

energies principally to promoting the social and intellectual welfare of the farmer and to business coöperation, sometimes on a large scale. But, as soon as an organization has drawn into its ranks a considerable proportion of the farmers of a State, especially in the West, the temptation to use its power in the field of politics is almost irresistible. At first, political activity is usually confined to declarations in favor of measures believed to be in the interests of the farmers as a class; but from this it is only a short step to the support of candidates for office who are expected to work for those measures; and thence the gradation is easy to actual nominations by the order or by a farmers' convention which it has called into being. With direct primaries in operation in most of the Western States, these movements no longer culminate in the formation of the third party but in ambitious efforts to capture the dominant party in the State. Thus in Wisconsin the president of the state union of the American Society of Equity, a farmers' organization which has heretofore been mainly interested in coöperative buying and selling, was recently put forward by a "Farmers and Laborers Conference" as candidate for the nomination for governor on the Republican ticket and had the active support