

# Industrial Power in Omaha, South Omaha and Vicinity

The art of producing electricity has in the past few years been revolutionized by the development of the steam turbine keeping well abreast of the march of progress.

The Omaha Electric Light and Power Company has, during the past few years, completely rebuilt its power plant and replaced the old style of engines with these modern powerful turbines, which are fully capable of supplying

**Electricity that is available 24 hours each day, 365 in the year, in Omaha, South Omaha and vicinity for many years to come.**

Our capability in this line is shown by the splendid and efficient service that is now furnished to the many large and small establishments, particularly the **large grain elevators, shirt and overall factories,** and the many other manufacturers where hundreds of motors aggregating thousands of horse power are used every day.

## Which Means Low Prices and Satisfactory Service to the Consumer

Any manufacturer desiring to locate anywhere within the reach of our power lines needing steady and reliable power, will profit by talking it over with us. We have surprised thousands of power users with our low rates, and will doubtless surprise you.

# Omaha Electric Light and Power Company

## President Roosevelt's Plan to Improve Conditions of Life on the Farm

WASHINGTON, Sept. 25.—People who have had best opportunities to know and understand Theodore Roosevelt have said that his great distinguishing, dominating intellectual characteristic is his highly developed social sense. It is this that makes him resolve all problems of government and administration into terms of ethics; that makes him preach sermons in state papers and from the stump; that inspires his marvelous resourcefulness of ideas for bettering the condition of his fellow men; that leads him instinctively to gather around him men who understand what he is trying to do, and sympathize with the ambition.

It is this dominating social sense that moves him one day to order prosecution of some aggregation of selfish interests which he has become convinced is unsocial; on the next, to press for passage legislation to prevent discrimination by public service corporations, the next to call a congress of governors to consider the immense problem of conserving natural resources, and that finally has recently moved him to appoint a commission of experts for the study of means to improve the country life, to make it better, fuller, broader and more attractive.

The project thus stated may seem a bit vague and academic; but resolved into its elements it is a great enterprise which in its development will be found to involve the most practical handling of a number of specific problems. It is in one way a corollary to the proposal for effective conservation of natural wealth; but it is a more complex and difficult problem because it involves dealing with people, rather than with things; with souls, rather than with acres and corporations.

This problem of the farm and its economics and its life has for a long time been interesting the president. He laid the foundation of the present movement in the speech at Lansing over a year ago, when he told his hearers that, beyond the very important business of producing good crops, the farm must be made to produce the vastest most important output of good manhood and good womanhood, all of which sounds well, but still exceedingly vague. To be specific, the movement for the uplift of the rural population involves such problems as these:

Improvement of country schools so that it shall not be necessary for farmers to "move to town" in order to "give the children some schooling"; a process which generally takes both parents and children away from the farm, to the ultimate misfortune of parents, children and farm.

Improvement of country roads. Establishment of social centers in rural communities and development of a social life which shall be attractive enough to counteract the gregarious instinct always tending to draw people together into towns.

Improvement and broadening of the practical usefulness of the church in the country. Establishment of libraries, lectures, farm-ers' institutes, etc., and general promotion of intellectual interests.

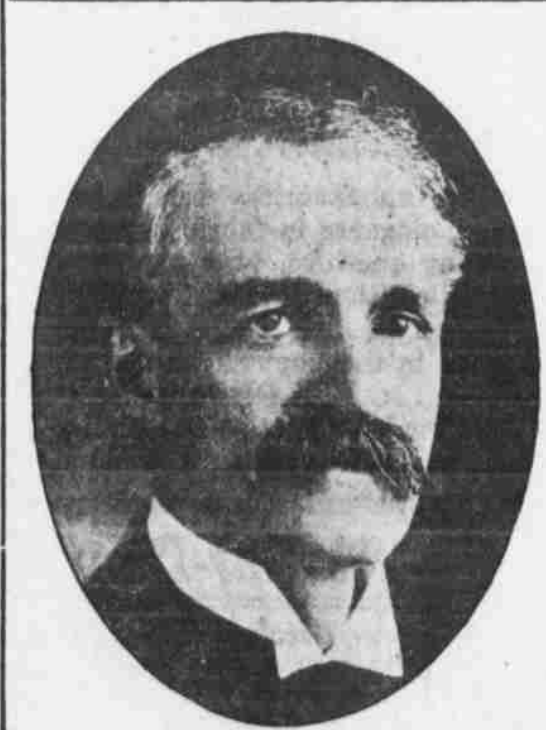
Promotion of co-operative buying and marketing among farmers, which shall free them from the impositions of the middlemen and transportation interests.

Propagation of intelligent interest in, understanding of and demand for the parcels post, so that it may be brought about.

Encouragement of such forms of co-operation as the mutual insurance company, the community creamery, etc.

Improvement of farm life from both the material and the aesthetic sides by inducing interest in better arrangement of the farm

### Members of Commission Appointed to Study Rural Social Life in America



GIFFORD PINCHOT,  
Washington.



HENRY WALLACE,  
Des Moines.



KENYON BUTTERFIELD,  
Massachusetts.



WALTER H. PAGE,  
North Carolina.

home plot, construction of more attractive residences and more economical farm buildings, with more general diffusion on the "modern conveniences" than the farm has thus far known.

Helping the woman of the farm to improve the conditions of her life, which by all the students of the problem is conceded to constitute the most difficult problem of all.

These are only a few of the questions which the president's country life commission must consider. They are mentioned as among the most striking, and as suggestive of the great scope of work for the farming population which is proposed to be taken up.

President Roosevelt believes, and so do the gentlemen whom he has designated as his commissioners, that the city has had its share of attention; that the country needs and is entitled to intelligent consideration. To keep the people from deserting the farm for the city is a great problem nowadays all over the world. England has grappled with it and been hopelessly defeated; it presents a decadent agriculture and overcrowded cities full of ignorant and vicious elements, as a result of this defeat. Germany faces the problem with misgivings; her defeat has not yet been made as signal and overwhelming as that of England, but the tendency to concentrate in the cities is marked and alarming. Austria and Italy confront like conditions, especially northern Italy. France has best stemmed the tide toward the cities, France being a country of small holdings of land, while the others are countries of landed proprietors and tenant farmers; and as one of the dangerous aspects it is urged that the United States strongly tends in the same direction.

At the outset, it is the opinion of the commissioners that such projects as the "homestead" and Salvation army enterprises, to induce people to leave the city and go back to the country, present a

less and ineffective waste of effort. The one trouble is that the people will not move in that direction; at least, not till the country is made more attractive to them than now. It is useless to moralize and preach about it. "The people whom we regard as unfortunates, on New York's lower East Side, would rather stay right there, and continue living the life of the city, than to move away to the really better conditions of the country; and there's the end of it," said Gifford Pinchot, one of the commissioners. "We must make our effort to keep the people on the farm, once they are there; not to tell them away from the city to the farm."

Mr. Pinchot is that rara avis, a practical altruist; he is a millionaire, who instead of driving a coach and six over the beautiful roads of England, or automobiling in France, for mere pleasure, rolls up his sleeves and works without vacations for the government at a per annum salary which represents his private income for a week or two, and then pays a good slice of the salary to piece out the meager allowance made by the government for a private secretary; in order that he may have the secretary he wants. He has been studying these problems for years. As chief forester he has lived much among the poorest country people. He knows their conditions and their needs. He can tell of nights spent in the effort to sleep on the floors of their humble but hospitable homes; of meals of "sawbilly" and pone; of the deadly monotony of their lives and the unending drudgery of their work. He believes that this work is one of education as well as of institution-creating; of making the people understand; of instilling a social consciousness, an ambition and aspiration for better things. He believes that new institutions must indeed be created, but before these can be secured, there must be aroused an aspiration for them and for the better conditions which they will bring. Bring the

people to know what better road laws, better school laws, better corporation laws, better transportation and communication, co-operation in buying and selling, elimination of the middleman, establishment of social centers, libraries, lectures, etc., education in the things which come close to the farm and its life; better houses and more conveniences, with bigger profits and therefore a larger margin to spend in better living; bring the people to understand what all these things will mean to them, and that these things are what the new movement seeks to give them, and Mr. Pinchot believes there will be short delay about getting it under headway.

President Roosevelt has named as his commissioners, Prof. L. H. Bailey of New York Agricultural college at Ithaca, who is one of the recognized experts in these studies; Henry Wallace of Des Moines, a practical farmer, who knows actual farming conditions all over the country; President Kenyon L. Butterfield of the Massachusetts Agricultural College; Gifford Pinchot, forester of the government; and Walter H. Page, editor of The World's Work. These gentlemen will meet shortly, probably in this city, and prepare for their work, on which the president has asked them to report before January 1 so that he may have opportunity to make recommendations to congress as to aspects which may necessitate legislation.

This report will be merely preliminary. It is designed to have a great, permanent, organized movement developed from this beginning. It is recognized as a work of years, of decades; indeed, a work that will never be finished, if it is rightly begun and well prosecuted.

Social and economic changes of utmost significance may readily be forecast as results of this work. Thus, the commission will make most careful inquiry into the benefits and the need of co-operation. Co-operation among farmers means nothing less than the death-knell of the country town. Primarily a trading center, and secondarily a social and educational center, it is supported by the population immediately surrounding it. The indictment against the country town charges that it is economically wasteful in that it takes heavy toll from the producing community without any adequate compensation; that it is socially demoralizing, and that as an industrial center it is a failure. Its schools are better than those of the country district; but they are not good, and are in nowise adapted to the education of the boys and girls who are to be farmers.

So, inevitably, the extension of practical co-operation in buying and selling the farm's necessities and products, and better transportation, means the decay of the country town. It means, if such careful students as Prof. Bailey, who has gone deeply into this problem, can be taken as authority, that the farmer would get more nearly what he is entitled to from his products, while the people who now make up the population of the country town would themselves be gradually redistributed back to the ranks of economic producers; some would become farmers, some would go to the industrial centers. The disintegration of the country town is inevitable when rural free delivery shall remove excuse for maintaining its postoffice, when postal savings banks shall enable the farmer to handle his money most easily, when co-operation shall have reduced the amount of business for the country "general store," and when parcels post shall have brought the markets of the city to the farmer's door. Then the improvement of country schools will make it possible for growing families to be educated without leaving the farm; and the establishment of social centers, libraries, halls, institutes, lecture courses, etc., will remove the social excuse for the country town's existence.

This is rather a big problem with which to grapple. It involves running counter to

a vast power of interest and prejudice; a power which has thus far been successfully appealed to in the effort to prevent adoption of the parcels post adjunct to the postal service, for instance. But, urge those who believe the country town an excuseless institution, when it is abolished the farmer will co-operate in marketing his products. His butter and eggs instead of being produced at home and marketed at the country store by the pound and dozen and paid for "in trade," will be marketed directly to the city, in quantities; the butter will be made at the co-operative creamery and sold for cash; the grain will pay no excessive toll to the elevator combine, but will be handled at cost by the co-operative elevator. And so on through the list of the farm's output.

So much for the economic revolution—a quiet and gradual one, of course, and one which in truth would finally benefit all concerned, if those who advocate it are right. The educational changes would be no less striking. It is in mind that, instead of having subdistrict schools scattered all over each rural township, a system should be developed under which a single central school should be for the township, with a good, sanitary, modern school building. In this should be conducted an organized and graded school, with better paid teachers and with facilities for real educational work. Instead of having one teacher at \$3 a month teaching the three "r's" to a half score of infants in summer, and to a half hundred youth of all ages in winter, there would be skilled teachers in each grade, some higher courses and good work throughout the year for those who wanted it. More than all this, the text books for country schools and the courses of study would be designed for the special conditions of the country. There would be effort at adapting the education to the needs of the children; elemental chemistry, the adaptation of some knowledge of geology to study of soil conditions,

practical botany and horticulture—these would constitute useful and attractive aspects to the curriculum in the country school, along with many other things equally appropriate but now unknown.

When it comes to the problem of better roads—and this is essential to working out all the other features of the ideal township—legislation is necessary, and it must be secured from the state. Co-operation of the nation, the state and the local governmental division in development of better roads is the ideal of many; perhaps impractical and chimerical, but yet it is a many minds. Good roads are necessary to centralized schools, because with centralized schools there must be transportation of the pupils at public expense, which would be impossible without undue expense. Likewise better roads are necessary before the ideal social and intellectual development can be secured; before the people will go to the lectures which will be held in the assembly room of the township school or church; before the township library and reading room, for which quarters would be set off in the same establishment, can be patronized.

The roads problem will come in for much and prayerful consideration by the commission. Years of agitation and urgent appeal have thus far aroused the people of the cities to the need of better roads. To get laws through legislatures, looking to better roads, is commonly rendered most difficult because of the conservatism of the farmers themselves, who would be chief beneficiaries. Yet it is conceded that this must somehow be accomplished as a very beginning of the whole scheme of social reform for the country.

One interesting aspect of this inquiry will be the light it will shed on the tendency to tenant farming in this country; absentee landlordism and tenant management; on the question of farm labor, and wages, and on the reasonableness of current prices at which lands are sold, and of rentals charged for them in different sections of the country. It is well known that lands of equal economic value, located in different sections, are of widely different values in the market. The reasons for this will constitute an important light on the whole question of farm conditions.

In different sections of the country the problem of the farm is vastly different. In the south, southwest and throughout the frontier regions, conditions are worse than in the rich agricultural states of the middle west. These latter have all they need, materially; they have but to be taught how best to conserve and expend it to get best results. Again, the east, with its abandoned farms and decadent agriculture presents yet another problem. The farming country and the irrigated regions are peculiar to themselves, and have their own special sets of problems. And so on through all sections and circumstances.

And at the end of it all there is the haunting thought that perhaps by its very success the work might become a greater failure; that is, to expiate the sins of the fathers, that the boys and girls of the farm, raised, educated and equipped under these improved circumstances, might take that better equipment away to town and blithely set it to work there, utterly unmindful that they were given it all in order to keep them on the farm. Suppose their passion of better equipment to meet the conditions and demands of city life should merely increase their disposition to go to the city? Then indeed would it be doubly a failure.

But none of the students of the problem seriously believes the result will be anything of that sort.