

FOOLISH FARMERS.

SWINDLED BY CORPORATIONS AND BAMBOOZLED BY LEGISLATORS.

How a Committee of the Minnesota Farmers' Alliance Was Treated by the State Legislature—Some Sensible Advice to the Tillers of the Soil.

The following address was delivered before the Minnesota Farmers' Alliance in St. Paul on Jan. 6 by Hon. P. H. Rahilly of Lake City, Minn.:

The last convention of the Farmers Alliance of this state appointed a committee consisting of nine members, of which I had the honor of being chairman, whose duty it should be, first, to secure if possible some enforcement of those existing laws relating to common carriers which might be regarded as favorable to the farmers of Minnesota, and, second, to formulate and present to the legislature such measures relating to the carriage of farm products as in the opinion of the committee a sound public policy might dictate.

In the fulfillment of its mission the committee at once visited the railroad and warehouse commission and asked that body to secure to farmers their rights in freight and passenger rates on railroads. The commission seemed to believe that they had no power under the present law. Having become satisfied from the conduct and general demeanor of its members throughout that the railroad and warehouse commission was even worse than worthless for all public uses, we directed our attention toward the legislature. A series of remedial measures were prepared and were introduced in the house. Those measures were as follows:

First.—A bill amending the law creating the railroad and warehouse commission and calling on that body on the first Monday of May and November of each year and at such additional times as might be necessary to carefully examine the existing freight rates and unless the commission were satisfied that such rates were in all respects just and reasonable to call upon the railroads to make the necessary reductions. On the neglect or failure of the roads to make the required reductions the bill then made it the duty of the commission to appeal to the courts and to continue to so appeal until the lowest just and reasonable rates admitted by the courts were made to prevail. Thus an imperative duty to continue forcing down existing rates was sought to be enforced on the commission on pain of removal from office.

Second.—A bill providing for a uniform reduction of 20 per cent on all existing freight rates in force on Jan. 1, 1897.

Third.—A bill providing for a uniform passenger rate of 3 cents per mile.

Fourth.—A bill providing for the lawful transfer by delivery of mileage books from one person to another, the possession of such books being prima facie evidence of lawful ownership regardless of the name written or stamped on the book.

Fifth.—A bill providing for the establishment of scales at all railroad stations for the purpose of weighing farm produce and for the delivery to the shipper of proper receipts for the amount of grain so delivered.

The bills referred to were placed in the hands of the different members of the house. They were in time referred to the committee on railroads of that body. I made five trips to St. Paul and succeeded in making arrangements to have a public hearing on those measures. Accordingly I appeared before the committee on railroads, and after listening until 2 o'clock in the morning to the arguments of the railway attorneys gathered to oppose the so-called Douglas bill I was compelled to withdraw unheard. The next meeting I was re-informed by Mr. Costello. We were informed by the chairman that that body was very busy and could only allot a very short time to Alliance measures. A half hour was assigned in which to present the merits of the five measures above outlined. The time was as fully utilized as its brevity and the nature of the task before the committee admitted of.

But from the outset, indeed before a word had been spoken, it was plain that the experience of the committee before the railroad and warehouse commission was to be duplicated and that the measures would receive like treatment. It was apparent throughout that there was not a shadow of possibility that the measures advocated would receive any serious consideration whatever. On the following morning the bills were reported to the house adversely by the committee on railroads. Mr. Donnelly made a gallant fight in favor of the bills. He pleaded that they should be placed on general orders and be discussed and amended according as the judgment of the house might dictate, but he pleaded in vain. The measures were doomed from the outset to a speedy and violent death.

Whatever the present actual condition of public sentiment may be regarding the carriers of the state it is plain to demonstration that all the forces of official life today are organized and amalgamated in the great undertaking of preventing any change in existing regulations affecting railroads and other great corporations. The dominant element in our politics is in conspiracy with them.

From my experience as an agriculturist the past 30 years I cannot refrain from calling your attention to a few facts and suggestions which have been forced on me vividly.

I was born in a wheatfield nearly 40 years ago and have lived there ever since and no doubt will die there. A great portion of the time I have been a large shipper of grain. Some years I have raised as high as 51,000 bushels. Frequently the weight of grain would fall short at its destination from my

weight, but having no receipts from the railroads as to the number of pounds in a car I had no remedy but to submit to the imposition. There is a law on the statute books of this state providing that railroads shall weigh grain offered for shipment in bulk and issue a receipt therefor.

Finding myself defeated at every point by those whose duty it was to protect the interests and rights of the most industrious class of our citizens, I next turned my attention to enforcing this law which has been on the statute books of the state for the past 20 years. It appears, however, that nobody had been aware of this fact. Having received the rebuffs referred to, I concluded to prosecute the railroad company for non-compliance with the law in refusing to weigh grain and issue receipts for the number of pounds so delivered for shipment. I swore out a warrant for the arrest of the agent of the railroad company at Lake City. The case had a hearing in the court. For the first time we routed the enemy, horse, foot and dragon, and got judgment against the railroad company. As usual the railroad blustered, but finally paid the judgment to the state.

I appeal to the farmers of the state living on every line of road at every shipping point to get together and have some one among you present a car of grain for shipment to the agent at your shipping point and demand of him to weigh your grain and issue a receipt for you for the number of bushels so delivered. In case he refuses you do as I have done—secure a warrant for the agent's arrest.

It is the duty of the county attorney to prosecute all such cases in the name of the state. Remember you support the roads by using them and are as much entitled to consideration as those who contributed to build them if there is equality of citizens before the law.

By your actions you must prove to the people that you enter your protest against the courts, high or low, which protect stock and bond holders in their determination to secure profits by fictitious capitalization. The state means by legislation to stop fictitious capitalization, and if the courts will dare to uphold the right to profits on fictitious capitalization they hereby nullify the policy of the state.

If the courts will hold that corporations must take their chances like individuals in business, they would work for those things which would tend to promote the general welfare of the people. Knowing your rights, if you fail to defend them you deserve still more abuse than you have received at the hands of the corporations during the past 30 years. Remember if you don't defend your rights no one else will.

The fact that a district judge in this state has ruled that when an unsuspecting, law-abiding citizen purchases a mileage book placed by the railroad company in the hands of scalpers and offers it for his transportation the railroad company has a right to confiscate his private property, and he is not entitled to demand the return of his property as a condition to paying his fare in cash, while the company is justified in maltreating such citizen even unto death providing he contributed to the injury by his stubbornness in refusing to leave the car, pay his fare and not demand the return of his book, is now judicially established. The highest tribunal in the state, which should have been designated the supreme fraud of the state, has sustained the above decision by simply stating that such citizen should leave the car, pay his fare and not demand the return of his personal property, "he had his remedy in the courts afterward." In view of all this it seems to me that as the courts are at present administered any appeal to them is equivalent to going to law with the devil with the court held in hell.

There is another corporation or trust I desire to call your attention to known as the malthouse trust. During the last year I shipped some 20,000 bushels of rye and barley to manufacturers and maltsters in transit, thereby realizing in some cases nearly the Chicago prices at Lake City. This year the same parties informed me that they cannot deal direct with me. They belong to the trust. The malthouses and buyers are nearly all combined under one management, and one buyer purchases their supplies instead of 50 buyers, as heretofore, thus making little or no competition. I have always been opposed to prohibition, but in self defense I have changed my mind. I would therefore suggest that the next Alliance state convention insert a prohibition plank in its state platform. In my judgment the devil must be fought with fire.

Let us unite as one man to defend our rights against corporations and trusts of all description. Remember that as long as the producing masses of the state in the exercise of the voting franchise show themselves to be amenable to the influence of fear, fraud and chicanery to the extent manifested by them in the last state and national election, it will remain an utterly hopeless task for any body of men to seek relief in their behalf from the burdens under which they are today struggling.

In conclusion, brother farmers, I beg of you never cast a vote for any man who has ever used his influence against your interests.

I have never approved of the action taken some years ago declaring that the Farmers' Alliance was not a political organization. While this is strictly true the statement has been used by the enemies of the farmers to prove that the farmers should not use the ballot box to obtain the reforms they demand. When farmers take that position, they throw aside the greatest power of self defense which they possess—the right of suffrage—and permit their enemies to have a monopoly of it. Reform can come in this country only by one of two means, the ballot box or the cartridge box. To avoid the use of the last the farmers must employ the first. They should use their votes to protect and advance their personal interests and to reward their friends and punish their enemies.

FREEDOM AND ITS OPPORTUNITIES.

Natural Rights Which Man Has Foolishly Surrendered.

LAND AND FREEDOM OF EXCHANGE

Restoration of These Rights is the Answer to the Cry of Distress.

The Fabled Story of Antaeus and His Overthrow—How the Few Accumulate Great Stores of Wealth—The Methods of the Medieval Barons Are Still in Use—The End of "The Labor Question"—How Is the Cry of the Soul of Man to Be Answered?—Public Things to the Public; Private Affairs to the Individual—A Proposed Constitutional Amendment.

(From an article by Governor John R. Rogers of Washington in January Arena.)

In all ages broad minded and far-seeing men have not hesitated to declare that the right of access to land in some free and independent way is absolutely necessary to the creation of strong and stable nations and men and that in no other way can freedom and the rights of men be preserved. Thousands of years ago this was as well known and understood as it is today. The myths and mythology of the most ancient peoples conclusively prove it. In the mythology of Greece and Rome this truth was expressed in the fabled story of Antaeus, a giant or renowned athlete, who was said to be the son of Neptune and Terra (sea and earth or land and water). He inhabited the Lybian desert (where land was free) and successfully wrestled against all comers, for whenever thrown to the ground he received fresh accession of strength from mother earth, rising stronger than ever from his contact with the soil. Hercules, however, the crafty god of strength, detecting the source of his strength, held him up in his arms and strangled him in the air.

Doubtless the common people among the Greeks and Romans, to whom the priests told this story of the gods, believed it true and thought Antaeus a real personage, but the better educated among them probably knew perfectly well that this story contained one of the greatest truths—probably the most important to man's temporal welfare—which it is possible to state. Antaeus symbolized the human race, which, deprived of its hold upon the soil, is quickly weakened and destroyed.

Man's life upon this earth is governed by certain unchangeable laws, fixed in the decrees of nature. Men make no new ones, they only discover them. Having discovered them, if the course of their lives and their statutory enactments are in consonance therewith, happiness is the result; otherwise humanity pays the fixed and certain penalty. Statute law is like its makers, very imperfect.

All wealth—which is the only remedy for poverty—is created by the application of human exertion to land or to its natural products. If men are denied access to land, they are then unable to create wealth for themselves. If they work for others, the profits of their labor are taken from them. This, in short, is the sole origin of great wealth on the one side and poverty on the other. No man accumulates large wealth unless he is enabled in some crafty way to obtain the fruits of other men's labor. If access to land is open to all, men cannot be forced to work for insufficient pay. They are then free to work for themselves. If men possess their little self supporting homesteads, free from debt and taxation, they are then free, strong, brave and inclined to make much of their independence when in the presence of those who may try to impose upon them. Let us, then, endeavor to restore to men those natural opportunities which will enable them to protect themselves. This can be done by a change in our laws. And it will be done whenever our citizens determinedly and persistently demand of their lawmakers a restoration of those natural and inalienable rights guaranteed by our constitution as the self evident gift of the Creator to all.

I hold that our form of government, in its first intent—and in its basic form today—is the best imaginable, and that whatever of ill has become by lack of that eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty a part of its administration will yet be remedied by the courageous and resolute assertion of man's natural rights under the law. And I hold, too, presumptuously perhaps, that even among educated men there is great prevailing lack of perception of the real facts in the case.

A few hundred years ago the medieval barons held almost absolute sway over the lives and fortunes of our fathers, their subjects. Exchange which paid them no tribute could not exist. Descending with their armed retainers from their castles among the crags, they lived and thrived by unblushing robbery and the right of the strong to seize and to hold. Trade, as we know it, had no existence, and semibarbarism ruled. And yet the barons of old lived, as do their modern exemplars, simply by denying to the common man two plain natural rights—the right to the soil and the right freely to exchange the products of labor. And since the world began all tyranny has been enforced by these simple means and by no other. Times change, and methods with them, but at bottom the scheme of the tyrant is always the same. The plan is simple in the extreme. And since man has had an existence upon this earth tyranny in a large way has only been possible when men have first been deprived of those natural rights. And men are always deceived or deceive themselves. For not only have the few in all ages been able thus to deprive the many of their natural, inalienable and indefeasible rights

and thus reduce them to poverty and serfdom, but they have also been able to make the vast majority think it right that it should be so.

That this is the one only method ever employed should be clear to every reflective mind. For if men are in undisputed possession of the soil and secure in the right freely to exchange the products of the labor of both hand and brain, they are then able to maintain not only an independent existence, but also to go forward in the race of life. All things become possible to them, for when these rights are once fully attained and fully conceded mankind for the first time is freed from the unjust power of concentrated wealth and tyranny becomes impossible.

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That the right to untrammelled exchange is a natural right ought to be clear to all who will reflect that in a state of nature or under a proper administration of law no just demand anywhere exists for its limitation. The claim set up that tribute upon exchange is necessary to the support of government is seen upon examination to be false, urged only by those who in a covert way are thus enabled themselves to levy a tax upon the manual laborer. For all luxury, all privilege, all tyranny are now and have ever been possible only because of ability first obtained to deprive the manual laborer of those rights, powers and privileges admitted by and self evidently the gift of the Creator to all his children. Much talk is made by pseudo economists of the "wages of superintendence," and we hear much of the vast value to the world of the directive skill of the despoilers of labor. But all these live by imposing their luxurious support upon those whom they have first deprived.

If we suppose for a moment that all manual laborers were transported to another country, it will then be clear to the dullest comprehension that labor of the hands is the one essential to life which cannot be dispensed with. For the wealthy who are left must then consume the wealth previously obtained from the laborer, and when this has been expended or has wasted away, which must very soon occur, they can then begin themselves to labor with their hands or die.

If in possession of the two great rights, which when fully stated comprise all, the laborer cannot be forced. He is then free. He can not only maintain an independent existence, but the means of improvement and advance are his. By combination with his fellows all the facilities of modern life would shortly be obtained, and the former magnate would be forced to offer better terms. But the former serf would be in no haste to comply. Wages would rise. The laborer would then be able to set his own wage. "The labor question" would be at an end. The dignity and importance of manual labor would then be recognized by all. For the first time in all the history of the world the laborer would be free. All would not be obliged to labor upon land, but all laborers will gain liberty only by opening the escape valve which allows the unemployed and the unsatisfactorily employed to avail themselves of the natural right to land and exchange.

That mastery is always obtained by the few over the many by the machinery of deprival may be readily seen if we suppose all men everywhere to be in full and undisputed possession of large wealth. Suppose all, without exception, to possess an equal amount of the good things of life—houses and lands and all the attributes and belongings of a vast estate. Each and every man is then forced to labor with his hands. He can employ no one who is not equally desirous of employing him. Now gold has lost its value, for value is but an estimation of the human mind, and its power over men is gone, simply for the plain reason that gold depends for its value upon the absence of it in the pocket of him it is intended to influence.

The question at issue between the capitalist and the laborer is not only a political one, but it is in a most eminent degree a moral and a religious one. It is the question of the ages—the devilish power of greed against the rising claims of humanity, an irrepressible conflict, upon which wait the hopes and aspirations of men, for until it is settled, and settled as it should be, moral development in the world is at an end. But the capitalist will claim to the end that he has "a right" to some portion of the laborer's product, for if he could not possess himself of it he himself would be obliged to labor, and to this he is opposed.

But for the laborer, under the present regime, no hope appears—while he remains a laborer for hire. The capitalist, and the apologists for capitalism, tell him that. They say: "Work, save, collect interest from some other laborer. Get some form of legal advantage over men poorer and more dependent than yourself."

The laborer is thus forced to occupy a dependent position. But the laborer is dependent on other men only because other men, with his consent, have deprived him of natural right. Dependence is always a second step in the degradation of humanity. It is an effect. The cause is a fraudulent deprival. The few deny to the many the clear and self evident gifts of the Creator to all mankind.

Restore these natural and inalienable rights, and all will be well, and our economic affairs will regulate themselves. This is the American answer, the constitutional answer, and the answer of justice to the cry of distress. Freedom is still the goal. Now, as ever, liberty is the cry of the soul of man.

And how is this to be secured, do you ask? In reply and conscious of the fact that I can here only roughly outline a few principles which should guide us,

allow me to quote from the one man who by his writings did more to make the Declaration of Independence a possibility than any other, Thomas Paine.

He says: "Man did not enter society to become worse than he was before, or to have fewer rights than he had before, but to have those rights better secured. His natural rights are the foundation of all his civil rights."

"Civil rights are those which appertain to man in right of his being a member of society. Every civil right has for its foundation some natural right pre-existing in the individual, but to the enjoyment of which his individual power is not in all cases sufficiently competent."

I have grouped the natural rights of man under two heads:

First.—The right to security in the use of a sufficient portion of the earth's surface for self support free from the claims of rent, tax or the oppressive power of money; in short, a free home upon the soil which no power can wrest from the family, said homestead to be limited in money value so as to cover the necessities of life, all above this valuation to be taxed, all below it to be free from the claims of the sheriff for taxes or the demands of future would be mortgagees. For if this right to a home upon the soil is a natural right whence comes the power to tax or take away? Henry George admits this as a natural right, but would in his system allow this free gift of the Creator only to men able to pay. That is, he puts the right of man upon the auction block, and he who is able to pay most is to be given most of natural right.

Secondly.—The right of the producer of wealth to complete freedom of exchange with others for all the products of hand or brain, or exchange at cost, secured by the civil authority, where the ability of the individual is defective in power. Exchange at cost secured by the civil power includes in its scope the question of government ownership and control of the means of exchange, including railways, telegraphs, telephones and all the machinery of money. For it is self evident that if by means of these instruments of exchange specially favored and wealthy individuals are to be allowed to collect tribute above the cost of service, whoever is thus forced to submit to the exactions of a favored few is not a free citizen. Who does not know that the tribute thus exacted is the cause of all economic inequality among us? And who is there that cannot see that this inequality is secured by first depriving the citizen of his self evident, inalienable, indefeasible and constitutional right to free exchange?

I have endeavored to state these truths in few words, thus: Public things to the public; private affairs to the individual.

All rights can readily be secured under the forms of law now provided whenever the people have the virtue and the courage to demand their constitutional rights by persistently asserting themselves, as honest men should and as brave men will.

On considering man's relation to the soil two rights plainly appear—first, the right of the individual to the use of natural opportunities for self support, or the preservation of life; secondly, the right of organized society to whatever may be necessary for public use, it being understood that the right to occupy and use only is held by man. The right of the public to land is simple; as Paine has it, the right of individuals "brought to a focus." The right of the many to any particular spot or piece of land is, as a matter of course, greater than that of any one individual, provided it is needed for public use.

On whatever land is used or needed for use by the public, though nominally in the possession of individuals, and on whatever is held by individuals in excess of natural right, the right of the public to levy taxation, or collect tribute, seems clear, taxation being in reality an assertion of sovereignty. On land held, used and occupied by the individual citizen as a necessary means of support, and not needed for public use, the right of taxation does not obtain, from the absence of just ground for its exercise. The individual in this case is simply in possession of an inalienable right, the right to apply labor to natural opportunities for self support, and this fundamental natural right not even the public can rightfully abridge or deny.

The better to explain my meaning I have here set forth a proposed constitutional amendment. Properly, a constitution should be mainly a bill of rights. Hence here is the place for the statement of a fundamental right. Each state should fix the amount exempted at whatever sum may be sufficient to cover enough land for self support, and no more. From a somewhat extended inquiry I am convinced that the provisions here set forth, if enacted into law, would still leave, upon any proper estimate, or assessment, nine-tenths of land values still subject to taxation:

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

Section 1.—Real estate, or land and all usual improvements, to the value of a sum not to exceed two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) held, used, and occupied in good faith as a homestead by any usual and private family, the head of which family shall be a citizen of the United States and the state of Washington, is hereby forever exempted from all taxation of every kind and character in this state. Provided, that all lands and natural opportunities used or needed for public use or business, or certain limited and restricted areas in towns and cities, all mines, forests, waterfalls, or other natural opportunities not available for cultivation or as dwelling places be and the same are hereby expressly exempted from the provisions of this article.

Section 2.—The right of every family described in section 1 of this article to the exclusive possession of a homestead, held, used, and occupied as described in said section 1, and valued at a sum not exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) shall not be abridged or denied by reason of any contract, agreement, mortgage, or other instrument, promise, whatsoever, verbal or written, made or executed by the possessor of said homestead after this article shall have been adopted in proper form by the people of this state.

Section 3.—The legislature shall have power to enact any laws necessary to carry into effect the true intent and meaning of the provisions of this article.

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Postal Banks in New Zealand.

The New Zealand postoffice savings bank was established Feb. 1, 1867, with 46 branch offices situated in various parts of the colony. That the public were not slow in showing their appreciation of the bank was shown by the fact that Dec. 31, 1887, or 11 months after its establishment, there were 2,156 depositors with £71,197 14s. 1d. standing at their credit, or an average of £33 0s. 5d. for each depositor. The total number of transactions for the period named was 8,977 deposits, representing £96,872 7s. 10d., and 1,919 withdrawals, amounting to £36,415 18s. 9d. The average amount of the deposits and withdrawals was £18 16s. 8d. and £18 15s. 8d. respectively.

The business of the bank has steadily increased year by year, until at the end of 1896 there were 371 branch offices, with 147,758 depositors, the amount standing at their credit being £4,811,684 13s. 9d. The average amount standing to the credit of each open account Dec. 31 was £20 8s. 7d.

A Popular Supreme Court.

Senator Marion Butler of North Carolina has introduced a joint resolution in the senate which calls for the submission of an amendment to the constitution of the United States. Mr. Butler's amendment provides for the election of the members of the supreme court by popular vote. He would divide the country, making as many districts as there were members of the court, with the exception of the chief justiceship, which position is to be filled by popular vote of the entire country. The terms of the justices are fixed in the resolution at eight years.

Everybody Says So.

Cascarets Candy Cathartic, the most wonderful medical discovery of the age, pleasant and refreshing to the taste, and gently and positively on kidneys, liver, and bowels, cleansing the entire system, dispel colds, cure headache, fever, habitual constipation and biliousness. Please buy and try a box of C. C. C. today—10, 25, 50 cents. Sold and guaranteed to cure by all druggists.

The Bank Ring at Work.

The New York National Bankers' association is sending out circulars to all the bankers in the country asking them to protest against postal banks. The protest is being pretty generally endorsed by the bankers of the country, as might be expected.

Wages are being scaled down in New England. In the "anarchistic" state of Colorado wages are creeping up a little every day. The wages of common labor are 15 per cent higher today than a year ago. Draw your own conclusions.—Denver Road.

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Cascarets stimulate liver, kidneys and bowels; never sicken, weaken or sripes.

I HAVE FOR SALE A LOT OF POLAND-CHINA PIGS of both sexes, of Free Trade, Wilkes and U. S. strains that I will sell very cheap. Foundation stock for herds of quality. Will sell more bred to suit of Farmer's Model, the \$3.00 hog, and Chief Tomahawk 2d, the greatest Poland-China hog on earth. ADDRESS L. H. SUTER, Neligh, Neb.

The New Union ELEVATED LOOP in Chicago IS NOW OPEN. It runs on Van Buren St., Directly in front of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific STATION.

Passengers arriving in Chicago can, by the new Union Elevated Loop, reach any part of the city, or, for a five-cent fare, can be taken immediately to any of the large stores in the downtown district. All Elevated Trains will stop at the "Rock Island" Station. Train every minute. These facilities can only be obtained by the "Great Rock Island Route." If you will send a 3-cent stamp for postage we will mail you at once a new bird's eye view of Chicago, just issued in five colors, which shows you just what you want to know about Chicago and the new Loop and Elevated System. This map you should have, whether you live out of the city and expect to come to it, or whether you now live in Chicago and you or your friends contemplate making a trip. Address John Shanahan, P. O. 2, Chicago.