

**Legislative  
SIDELIGHTS..**

by  
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(Legislative Sidelights is made available to your local newspaper as a service of the Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of this newspaper).

**The Chair on the Left**  
Though the recent election has presently eclipsed the political-social theory of cooperative administration, cooperative leaders who believe in cooperatives as a way of doing business in a free-enterprise democracy must guard against centralizing control of their cooperatives in the hands of the zealots who await the day they can come again into position of political influence.

Control of agricultural cooperatives is an important phase of the effort of political zealots to convince farm families that the free-enterprise profit system has failed in America and that the destiny of agriculture is best tied to big government.

It is possible, unless steps are taken soon to protect the American free-enterprise system that under a Republican administration long in power these zealots will find an opportunity to advance their profitless, cooperative society philosophies further than they did under the recently terminated Fair Deal.

Some years ago, a so-called leader of one of America's farm organizations spoke before the national convention of that organization, outlining his ideas about agricultural cooperatives. During his speech, this leader outlined philosophies which apparently, so far as this reporter can ascertain, continue to be his personal beliefs and those of many of the leaders of his organization. Neither he nor his organization have to date repudiated or acknowledged a change in their basic philosophies proclaimed on that occasion. It seems logical, therefore, to assume on the basis of the actions of that organization today that these philosophies continue to guide its policy decisions.

In 1938, this so-called farm leader said: "Today we are in the upward pull of another great tidal wave. This time the breaking down of the profit system and finance capitalism is the cause of a great upward surge of humanity. Today we are witnessing the confusion created by the complete breakdown of the existing order of things."

"In the farm organization field there are three chairs. The chair on the right is occupied by an organization whose leadership now in control is apparently against any change in the order of things. To them the profit system will work again as soon as we turn some mythical corner or tinker with the mechanism a bit—the farmer can solve his own problems if he can just starve it out. The middle chair is occupied by another large farm organization, which concludes that as long as things run down the middle of the road and don't get too far left, too radical, as long as some of the profit toll bridges are left in—that things are all right. The third great farm organization chair on the left has been vacant a lot of the time. We have been warming up the left chair. A little more—we are getting a little more familiar with the students whose philosophy forces them to sit in the left wing classroom."

"Do we actually believe and take the position that the profit system has failed and that we must build a new economic order, a new way of life through the cooperative movement—or are we just kidding ourselves by developing cooperatives to make a little profit for ourselves? If we want to uproot the profit system, we can't consistently work for profits ourselves and expect the folks to think we're sincere. Do we look at legislation as the objective or do we recognize it as a means of keeping the road clear for the development of a cooperative Democracy?"

"If we decide that we are going to fill that chair on the left, we must recognize that we believe that the profit system is done for, that legislation is only a means to an end and not an end in itself and that cooperatives are the mechanisms for building a new economic order. We must do a better job of convincing our members that cooperatives are the basis for development of a new economic order and not just another way of doing business to get a little profit."

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