmer must know what is needed.

It is as much a duty of the country pastor to exhort us to own a home while on earth as it is to inspire us to build a mansion in the skies.

We must give the same care and consideration to a system of co-operative laws, extending to the farmer the facilities adapted to his business that is now afforded corporations.

The rural press, the pulpit and the school are a trinity of powerful influences that the farmer must utilize to their fullest capacity before he can occupy a commanding position in public affairs.

Farm tenancy is the greatest menace now confronting the nation and can only be checked by affording the tenant and the laborer facilities for acquiring property and by reducing the high rates of interest which are now sapping the vitality of agriculture.

Under the present system of marketing farm products, it is possible and often occurs, that people in one part of the United States literally starve for the want of a product, while the same product in another part of the nation is wasting for want of a market.

The Morrow County Fair.

Next week Morrow County will hold a fair. At that time she will display to the world the wonders of her resources and they are many. At one time a part of the great Eastern Oregon desert and later a part of Umatilla county. This section of the country has been steadily finding itself and becoming more and more productive each year. Today Morrow county is a rich agricultural community. Broad wheat fields cover its hills where the soil is deep and rich. Its foothill ranges are the best in the Northwest and in the production of beef cattle alone it takes first rank with the larger counties of Oregon. Not only does it produce beef cattle in large quantities, but also mutton and dairy herds. For many years Morrow county has been noted for the excellence of its dairy herds and also the excellence of its beef herds.

Morrow county stockmen were among the very first in the entire Northwest to improve the breed of beef cattle. Long before the big ranges were cut down in Eastern Oregon Morrow county had a reputation for thoroughbred cattle. The country tributary to Heppner produces an immense amount of beef, wool and mutton each year.

There are many other fertile resources of the county which will all have a showing in the coming fair. To the old timer a trip to Heppner at this time will be well worth the time and money while to the younger generation it will be a surprise.—Pendleton Tribune.

A. M. Slocum came up from Portland last Sunday evening. Mr. Slocum still retains considerable business interests in this city.

J. A. Gibbons of Castle Rock, came over from the Columbia river town on Sunday.

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THE PROPOSED EIGHT HOUR LAW COLUMN

Oregon Newspapers Decidedly Against This Initiative Measure.

Work Not Ruled by Clock.

Commenting on the recent editorial in the Rural Spirit wherein it was stated that enactment or defeat of the proposed eight-hour law is up to the farmers, the Tillamook Headlight says:

"The Rural Spirit is wrong. If the law is enacted it will be because the politicians fooled the farmers with the Oregon system. The law is apt to carry because all the unemployed and the employees as well will vote as a unit for the law. A large number of dairymen were in favor of the eight hour law for county and municipal employes. As long as the county pays the bill, it is O. K., but now that the bill is to be introduced that will effect the farmers, they are un in arms against it."

Eight hours a day for county or municipal employes is purely a matter of interest to taxpayers. Everyone pays taxes directly or indirectly. If these taxpayers see fit to enact eight hour legislation for county and municipal work, they pay the bill and it is their privilege to limit hours of labor as they see fit. Municipal or county work is of an artificial nature. It can therefore be regulated. That which is not done today may be attended to tomorrow.

Farming is a work of seasons. Season is based upon natural law. Man-made laws cannot regulate seasons. We have no eight hour fruit, no twenty-four hour cows, and no rainfall that can be governed by laws. Weeds grow and must be cut. The ground bakes after the rainfall and must be harrowed at once else moisture is lost. In some parts of Oregon it requires more than eight hours to make the trip to freight cars with grain. Farm work is peculiar to itself. In no other work does timeliness count for so much and frequently what is not done today cannot be done tomorrow.

The work of the mine, the mill, factory, shop, office or store can be done by two or three shifts a day with no loss in output or in quality of product. But the cow that is milked with a change of workmen twice a day becomes unprofitable. There are weeks when more than eight hours a day are required on Oregon farms and there are weeks when a less number of hours serve to complete the work.

The enactment of the eight hour law for Oregon as it is written, will not create more jobs for more men and lengthen the period of work in the country. It will cause one farmer to exchange work with another farmer. It will render idle more than half the farm lands in Oregon. It will result in many a fruit or dairy farm falling into the hands of the industrious Japs. The farm hands and the farmers will make common cause in defeating the proposed eight hour law in Oregon.—Rural Spirit.

Beat It.

On the November ballot there is a proposed eight-hour law. It prescribes a universal work day of eight hours for everybody in the state. Failure of an officer to enforce it results in his dismissal from office for malfeasance. It ought to be beaten. If passed and enforced, it would destroy the agricultural interests of the state. It would either put farmers out of business or cause them to rise in a body to overthrow the measure.

Under its terms, no employe in any capacity can work more than eight hours a day. A dairy farmer could not run his business without employing two sets of hands. That would double the cost of dairy products or put the dairyman out of business. In nine if not in ten cases out of ten, it would drive the dairyman either out of business or out of Oregon.

The same would be true of irrigation farmers. Their crops might be burning up for need of water. But with the eight-hour law in effect, the water would have to be shut off whether the crops were saved or not saved.

In the busy harvesting season, farmers almost universally work extremely long hours. The labor supply and the limited number of harvesting machines make such hours necessary. Many a time the work begins at five or six a. m. and does not end until darkness, especially in the threshing season. There is always extreme haste in cutting and threshing the grain because of the peril of the early rains.

If the eight-hour law passes, it would be a calamity to harvesters. The number of men would have to be doubled by placing on two shifts. There wouldn't be men enough to supply the demand. There wouldn't be a farmer in Oregon who could afford the added expense.

The law would be a worse pest on Oregon farmers than would the Hessian fly or weevil in the wheat. Vote 321 no.—Oregon Journal.

Among the many measures to be voted on this fall is one initiative bill that is hard to defend from any viewpoint. It is the Universal Constitutional Eight Hour Day Amend-

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ment and it is about the most harsh and unyielding piece of legislation ever proposed. By this bill no employer in any line of work whatsoever, from college professor to farm laborer, may give work to any person for more than eight hours in any day or more than 48 hours in any week. The bill continues: "The period of nine consecutive hours with eight hours for work therein, and one hour for eating and rest, shall by the provisions of this law, be identical for each, any and every calendar day of each, any and every calendar week." Clerks, farmhands, printers, teamsters, threshers, loggers, boys and girls working on the premises of their parents—every conceivable class of toilers comes under the bill. The proposed law has nothing in its favor and should receive a unanimous negative vote.—Enterprise Record Chieftain.

Oregon has had enough of freak legislation. There is no demand for a law such as is proposed. All industries in which it is practicable to employ the eight hour day are now on the basis, or else tending that way. Oregon needs a chance to assimilate the laws she has, before trying any new ones.—Springfield News.

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Miss Mary E. Power, primary teacher in the public schools, arrived in the city last Saturday, after spending the summer with her parents in North Dakota.