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LIFE ON THE FARM

President Turns Attention to Improving Social Conditions.

COUNTRY LAGS BEHIND NATION

Economic Institutions Not Keeping Pace with Developments.

SPECIAL COMMISSION APPOINTED

It is Asked to Look Into Affair and Report by December.

SPECIAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS

President Will Make Recommendations Basis of Suggestions for Legislation that Will Tend to Remedy Matters.

OYSTER BAY, N. Y., Aug. 10.—With a view to bringing about better social, sanitary and economic conditions on American farms, President Roosevelt has requested five experts on country life to make an investigation into the whole matter and to report to him with recommendations for improvements. The report and recommendations, with any additional recommendations which the president himself may desire to make, will be incorporated in a message which the president will send to congress promptly early next year.

The men President Roosevelt has asked to act as an investigation committee are Prof. L. H. Bailey of the New York College of Agriculture; Henry Wallace of Wallace's Farmer, Des Moines, Ia.; President Kenyon L. Butterfield, Massachusetts Agricultural college; Gifford Pinchot of the United States Forest reserve, and Walter H. Page, editor of the World's Work, New York.

President Outlines Plans.

In a letter to Prof. Bailey, asking him to accept the chairmanship of the commission, the president outlines his desires in the direction of improvements on the farms. The letter follows:

My Dear Prof. Bailey: No nation has ever achieved permanent greatness unless this greatness was based on the wellbeing of the great farmer class, the men who live on the soil, for it is upon their welfare, material and moral, that the welfare of the rest of the nation ultimately rests. In the United States, disregarding certain sections and taking the nation as a whole, I believe it to be true that the farmers in general are better off today than they ever were before. We Americans are making great progress in the development of our agricultural resources. But it is equally true that the social and economic institutions of the country have not been keeping pace with the developments of the nation as a whole. The farmer, as a rule, is better off than his forebears, but his increase in wellbeing has not kept pace with that of the country as a whole. While the condition of the farmers in some of our best farming regions leaves little to be desired, we are far from having reached so high a level in all parts of the country. In portions of the south, for example, where the Department of Agriculture, through the farmers' co-operative demonstration work of Dr. Knapp, is directly instructing more than 30,000 farmers in the scientific side of farming, there is nevertheless much unnecessary suffering and needless loss of efficiency on the farm. A physician, who is also a careful student of farm life in the south, writing to me recently on the enormous percentage of preventable deaths of children due to the unwholesome condition of certain southern farm homes, says:

"Personally, from the health point of view, I would rather see my own daughter, 8 years old, at work in a cotton mill than have her live as tenant on the average southern tenant one-horse farm. This appears a strong statement to be based upon actual life among both classes of people."

Better Crop, Then Better Living.

I doubt if any other nation can in any way rival in bringing about better social, sanitary and economic conditions on American farms. President Roosevelt has requested five experts on country life to make an investigation into the whole matter and to report to him with recommendations for improvements. The report and recommendations with any additional recommendations which the president himself may desire to make, will be incorporated in a message which the president will send to congress promptly early next year.

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