

Home and Farm Magazine Section Editorial Page

Timely, Pertinent Comment Upon Men and Affairs, Following the Trend of World News; Suggestions of Interest to Readers; Hints Along Lines of Progressive Farm Thought.

TO ADVERTISERS.

Advertisers in this locality who wish to fully cover all sections of Oregon and Washington and a portion of Idaho will apply to local publishers for rates. General advertisers may address C. L. Burton, Advertising Manager of Farm Magazine Co., Publishers Oregon-Washington-Idaho Farmer, 411 Panama Building, Portland, Oregon, for rates and information.

TO READERS.

Readers are requested to send letters and articles for publication to The Editor, Oregon-Washington-Idaho Farmer, 411 Panama Building, Portland, Oregon. Discussions on questions and problems that bear directly on the agricultural, live stock and poultry interests of the Northwest, and on the uplift and comfort of the farm home always are welcomed. No letters treating of religion, politics or the European war are solicited, for the Farm Magazine proclaims neutrality on these three matters. Comparatively brief contributions are preferred to long ones. Send us also photographs of your live stock and farm scenes that you think would be of general interest. We wish to make this magazine of value to you. Help us to do it.

IS IT PERSECUTION?

FARM IMPLEMENTS of the best materials and at the lowest prices are necessary for the prosperity of the American farmer. If both can best be secured from a large corporation, it is to the benefit of the farmer that such a concern exist. If it is true that the International Harvester Company sold farm machinery in Europe at a lower price than in America, the investigation carried on by the Federal Government would be in order. If, however, such a condition does not exist, the continued attack on this corporation made by members in Congress would be in the nature of persecution.

There is a type of politician today who builds up a reputation on his strenuous opposition to "trusts." He proclaims his undying hatred for all "big business" and seeks every opportunity to harry large money interests, sometimes bringing on a panic by his uncalled-for attacks. Such an agitator should be suppressed and suppressed with finality. He does no one any good but himself, and his work is one of destruction rather than construction.

On the other hand there is many a man frequenting Congressional halls today who is sincere in his conviction that large organizations or combines of capital are detrimental to the welfare of the nation. We do not hold a brief for "big business," for its sins are many, but we do object to a persecution of any corporation just because it is a corporation. We believe that conscientious members of Congress, whether or not they are among the strongest supporters of "anti-trust" movements, will agree with us in this stand. We stand for fair play.

While the agitator is crying that the International Harvester Company is the deadly enemy of the farmer, fleecing him at every opportunity, many American farmers have written letters of protest, declaring that the corporation had been eminently fair in all its dealings with them. Of the decision of the case against the International Harvester Company some have gone so far as to state that it was in the face of the fact that the company was found honest and square in all its dealings and of admitted value to the American farmer. Two judges decided against the company, one for it.

The supreme tribunal of the land will now have an opportunity to sit upon this case. Whatever its finding may be, it is certain that the company does not go into court without the sympathy of many American farmers. The policy of man-handling corporations for little cause does not meet with universal approbation. A manufacturing concern is entitled to the same hearing as an individual. If dishonest, it should be severely punished. If found to be operating on a clean, honest, business-like basis, a decision in its favor should be given as wide publicity as one condemning it.

SPECULATION VS. INVESTMENT.

FORTUNES have been made by speculation. But a great many more have been lost from the same cause. In speculating, a man takes a chance, and in the event of success the returns are great. And in this lies the lure of speculation.

Speculation is the greatest of American gambling games that has not been severely dealt with by the law. And when it is carried on without false representations and by honest men, it is fully as deserving as any line of business. It is only when the unscrupulous man enters the field, determined to make money at the cost of the men who believe in his schemes, that the head of ruin rears. It is this man that the government will not tolerate, but it is difficult to prosecute him and the majority of convictions have only been when he has been found to have made use of the United States mails for fraudulent purposes. Then, too often, conviction has merely meant a small fine, easily paid.

There is little objection to legitimate speculation, except that it fosters the gambling spirit, which is a tendency which should not be cultivated. Legitimate speculation is closely related to investment, though investment says not so much of the element of chance.

Investment of money is to be advised, if the investment be a wise one. Too often the mistake is made of "investing" money in a proposition that is obviously a gamble—a speculation. Speculation and investment are sometimes used as synonyms, which they are not. Investment implies investigation of possible returns. Investments are made with a reasonable chance of a successful outcome. Neither of these are implied in speculation. If not merely a blind chance, speculation infers the placing of money in the hope of getting much larger returns than would be possible from a legitimate business proposition or the ordinary conservative investment. The investor is protected to some extent by the reliability of that in which he invests. The speculator "takes a chance."

The advertiser who encourages speculation in that which he has to sell is only objectionable when he promises that which he is in no position to make possible. That is, he is objectionable when he tells his patrons that what he has is a "sure-thing," rather than what it really is, a "sporting chance."

THE COUNTY FAIR.

THERE are two kinds of farmers in this country, those who growl and grumble and let their places run down at the heels, and those who go to the county fair. The county fair is to farming what a revival meeting is to a Methodist church. After a man has plodded along at the same old tasks for months at a time he begins to petrify. He needs something to happen to him, to jar his corpuscles into faster activity.

A great deal is said about the value of the county fair from an educational standpoint. But that isn't the principal value of a county fair, says the Western Farmer. Not by any means. A man could sit down for an hour or so in the rocking chair, with his feet on the center table, and learn more from an old file of agricultural papers than he could in three days at the county fair. That is, if he didn't go to sleep.

The great value of the county fair is in its inspiration. The farmer gets a broader view of his calling as he walks down between the rows of fruit and vegetables. As he stands before the judging ring and watches the ribbons tied he has an uncomfortable sense of opportunities neglected. He doesn't believe for a minute that he doesn't know enough to produce a colt or a calf as good as those that captured the blue ribbons. Then why hasn't he done it? He has a dozen excuses to offer, but down in his heart he knows that it is simply because he has neglected his opportunities. He resolves to make a feed box for the colts as soon as he gets home and he changes his mind about cutting off the calf's allowance of skim milk. He decides to drive around by the feed store on the way home and order some stankage for the pigs. He had better blood than the neighbor who won first prize.

Why not feed a little better and prove that he has the best pigs.

The boy who went to the fair tired of the farm and ready to look for a job on the section, goes home feeling differently. He has signed up for the corn contest next year, and is already making plans for raising the biggest crop of corn the county has ever seen. He has taken part in the corn and stock judging contest, perhaps, and while probably he did not get first place, he has found that there is a great deal to an ear of corn or a horse that he did not know before. He goes home and examines the old work horses for side bones, and tries to tell their age by their teeth. He learns to look into the farm papers now and then, and begins to see that there is something more to farming than pulling weeds and milking cows.

For the whole family the fair is a badly needed outing. They meet old friends and make new ones. They come home tired, but happy. They wake up the next morning resolved to make the coming year count for more than the one just past. The fair that can send people home feeling good and keep them feeling good until they get the fences fixed and the yard cleaned up is well worth while.

THE POOR PLANTER.

THOUGH the Southern members failed to induce Congress to vote \$250,000,000 or some other huge sum of public money as a subsidy to the distressed planters of the South, the poor cotton grower does not lack sympathetic and influential friends in Washington and is not to go without substantial assistance.

In his announcement that the new regional reserve banks will begin operation November 16, though their directors asked for two weeks more for preparation, Secretary of the Treasury McAdoo makes plain the reason for his haste in distributing \$400,000,000 of national bank reserve funds, "as large an amount of government funds as possible," where it will be available for loans to bank customers. "By this means," says the secretary, "and through the agency of the federal reserve banks I hope to give additional assistance to that already given by the Treasury Department to the cotton producers, the cotton industry and the business men of the South."

Simultaneously with Mr. McAdoo's announcement the Cleveland Leader published a letter from a Northern man in Texas, relating his observations of the poor cotton grower and his companion in distress, the Southern business man.

Briefly, the writer pictured the Texas cotton grower as more often than not a wandering, shiftless, impecunious tenant farmer, operating on borrowed money and forcing the landlord to do the same. Though the Department of Agriculture has been urging them for years to raise food crops, the letter states, both classes refuse to plant anything but cotton, the legislature has failed to limit the cotton acreage and, though containing some of the most fertile land in the world, Texas does not begin to produce her own food supply. Cotton, of course, is a staple well adapted to use as collateral or subject of speculation. On it, the writer alleges, the Texas banker has built a system of usury forcing the cotton grower to pay 12 to 20 per cent for loans.

It is a dismal picture. That it overdraws the shortsightedness of the planter, the greed of the banker and the sorry future of the industry can at least be hoped. Another natural hope is that the government's huge subsidy will not reach the cotton grower in the form of 12 to 20 per cent loans, with the lion's share of the benefit going to the local money lender. For, it will be a pity that the regional bank system, which was expected to do so much for the whole country, should be so largely devoted at the outset to the benefit of a single sectional industry.

The way to make the country home attractive to the young folks is to have the home surroundings conducive to comfort. Money and time spent in this department of the farm is well spent.