

# Farmer Must Be on Same Basis as Industry-Dawes

## Urges Need of Specific Relief Plan

Pledges Party to Thorough Survey of Situation With View to Bringing Forth Solution. Says War Caused Distress

I realize that because I happen to be a candidate for office, the question is naturally raised in your minds as to whether the fact that I am a farmer should be a disqualification for me to discuss the agricultural question as it should be discussed from the standpoint of national interest and not party interest. Let me say at the beginning that both the republican and the democratic parties recognize the difficulties under which agricultural industry has been carried on during the last few years; that both are equally anxious to correct it; that in the betterment of the industry of agriculture, from which our people draw the means of existence and life itself, all parties and all the people must see the welfare, not simply of the American farmer, but of the American people. This question is a national question. It is a nonpartisan and economic question. It must not be and cannot be either discussed or settled as a party question. It is the most serious economic question confronting our nation today. Upon its solution depends our future national prosperity.

This is no side issue. It is in its most important and complex issue. In its solution we have no precedent to follow, for never in the history of the world, so far as I can find, has there been a country producing and exporting in large volume, at the same time, both the products of the farm and of industry.

**Farm Price Equality Needed.** The problem stated in the most simple terms is how can equality in earning capacity be secured between agriculture and industry. What are the conditions of this problem which we confront? What is the situation? Disparity in earning capacity of agricultural and industrial population is evidenced in unmistakable manner by the marked increase in savings deposits in industrial centers as compared with those in agricultural sections of the country.

The unsatisfactory condition of agriculture is most evident in the case of producers raising crops of which the available supply exceeds the domestic and consumptive demand. The distress of the wheat grower has been emphasized by leaders of agricultural organizations and by politicians seeking the support of agricultural communities but, as a matter of fact, the same general condition in varying degree applies to all branches of agriculture.

The agricultural and the industrial elements in our population are absolutely interdependent. Lasting industrial prosperity cannot exist if agriculture is in a state of depression and conversely agriculture cannot prosper if industrial activities come to a standstill.

Few Failures Due to Courage. While public publicity has been given to the distress of the farmer, particularly the grain grower, it is to be noted with satisfaction that during the period of post-war readjustment from which we are emerging the percentage of failures among farmers has been smaller than among those engaged in commercial pursuits and this would indicate that the American farmer has the courage, intelligence and resourcefulness required to solve the most difficult problems affecting his results. The recent improvement in the agricultural situation is a fact.

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tural situation must not be taken as evidence that the farmer's problem has worked out its own solution.

Within the last 90 days there has been a marked advance in grain prices which is a natural result of the operation of the law of supply and demand.

The good fortune of the American farmer is attributable to the fact that there is an estimated shortage of two hundred million bushels in the Canadian wheat crop as compared with that harvested last year and when one considers that the Canadian crop of 1923 furnished almost one-half of the total requirements of wheat importing countries it is evident that a shortage in this most important source of supply is of vital interest to all European countries which are largely dependent upon their imports for their bread supply. In addition to the Canadian situation, extensive drought has been reported in Russia eliminating that country as a source of supply. Furthermore, the uncertainty attending the maturing of our corn crop has doubtless had a detrimental effect upon the prices of all grain in the country; it should be emphasized that all of the factors contributing to the present price level of grain are temporary in their nature and cannot be counted upon in the future. This statement should relegate the absurd and demagogic claim that the recent advance in grain has been engineered by the so-called interests, for political purposes.

**Farm Distress General.** The unsatisfactory condition of the grower of grain and live stock has been so widely heralded through the press and upon the platform that one is inclined to believe that the agricultural depression is confined to these particular classes of growers but upon inquiry it becomes evident that the distress is general and consequently its cause must be fundamental.

Passing from the raising of field crops to the most intensive form of agriculture we find, for instance, that the growers of fruits in California have been unable on the average to realize a profit from their operations during the last two years. Citrus fruit growers are feeling keenly the increasing competition of Florida and there have been carried over from last year's crop large surpluses of raisins and prunes which naturally act as depressing factors on the price for the new crop. This year's drought may relieve the California situation temporarily but as the Canadian shortage benefits the grain grower. The cotton grower has passed through the same experience which until recently has affected the grower of grain and his improved condition is due not to any fundamental change in the situation but to a curtailment of supply through the ravages of the boll weevil.

Foremost among the causes responsible for the unsatisfactory condition of agriculture in this country is unregulated production. Until production is brought more nearly into line with consumptive demand there can be no permanent betterment in the price situation. Under the stimulus of war time demand our wheat acreage increased from forty-seven million acres, which was the average for the period 1909 to 1913, to nearly seventy-six million acres in 1918, since which time there has been a substantial decline, but the 1922 acreage, although 19 per cent below the maximum, still shows an increase of six million, four hundred thousand acres, or 13 1/2 per cent over the pre-war period 1919 to 1913. In this connection, I would call your attention to the fact that of this existing increase in acreage, the states of Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska have contributed five million, one hundred and twenty thousand acres. While this expansion in wheat production has been going on in the United States the prairie provinces of Canada have increased their average 56 per cent, or over eleven million acres.

**Must Guard for Home Demand.** It is an admitted fact that in the case of any agricultural commodity of which we raise a substantial surplus plus the price obtainable for this surplus in the world's markets establishes in a general way the price level of the entire crop. This being true, it is significant that, while we exported about 15 per cent of our wheat crop during the pre-war years 1909 to 1913, in 1922 practically 44 per cent of the crop was exported, and in 1923, a year of lighter production, about 26 per cent of the crop was exported. In other words, the percentage of our wheat crop sold in the world's markets has, since pre-war years, almost doubled, and consequently has had an increased tendency toward the maintenance of our price level on the basis of the world's market. Since the period 1909 to 1913 the increase in the average annual exports of wheat from the United States exceeds by 10,000,000 bushels the average annual export of wheat from Russia prior to the war.

When there has been a marked decrease in our wheat acreage since the year of maximum seeding, 1919 (about 29 per cent), it is discouraging to note that the report of the United States Department of Agriculture, under date of August 15, dealing with intended seeding of wheat this fall, indicates that an increase of 7 1/2 per cent is contemplated by the winter wheat growers. The value of this estimate is questionable, but it at least affords an indication of the effect an advance in price always has upon production. This tendency to ignore domestic consumptive demand in our seeding and planting operations is equally evident in the fruit industry of California, notwithstanding the very substantial investment required in the development of orchards and vineyards. In the case of raisin grapes, the pre-war world's crop was about 150,000 tons, of which a little over one-half was produced in the state of California. Today the vineyard acreage in California under normal conditions would produce over 300,000 tons, and there are still many thousands of acres under cultivation which have not yet come into bearing. As a result of this unwarranted expansion there has been a carryover from last year's surplus of raisins nearly equal to an entire pre-war crop, and the same condition exists in the prune industry. The general situation in California is clearly shown by the fact that while the 1923 production of fruit

and the establishment of its normal consumptive demand for the products of the American farm and American industry. It will not be considered improper for me to say in this connection that, in my judgment, should the plan become operative as now seems likely, there will follow, without question, direct benefit to agriculture through increased demand particularly for pork products and specialty crops and decided indirect benefit through the stimulation of industrial activity and consequent broadening of our domestic markets for agricultural products which always follows increased purchasing power.

Upon the agricultural problem we are listening, as a people, at this time, to three lines of argument. First, a political discussion of the question from the stump. This consists of statements of what not only the farmer but every good citizen wants to see accomplished in the agricultural industry, without any practical suggestion as to the steps to be taken to achieve them. The second line of argument is that our position relative to the Argentine (our next largest competitor) would be still more favorable, owing to the difference in standards of living and the cheapness of labor obtaining in South America.

With truly American spirit, desiring to accomplish the development of our resources in the immediate future, we have undoubtedly put under cultivation millions of acres of land, which should have been conserved as a source of food supply for future generations, and in this connection, I would state that every reclamation project, whether by irrigation or drainage, furnishes added competition for existing cultivated farms, orchards and vineyards, at a time when we are already seriously embarrassed by overproduction in many lines.

**Push Co-operation Slowly.** That the farmer, in common with the entire American public, is suffering from the increased burdens of taxation is evidenced from the figures given by the Secretary of Agriculture in his report to the president last November. It is stated that property taxes paid by the owners of agricultural lands in 1920 amounted to \$532,000,000, while in 1922 this amount had increased to \$797,000,000. The added burden of \$265,000,000 is a factor worthy of serious consideration and can only lead to the conclusion that economies in federal, state and local governments are absolutely imperative.

Co-operative marketing has received the endorsement of the more important political parties. The theory underlying this form of marketing and distribution is unquestionably sound, but in the application of the principles involved, many serious difficulties have been encountered. Up to date experience has demonstrated that co-operative marketing has proven most effective in the case of farm, vineyard or orchard products, which are perishable or semi-perishable and which constitute, to a varying degree, natural monopolies, owing to the restricted areas in which the commodities can be produced. The fact that a certain method of marketing has proved successful in Denmark, with an area of less than one-quarter of the state of Nebraska, does not necessarily mean that it would be equally successful in a country comprising as vast an area as the United States.

The development of the practice of co-operative marketing must proceed slowly and upon sound lines. It must be borne in mind that such success has been attained by co-operative organizations in this country is measured by a comparison with absolutely unorganized marketing conditions, which existed prior to the organization of the co-operative. Many of the best minds engaged in working out co-operative marketing problems are of the opinion that this form of distribution is of value chiefly in the case of commodities, the demand of which can be stimulated by domestic and international advertising and by the adoption of standards for grading, sorting, packing and processing which will make the quality uniformly dependable. Up to date the co-operative organizations have apparently been unable to exert any marked influence in the regulation of production, as is evidenced by the fact that the largest dried fruit co-operatives in California and the tobacco co-operatives of the south are all reported to be carrying burdensome surpluses into the new crop.

**Farm Commission Needed.** The problems involved in co-operative marketing should receive most serious and continuous study to the end that this form of distribution may be established on sound lines which ultimately will bring results advantageous to the producer. The announced intention of the president to appoint a commission to study the agricultural problem and to make recommendations to congress, precludes the possibility of a political discussion of any of the relief measures considered by congress or now under consideration by the leaders of various farmers' organizations.

The necessity for choosing a commission to study the agricultural problem and to make recommendations to congress, precludes the possibility of a political discussion of any of the relief measures considered by congress or now under consideration by the leaders of various farmers' organizations.

The farmers must organize—preferably on a commodity basis—for the purpose of improving marketing facilities where present conditions are burdensome or can be reduced, and what is of equal importance, for the purpose of collection and prompt dissemination of information in intelligible form which will aid in the working out of proper seeding and planting programs.

**Dawes Plan to Benefit Farmer.** My name is attached to a plan evolved by a group of experts, of which I was one, recently summoned by the allies to suggest means for the settlement of the reparations question, which bids fair to result in the economic peace of Europe

ing the two periods, which in certain sections of our country is so marked that extreme business prostration and suffering have existed, it is claimed that a number of things contribute, outside of the effect of the war. The American prices of farm products, as I stated before, are fixed by the price at which the exportable surplus is sold abroad in a competitive world market. In other words, unlike the condition which existed in manufacturing, when a small surplus sold abroad at the world price does not necessarily fix the American price for the bulk of our manufactures, the world price of a wheat surplus fixes the price for all American wheat at home.

**Tariff Aids Farmer.** But, in making a claim for equality for agriculture, the leading proponents of measure for agricultural relief have not assailed the American system of protection nor do they assail the policy of restricted immigration as a necessary national policy. They recognize that in the better buying power of labor, resulting from higher wages, there is a benefit in the increase in demand for farm products. While not asking a reversal of the national policy of protection of labor and manufacturing so long pursued by this government, recognizing that disaster not only to them but to agriculture as well might be involved, they do claim that the farmer has the right to be included in the governmental policy of protection—that it is as important that the great basic industry of agriculture be protected from the fixing of a price on the bulk of its products at home at the figure for which a sur-

plus of them is sold abroad as it is that labor and manufacturing be protected from unlimited foreign competition. In any plan they maintain it as a principle that the objects of any measure of relief should be only the placing of the farmer in that fairer relationship to other industries in the United States which existed in the pre-war period.

Such relief, if the means for it can be found, is fair. The farmer does not ask sympathy. He demands justice. The position outlined by the proponents of agricultural relief is evidence that they regard properly the protective tariff and restricted immigration, more as a moral justification of the demands for agricultural relief than as the cause of the recent depression.

**War Cause of Depression.** This is natural, for in the 10-year pre-war period the surplus of the farmers' products, as at present, was sold in the world market and he bought in a protected market. Our policy of protection in no way eliminates the operation of the law of supply and demand within our own borders, but simply limits supply from abroad below a certain price level determined by the import duty.

That the protective tariff was somewhat lower than now in existence was because it was sufficient then to give labor and manufacturing their American market. At that time the manufacturing costs of production in Germany had not been lessened by the enormous decrease in the wages of labor there, caused by the degradation of the mark. Inflation of other European currencies had not

then lessened other labor costs in Europe. The lower tariff, then, prevented ruinous foreign competition, as the Fordney tariff does now. As to restricted immigration, considering the two periods of before the war and since the war, the difference in the number of immigrants is not yet such as to be a real factor in the difference in labor costs. Other reasons have operated there, including the proper organization of labor for its own protection. Fair consideration of all the elements in the situation leads one to the conclusion that the great underlying cause for the recent depression in agriculture has been the conditions resulting from the world war.

**War Always Hurts Farmer.** Agriculture has always suffered as a consequence of war. It was so in the United States following the revolutionary war, beginning with the depression of 1785; following the Napoleonic wars, beginning with the depression of 1808; following the civil war, beginning with the depression of 1870; and following the world war, beginning with the depression of 1921. Indeed, during the present period after the world war, the distress in agriculture was not more acute than in the periods after the civil war and the Napoleonic wars.

A period of war at first greatly stimulates agricultural production. The increase in the demand for agricultural products and the inflation of credits which accompany war creates a situation which brings its own reaction. When, after war, reaction manifests itself, as it does in general industry as well as in agriculture, of other European currencies had not

than other industry. This is chiefly because agriculture is an industry whose entrance is more widely opened to the detached individual and no effective precautions exist for safeguarding it as a whole. Upon the restoration and retention of the normal relationship between the prices of farm commodities and other commodities and services depends the permanent prosperity not only of the agricultural industry, but of the nation. In the midst of the agricultural crisis through which we have been passing, the leaders in thought and action among the farmers of the United States, have set an example to the public men of the nation, for in their discussions, the authorized proponents of suggested measures for relief have considered the supremacy of economic laws, the effect of whose operation has recently so benefited their industry. Relegating demagoguery, presenting relevant facts and discussing the relations of economic law to them, the leading proponents of remedies for agricultural distress have exhibited that moderation in statement and that wisdom in presentation to which

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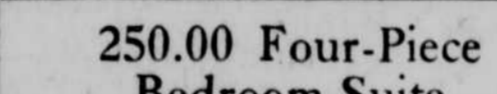
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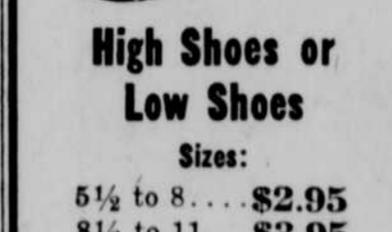
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